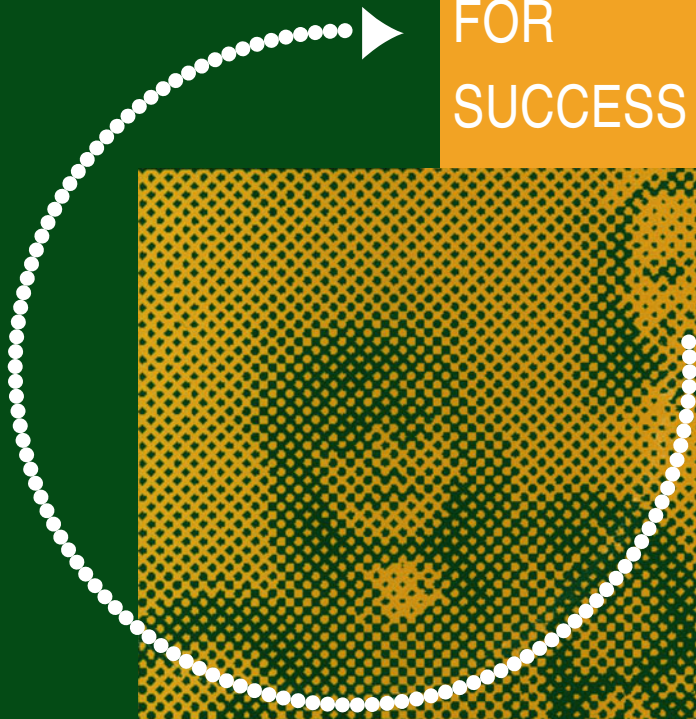


Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students

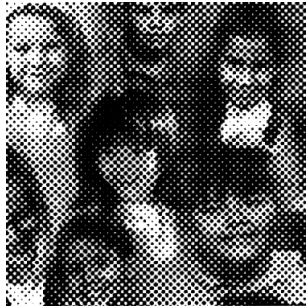
A NEW
DIRECTION
FOR
SUCCESS

DRAFT POLICY ON
SPECIAL EDUCATION



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SPECIAL EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

In fall 1996, following the Estates General on Education, the Minister of Education, Mrs Pauline Marois, announced the general orientation of her reform of education to better reflect society's changing needs. She set a major challenge for the education community: to take a new direction for success in order to move from the goal of access for as many students as possible to success for as many as possible.

To carry out this reform, the *Ministerial Plan of Action* and *Québec Schools on Course: Educational Policy Statement* were issued and amendments were made to laws and regulations. Thus there will be an entirely new context in the schools in the next few years.

At first glance, the challenge to be met appears even greater for students with special needs. What will the reform mean for these students? What measures are needed to help as many of them as possible to succeed?

At a time when we are taking the new direction for success proposed by the Minister, it seems important to revise the policy on special education in keeping with the changes recommended in the reform. Clear orientations adjusted to the current context, accompanied by lines of action to attain the objectives set for these students, should contribute to better meeting their needs.

This draft policy on special education comprises three chapters. After looking at the changes in the situation of students with special needs in recent years, this document will present the broad lines of the current context that may affect the services to be set up. Then, the basic orientation of the current policy and the lines of action to be adopted will be presented.

CHAPTER I - PRESENTATION OF THE SITUATION

Various sources of information have been used to assess the situation in special education and identify the principal concerns.

First of all, a quantitative report is provided, based on the data available on the situation of students with special needs. The initial data provided are *basic data* that are well known; they are an update of data that have already been used by the Ministère or its partners. These data include the distribution of students, the proportion of students declared as having special needs and their rate of integration into regular schools and classes, and the development of Student Services personnel. To provide other indicators for monitoring the situation of students with special needs, *supplementary data* on the success rate and the academic progress of these students and the results of a survey of young people without secondary school diplomas are also presented.

Following this, the main concerns stated in two documents published in 1996 are presented. These documents, which show other aspects of the situation of students with special needs that require improvement, are the brief of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation entitled *L'intégration scolaire des élèves handicapés et en difficulté* and the *Exposé de la situation* produced by the Commission for the Estates General on Education.

Basic Data

In 1997-1998, there were 1 033 099 students registered in preschool, elementary and secondary education, including 128 343 students, or 12.42 percent of the student population, with special needs (Table 1). Of these, 115 333 students, or 11.16 percent of the student population, presented social maladjustments or learning disabilities, and 13 011 students, or 1.26 percent of the student population, had handicaps.

A significant fact is that although there were more girls than boys in elementary and secondary school, there were almost twice as many boys in preschool, elementary and secondary education with social maladjustments or learning disabilities. However, the difference is less marked in the case of students with handicaps (Table 2). This observation is consistent with other data of recent years on school dropouts, grade repetition and failure rates.

When students are grouped according to the type of difficulty they have (Table 3), it is evident that the vast majority of students in special education consists of students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities (89.8 percent). Students with learning disabilities make up the majority of students with special needs (66.7 percent), followed by students with behavioural difficulties (19.3 percent). Of the students with handicaps, the largest number have multiple impairments (2.3 percent) or moderate or severe intellectual impairments (2.1 percent).

The provincial percentages of students declared as having special needs have been relatively stable in all categories in the past three years (Table 4). However, a look at the regional rates makes it possible to qualify this perception. In fact, there are significant differences among regions, and even among school boards within the same region (Table 5).

The breakdown of the student population by language of instruction (Table 6) shows that the percentages of students declared as having social maladjustments or learning disabilities in elementary and secondary school are higher in the English sector than in the French sector. The percentage of students declared as having handicaps, however, is similar in the two sectors, except in preschool education, where it is higher in the English sector.

An important aspect of the situation of students with special needs is their integration into regular schools and classes. In fact, this has certainly been the major issue in the demands of organizations representing these students in recent years. Tables 7 and 8 show that the vast majority of the students are integrated into regular school and that this situation is increasing for most students with special needs.

The rate of integration into regular classes (Tables 9 and 10) has increased substantially for seven of the ten categories of students concerned. It should be noted that, while the rates are increasing, some of them (those for students with severe learning disabilities and behavioural difficulties) are still quite low.

Furthermore, for students in all categories, there is a significant difference between the rate of integration for students in preschool and elementary education and those in secondary school. This observation allows us to qualify our perception of the situation and better define our potential targets for action.

The statistics on Student Services personnel give a general idea of the services offered to these students. Tables 11 and 12 show the numbers of personnel (professional and technical) since 1990-1991. There has been a decrease in the number of professionals in the past two years, whereas there has been a significant increase in technical personnel since 1990-1991.

Supplementary Data

The data banks of the Ministère were consulted for information on the graduation rates and the academic progress of students with special needs. This type of data is especially valuable in a context where schools must make special efforts to provide students with qualifications and ensure success for the greatest possible number.

First of all, it is possible to know the distribution of students registered in individualized paths for learning for the year in progress. In 1997-1998, there were 20 118 students with special needs registered in temporary individualized paths for learning (Table 13) and 18 854 in continuous individualized paths for learning (Table 14). The former group contains a large percentage of students with mild learning disabilities and behavioural difficulties, whereas the latter consists mainly of students with mild or moderate intellectual impairments, speech disorders or severe learning disabilities. As might be expected, the students with more serious social maladjustments

or learning disabilities are the ones registered in continuous individualized paths for learning.

The data concerning graduation rates are more complicated to deal with. A cohort of students must be established and followed over several years, using the data from the system. The cohort chosen was that of students who were 14 years old in 1990 and were declared as having special needs. These students were followed until the age of 21.

The results were interesting, because they showed how graduation rates varied for the different categories of students. They also made it clear that some categories of students tended to choose educational options other than secondary education in the youth sector.

For purposes of comparison, the success rate for students who have not been declared as having special needs was 83.1 percent, divided as follows: 71.2 percent graduated in the youth sector (SSD, youth), 8.8 percent in vocational education (DVS) and 3.1 percent in the adult sector (SSD, adult).

Among students with special needs, those with visual impairments (44.4 percent), hearing impairments (42.9 percent), mild or organic motor impairments (44.3 percent) and mild learning disabilities (37.6 percent) had the highest success rates. Especially low rates were observed in students with behavioural difficulties (14.9 percent) and severe learning disabilities (12.7 percent).

In terms of sectors, the highest success rates in the youth sector were achieved by students with mild or organic motor impairments (39.8 percent), visual impairments (40.0 percent), hearing impairments (31.6 percent) and mild learning disabilities (21.0 percent).

The highest success rates in vocational education were those of students with hearing impairments (9.8 percent) and mild learning disabilities (9.7 percent). The latter group also had the highest success rates in the adult sector (6.9 percent).

In addition, among the students in this cohort who did not obtain diplomas during this period, in the adult sector there were high proportions of students with behavioural difficulties (43.2 percent), psychopathological disorders (42.9 percent), severe learning disabilities (42.2 percent) and mild learning disabilities (30.4 percent). In vocational education, 8.7 percent of the students had mild learning disabilities and 7.3 percent had behavioural difficulties. The other groups of students who did not obtain diplomas were proportionally more numerous in the youth sector.

Social and Employment Integration

Two surveys on the social and employment integration of young people without secondary school diplomas were carried out in spring 1996. The aim of the first was to assess the situation of young people with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, and of the second, that of young people with handicaps. Several of the conclusions of these surveys are worth looking at more closely.

Overall, in terms of the various aspects examined, especially employment, the situation of former students with special needs who did not obtain diplomas is more difficult than that of other young people without diplomas in general education. Among young people with social maladjustments

or learning disabilities, this is most marked in those with social maladjustments (behavioural difficulties). On the other hand, in terms of employment integration, the situation of young people with mild intellectual impairments or sensory impairments is comparable to that of other young people without diplomas in general education.

Boys are in the majority in all groups of young people without diplomas except for those with physical disabilities. The proportion of boys among young people with social maladjustments is even higher.

The rates of grade repetition are very high among young people without diplomas; students with severe learning disabilities repeat grades most often.

In terms of employment integration, there are more young people with social maladjustments who are neither working nor studying than other young people without diplomas; there are also more of them who are unemployed or non-participants in the labour force; and they leave school earlier than other students. Young people with handicaps who have done practicums are twice as likely to be employed than those who have not. Generally speaking, the salaries of young people with social maladjustments or learning disabilities are slightly lower than those of other young people.

In terms of social integration, a considerable percentage of young people with handicaps, especially those with severe handicaps, are extremely isolated socially (they have fewer activities, more of them have no friends, etc.). For young people with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, the situation is similar to that of young people without diplomas in general education, except in the case of those with social maladjustments, who are more likely to have no social network.

Information from Other Sources

The assessment of the situation with respect to special education cannot be based only on the data available. To obtain an overview, it is necessary to pay particular attention to other aspects of the situation that have been brought to light over the years.

In its brief to the Minister of Education on the educational integration of students with special needs, published in 1996, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation notes at the outset that in the past twenty years there has been undeniable progress in educating these students.¹ The Conseil observes that educational integration of students with special needs has been progressing but that it has varied according to level of instruction, category of students and region.²

The Conseil speaks of some genuine successes in integration that are not very well known,³ and mentions several studies whose purpose is to develop new approaches or new types of action. It

1. CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION. *L'Intégration scolaire des élèves handicapés et en difficulté*, Québec, 1996, p. 6.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

3. CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION. *L'Intégration scolaire des élèves handicapés et en difficulté*, Québec, 1996, p. 42.

also speaks of links that have been created between the school and the community.⁴

However, according to the Conseil, some problems remain and are even becoming more serious. These largely concern the kind of support given to teachers, teacher training, planning and evaluation of actions, the continued existence of beliefs and practices that hinder the integration of students with special needs, and the method of funding, with which almost all the players are dissatisfied.⁵

The Conseil speaks of unresolved issues that nobody has dared to broach: the lack of precision of the typology used to identify students (some people feel it should be reduced to two categories - students with handicaps and those with social maladjustments or learning disabilities - while others favour a typology based on needs rather than problems); the ambiguity of practices related to grade repetition; the limits of research in education, especially regarding services for students with special needs; and complex questions of an ethical nature (the gap between the specific needs of individual students and the capacity of the school system to meet them) that arise with respect to the education of these students.⁶

The *Exposé de la situation*⁷ of the Commission for the Estates General on Education expresses the following opinions concerning special education:

“Organizations defending the interests of people with special needs, parents of students coping with these difficulties and the students themselves provide a rather bleak assessment of the educational activities that have been organized, especially the efforts at integration. [...] Teachers are critical of across-the-board integration carried out hastily and without adequate support measures.”

“People who are opposed to the integration of students with special needs into regular classes are rare. However, while there are some who are in favour of integration at all costs and who therefore demand the abolition of special schools, the majority of the participants, in all categories, are conditionally in favour of integration.”⁸

Furthermore, all the participants seem to be in agreement on the main problems that arise concerning these students: screening takes place too late; the diagnosis is not always accurate; the classifications, like the individualized education plans, meet administrative requirements rather than

4. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

7. COMMISSION FOR THE ESTATES GENERAL ON EDUCATION. *Exposé de la situation*, Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, 1996, pp. 31-32. (Translation by the DPLA.)

8. *Ibid.*, p. 32. (Translation by the DPLA.)

the needs of the students and the people working with them; specialized services and personnel are insufficient or are not well known; the teaching personnel lack training. In addition, parents feel they are not involved enough in drawing up and implementing their children's individualized education plans. Organizations defending these people's rights feel their competence is not drawn on sufficiently and are asking for an overall policy that would clarify the relationships among the various parties involved. Teachers say they are neither informed nor consulted nor involved nor supported. Students claim teachers confuse learning disabilities with discipline problems. And administrators say that drawing up and managing individualized education plans is too demanding to be left entirely to them, considering their slender means.⁹

Main Concerns

The quantitative data provide only a partial view of the situation in that they give no indication of the quality of the services or the results obtained with the students. However, some concerns can be identified in order to define possible actions in the next few years.

The indicator most often used to measure the progress of the situation of students with special needs, their integration into regular schools and classes, shows steady improvement in the past few years, especially for some categories of students with handicaps. But it should be noted that the rates of integration of students with severe learning disabilities and behavioural difficulties have remained low, despite some improvement. Finally, the difference between the rates observed in preschool and elementary education and those in secondary school is another element that must be taken into consideration.

The situation of students with behavioural difficulties raises other concerns: low success rate; dropping out at an early age; problems in social and employment integration.

The proportion of boys among students with handicaps is very high, and even higher among those with social maladjustments or learning disabilities. It is also high among young people without diplomas, especially those with behavioural difficulties.

The academic progress of students with special needs should be followed more closely. It is interesting to observe that students with handicaps have a high success rate in vocational education. In addition, a high proportion of students with behavioural difficulties or severe learning disabilities who do not graduate continue their studies in the adult sector.

Neither the views of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation nor those expressed during the Estates General on Education take issue with the educational integration of students with special needs. They observe that the situation has improved and that there have been real successes. The main problems raised concern the training and support given to teachers, the lack of evaluation of actions taken and, especially, the importance placed on certain administrative questions related to the funding of the services. These comments are an accurate reflection of the messages most often heard about the situation of students with special needs.

The lines of action adopted should take these observations into account.

9. COMMISSION FOR THE ESTATES GENERAL ON EDUCATION. *Exposé de la situation*, Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, 1996, p.33. (Translation by the DPLA.)

CHAPTER II - THE NEW CONTEXT RESULTING FROM THE EDUCATION REFORM

The education reform is taking place in an entirely new context as a result of the merging of school boards throughout Québec. The purpose of the decision to pare down the structures that have no direct connection with the students is to give the schools more room to manoeuvre and more powers in order to allow them to make the most appropriate choices for the students. However, as school boards merge, they are obliged to review their policies and regulations concerning the services to be provided to students with special needs in order to harmonize their actions. The education reform and the review of the special education policy is taking place in this context, which is conducive to reflection.

The essentials of the reform and the means for carrying it out may be found mainly in the new *Education Act* and *Québec Schools on Course: Educational Policy Statement*. The key idea of the reform is that the education system should take a new direction for success: success for as many students as possible.

A huge undertaking has begun in order to carry out this idea: a major overhaul of the school curriculum. The objective is to create an entirely new educational environment, one that focuses on essentials, raises the cultural level of programs of study and introduces greater rigour, and at the same time pays special attention to each student—especially those with special needs—provides students with the foundation for lifelong learning and puts the organization at the service of the students.

The new curriculum emphasizes the development of cross-curricular skills, learning that must be present not only in the disciplines taught but in all the educational activities organized by the school. The policy on the evaluation of learning must also be revised to reflect these changes.

Changes to the *Education Act*

The changes to the *Education Act* may also have an impact on the approach to special education and the organization of the services. Let us examine some key aspects of the act.

The Mission of the School and Openness to the Community

The mission of the school is defined in section 36 of the act. In keeping with the principle of equality of opportunity, the mission of the school is to impart knowledge to students, foster their social development and give them qualifications, while enabling them to undertake and achieve success in a course of study. The concern with giving students qualifications is now expressly stated.

The school pursues its mission within the framework of an educational project defined, implemented and periodically evaluated in collaboration with the students, the parents, the principal, the teachers and other school staff, representatives of the community and the school board.

The school's openness to the community, seen in terms of its contribution to the social and cultural development of the community, is another basic element of the education reform. In turn, the contribution of the community - first of all that of the parents, and then that of the other parties involved with young people of school age - must be put to use to ensure the consistency and complementarity of actions taken. The aim should be to establish an educational community while respecting each party's roles and responsibilities.

The Autonomy of the School

Greater autonomy is sought for schools. This basic orientation seeks to bring important decisions closer to the very heart of educational action. In order to do so, the act provides for the creation of a governing board, supported and provided with assistance by the school administration, and given decision-making authority. Parents, school staff, the community and, in secondary school, the students all play important roles on the governing board (s. 42).

The school, through the governing board and the administration, has new roles with respect to various aspects of school life. The governing board must, among other things, adopt, oversee the implementation of and evaluate the school's educational project (s. 74). The governing board is also responsible for approving the student supervision policy proposed by the principal (s. 75). This policy includes measures relating to the use of non-teaching and non-scheduled time for instructional or educational purposes, the organization of extracurricular activities and the development of approaches to foster academic success.

The governing board is responsible for approving the rules of conduct and the safety measures proposed by the principal (s. 76). It is responsible for approving the approach proposed by the principal for the implementation of the student services and special educational services programs determined by the school board (s. 88). Proposals concerning the student supervision policy, the rules of conduct, the safety measures and the implementation of the student services programs are developed in collaboration with the school staff (ss. 77 and 89). The governing board is also responsible for approving the overall approach proposed by the principal for the enrichment or adaptation by the teachers of the objectives and suggested content of the programs of studies established by the Minister and for the development of local programs of studies to meet the specific needs of the students at the school (s. 85).

Finally, the principal, after consulting with the school staff, informs the school board of the needs of the school in respect of each staff category and of the professional development needs of the staff (s. 96.20). The principal is also responsible for the management of the staff of the school and determines the duties and responsibilities of each staff member (s. 96.21).

Transparency and Accountability

The exercise of power entails responsibilities, which must be fulfilled in the utmost transparency. Thus, the governing board must prepare and adopt an annual activity report and transmit a copy of it to the school board (s. 82). It must also inform the community served by the school of the services provided by the school and report on the level of quality of such services (s. 83). The

school board must prepare an annual report containing a statement of its activities during the school year and a report on the educational and cultural activities of its schools and centres, and transmit copies of these reports to the Minister (s. 220).

This concern with accountability is part of the emphasis the reform places on the evaluation of results. It must be present at various levels, and efforts will be made on a provincial scale to provide schools with evaluation and support to improve their evaluation practices.

Special Education

In special education, certain principles have been reaffirmed and some changes have been made in order to provide clearer guidelines on the services to be set up for students with special needs.

Students' Rights

The right of the student with special needs to receive educational services is reaffirmed; for students with handicaps, this right extends to the age of 21 (s. 1).

Adaptation of Services

The emphasis is still on the adaptation of services. School boards must adapt educational services to students with special needs according to the student's needs and in keeping with the student's abilities as evaluated by the school board (s. 234).

Individualized Education Plan

The obligation to establish an individualized education plan adapted to the needs of each student with special needs is maintained (s. 96.14). The principal must see to the implementation and periodic evaluation of the education plan and inform the student's parents on a regular basis. The plan must be consistent with the school board's policy concerning the organization of services for students with special needs and in keeping with the ability and needs of the student as evaluated by the school board before the student's placement and enrollment at the school.

Policy on the Organization of Services

Integration into regular classes is favoured. School boards must adopt a policy concerning the organization of educational services for students with special needs, to ensure the harmonious integration of each such student into a regular class or group and into school activities if it has been established on the basis of the evaluation of the student's abilities and needs that such integration would facilitate the student's learning and social integration and would not impose an excessive constraint or significantly undermine the rights of the other students (s. 235).

Service Agreements

The organization of educational services, by the school board that has jurisdiction, as near the students' place of residence as possible is preferred. The school board must organize educational services for students with special needs itself or, if it can establish that its resources are insufficient or if the parents request it, entrust the organization of these services to another school board with which it has entered into an agreement, while making sure the services are provided as near the students' place of residence as possible (s. 209).

Advisory Committee and Parents' Committee

The advisory committee on services for students with special needs (s. 185), which is established by the school board, is consulted in particular when the school board has to make decisions concerning the organization of services. The committee advises the school board on its policy for the organization of educational services for students with special needs (s. 187) and on service agreements it concludes with other school boards for these students (s. 213). A representative of the advisory committee who is a parent of a student with special needs is a member of the parents' committee (s. 189). Among other things, the parents' committee informs the school board of the needs of parents as identified by the school representatives and by the representative of the advisory committee (s. 192).

Other Elements of the Context

The world of education is not alone in undergoing profound changes. The entire society of Québec and the structure of its services are in the process of changing. The difficult economic context combined with the complex and varied needs of the population, as well as the desire to reduce the provincial deficit, have led the government to review all the services provided. Cutbacks in education in the past few years may have had an impact on the services for students with special needs, even though budgets for these students have not been directly targeted by these cutbacks.

In this context of cutbacks, it has become essential to find ways of doing things that make the best use of the available resources, avoid duplications of services and draw on all available expertise in a coherent and complementary way. Hence the great stress that has been put on collaboration and partnership in the past few years. This orientation is already part of the school's practices. It will be further developed through the establishment of the governing boards that give parents and the community a larger role.

A desire for collaboration is also evident in the relationships the school has with its partners outside the school system. Collaborative arrangements have already been established with organizations in the health and social service network, and in the next few years they should show results at the various levels of planning and services provided. Similar arrangements will also be made with early childhood centres. The government's new family policy should ensure greater complementarity between daycare services and other services for children, which is in the interest of young children and their parents. Collaboration with other partners, such as those in justice and public security, is also increasing. There are a variety of working groups at the provincial and regional levels, made up of these partners, that are seeking to provide young people of school age with more coherent solutions that will better meet their needs.

The need to emphasize the prevention of difficulties is a priority in the current context. Immediate and effective intervention at the first sign of a problem, or even before, is undoubtedly the approach to favour in order, in the long term, to reduce human and social costs. It is thus natural that young people of school age constitute a special target. Furthermore, this message has been well assimilated by the various partners that work with young people.

The development of information technology is another area that should not be neglected. Now when Québec society is undergoing profound changes as a result of, among other things, the openness to the world this technology has made possible, it seems essential that the school adapt its ways of doing things in order to take advantage of the new means of communication available. This is the context of the Minister of Education's plan to provide the schools with computer equipment. However, there is still a great deal to be done to make them part of practices in schools and to assess all their possibilities. This new factor has particular importance for students with special needs because it opens the door to the possibility of new equipment to meet their needs. For some of these students, it may even constitute an essential means of access to learning.

Finally, all these efforts to adapt practices should be validated and adjusted in order to meet the needs of the population as best possible. Serious attention to the evaluation of results is thus desirable and it is consistent with the desire to improve the situation. In education, as in other areas of activity, special efforts should be made to examine and evaluate results. Provincial bodies have a role to play in this, as do all levels of service organization.

CHAPTER III - BASIC ORIENTATION AND LINES OF ACTION

Basic Orientation of the Special Education Policy

The new orientation involved in the reform - the move from the goal of access for as many students as possible to success for as many as possible - is ambitious and demanding for students in general and for those who guide them. It is even more so for students with special needs.

The special education policy must send a clear message as to the place students with special needs are to have in the reform, so that they may benefit from it along with other students. The school's mission, which is to impart knowledge to students, foster their social development and give them qualifications, defines the objectives the reform aims to fulfil more successfully. The basic orientation of all action in special education is defined as follows:

To help students with handicaps and those with social maladjustments or learning disabilities succeed in terms of knowledge, social development and qualifications, by accepting that success has different meanings for different students, and by adopting methods that favour their success.

This orientation presents several challenges for the school system. The first one is to realize that students with special needs, like other students, can succeed in acquiring knowledge, achieving social development and obtaining qualifications, on condition that they are given help in doing so and that it is accepted that success may have different meanings for different students.

The data presented in Chapter I lead to the conclusion that the efforts of recent years have resulted in some progress in the social integration of students with special needs: more of them now attend regular school in regular classes with the other young people of their neighbourhood. One of the challenges set by the reform is to pursue these efforts so that students with special needs are also successful in terms of knowledge and qualifications.

This last element, expressly added to the school's mission, introduces a new approach to working with students with special needs. How can we ensure their academic success, social development and acquisition of qualifications? What conditions should be established to help them succeed? How can we prevent difficulties and adapt services to increase their chances of success? How can the organization be put at the service of the students? How do we take into account the fact that success can have different meanings for different students? Which players are part of students' success? How should the progress of students - their success - be evaluated?

In order to respond to these concerns and meet the challenges underlying them, six lines of action are proposed. For each one, favourable aspects of the context are identified and possible actions suggested, which draw on all levels of the school system as well as the school's partners. Some actions are already in progress and others will require new efforts or different approaches with students with special needs.

Lines of Action

Recognizing the importance of prevention and the need to devote additional effort to this task

Where should one start to ensure success in school? The answer is simple: start at the beginning, and do so as soon as possible by calling upon all of the partners involved. Prevention is, therefore, the first step toward achieving lasting results.

Two aspects of prevention deserve special attention: the creation of an environment conducive to learning and success in school; and early intervention.

> To create an environment conducive to learning and success for all students.

A school that takes into account early on the diversity of students' needs and abilities, adopting a flexible, open approach and finding ways to manage diversity, will foster learning and reduce the number of specialized interventions directed at students with special needs.

Although the attitude of the school is important, there are no magic solutions. Conditions favourable to new ways of doing things must be in place. The supporting role of the school administration is a determining factor. And all levels of the educational community must be involved.

> To intervene as soon as problems arise.

Some children come to school with particular needs resulting from an impairment or disability or unfavourable environment, or with expectations connected with services that they have already received and would like to continue receiving. For others, school signals their first encounter with problems. The demands of learning and the constraints associated with group life bring out the differences among students, along with the needs that have to be met if they are to succeed in school.

Excellent results can be achieved with students with special needs, provided that intervention begins early, during the first years in school. Special attention should be devoted to identifying children with difficulties, so that the school does not lose any time in finding the approach best suited to their needs. Moreover, problems should be monitored throughout the student's school years, with a view to preventing further difficulties. There is a higher representation of boys among students with special needs, and this should be taken into account in the search for new types of intervention.

The school is not the only actor in the area of prevention. Care must be taken to ensure that its actions complement whatever steps may have been taken in early childhood by the parents and the school's other partners. It is essential that measures be taken to help those parents who require assistance in developing their parenting skills.

Those involved in intervention efforts seem to be convinced of the benefits of prevention. However, the challenge consists in making prevention a priority and in committing the financial and human resources required to make it a reality. In situations where resources are limited, there is a tendency to respond to the most pressing or obvious needs first. Meanwhile, the fact that preventive action can often help to alleviate some manifestations of difficulties tends to be forgotten.

Favourable Factors

Certain features of the current situation in education are conducive to this line of action.

First of all, the revision of the curriculum begun with the recent educational reform has had a noticeable effect on the learning environment:

- The adoption of a Program of Programs, which provides the framework within which programs of study are developed, is intended to promote an overall, integrated vision of education. This vision recognizes not only what the students learn in courses and formal programs of study, but also the learning they acquire through other educational activities offered by the school.
- The Program of Programs must provide students with skills as well as knowledge. This means that students' results must be evaluated from these two standpoints, and that success in school may take different forms, depending on the students. For students with special needs, the emphasis on skills assumes great importance, and there is good reason to believe that the efforts devoted to the development of these skills will be particularly rewarding for these students.
- All further development or revision of programs of study should take into account, from the very outset, the diversity of student needs and abilities, particularly those of students with special needs. The objective is to adapt programs from their inception.

With respect to early intervention, the development of early childhood centres, daycare services and kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds should facilitate the identification of students with difficulties, and this could help educators to find the appropriate modes of intervention within a shorter time.

A number of school communities are already exploring new methods that foster the management of diversity and respect for differences. Examples include different approaches to teaching and classroom management. Other schools favour early intervention for students with special needs, as a way of alleviating existing difficulties or preventing them from becoming worse. Still others are putting their efforts into projects designed to support parents in their roles as educators. Despite all this, much remains to be done if prevention is to assume its rightful place and yield the desired results.

Suggested Strategies

Each level of the school system must take concrete action, thereby demonstrating the importance it places on prevention.

The Ministère de l'Éducation must support the school in its efforts to provide more prevention services:

- The Ministère must help to create an open and flexible learning environment that enables the school to manage diversity. The revision of the programs of study is a step in this direction, as is the reorganization of cycles at the elementary level. The policy for learning evaluation must be adapted to the new aim of programs of study focusing on the acquisition of skills and knowledge. The results obtained must help the school to monitor the students' progress and to make any necessary adjustments.
- The Ministère must help those working with students with special needs to know more about the characteristics and needs of these students, and to determine which measures to implement in order to mitigate their difficulties. The situation of boys deserves special attention. Those engaged in developing regional expertise to help the school work with certain students with special needs should continue their efforts. Examples of good practice in this area should also be publicized so that they can be put to good use, and so that other communities are encouraged to initiate the process of change.
- The Ministère must coordinate its efforts with those of its university partners, in order to determine preventive measures and obtain lasting results. Prevention must become a major focus of research.

The school must, for its part, demonstrate the importance it assigns to prevention.

- The governing boards must be made aware of this issue. The school's educational project must devote attention to students with special needs, and to any actions (like preventive measures) likely to reduce the incidence of difficulties or prevent existing problems from becoming worse.
- School administrators must encourage and support their staff, to enable them to be innovative in their approaches and the measures they must take to manage the diversity in their schools. Administrators must adopt means that allow for change, setting aside, for example, time for sharing knowledge, team work and professional development. They must ensure that parents are closely involved in their strategies, since parents play a determining role in the prevention and identification of difficulties in their children. To consolidate the preventive measures taken, the schools must also develop closer cooperation with their daycare service providers, with health and social service agents, and the community in general.
- The school board must foster cooperation among the school's various partners, as a way of ensuring rapid and well-coordinated intervention during or before kindergarten. The early identification of difficulties must be high on the list of priorities of all partners.

Making the adaptation of educational services a priority for all those working with students with special needs

In keeping with the first line of action, the adaptation of educational services should be considered, first of all, in the context of the services offered to all students, and then in terms of more specialized adapted services. Adaptation can be carried out in a number of ways: by adjusting or changing practices, or by suggesting to the students ways in which they might find the solutions best suited to their needs. Whatever the method, adaptation requires an attitude of openness to difference as well as creativity in the search for possible modifications to respect the particular needs of the students.

> To adjust or modify existing methods.

The adaptation of services is the basic orientation of the law insofar as it applies to the organization of services for students with special needs. Most students have access to educational services through regular classes, and adapting these services should be the first line of response to the needs of students with special needs. Various means could be used for this task; they might include developing programs that take account of student diversity, adapting teaching methods or materials, adopting flexible pedagogical approaches that respect the students' learning rates, and so on.

This concern should extend beyond the classroom, so that other educational activities and services (daycare services, extracurricular activities, etc.) are accessible and adapted to students with special needs. Each member of the school staff should have a role to play. And each one should structure his or her activities in ways that make them more accessible to students with special needs.

The teaching staff are, however, the first line of response in the adaptation of services. Their task is not an easy one, since they have to respond to individual needs while accounting for the learning development of an entire group. They must be supported in this endeavour by their colleagues, by students services staff and by the school administrators. They must also be provided with suitable working conditions.

> To offer the students various options.

To ensure that students with special needs have more chances to obtain qualifications, it is important that the teaching institutions offer a broad range of schooling options that are adapted to the interests and abilities of each student, that they foster access to existing programs and that they facilitate the transition between the different courses. These students should be offered new options designed to maximize their chances to obtain qualifications. The means of student evaluation, as well as the certification rules, must follow this line of development and allow for the recognition of achievements and qualifications. The choice of options is very difficult for students with special needs, and particularly decisive for their future. It is essential that they be guided so that they can make informed choices.

Preparation for the job market, whether in the form of work practicums, social and employment integration programs, or any other arrangements that facilitate the transition from school to the job market, should be subject to greater scrutiny in the case of students with disabilities or learning difficulties. An education plan framed from this perspective can make all the difference and improve the chances of success.

Student qualification is a key element in the new direction for success outlined as part of the recent educational reform. In order to embark on this course, certain adaptations and choices must be made to ensure that students with disabilities or learning difficulties have an equal chance to succeed. This is a significant challenge, and all levels of the educational community must do their part.

Favourable Factors

As stated above, curriculum reform should foster special education since the programs of study will already be better adapted to take account of the students' needs and abilities. Moreover, the programs will be organized by cycle, which will give teachers and students greater latitude to consolidate learning.

The increased role of information and communications technologies in the classroom could also be an advantage. School staff can use these new means for their own learning and professional development. For some students with special needs, these technologies are much more than attractive additions to the school's resources: instead, they are essential tools of communication, and make learning possible. Consider, for example, the case of a student with a major motor impairment who can communicate with his teacher or classmates only by computer.

With regard to the students' education plan and the link to be established with the job market, real advances have been made. Consider the practicums carried out by students with special needs within the framework of individualized paths for learning in social and employment integration; or the testing, begun in 1996, of programs of study adapted to secondary school students with intellectual impairments. Nevertheless, much work remains to be done.

In the current context there is, however, one development that could lead to more effective guidance for students in the choices they have to make. In the year ahead, a working group created as part of the educational reform must provide the Ministère de l'Éducation with proposals touching career guidance and information for young people. The proposals developed should help to make school staff more aware of this issue, and make it possible to determine how each member can enable the students to make the best possible choices for their future.

Suggested Strategies

The Ministère de l'Éducation must continue to help the school make special education a priority.

- It must ensure that the initial and ongoing training of all staff, and particularly the teachers, be designed in a way that helps them to better understand the needs and abilities of students with special needs, and to adapt their teaching in light of this new understanding.

- It must provide access to means likely to foster special education. It is important that the role of information and communication technologies, particularly for students with disabilities or learning or adjustment difficulties, be developed. The school's plans with respect to the development of these technologies should convey this concern, and enable the school to devote special attention to it.
- It must share information about promising experiences, effective approaches and new developments so that other partners can make good use of them.
- It must reduce any obstacles likely to hinder the progress of students with special needs. It must facilitate access to the various courses and smooth the transition from one to the other. Entrance requirements, means of evaluation and certification rules must be examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory.
- It must make a special effort to facilitate access to vocational education by offering students with special needs whatever assistance they may require.

The school must also make decisions that foster the adaptation of services.

- The school administration must support its staff in its endeavours to adapt services. It must act in a way that integrates this concern into the entire school's operations. It must adopt measures for this purpose, notably by scheduling time for the exchange of information and the adaptation of material. Student services personnel must support the teaching staff and see to it that educational activities other than those directly associated with teaching the programs of study are adapted as well. Moreover, the school administration must promote ongoing staff training in the adaptation of services in areas such as that of the new information and communications technologies.
- The school boards must offer options that reflect student diversity and are adapted to the students interests and abilities. A special effort must be made to facilitate access to vocational education at the secondary level. Students must receive whatever guidance or career counseling they may need. Measures must be taken to better prepare young people for the job market. Practicums must be made available. And the school board must foster cooperation with the partners outside the school - employers, rehabilitation services providers, etc. - to smooth the transition from the school to the workplace.

Placing the school organization at the service of the students by evaluating their needs on an individual basis, by ensuring that evaluation is carried out in the environment where they are most comfortable, as close as possible to their place of residence, and by favouring their integration into regular classes

First of all, the needs of these students must be well understood and their interests taken into account when decisions concerning them are being made. At a time when schools are enjoying greater autonomy and when local bodies, particularly the governing boards, have significant decision-making power, it is essential that these boards be fully aware of the situation of students with special needs.

Moreover, the law provides for the organization of educational services on the basis of individual evaluation of the needs and abilities of students with special needs. This evaluation must be made by the school board before registration and placement of the students in the school. In its overall approach to planning services, the school board must take account of these individual evaluations and adhere to policy regarding the organization of the services offered to these students.

The individualized education plan remains the most effective means of planning the interventions required on behalf of students with special needs. Adapted to the needs of each student, the plan must facilitate coordination among those providing services to these students. The plan must also take account of any changes of situation, as well as the student's progress. In the minds of some, this plan is associated with administrative constraints imposed by law. It is essential that this view be corrected, and that the school see the plan as an opportunity for coordinating and following up services to students.

For school administrators, the challenge consists in planning the overall organization of services in a way that takes account of individual student evaluation. And the stakes are raised when one considers that the regulations governing the financing of services for students with special needs refer to categories of students with handicaps and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities. Even if the ultimate purpose of these rules is not to specify the organization of services but to ensure a fair distribution of resources, the direct link between financing and the organization of services produces confusion and discontent among certain partners. In recent years, there have been several demands for simplification of the rules governing the financing of services for students with special needs and for greater transparency with respect to the financial resources allocated. The steps already begun in this direction should be continued, and a special attempt should be made to clarify the extent to which these rules affect the organization of services for students with special needs.

The socialization of students remains an important facet of the school's mission. However, this objective assumes a particular meaning for students with special needs. It is essential that these students assume their rightful place in the socialization process, and that they receive the preparation they need to become responsible citizens - like other young people of the same age. Some steps in this direction have been taken in recent years - with positive results, even if there are still major discrepancies among students. However, further progress must yet be made, and successes documented, to ensure that these students enjoy truly equal opportunities. The *Education*

Act provides some guidelines for the organization of services for students with special needs. Thus each partner must develop a policy with respect to an organization of educational services that is in keeping with these guidelines.

Favourable Factors

The revised *Education Act* brings a fresh outlook to the organization of services for students with special needs. The whole spirit of the new law, and not only in the sections that refer directly to these students, is changing the way we see things.

The schools are being granted more power and autonomy. Through their administration and their governing boards, they now have greater latitude to make decisions that respect their values and the priorities they have set for themselves in their educational projects. The schools are closer to the heart of educational activities, hence closer to the students. So they should be in a better position to respect their needs. For example, the policy governing support and supervision services for students is framed at the school level. The law stipulates that this policy must provide, among other things, for measures relating to the educational and pedagogical use of time outside teaching and the regular school schedule, to the organization of extracurricular activities and to the development of means designed to foster the students' success in school. School administrators must inform their school boards, after consultation with staff, of the school's needs for each category of staff, along with its professional development needs.

- The *Education Act* sets the guidelines for the organization of services for students with special needs. Integration into a regular group or class is arranged when evaluation of the student's needs and abilities demonstrates that such integration would foster the student's learning and social integration, and that it would not constitute an excessive constraint or have a significant negative impact on the rights of the other students. The organization of educational services falls to the school board closest to the student's residence. Also, these services must be provided as close as possible to the student's residence. Before entering into a service contract with another body, the school board must first demonstrate that it does not have sufficient resources to provide the services itself.

Moreover, the combining of different school boards makes it necessary for those concerned to reexamine their operations and bring them into line with each other. This demanding task is also an opportunity to make important changes likely to breathe new life into special education services in the schools. The development of a policy governing the organization of services for students with special needs in keeping with the law and the Ministère's policy in this matter is also a great opportunity to further the interests of these students.

Suggested Strategies

The Ministère de l'Éducation must continue to help the school to place school organization at the service of students with special needs.

- The Ministère must reduce the number of administrative constraints associated with the declaration of students with special needs, so that specialists on staff have more time at their disposal to work with students.

- It must ensure that the individualized education plans required by law foster coordinated action in conjunction with the students, their parents and the staff concerned.
- Where required, it must maintain and improve the financing regulations introduced over the last few years in order to ensure greater transparency with respect to the sums allocated, to help school boards account for their results and to promote equitable distribution of financial resources. It must continue its efforts to separate, as much as possible, the financing of students with special needs from the declaration of students.
- It must develop a range of specialized services for the schooling of students who have highly specialized needs that cannot be met by each and every partner in the educational system. This service arrangement must also specify the mandates that will be given to certain school boards to support school staff and organizations in their work with young people with special needs.

The educational community, for its part, must plan the overall organization of services by taking account of the evaluation of individual needs. This is what is required to place school organization at the service of the students.

- The governing boards must be made aware of the situation of students with special needs and take account of them when making decisions that concern the school and the students. The expertise of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities must also be called upon. And other means must be enlisted to inform and sensitize the members of the governing boards about special education.
- School administrators must create conditions favourable to the development and implementation of the individualized education plan. Their view of the latter should also be consistent with the spirit of the law, which sees the plan as a unique opportunity to plan and coordinate the steps to be taken on behalf of students with special needs.
- The choice of services to be provided to students with special needs must reflect evaluations of individual needs and abilities and must emphasize the adaptation of services offered to all students. Student services staff must help the teaching personnel to adapt services, or to offer services to students in the most normal conditions possible.
- The school board must develop a special education policy that reflects the orientations of the *Education Act* and government policy. It must take into consideration the educational community's desire to give students with special needs the best possible chances for success with respect to instruction, socialization and qualifications.

Creating a true educational community around the child, starting with the parents and continuing with outside partners and community organizations working with young people, in order to provide more consistent intervention efforts and better-coordinated services

Students are the main authors of their own success in school. However, they still need guidance and support so that they can develop their independence and be fully equipped to exercise their responsibility. Parents have a major role to play in their children's education—indeed it is they who have the prime responsibility for it. The educational community and its partners must also lend their support, so that the students acquire the learning they need to actively participate in their own success.

Given the essential role of the parents, the school must make them feel welcome and support them in the task of making their children's needs known. They must also be encouraged to help set objectives for their children and to be attentive to their progress in school. Some parents feel uncomfortable in a school setting. Given that we want to ensure greater success for all students, it is more important than ever to make a place for parents in the school, so that they can do their part as those with the ultimate responsibility for their children.

The commitment demanded of parents of children with special needs is greater than that asked of other parents. They have to take part in the evaluation of their children's needs and abilities that is conducted by the school board before registration or placement. They also have to participate in developing an individualized education plan in order to ensure a better coordination of efforts and to follow their child's progress throughout the plan. These are demanding responsibilities, and it is essential that the conditions conducive to parental involvement be established to help them fully assume their responsibilities.

Moreover, the *Education Act* gives concrete expression to the desire to further open the school to parental involvement by giving parents an important role on the governing boards. This local decision-making structure, which also provides for the participation of certain community representatives—community, municipal and recreational bodies, and so on—introduces a new dynamic into the relations with partners, one that changes the vision of the school. This partnership is aimed at forming an educational community with all those who are responsible, in one way or another, for the children, and who share a common concern, namely, the children's well-being and optimal development. In this respect, the parents are certainly the most closely involved, and their vital contribution must be recognized.

While respecting the roles, responsibilities and contributions of each and every partner, it is essential to pursue a common goal, that of providing the students with a stimulating educational environment conducive to their success in school.

It is important to understand the needs of students with special needs, and that they be given the consideration they deserve in decisions that concern them. By virtue of the *Education Act*, the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities is called upon to play an important role with the school board respecting the organization of services offered to these students. Moreover, a representative of this committee also sits on the parents' committee, one of whose functions is to inform the school boards of the

needs expressed by the parents. These officially recognized structures are important to ensure the representation of students with special needs and their parents.

Moreover, the services that students with special needs may need are not found only at school. They also come from other sectors (e.g., early childhood, health, social and public safety services, etc.) that must work together to provide better-coordinated services. The partnership between the various sectors of intervention must first find expression at the local level, particularly on the governing boards with the school staff and community organizations, but also at the regional and provincial levels through the establishment of consensus-building mechanisms with a view to better planning and coordination of services. This collaboration between the different sectors of intervention must first of all translate into a better knowledge of the roles and realities of intervention, so that expectations are more realistic. It must strive toward the best possible use of resources, as well as a better integration of the services offered to students with special needs.

Favourable Factors

Initiatives that foster coordination among the various partners (government departments, governing boards, parents, community organizations, etc.) working with young people have been developed in recent years. The goal of these initiatives is to ensure greater consistency and complementarity in intervention.

For example, at the provincial level a committee bringing together directors at the Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux has been set up to look regularly at matters of common concern, and to decide upon the steps to be taken on behalf of a global and integrated approach to intervention in the school community. Moreover, regional mechanisms designed to promote information sharing and improve the quality of services exist in several Québec regions. For example, regional services organization plans coordinated by the Regional Health and Social Services Boards, with input from representatives from the education sector, have been set up.

These initiatives attest to the partners' willingness to offer young people of school age more coordinated services. The education sector must take advantage of the specific context generated by the current educational reform to take an active role in this attempt at coordination. The establishment of governing boards, which are intended to open the school up to parents and the community, reflects this emphasis.

Suggested Strategies

The Ministère de l'Éducation must help to create a true educational community centred around the students:

- It must support the school community in training the members of the governing boards. Given the essential role played by the school administration in the matter of educational reform, the support and professional development of school administrators must be a special concern in the years ahead.
- It must encourage university researchers to join with the school community to determine the conditions that would allow for the establishment of a true educational community.

- It must continue to work with its partners, so that the services offered are better coordinated. For example, in the year ahead, the Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux will define shared orientations with respect to the organization of services to be offered to all students, including students with special needs. This approach, which is more global and integrated, should ensure greater consistency and better follow-up in the delivery of services.

The school community, for its part, must continue with its efforts and demonstrate its willingness to work with the parents, the community and the outside partners to create a true educational community centred around the student.

- The school administrators have an important role to play in ensuring that all parents participate actively in their children's success. They must support their staff in developing means that will promote cooperation with parents, particularly by scheduling time for regular discussions with them about their children's progress or difficulties. Communication should not be reserved only for dealing with problems.
- The school administrators must satisfy themselves that the overture made to parents and the community through the establishment of the governing boards results in real collaboration. They must welcome and support the participation of the parents by keeping them informed and aware of the various aspects of school life that may impact on the decisions they will have to make as members of the governing boards.
- The school administrators must ensure that the development of the individualized education plan becomes a special opportunity for the parents of children with special needs to take an active part in determining the objectives that the school and family must set for the children. Such participation guarantees greater consistency and continuity in interventions, both at home and in the school.
- The school board must ensure that the structures which the law provides designed to ensure parental representation (the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, the parents' committee) are constituted and consulted in conditions that are fully conducive to the exercise of their functions.
- The school board must support the schools that have to determine the needs of their students and find the appropriate means to respond to them. It has a responsibility to distribute resources fairly among the schools.
- The school board must establish ways of working with outside partners, particularly those of the health and social services network, so that the organization of services makes good use of the available expertise and resources and respects the guidelines provided by the two ministries concerned. It must also do its part in the regional planning of the two sectors of intervention, so that the needs of the school community are taken into account in the distribution of regional resources.

Devoting particular attention to students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities

The schools' concern with students with special needs, particularly those with behavioural difficulties, has grown over the past few years. One element that may have contributed to this development is the transformation of the in-house care facilities of the health and social services system, which has brought back into the regular school system students who were previously schooled in rehabilitation centres.

Moreover, one cannot think about students with special needs without thinking about certain social problems experienced by this generation: drug abuse, violence, suicide, dropping out of school, etc. Young people's needs are complex and varied, and certain social factors such as poverty and unemployment have contributed to a growth in these needs. Strategies aimed at solving these problems must be viewed within the context of the solutions proposed for students with special needs in conjunction with the partners concerned. This poses a particular challenge to the schools, particularly with respect to the resources required for the provision of such services. The expertise required to respond to the needs and abilities of these students remains to be developed in the school community.

Boys account for a high proportion of students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, and they are also strongly represented in certain categories of students with handicaps. Recent reports and studies have brought out the differences and discrepancies between boys and girls in various facets of school life. For example, one such discrepancy is that observed with respect to academic success. We still do not know which strategies to adopt to ensure that both boys and girls are successful in school.

This is an important issue, and one which researchers must study for appropriate intervention strategies. The school community must also take part in this endeavour. It must keep this concern first and foremost when deciding on which strategies to adopt for its students - boys and girls alike - and when determining those which seem most likely to take account of the differences between them.

Students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities account for the great majority of students in special education. However, certain aspects of their situation remain a cause for concern. Their rates of integration into regular classes are rather low, as are their graduation rates. Moreover, some of these students encounter trouble with social and employment integration when they leave school. Social maladjustments and learning disabilities may stem from many factors, and may be expressed in ways that vary with each student. The school, the approaches used and the attitudes adopted (tolerant, rigid, etc.) can also affect how difficulties are manifested. Hence the complexity of intervention with such students, and the need to obtain the cooperation of the family and other concerned parties to develop consistent strategies.

This concern with students with special needs is very widespread in Europe and the United States, where people recognize the importance of preventive intervention among students who show signs of vulnerability, or who are in danger of experiencing difficulties if early intervention is not carried out.

Much work remains to be accomplished to improve current understanding and to determine appropriate strategies for the educational success of students with special needs. One avenue that appears to be particularly promising for students with handicaps, as well as for students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, is that of prevention. The soundness of this approach seems to be well established. Whether one opts for prevention or some other strategy - whatever the case, one must be ready to devote the necessary resources to the task at hand.

Favourable Factors

The need to examine the situation of students with special needs is not confined to the school. The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux is also concerned with these young people and the services available to them. In 1998 it published *Agissons en complices: Pour une stratégie de soutien du développement des enfants et des jeunes*. This outlined a strategy aimed at ensuring a smoother coordination of services.

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation is currently studying the question of the discrepancies observed between the success rates of boys and girls. Its conclusions, which are to be tabled sometime between now and the end of the 1998-1999 school year, are much awaited, since they will help in the efforts to devise strategies likely to ameliorate the situation.

Other initiatives foster the search for solutions to social problems by advocating coordination among the various partners. For example, the Provincial Consultation Committee on Violence, Youth and the School System was established. This body brings together the concerned government departments - i.e., education, justice, health and social services, public security - as well as representatives of their principal partners. This group's objective is to develop a shared vision of the situation and to determine what steps are required to support the community in its various strategies. A province-wide suicide-prevention strategy was also announced in 1998. This is designed to coordinate the actions of the partners involved in suicide prevention.

Suggested Strategies

The Ministère has a role in supporting the school community in its work with students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities.

- It must first of all define the orientations to be adopted with respect to students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities by taking into consideration the differences observed between boys and girls. Many approaches, some of which contradict others, have been suggested to the school community to help it define the problem and determine the appropriate form of intervention. It is essential that the school community have the information it needs to make informed decisions and provide the support required to develop some of these approaches. The regional teams, which were set up to assist the school boards and the school teams, exist to provide just this kind of support to the school community.
- It must foster the development of knowledge and research on students with social maladjustments and learning disabilities. It must also foster the sharing of expertise by publishing information on relevant experiments, as well as the results of research and studies dealing with these students. A survey on their social and employment integration of students with handicaps and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, in which they were queried,

identified certain avenues worthy of analysis and development. Such studies should be repeated, and their results should be made public in order to give the school community avenues for reflection.

- It must continue to work together with its partners in other sectors of intervention, in order to ensure that they share a common vision and give a clear message with respect to the strategies to be employed.
- The school community, for its part, must show that it is devoting particular attention to students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities.
- The school administrators, in conjunction with the governing boards, must consider the situation of these students when defining the school's educational project, developing the student supervision policy and establishing rules of conduct and safety measures. They must have an overall view of the situation, and take into account the steps that have been taken to prevent or offset social problems, as well as those that take account of the discrepancies observed between boys and girls.
- The school administrators must help all concerned staff to adapt their strategies to these students. It must take account of the professional development needs of its personnel and create conditions conducive to the sharing of expertise.
- The school board should devote particular attention to these students when developing policy covering the organization of services for students with handicaps or students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities. It must see to it that the schools have the resources they need to set up services suited to these students.
- The school board must also work with its outside partners to ensure the complementarity and continuity of services provided by the different sectors.

Acquiring the means to evaluate the students' progress, improve the quality of services and account for results

An accurate picture of the situation, including a thorough grasp of favourable and unfavourable factors, is required to help students with special needs to succeed. The information gathered must be relevant to the students and make it possible to follow their progress and success as well as their difficulties and needs. It must also target school organization and the measures taken (e.g., services, adaptations, joint efforts) to help students move ahead.

The challenge of evaluation consists in acquiring various indicators that can be used to determine whether the actions taken and the modifications made have led to the desired results. The essential goal here is to obtain the information required to make sound decisions, improve the situation and account for results.

Although evaluation is generally recognized as having a sound basis, it gives rise to some anxiety among people who believe that it is used to condemn situations instead of changing them in positive ways. The fact that very few indicators are currently used has certainly helped to create confusion and led to faulty conclusions. New indicators should provide more complete information on the situation and shed light on situations, in the best interests of the students.

The Ministère de l'Éducation must ensure that the indicators proposed for the schools are in keeping with its orientations and that they are useful to those working with students, so that evaluation becomes an integral part of their work.

> To evaluate the student's progress in order to adjust intervention strategies.

In recent years, discussions about students with handicaps or students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities have tended to focus on their integration into the school or regular classes. This is a good indicator for evaluating the efforts that have been made to foster their social integration. However, few indicators allow us to evaluate or measure their academic success and acquisition of qualifications. It is important to collect data that can be used to make the necessary adjustments. Student evaluation is valid only if it makes it possible to monitor the students' progress, to inform the school staff about the quality of their learning and social integration, and to make decisions that will help them in school.

> To improve the quality of the services provided.

Evaluation must not focus only on the students. In the absence of other formal indicators, school marks are sometimes used to evaluate the quality of teaching, and even of the school itself. There is a risk in placing all responsibility for success on the students while forgetting that various aspects of school organization and services also have an impact on the students' success, and that they need to be improved. For example, various indicators should help to measure the work that has been done in adapting services, the conditions created to foster this adaptation, as well as the measures that have been taken to ensure that students with special needs acquire qualifications.

It is essential that indicators be developed to give the school and the school board a more comprehensive vision of the situation, so that they can verify whether the decisions that have been made have produced the hoped-for results and make informed decisions with respect to the priorities to be set in improving services for students with special needs.

> To account for the results obtained.

The recent educational reform granted increased powers to the schools and school boards. With these come responsibilities, which must be assumed with the greatest possible degree of transparency and accountability for results in relation to the decisions that have been taken.

Equal opportunity education is a fundamental value in Québec schools. Equal opportunity for students with special needs has been made possible through the adaptation of educational services. This principle is unconditional. However, given the human and budgetary resources invested in this area, it is essential to account for the results obtained in relation to the choices that were made. This is a matter of equality with respect to the student population as a whole, as well as a question of open-mindedness with regard to the adjustments to be made to obtain the best results.

Favourable Factors

Concern with the evaluation of results is one of the major tendencies that have been observed internationally in education. The need to evaluate practices with the goal of improving the quality of the services provided and accounting for the use of budgetary resources seems to be largely recognized.

The new *Education Act* introduces this concern. While emphasizing greater autonomy for schools, the *Act* makes certain stipulations with respect to accountability for results. The schools must, therefore, produce annual reports along with assessments of activities. Greater transparency in budget management is also expected. For example, the school must inform the community of the services it offers and ensure their quality. The school board, for its part, must obtain the opinion of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities with respect to the financial resources allocated for services to these students.

Evaluation will also be a major concern of the Ministère de l'Éducation in the years ahead. This constitutes an important challenge, since it is essential to find the indicators that will make it possible to evaluate the quality of the services provided and the results obtained, in order to determine, among other things, the effects of educational reform and the adjustments to be made.

Special education must also be evaluated. The revision of the Ministère's special education policy affords a good opportunity for placing this concern on the agenda and for studying how this evaluation might be carried out.

Suggested Strategies

The Ministère de l'Éducation has an important role to play in bringing all levels of the school system to work together to develop a culture of evaluation.

- It must set the example for others by evaluating application of the special education policy. Hence it must work out an evaluation protocol outlining the focus of evaluation, the measures to be taken and the main results expected from such an exercise.
- It must provide the school community with possible indicators that could be used to evaluate student progress and achievement with respect to instruction, socialization and the acquisition of qualifications. Other indicators that would make it possible to gather information on various aspects of school organization must also be developed. These indicators must give a clear picture of the quality and quantity of the services offered. The Ministère must equip the school community with the information and tools required to carry out such evaluation.

The school community, for its part, must endeavour to incorporate its concern with evaluation into its everyday practice.

- The school board must take steps to ensure that evaluation is carried out. It must set aside the resources required to plan and organize such evaluation. It must provide access to all information that makes it possible to have an overall picture of the situation. It must support the schools so that they can properly carry out their role in conducting this type of evaluation, particularly by preparing information and training sessions for staff.
- The *Education Act* stipulates that the school board must show how resources allocated for students with special needs are distributed. It is answerable for the delivery of services in relation to the amounts allocated. It is also expected to ensure transparency in the management of such budgets and account for the results obtained.
- The school administrators also have an important role to play in the evaluation of results. It must, for example, make the governing board and the school staff more aware of the importance of evaluation, with a view to improving the quality of services offered. The governing boards and the school staff must be encouraged to give their opinion with respect to the focuses of evaluation and the means of carrying it out, so that they can participate in the decisions that stem from the evaluations in question.

CONCLUSION

The new special education policy demonstrates that the Ministère de l'Éducation is ready to take all necessary measures to help students with special needs. The Ministère has embarked on this path knowing that it can depend on the total commitment of the school community and its partners.

However, the future of young people with special needs is not the school's sole responsibility. Indeed, well before children reach school age, appropriate steps must be taken and conditions created to prevent the appearance of difficulties, or reduce their impact. Certain economic and social decisions affect the living conditions of families and children, while others have repercussions on their social or employment integration.

Although much is expected from the school community, one must not forget the major roles and responsibilities assumed by the other social and economic partners. Each one of us must do his or her part to improve the chances of success for students with special needs.

The new special education policy is the Ministère's contribution to the work that is being done to help adapt our schools to the needs of all students.

TABLE 1**DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS AND STUDENTS WITH SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENTS OR LEARNING DISABILITIES - PUBLIC SECTOR
1997-98**

	Preschool Education	Elementary	Secondary	Total
Students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities (%)	839 (0.79)	52 680 (9.91)	61 813 (15.7)	115 333 (11.16)
Students with handicaps (%)	1 218 (1.14)	6 400 (1.20)	5 393 (1.37)	13 011 (1.26)
Total students with special needs (%)	2 057 (1.93)	59 080 (11.11)	67 206 (17.04)	128 343 (12.42)
Regular students (%)	104 758 (98.07)	472 730 (88.89)	327 268 (82.96)	904 755 (87.58)
Total student population (%)	106 815 (100.0)	531 810 (100.0)	394 474 (100.0)	1 033 099 (100.0)

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS AND STUDENTS WITH SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENTS OR LEARNING DISABILITIES ACCORDING TO SEX AND LEVEL OF INSTRUCTION 1997-98¹

	Preschool Education		Elementary		Secondary		TOTAL	
	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.
Students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities (%)	551 (65.7)	288 (34.3)	35 136 (66.7)	17 544 (33.3)	40 543 (65.6)	21 270 (34.4)	76 230 (66.1)	39 102 (33.9)
Students with handicaps (%)	775 (63.6)	443 (36.4)	4 050 (63.3)	2 350 (36.7)	3 154 (58.5)	2 239 (41.5)	7 979 (61.3)	5 032 (38.7)
Total students with special needs (%)	1 326 (64.4)	731 (35.5)	39 186 (66.3)	19 894 (33.7)	43 697 (65.0)	23 509 (35.0)	84 209 (65.6)	44 134 (34.4)
Total regular students (%)	53 396 (51.0)	51 362 (49.0)	234 665 (49.6)	238 065 (50.4)	160 033 (48.9)	167 234 (51.1)	448 094 (49.5)	456 661 (50.5)

¹ Data refer to the public sector

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (SN)
ACCORDING TO TYPE OF DIFFICULTY AND LEVEL OF INSTRUCTION (

	Preschool Education (% of Special Needs)	Elementary (% of SN)	Secondary (% of SN)	Total (% of SN)
Mild learning disability	144 (7.0)	21 246 (36.0)	19 804 (29.5)	41 194 (32.1)
Severe learning disability	381 (18.5)	17 296 (29.3)	26 761 (39.8)	44 438 (34.6)
Behavioural difficulty	166 (8.1)	10 987 (18.6)	10 034 (14.9)	21 187 (16.5)
Severe behavioural difficulty	14 (0.7)	675 (1.1)	2 904 (4.3)	3 593 (2.8)
Mild intellectual impairment (21+71)	134 (6.5)	2 476 (4.2)	2 310 (3.4)	4 920 (3.8)
SUBTOTAL	839 (40.8)	52 680 (89.2)	61 813 (92.0)	115 332 (89.8)
Moderate-severe intellectual impairment	198 (9.6)	1 088 (1.8)	1 443 (2.1)	2 729 (2.1)
Mild, organic motor impairment	163 (7.9)	792 (1.3)	495 (0.7)	1 450 (1.1)
Severe motor impairment	79 (3.8)	332 (0.6)	323 (0.5)	734 (0.6)
Visual impairment	31 (1.5)	220 (0.4)	213 (0.3)	464 (0.4)
Hearing impairment	134 (6.5)	791 (1.3)	658 (1.0)	1 583 (1.2)
Autism	97 (4.7)	312 (0.5)	229 (0.3)	638 (0.5)
Speech impairment	201 (9.8)	1 271 (2.2)	300 (0.4)	1 772 (1.4)
Psychopathological disorder	67 (3.3)	314 (0.5)	347 (0.5)	728 (0.6)
Multiple impairments	248 (12.1)	1 280 (2.2)	1 385 (2.1)	2 913 (2.3)
SUBTOTAL	1 218 (59.2)	6 400 (10.8)	5 393 (8.0)	13 011 (10.2)
Total SN students	2 057	59 080	67 206	128 343
Regular students +	106 815	531 810	394 474	1 033 099

1 Data refer to the public sector

TABLE 4
CHANGES IN DECLARATION RATES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
IN EACH REGION
FOR THE YEARS 1995-96 TO 1997-98¹

	1995-96 %	1996-97 %	1997-98 %
Bas-Saint-Laurent–Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine	13,34	13,34	14,4
Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean (02)	13,21	12,93	13,09
Québec–Chaudière-Appalaches (03)	11,89	11,53	10,59
Mauricie–Centre-du-Québec (04)	11,94	12,1	12,28
Estrie (05)	13,69	13,79	13,92
Laval-Laurentides-Lanaudière (06.1)	9,88	9,76	9,84
Montérégie (06.2)	12,9	13	12,9
Montréal (06.3)	13,35	12,93	14,03
Outaouais (07)	13,24	13,62	13,77
Abitibi-Témiscamingue (08)	14,7	14,5	14,49
Côte-Nord (09)	12,61	13,6	12,97
Nord-du-Québec (10)	6,28	5,59	12,08
TOTAL	12,37	12,26	12,42
Deviation between regions	6.28 and 14.70	5.59 and 14.50	9.84 and 14.49

¹ Data refer to the public sector

TABLE 5

**NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS AND STUDENTS WITH SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENTS OR LEARNING DISABILITIES IN EACH REGION
DEVIATIONS IN DECLARATION RATES
1997-98¹**

	Students with Social Maladjustments or Learning Disabilities	Students with Handicaps	Total Students with Special Needs	Deviations between the School Boards of the Region
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	
Bas-Saint-Laurent–Gaspésie–Îles-de-la Madeleine (01)	6 706 (13.20)	610 (1.20)	7 316 (14.40)	8.30 and 24.03
Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean (02)	5 980 (11.63)	750 (1.46)	6 730 (13.09)	7.47 and 14.96
Québec–Chaudière-Appalaches (03)	13 625 (9.35)	1 809 (1.24)	15 434 (10.59)	7.11 and 16.85
Mauricie–Centre-du-Québec (04)	7 974 (11.04)	896 (1.24)	8 870 (12.28)	7.30 and 17.35
Estrie (05)	5 206 (12.62)	537 (1.30)	5 743 (13.92)	11.16 and 27.28
Laval-Laurentides-Lanaudière (06.1)	15 874 (8.80)	1 876 (1.04)	17 750 (9.84)	5.75 and 17.33
Montérégie (06.2)	22 892 (11.81)	2 108 (1.09)	25 000 (12.90)	3.19 and 22.90
Montréal (06.3)	24 645 (12.43)	3 176 (1.60)	27 821 (14.03)	5.39 and 16.54
Outaouais (07)	6 420 (12.50)	655 (1.28)	7 075 (13.77)	9.87 and 20.85
Abitibi-Témiscamingue (08)	3 784 (13.29)	344 (1.21)	4 128 (14.49)	6.36 and 21.05
Côte-Nord (09)	1 837 (11.45)	243 (1.52)	2 080 (12.97)	7.25 and 20.99
Nord-du-Québec (10)	389 (11.86)	7 (0.21)	396 (12.08)	---
Provincial total	115 332 (11.16)	13 011(1.26)	128 343 (12.42)	
Deviations between the regions	8.80 and 13.29	1.09 and 1.60	9.84 and 14.49	

¹ Data refer to the public sector

TABLE 6
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS WITH SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENTS OR LEARNING DISABILITIES
AND STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS
ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION
1997-98¹

		Preschool Education		Elementary		Secondary		Total	
		Number (%)		Number (%)		Number (%)		Number (%)	
Students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities	French	798	(0.83)	45 620	(9.53)	54 314	(15.28)	100 732	(10.8)
	English	41	(0.44)	7 060	(13.30)	7 495	(19.20)	14 601	(14.2)
Students with handicaps	French	1 079	(1.12)	5 764	(1.20)	4 883	(1.37)	11 726	(1.26)
	English	139	(1.50)	636	(1.20)	515	(1.32)	1 285	(1.25)
Total with special needs	French	1 877	(1.95)	51 384	(10.73)	59 197	(16.66)	112 458	(12.1)
	English	180	(1.94)	7 696	(14.52)	8 010	(20.50)	15 886	(15.5)
Regular students	French	94 449	(98.05)	427 444	(89.27)	296 221	(83.34)	818 114	(87.92)
	English	10 309	(98.28)	45 286	(85.47)	31 046	(79.49)	86 641	(84.51)
Regular students + students with special needs	French	96 326		478 828		355 418		930 572	
	English	10 489		52 982		39 056		102 527	

¹ Data refer to the public sector

TABLE 7**PERCENTAGE OF AT-RISK STUDENTS INTEGRATED INTO SCHOOLS¹**

Year	Mild learning disabilities	Severe Learning Disabilities	Behavioural Difficulties	Mild Intellectual Impairments
Preschool education				
1990-91	100.0%	99.7%	87.7%	98.0%
1993-94	97.7%	90.9%	97.9%	96.0%
1997-98	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	95.0%
Elementary				
1990-91	99.8%	99.0%	89.9%	95.0%
1993-94	100.0%	99.3%	95.3%	98.0%
1997-98	100.0%	99.7%	96.0%	98.0%
Secondary				
1990-91	99.8%	94.4%	81.0%	79.0%
1993-94	99.9%	94.9%	79.9%	83.0%
1997-98	99.8%	96.6%	82.1%	85.0%
Total				
1990-91	99.8%	96.4%	85.0%	87.0%
1993-94	99.9%	96.5%	87.2%	90.0%
1997-98	99.9%	97.9%	88.8%	92.0%

¹ Data refer to the public sector

TABLE 8**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS INTEGRATED INTO REGULAR SCHOOLS¹**

Year	Impairment					
	Moderate Intellectual	Severe Intellectual	Visual	Hearing	Physical	Multiple
Preschool education						
1990-91	88%	38%	84%	63%	91%	56%
1993-94	87%	50%	78%	68%	71%	66%
1997-98	84%	36%	81%	69%	71%	67%
Elementary						
1990-91	80%	49%	87%	83%	94%	71%
1993-94	81%	46%	87%	83%	87%	70%
1997-98	79%	44%	89%	84%	89%	75%
Secondary						
1990-91	49%	40%	71%	90%	79%	49%
1993-94	57%	42%	81%	94%	75%	55%
1997-98	63%	43%	84%	95%	82%	60%
Total						
1990-91	64%	43%	81%	84%	89%	60%
1993-94	68%	45%	83%	87%	82%	64%
1997-98	71%	43%	86%	87%	85%	68%

Note: A physical impairment may be a mild to severe motor impairment or an organic impairment.

¹ Data refer to the public sector

TABLE 9**PERCENTAGE OF AT-RISK STUDENTS INTEGRATED INTO REGULAR CLASSES ¹**

Year	Mild Learning Disabilities	Severe Learning Disabilities	Behavioural Difficulties	Mild Intellectual Impairments
Preschool education				
1990-91	99.0%	87.0%	77.0%	81.0%
1993-94	97.0%	80.0%	87.0%	84.0%
1997-98	99.3%	91.6%	99.4%	83.0%
Elementary				
1990-91	97.0%	50.0%	63.0%	27.0%
1993-94	98.0%	62.0%	70.0%	30.0%
1997-98	98.7%	68.2%	74.4%	35.0%
Secondary				
1990-91	51.0%	14.0%	30.0%	3.0%
1993-94	53.0%	17.0%	35.0%	4.0%
1997-98	56.1%	24.4%	39.5%	9.0%
Total				
1990-91	81.0%	29.0%	46.0%	15.0%
1993-94	79.0%	36.0%	51.0%	18.0%
1997-98	78.3%	42.0%	56.3%	25.0%

¹ Data refer to the public sector

TABLE 10

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS INTEGRATED INTO REGULAR CLASSES¹

Year	Impairment					
	Moderate Intellectual	Severe Intellectual	Visual	Hearing	Physical	Multiple
Preschool education						
1990-91	60%	21%	84%	33%	89%	43%
1993-94	77%	21%	78%	38%	79%	51%
1997-98	71%	5%	81%	39%	67%	50%
Elementary						
1990-91	21%	2%	75%	68%	78%	18%
1993-94	27%	3%	78%	71%	73%	25%
1997-98	25%	4%	86%	74%	74%	31%
Secondary						
1990-91	1%	1%	42%	48%	40%	2%
1993-94	3%	1%	55%	59%	49%	5%
1997-98	4%	1%	64%	63%	53%	8%
Total						
1990-91	11%	2%	62%	57%	67%	12%
1993-94	18%	3%	69%	63%	64%	18%
1997-98	18%	2%	76%	67%	65%	23%

Note: A physical impairment may be a mild to severe motor impairment or an organic impairment.

¹ Data refer to the public sector

TABLE 11

**CHANGES IN STUDENT SERVICES (PROFESSIONAL) STAFF¹ (FTE²)
FOR ALL ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS
YOUTH SECTOR, 1990-91 TO 1997-98³**

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98 ⁴
Student life animator	72.75	69.13 (-5.0)	76.57 (+10.8)	86.24 (+12.6)	88.69 (+2.8)	89.47 (+0.9)	81.97 (-8.4)	76.94 (-6.1)
Pastoral animator	342.83	325.78 (-5.0)	324.12 (-0.5)	320.61 (-1.1)	305.17 (-4.8)	294.49 (-3.5)	276.56 (-6.1)	253.63 (-8.3)
Academic information counsellor	45.07	48.65	41.69	45.8	22.53	26.44	23.86	25.84
Guidance counsellor	484.26	476.97 (-1.5)	479.98 (+0.6)	481.64 (+0.3)	510.04 (+5.9)	501.73 (-1.6)	487.62 (-2.8)	450.30 (-7.7)
Dietician, nutrition consultant	9.89	10.42	12.26	14.18	13.43	11.85	13.23	8.73
Occupational therapist, physiotherapist	8.34	5.81	7.74	6.83	8.8	8.8	9.05	10.28
Remedial teacher	14.16	67.19 (+374.5)	76.97 (+14.6)	94.18 (+22.3)	93.37 (-0.9)	95.75 (+2.5)	96.80 (+1.1)	102.49 (+5.9)
Speech therapist	164.94	167.52 (+1.6)	172.46 (+2.9)	180.32 (+4.6)	191.61 (+6.3)	202.62 (+5.7)	202.42 (-0.1)	209.67 (+3.6)
Psycho-educator	218.34	212.23 (-2.8)	248.63 (+17.1)	286.11 (+15.1)	303.80 (+6.2)	321.68 (+5.9)	317.33 (-1.4)	308.18 (-2.9)
Psychologist	568.91	592.43 (+4.1)	614.29 (+3.7)	648.74 (+5.6)	640.20 (-1.3)	638.98 (-0.2)	627.69 (-1.8)	607.56 (-3.2)
Social worker	18.8	19.86	25.66	36.61	29.82	28.04	24.51	20.74
PROFESSIONAL STAFF TOTAL	1948,29	1995.99(+2.4)	2080.37(+4.2)	2201.26(+5.8)	2207.46(+0.3)	2219.85(+0.6)	2161.04(-2.6)	2074.36(-4.0)
SCHOOL POPULATION (STUDENTS)	1033240	1 034 622 (+0.13)	1 039 989(+0.52)	1 033 544(-0.62)	1 034 421(+0.08)	1 037 807(+0.33)	1 035 946(-0.18)	1 033 099(-0.27)

1. The PERCOS system, which compiles data on school staff, was established using the categories employed for the classification of professional and technical jobs in the education system.
2. FTE: Number of positions, converted to full-time equivalents
3. Data refer to the public sector
4. () Percentage deviation from preceding year

Note: The data for 1997-98 must be used with caution, since they could change over the course of the school year.

TABLE 12

**CHANGES IN STUDENT SERVICES (TEHCNICAL) STAFF (FTE²)
FOR ALL ADMINISTRATIVES REGIONS
YOUTH SECTOR, 1990-91 TO 1997-98³**

	1990-1991	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998 ³
Medical assistant	32,40	44,52	38,70	41,07	40,67	36,12	36,60	35,25
Nurse	9,50	8,44	14,79	13,00	9,57	6,00	7,00	6,00
Day care attendant	1021,49	1076,43 (+5,4)	1166,76 (+8,4)	1274,88 (+9,3)	1435,28 (+12,6)	1692,04 (+17,9)	1804,99 (+6,7)	1961,20 (+8,7)
Student supervisor	1274,86	1509,78 (+18,4)	1566,98 (+3,8)	1582,83 (+1,0)	1593,82 (+0,7)	1631,14 (+2,3)	1581,52 (-3,0)	1778,86 (+12,5)
Swimming pool supervisor	36,96	54,19	52,01	45,81	46,32	40,86	45,47	42,02
Social aid technician	55,22	62,03 (+12,3)	91,94 (+48,2)	130,98 (+42,5)	131,07 (+0,1)	129,79 (-1,0)	125,31 (-3,5)	117,33 (-6,4)
Special education technician	874,95	993,62 (+13,6)	1222,04 (+23,0)	1403,30 (+14,8)	1521,99 (+8,5)	1627,00 (+6,9)	1688,53 (+3,8)	1821,89 (+7,9)
Recreational activities technician	130,12	135,62 (+4,2)	142,05 (+4,7)	155,13 (+9,2)	163,17 (+5,2)	158,93 (-2,6)	166,28 (+4,6)	162,05 (-2,5)
Psychometric technician	25,98	23,43	22,13	21,41	21,43	19,05	16,81	15,76
TOTAL TECHNICAL STAFF	3461,48	3908,06 (+12,9)	4317,40(+10,5)	4668,41 (+8,1)	4963,32(+6,3)	5340,93(+7,6)	5472,51(+2,5)	5940,36(+8,5)
SCHOOL POPULATION (STUDENTS)	1033240	1 034 622 (+0,13)	1 039 989(+0,52)	1 033 544(-0,62)	1 034 421(+0,08)	1 037 807(+0,33)	1 035 946(-0,18)	1 033 099(-0,27)

1. The PERCOS system, which compiles data on school staff, was established using the categories employed for the classification of professional and technical jobs in the education system.
2. FTE: Number of positions, converted to full-time equivalents
3. Data refer to the public sector
4. () Percentage deviation from preceding year

Note: The data for 1997-98 must be used with caution, since they could change over the course of the school year.

TABLE 13
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN TEMPORARY INDIVIDUALIZED PATHS FOR LEARNING
ACCORDING TO TYPE OF DIFFICULTY AND YEAR OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
1997-98¹

	Sec. 1	Sec. 2	Sec. 3	Sec. 4	Sec. 5	Sec. 7	Sec. 8.	TOTAL (Total % of cat.)
Mild learning disability	4049	2571	1537	1121	326	0	23	9627 (48.6)
Severe learning disability	2114	1640	1478	1137	575	0	6	6 950 (26.0)
Behavioural difficulty	929	683	387	226	86	0	2	2 313 (23.1)
Severe behavioural difficulty	268	250	173	85	33	0	1	810 (27.9)
Mild intellectual impairment	24	31	11	10	7	0	3	86 (3.7)
Moderate-severe intellectual impairment	3	2	0	1	2	0	0	8 (0.6)
Mild organic motor impairment	23	21	12	19	3	0	1	79 (16.0)
Severe motor impairment	11	4	3	1	2	0	0	21 (6.5)
Visual impairment	14	11	6	0	5	0	0	36 (16.9)
Hearing impairment	24	23	18	17	15	0	5	102 (15.5)
Autism	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	5 (2.2)
Speech impairment	21	0	6	1	0	0	0	28 (9.3)
Psychopathological disorder	10	2	6	3	1	0	0	22 (6.3)
Multiple impairments	8	10	2	4	7	0	0	31 (1.4)
Total with special needs	7499	5249	3641	2626	1062	0	41	20 118 (29.9)

¹ Data refer to the public sector

TABLE 14

**DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CONTINUOUS INDIVIDUALIZED PATHS FOR LEARNING
ACCORDING TO TYPE OF DIFFICULTY AND YEAR OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
1997-98¹**

	Sec. 1	Sec. 2	Sec. 3	Sec. 4	Sec. 5	Sec. 7	Sec. 8	TOTAL (Total % of cat.)
Mild learning disabil.	64	103	86	80	55	0	0	388 (2.0)
Severe learn. disabil.	3112	2558	2470	1835	1099	10	0	11 084 (41.4)
Behav. difficulty	888	664	636	430	236	0	0	2 854 (28.4)
Severe behav. diff.	245	241	155	108	53	0	1	803 (27.7)
Mild intell. impair.	420	253	315	225	366	6	22	1 607 (69.6)
Moderate-severe intell. impairment	104	48	90	87	284	9	59	681 (47.2)
Mild organic motor impairment	37	33	21	17	19	1	0	128 (25.9)
Severe motor impair.	18	40	17	20	15	0	3	113 (35.0)
Visual impairment	9	5	4	4	9	0	0	31 (14.6)
Hearing impairment	16	16	23	17	25	0	0	97 (14.7)
Autism	17	4	14	12	28	1	7	83 (36.2)
Speech impairment	48	38	26	24	38	0	2	176 (58.7)
Psychopath. disorder	23	12	26	10	33	0	0	104 (30.0)
Multiple impairments	97	104	96	102	273	6	27	705 (31.2)
Total with special needs	5098	4119	3979	2971	2533	33	121	18 854 (28,1)

¹ Data refer to the public sector

