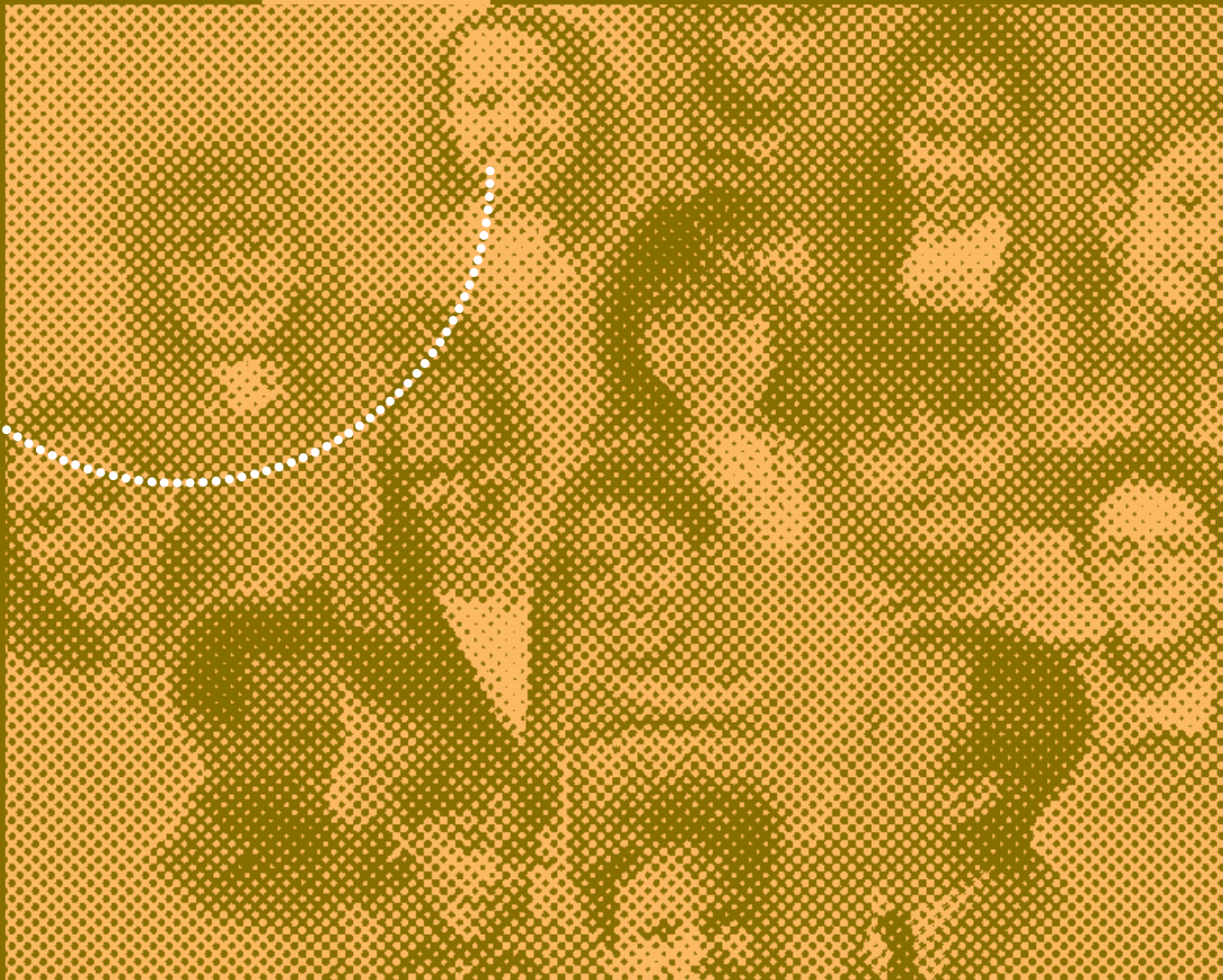
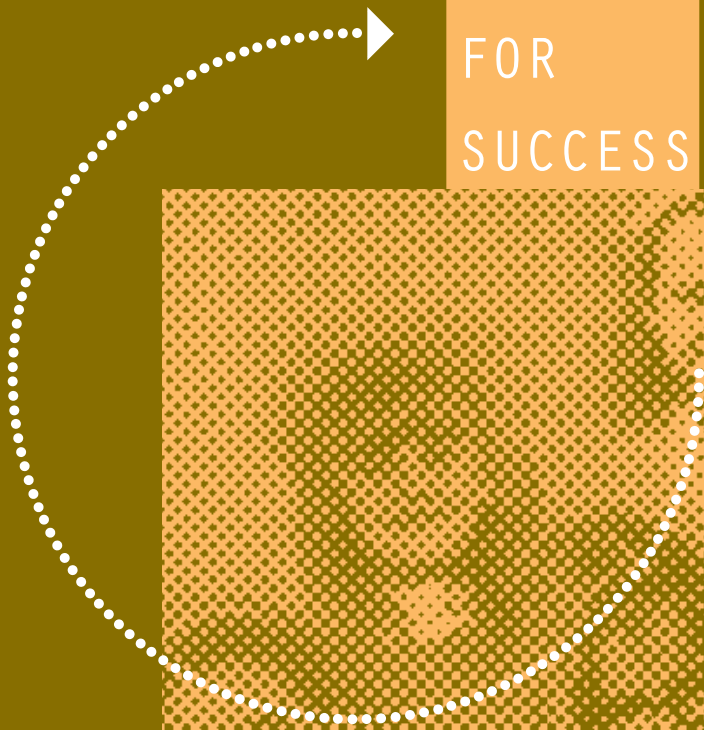


A school for the future

*Educational Integration
And Intercultural Education*

A NEW
DIRECTION
FOR
SUCCESS

POLICY PROPOSAL



A SCHOOL FOR THE FUTURE

Educational Integration

And

Intercultural Education

POLICY PROPOSAL

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For some time now, a change has been under way: more and more people are seeing the issue of citizenship in Québec in a new and modern light. The new outlook is that of ZERO EXCLUSION, and its ideal is for each and every citizen to be able to participate fully in the development of Québec society.

A School for the Future, the policy proposal we are presenting today, salutes the efforts that Québec schools are already making to ensure the success of all students, in both the youth and adult sectors. At the same time, the proposal calls on us to adopt a broader perspective on integration and intercultural education, affirming our desire to live together, sharing common values and developing our sense of belonging in Québec society. In this sense, the proposal urges everyone—parents, families, the educational milieu and local communities—to join with us in striving to fully realize the promise of Québec’s diversity.

This policy proposal represents a new step towards a more inclusive society. We are pleased to propose a plan that involves education in a collective effort of society as a whole.

André Boisclair

Pauline Marois

**Minister of Relations with Citizens
and of Immigration**

Minister of Education

SUMMARY OF THE POLICY PROPOSAL

In the context of the reform announced by Pauline Marois in the fall of 1996, the ministère de l'Éducation has developed a policy proposal defining the responsibilities of the schools and the Ministère regarding integration and intercultural education. The proposal indicates the major approaches that schools should adopt in their efforts to integrate newly arrived students and prepare the whole student population to participate in social interaction in a democratic, francophone, pluralistic Québec.

The policy on integration and intercultural education, which is addressed to elementary and secondary school personnel in all regions of Québec and in all sectors of the education system, has been prepared by a work group made up of representatives from the world of education, the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the ministère de la Métropole and the city of Montréal. The work group also received input from an advisory committee of experts in intercultural relations in the schools.

The policy proposal provides guidelines for helping recent immigrants learn French and assimilate the basic norms and values of Québec society, which are essential both for their success in school and for their social and linguistic integration. It also provides orientations for educating the student population as a whole in the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and in openness to ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

The first chapter describes the diversity of the school population and recalls the schools' mandate to educate and integrate young immigrants, which, since the coming into force of the *Charter of the French Language* in 1977, concerns mainly the French-language sector. The relative concentration of immigrant students in Montréal is discussed, as is their variable distribution among the school boards concerned and the obligation of all schools, irrespective of the relative diversity of their student population, to ensure that all students receive the same basic education and adhere to the shared values of our society.

The second chapter deals with the three principles for action on which Québec schools should base their accommodation of ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity. **Promoting equality of opportunity**, the first principle for action, involves eliminating discrimination and taking appropriate measures to compensate, in a spirit of equity, for whatever learning disadvantages immigrant students may present on arrival, in order to allow these students to learn, socialize and prepare for an occupation, like the other students. **A command of French, the common language of public life**, is the focus of the second principle for action. Schools must give all their students access to a solid grounding in French, whether as the language of instruction or as a second language. The third principle for action, **education for democratic citizenship in a pluralistic society**, aims to prepare students to play an

active role in a democratic Québec society by understanding that society and by sharing its common values, of which the recognition of diversity is one.

The third chapter presents an overview of the school system's efforts to date in the areas of integration and intercultural education and the priorities for future action. Regarding **success in school**, taking all sectors together, the performance of young allophones—including both immigrants and the children of immigrants—is comparable to that of other students, but students belonging to certain groups experience difficulties. It has been noted that allophone immigrant students who arrive in the French-language school system at adolescence are much less likely than other students to obtain their secondary school diploma, while the situation of students with difficulty integrating into school, who generally have had little or no schooling prior to their arrival in Québec, remains problematic. The proportion of such students in welcoming classes has remained stable for many years. As for adult immigrants, a high proportion of them make use of the adult education services, but the issue of the recognition of their prior scholastic and experiential learning has not been resolved.

Concerning support for the **acquisition of proficiency in French**, the finding is that immigrant students or students whose parents are immigrants master French as the language of instruction adequately, at least in functional terms. However, the tendency in recent years to prolong the length of time such students spend in welcoming classes suggests that they are perceived as being less and less proficient in French. Meanwhile, students in the English youth sector generally feel that their command of French is very limited. Immigrant students in adult education in the French- and English-language sectors have access to a variety of francization services, but there seem to be few measures permitting students to bridge the gap between the basic skills and the proficiency necessary to study or work in French.

The last item in the overview concerns measures taken to promote the shared values and the heritage of Québec and to **take diversity into account**. Some efforts have been made along these lines in the present curriculum, but they have been modest. Immigrant students are not given adequate access to information on Québec's heritage, history, values and customs. Relations among students and between students and teachers do not always reflect the climate of mutual understanding that should prevail. Some staff members continue to stress the need to develop greater skill in the management of diversity. School board measures to reproduce in school staff the diversity of Québec society have not been very effective so far. Collaboration between the school and the family and community likewise remains, for the most part, sporadic and limited. The universities have made a real effort, setting up programs and courses to ensure that intercultural education is part of the **initial training and continuing education** of school staff. These efforts have had a higher profile since the reform of teacher training. Many school teams are relying increasingly on peer teaching.

The fourth and final chapter of the policy proposal goes to the heart of the matter, proposing seven **orientations** for schools to follow in the areas of integration and intercultural education. The **first orientation** underscores the role of regular classes as the principal context for the integration of newly arrived immigrant students. This orientation rejects the practice of keeping allophone students in welcoming classes for protracted periods, recommending instead that they be integrated into regular classes and receive help learning French. The **second orientation** calls for rapid, effective help for students with difficulty integrating into school in order to avoid placing them in a situation leading to failure and discouraging them. The measures taken have to be suited to the realities of the milieu and the needs of the students in question. The **third orientation** emphasizes the need for schools to involve families and the community more in the educational mission.

The **fourth orientation** stresses that learning French is an ongoing process. This approach enables non-francophone students to increase their proficiency in French, according to their needs, by ensuring better coordination among services offering instruction in the French language. The **fifth orientation** also concerns language, urging the education community to highlight the role of French as a vehicle of cultural and intellectual life. In addition to mastering the language, immigrants should be given opportunities to enjoy using it in everyday situations, which will enhance their understanding of Québec culture and of francophone culture in general.

The **sixth orientation** is for the curriculum and school life to convey the heritage and shared values of Québec, including openness to ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity. Thus, course and program content should transmit the basic values of Québec society, while helping students recognize the contribution made by diversity, and school life should be used to introduce students to the exercise of democracy, prepare them to participate in the common civic space and foster a sense of solidarity. The **seventh orientation** involves ongoing training for all school staff, because all members of the staff are responsible for promoting openness to diversity and for the integration of any new immigrant students.

The success of any policy depends on the support of those responsible for applying it. Along these lines, it is to be hoped that the education community adopts these orientations wholeheartedly and translates them into suitable measures that optimize the policy's effectiveness, thus contributing to the renewal of the education system.

FOREWORD

This policy proposal follows up on the intentions expressed by Education Minister Pauline Marois in *A New Direction for Success: Ministerial Plan of Action for the Reform of the Education System* in the fall of 1996. It indicates the major approaches that the educational community should adopt in its efforts to integrate immigrant students and prepare the whole student population to participate in building a democratic, francophone, pluralistic Québec.

The policy proposal thus reflects the outlook of the most recent report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education in the Twenty-first Century, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, and underscores the importance of teaching students how to live well together. This new learning focus involves not only respecting each other's differences, but also sharing the same social values, which are part of our history and have become the basis of our institutions. Intercultural education and education for citizenship are thus inseparable dimensions of this policy.

The need for a policy on integration and intercultural education was recognized by the Commission for the Estates General on Education (1995-96), whose final report, observing the numerous but scattered efforts made within the educational milieu, called for a statement of orientations that would define the responsibilities of the education system regarding educational integration and intercultural education.

In this spirit, Education Minister Pauline Marois mandated an interministerial work group to draft a consultation document. In addition to representatives from the world of education, this group included members delegated by the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the ministère de la Métropole and the city of Montréal. The work group also received input from an advisory committee of education specialists who work with young people or with adult immigrants or persons of immigrant parentage. We wish to thank all those who contributed to the development of the policy proposal.

The policy on the educational integration of newly arrived immigrant students and on intercultural education is addressed to elementary- and secondary-level school personnel in all regions of Québec, in the public and private, francophone and anglophone, youth and adult sectors of the education system.

The document has four chapters. The first chapter describes the diversity of the school population and the general context in which the policy will be applied. The second chapter deals with the principles underlying measures by Québec schools to guarantee the right to an education of a population characterized by ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and thus favour a common socialization process.

The third chapter presents an overview of the tasks facing the school system as regards integration and intercultural education. Although efforts to achieve these ends have made considerable headway in certain areas, many problems remain. The fourth and final chapter presents the Ministère's orientations on issues such as integrating immigrant students into regular classes, fostering a knowledge of Québec's heritage and acceptance of its shared values, taking pluralism into account in the curriculum, the teaching of French and school staff training, and so on. The conclusion underlines the need for this policy to be actively supported by the entire education community.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity characterizes the education systems of many societies today. In Québec, as elsewhere in Canada and the world, schools must now find ways to accommodate diversity in their educational practices and objectives. To help them, the ministère de l'Éducation du Québec has developed a policy proposal setting out its principles and orientations for achieving the successful integration of immigrant students into Québec schools and society, while at the same time ensuring that the whole student population receives appropriate instruction in intercultural relations.

Integration—the first dimension of the policy proposal—may be defined as a long-term multidimensional adaptation process, which is distinct from assimilation, the overall adoption of the host society's culture and fusion with the majority group. The process of integration, which involves accepting elements of the immigrants' cultural identity of origin and in which the achievement of proficiency in the language of the host society plays an essential role, is only complete when the immigrants or their descendants participate fully in all aspects of the community life of the host society and feel a sense of belonging to that society.

This means that when immigrants first enter the Québec school system, they are only at the beginning of their integration process. They have to acquire a certain proficiency in French, which is the language of instruction and of public life, in order to master the subjects taught in school (linguistic and academic integration) and they must assimilate the social codes in order to establish meaningful relations with their classmates and participate in the life of the community (social integration). In addition, it takes time before students from other countries develop a feeling of belonging to Québec society. This happens gradually, and depends in large measure on the acceptance of the immigrants as full members of the host society.

It is important to recognize that integration is a two-way street. Certainly it requires that the immigrants make efforts to adapt and to adopt the shared values of the host society, but it also demands openness to diversity and the application of appropriate policies by the social and educational milieu that receives them. The specificity of the school context and of the needs of newly arrived students must be taken into account by all concerned. This reciprocal relationship based on respect for obligations on both sides is essential for successful integration.

Intercultural education is the second dimension examined by this policy proposal, and it influences the concept of integration just considered. It refers to any educational measure designed to foster awareness of the diversity—notably,

ethnocultural diversity—that characterizes the social fabric and develop skill in communicating with people from various backgrounds, as well as attitudes of openness, tolerance and solidarity.

The object of intercultural education is not to convey knowledge about cultures—there are already disciplines that do that—but rather to foster a better understanding of culture in pluralistic societies. This sort of education requires that people take stock of their cultural backgrounds and ties and reflect on their socialization in order to overcome their prejudices concerning “otherness,” in whatever form it presents itself, and so be able to communicate better with people who are different from themselves.

The aim of this policy proposal is thus in part to provide guidelines for the integration of students from other countries, and in part to favour openness to diversity in the school system, which can help it become a source of collective enrichment for the whole society. The proposal also suggests ways to foster acceptance of the basic values of Québec society and whole-hearted participation in the construction of a shared civic space. In this sense, the objectives of intercultural education overlap with those of education for citizenship. Both reflect the need today, as part of the general reflection under way concerning how best to integrate immigrants into Québec society, to emphasize civic norms and shared values.

CHAPTER 1

THE DIVERSITY OF THE STUDENT POPULATION

The composition of the student population, which once consisted primarily of French Canadians, English Canadians and Amerindians, has changed considerably since the end of the nineteenth century as successive waves of immigration have brought students from many ethnic backgrounds and from every continent. Until the late 1960s, the great majority of immigrant students came from Europe and North America, while today, most come from Asia, the West Indies, Africa and South America.

This diversity is also reflected in linguistic terms, with more than 150 mother tongues, many of them belonging to linguistic families bearing little similarity to French, represented in the schools. In addition, all the major religions are represented.

This ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity extends throughout the whole school system, producing a wide variety of situations. Some schools have a large proportion of immigrant students or students whose parents are immigrants, with many different mother tongues and religious backgrounds, while other schools are relatively homogenous.

Most allophone students in the youth sector who arrived in Québec before the coming into force of the *Charter of the French Language* (1977) chose English-language public schools. Since then the opposite situation has gradually come to prevail; more than 80% of allophones attended French-language schools in 1996-97. Henceforth, this will be the sector in which most, although not all, young recent immigrants receive their schooling.

THE SITUATION IN MONTRÉAL

The Montréal region receives the great majority of allophone students. In 1996-97, 38.3% of youth sector students in this region claimed a mother tongue other than French, English or an Amerindian language, compared with 8.2% of students in the whole of Québec.

In 1996-97, allophone students represented about a third of the student population on the island of Montréal, a third of the student population in the French-language sector and a quarter of that in the English-language sector. It should be noted that

allophones in the English-language sector were for the most part born in Québec and are generally second- or third-generation Quebecers.

However, these proportions do not accurately reflect the diversity of the student population on the island of Montréal, for some students who stated that their mother tongue was either French or English were born outside of Canada or have at least one parent born outside Canada.

Ethnocultural and linguistic diversity is not evenly distributed among the school boards on the island of Montréal. The proportion of allophones varies between slightly under 10% and over 45%, depending on the school board.

As in the youth sector, the great majority of immigrant adult students attend schools on the island of Montréal. In 1995-96, about 80% of these students were enrolled in adult education centres or in vocational education centres. This proportion is comparable to the percentage of immigrants on the island.

ALLOPHONES OUTSIDE THE ISLAND OF MONTRÉAL

Although allophones represent a high proportion of the student population only on the island of Montréal, there are allophone students in almost every school board in Québec. Their distribution outside of Montréal is even more uneven than within it: the cities of Québec, Sherbrooke and Hull and towns on the North Shore and South Shore of Montréal have the main concentrations. Outside these agglomerations, there are very few allophone students.

ANGLOPHONE STUDENTS

In 1996-97, students declaring English as their mother tongue represented 8.3% of enrollments in the youth sector (private and public). They were present in all regions of Québec, but more than half attended schools on the island of Montréal, and more than three quarters, schools within the greater Montréal region. In Québec as a whole, in the youth sector, nearly one anglophone in five was enrolled in the French-language sector in 1996-97.

COMMON RULES

The diversity of the student population affects the public schools, which are divided, for the time being, into two confessional systems, each of which is subdivided into two linguistic sectors. Diversity also exists in private schools, which come under the *Private Education Act* and account for about 10% of total enrollments. There are various types of schools in the private network: schools authorized for subsidy purposes, French-language schools, English-language schools, heritage schools, schools that emphasize religious or cultural instruction. In addition to the network's linguistic diversity (instruction in French or English), there is also the possibility, for schools defined in terms of their religious or cultural identity, of offering part of their instruction in a third language.

Yet notwithstanding the diversity of teaching institutions and structures, both public and private, and the variable distribution of the students, there are common rules. All schools must conform to the basic school regulations respecting educational services in Québec. Subjects must be taught according to programs approved by the Minister of Education; schools must observe the rules respecting admission, enrollment, school attendance and the passage from one level of education to another, propose a school calendar and respect the prescribed periods of instruction, follow the rules for evaluation of learning, certification of studies and graduation, and hire only teachers with teaching certificates.

The education system has students from all sorts of backgrounds, with all sorts of languages and religious beliefs, but all of them have certain things to learn and a set of shared values to acquire. The reinforcement of these shared values and learning as they concern diversity is the crux of this policy.

CHAPTER 2

PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

The principles for action proposed here for Québec schools¹ dealing with ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity are derived from the basic principles of education itself and from government statements of policy concerning the integration of immigrants into Québec society. These principles are: equal opportunity for all; proficiency in French, the shared language of public life; and education for active citizenship in a pluralistic and democratic society.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The role that schools play, and must continue to play, in promoting equal opportunity for all is closely related to their vocation itself, which concerns instruction, socialization and certification.

Instruction is defined as guided learning that permits students to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need in order to understand and transform the world and to continue to learn throughout their lives. Schools socialize by transmitting the basic values of our democratic society and respect for its institutions, while at the same time encouraging exploration of those values. Schools help students qualify for various occupations by taking into account the needs of the job market as well as the students' interests and aptitudes, and providing the training and upgrading needed to exercise a given occupation.

The schools have an obligation to fulfill their mission with all students, whatever their characteristics (ethnic origin, mother tongue, social condition, sex, religion, etc.). This obligation follows from the principle of equal opportunity for all, which has been recognized in Québec since the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education (the Parent Commission) and the democratization of the province's education system in the 1960s. The same principle was reaffirmed by virtually all participants in the Estates General on Education (1995-96).

The schools' organization and educational activities should educate students, as individuals and as (actual or future) citizens, in the greatest possible equality of opportunity. This means maximizing students' chances to discover their particular

1. The term "Québec schools" is used here in a generic sense to refer to institutions of learning, including those for young people and adults, in the French and English-language sectors, and the public and private schools.

aptitudes and tastes and the means to develop their potential, and offering them the possibility of continuing their education in various ways and settings throughout their lives.

Equal opportunity implies not only ensuring that all students have access to the basic educational services, but also providing special conditions or compensatory measures (for example, help learning French) if students require them. This is consistent with the principle of accepting and respecting otherness and rejecting intolerance, ethnocentrism and all other expressions of discrimination. To apply this principle, schools have to recognize students for who they are, with their similarities and differences, their shared and particular characteristics. This means recognizing that ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity is characteristic of Québec society and has a right to be expressed. In this connection, schools can help students develop their self-confidence, a sense of their own identity and a feeling that they belong to Québec society, independently of their origins and of any other identity they may have.

PROFICIENCY IN FRENCH, THE LANGUAGE OF PUBLIC LIFE

The school is the main, although not the sole, institution responsible for ensuring that students learn and use French, the language of public life, with which Quebecers of all origins can communicate and participate in the development of Québec society. The schools should be capable of turning out students who are proficient in the use of this basic tool of communication, whether French is their mother tongue, as it is for the majority, their second language, as it is for anglophones and some allophones, or their third language, as it is for certain children of immigrants, even if it is a language they do not speak at all on their arrival.

The education system should take the appropriate measures to fulfill this expectation by providing students in French-language schools with a solid grounding in the language of instruction and providing students in English-language schools with access to quality instruction in the second language. Acquiring proficiency in French and using it can help students from other backgrounds surmount their marginalization and develop a sense of membership and participation in Québec society.

EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP IN A DEMOCRATIC, PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

Seeking and promoting shared values contributes to the development and consolidation of a democratic society that accepts all its members as full participants. Education for citizenship aims to make these values an integral part of a society characterized by democratic traditions and institutions, respect for individual rights and a commitment to live together in mutual respect for individual and group differences.

Schools have a responsibility to promote education for citizenship in order to prepare students, both young and adult, to play an active role in Québec democracy by adopting its values, codes and norms, knowing its key institutions, and exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society. Education for citizenship focusses on both knowledge and experience, and is grounded not only in the curriculum but also in democratic practices, in the schools and in society. In this sense it extends into the life of the immediate community and more generally into social, economic and cultural life.

Education for citizenship concerns both diversity (in terms of family background, religious or cultural identity, fields of interest and so on) and the shared values and democratic institutions that make it possible for people to live together. From this perspective, the recognition of diversity is itself one of our shared values.

The schools have an obligation to attune their students to diversity and to prepare them to live in a pluralistic society that is broader than their families or neighbourhoods, and to help them appreciate its richness and be aware of the challenges it poses, the better to overcome them. With the proper skills, students should be able to understand the relationship between “same” and “other,” particular and universal, solidarity and difference, to expand the boundaries of the familiar and open up to the world.

Certainly the schools already help their students accept diversity and develop attitudes of openness to the world by means of the knowledge they transmit. This learning is the fruit of many generations and cultures, which have commingled over time and space. If the learning the students assimilate no longer bears an ethnic tag, that is because it has become a part of the human heritage. Schools can reconstitute the origin of various domains of learning by placing their development in historical context. In this way, in addition to discovering their roots, students can become aware of the perpetual process of borrowing and lending that nourishes all cultural progress. What the students learn about the constitution of cultural heritages in general applies to the concept of Québec’s particular cultural heritage: it too is an

original creation drawing on many sources and influences, and its development is still under way.

Québec's present diversity cannot be ascribed entirely to immigration, although the latter has played a major role by introducing new cultural or religious currents or accentuating their presence. Factors related to the internal evolution of Québec society, notably the Quiet Revolution, also help explain why it is necessary to learn to live in a pluralistic society in which the norms of social cohesion are changing.

Social cohesion is not a juxtaposition of many disparate elements, but the reflection of the successful integration of shared characteristics. In this connection, schools are responsible for educating their students in the norms, values and codes that sustain a democratic community imbued with a spirit of openness but resolved to transcend particularisms when this is the condition for endowing the collectivity with a common language and shared instruments of everyday life and emancipation.

CHAPTER 3

OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

In a number of areas, measures have been taken to favour the integration of students from outside of Canada into Québec's school system, in either the youth or adult sector, and to foster openness to ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity. The results have been encouraging in several respects. However, certain problems persist and others have emerged more recently. This chapter presents an overview of the situation in the light of the principles presented previously, and highlights certain areas in which intervention is urgent. The question of the training of school staff is considered at the end of the chapter.

SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

Students in the youth sector

The performance in school of allophone students (including immigrants and Québec-born second- and third-generation descendants of immigrants) is comparable, taking all sectors together, to that of students whose mother tongue is French or English. Marks on the uniform secondary school examinations are very similar and so are success rates for the two groups. In certain subjects, the allophones have slightly higher marks than the francophones.

It is also known that allophones do slightly better in school in the Montréal region than outside it, and that they are not over-represented among handicapped students or students with adjustment or learning difficulties. The breakdown of the marks of allophones by linguistic group shows, however, that certain groups experience difficulties and have marks well below the level of the student population as a whole.

It may be presumed that there are a number of factors underlying these difficulties, such as poor or inadequate educational conditions prior to immigration, poor mastery of the language of instruction, a disadvantaged social and economic milieu, administrative underevaluation of these students' needs, inadequate parental support and vestiges of prejudices among school staff, which can result in lowered expectations for these students. To date, however, the respective weight of each of these factors remains unknown, and no overall plan has been elaborated to deal with the situation.

There is no concrete evidence whether ethnic concentration (the presence of a high proportion of students receiving instruction in a language other than their mother tongue), favours or impedes success in school. A review of the situation in Montréal schools reveals that the success rate is higher when ethnic concentration is low, declines when it is average and increases when it is very high. It is possible that socioeconomic status and parents' educational level would go further to explain the various patterns of performance among immigrant students.

It has been noted that, independent of their linguistic group, non-francophone immigrant students who arrive in the French-language school system at adolescence have problems in school. Six years after entering reception and francization services, an overwhelming majority of these students have repeated two or more years, and only one in three obtains a secondary school diploma.

At the time of their arrival in Québec, some allophone students are already three or more years behind in their studies relative to Québec norms, and must be viewed as students with difficulty integrating into school. Some of these students have attended school very little or not at all, some have experienced interruptions in their school attendance in their home countries, some have been exposed to fundamentally different sorts of education than that recognized in Québec, and some simply have learning difficulties.

Action-research projects at the elementary and secondary levels have tested various approaches to the problems of these students. However, the problem remains formidable, and the question of how to ensure the education of these students was a major preoccupation in all the schools concerned. As certain linguistic groups are overrepresented among these students, the identification of learning difficulties among them is often touchy.

Other immigrant students who enter Québec schools during secondary school may not obtain their secondary school diploma in the youth sector, in which case they are obliged to continue in the adult sector. Students over the age of 18 are not allowed to continue their studies in the youth sector unless they will obtain their diploma before the age of 19. Thus after a year or two in the youth sector, these immigrant students must switch to the adult sector. This change is unsettling and necessitates further adaptation without increasing the students' chances of obtaining their diploma.

It has also been observed that few of these students enter the vocational sector, either for lack of interest or information or because they have not acquired sufficient command of the language of instruction. This sector is often

undervalued, and some parents do not encourage their children to learn a trade or opt for vocational education.

Students in the adult sector

Adult immigrants, whose choice of which schools to attend is not limited by the *Charter of the French Language*, make extensive use of educational services in both French and English in the adult education sector. They enroll more in general education (francization, literacy, Secondary Cycle One and Two, etc.) than in vocational education. They are concerned about obtaining recognition for their scholastic and experiential learning.

HELPING STUDENTS ACHIEVE GREATER PROFICIENCY IN FRENCH

Students in the youth sector

Immigrant students or students whose parents are immigrants, who are obliged to pursue their education in French, generally have average to good marks, as noted earlier. This indicates that they master French adequately, at least in functional terms.

However, three observations should be made. First, the ability demonstrated by these allophone students to study in French in elementary and secondary school, when they are obliged to do so, does not indicate that they will continue their education in the same language. On the contrary, the ministère de l'Éducation's data indicate that the tendency of allophone students who have obtained their secondary diploma in the French sector to transfer to English-language institutions has increased in the last few years, although their representation in English schools is still less pronounced than it was before the coming into force of the *Charter of the French Language*. It is unclear whether this trend is temporary and whether it reflects an influx of a particular type of immigrants in a particular period of time, such as immigrants from English-speaking countries.

The second observation concerns allophone students who are immigrants or have a parent who is an immigrant, and who attend schools with a high ethnic concentration. This phenomenon has a slight negative effect on students' "aptitude for French," a concept that refers to their tendency to speak French with their friends and other students, to have a favourable opinion of the French language, to aspire to do their post-secondary studies in French and to use electronic media in French. The impact is weakest among students belonging to groups with a fairly

strong tendency to transfer towards French within society. This suggests that, compared with other factors, attending a school with a strong ethnic concentration has relatively little effect on a student's linguistic integration.

The third observation has to do with the particular difficulties experienced by non-francophone immigrants who enter the Québec school system after beginning their schooling elsewhere. It may be supposed that their problems are in part imputable to their poor command of the language of instruction. This hypothesis is supported by the current trend in the schools to prolong immigrant students' period in welcoming classes.

However, spending more time in welcoming classes will not necessarily lead to greater proficiency in French, the language of instruction, as long as the students do not have to function in ordinary classroom situations. What has to be done now is not to count exclusively on intensive language-learning services, but to deploy several strategies concurrently.

It has been observed that students in the English sector, whether they are anglophones or allophones, generally believe that their French is too poor to enable them to attend a French-language school or hold skilled employment in which they would have to speak or write in French.

Students in the adult sector

In the adult education French sector, the francization services are supposed to enable non-francophones to acquire basic skills in oral and written French. However, there is no specific linguistic support (which could serve as a conduit between the acquisition of basic skills and the proficiency necessary to study in French) available to these adult students. Although these courses, including those given by the COFIs (Centres d'orientation et de formation des immigrants: Immigrant orientation and education centres), do introduce immigrants to French as the language of daily life, they are often unable to teach enough French to enable immigrants to exercise trades or professions or attend school, especially at the college or university level.

On the other hand, adult allophones who enroll in general education in the English sector have access only to the French as a second language course, which can hardly allow them to master the language and seek work in it.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

In the present curriculum

The schools already help familiarize students with the basic principles of a democratic society and with the rights and responsibilities of individuals. Considerable efforts have also been made to develop teaching materials that take into account the ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity of our society. A procedure has been developed for examining these materials to ensure that they contain no stereotypes and that they present diversity in a positive light. In addition, certain programs, such as the History of Québec and Canada program, deal with the issue of ethnocultural and religious diversity to a certain extent, while the Heritage Languages Program (HLP), which was set up about twenty years ago, gives these languages a certain symbolic legitimacy within the education system.

However, there is no course specifically devoted to education for democratic citizenship, which would encourage students to participate actively in civic life and develop their public spirit. The programs that treat this question at all do so only partially. The focus on diversity is limited, and not all programs of this sort deal with it at all. The result is that students from other cultures have difficulty recognizing themselves in certain learning content, which may have a negative effect on their sense of identity.

On the other hand, these students are not given adequate access to information on Québec's heritage, history, values and customs. They have little sense of the direction in which Québec society is evolving or of the role they might play in the construction and enrichment of this heritage. Finally, certain groups presently enrolled in the Heritage Languages Program include quite a high proportion of second- and third-generation Quebecers. The "language of origin" in which certain of these students take courses within this program is no longer either their mother tongue or their home language, and this situation does not correspond to the original objective of the HLP.

In school life

In many parts of the industrialized world, the student population of schools in large urban centres has become increasingly multi-ethnic over the last twenty-odd years. Often, the host population no longer constitutes a majority, and the social fabric has been transformed as a result. The repercussions of these changes may be examined from the perspective of relations among students, the management of

ethnocultural diversity and the impact of ethnic concentration on the cultural identity of the host society and its values.

As regards relations among students, there is a certain amount of closed-mindedness and withdrawal into ethnic identities, some exclusionism and some racial or ethnic tension. Extracurricular activities are used far more than classroom teaching for promoting community spirit and a sense of solidarity among all the students. These activities involve intercultural education, rights and responsibilities, international understanding, peace and the environment. Activities designed to give students experience in the exercise of democracy have been organized in most regions in order to attune young people to the issue of rights and responsibilities, notably in the context of student councils. Student-teacher relations do not always reflect the climate of mutual understanding that should prevail, although staff members in many schools have made many efforts to promote openness to diversity and to improve relations within the educational community. Their contribution to the quality of school life does not always receive the recognition and encouragement it should.

The educational milieu now has a number of reference documents (decisions of government agencies) on the management of ethnocultural, religious and linguistic diversity, to help it deal with the exceptional requests that it receives. However, some school personnel continue to stress the need to develop greater skill in this type of management, which is often complicated. Along similar lines, the introduction of a code of conduct that would take into account the diversity of the school population and respect the non-negotiable values of Québec society is a major concern in certain schools. Some observers maintain that the distinction between negotiable and non-negotiable elements remains ambiguous.

The mission of the school is to promote the integration of students of diverse origins by fostering democratic values, helping the students master the language of instruction and of public life, and making them aware of our unique historical heritage. Schools must devise educational measures and social integration strategies that suit their particular ethnocultural profile. The task may be more difficult in a school with strong ethnic concentration, especially if the parents themselves are still in the process of integrating. Recent research on the social integration of students shows that ethnic concentration has little impact on the image immigrant students have of the host society. At most, it may be said that their attitude is slightly more positive in schools with low ethnic concentration. It remains essential, however, to ensure that the school's relations with the students, the families and the community all contribute to the students' social, linguistic and cultural integration.

Among the school staff

The credibility of the discourse on openness and ethnocultural and religious diversity relies heavily on the visibility of this diversity within the school staff; but in most schools, the staff remains ethnoculturally homogenous. In addition, relatively few students who are recent immigrants choose teaching careers, especially in elementary school teaching. Several factors discourage them from choosing education as a career, including their image of the sector, the inherent difficulty involved in mastering the language of instruction and the obstacle represented by the written French test students must take to enter university.

Programs favouring employment equity for members of the cultural communities in multi-ethnic school boards have not been very effective: the quotas established have not been attained in most cases. Some school boards have had to eliminate positions instead of hiring.

In the school's relations with the family and the community

Some multi-ethnic schools have taken measures to encourage collaboration between school and family: allocating extra human resources, adapting procedures for transmitting information and maintaining contact with the parents, holding consultations with parents or resource persons from multi-ethnic organizations, and inviting parents to participate in decisions concerning the orientations of the school or the education system. But these efforts have not been made in all schools. In some cases, the educational milieu and the families are not true partners in education. This situation, which is often imputable to linguistic barriers and differences in social and educational values and practices, can have a negative effect on the socio-educational integration process of immigrant students.

In addition, there is often a dichotomy between the school's expectations and the reality of family life today. The school staff expects parents to participate actively (help with homework, attend meetings, etc.) and sometimes interprets as evidence of irresponsibility behaviour that should in fact be attributed to socio-economic factors, different family dynamics or other factors. If the gap between the school's expectations and the parents' actual capacity to be involved is too great, the parents may react by ceasing to play any role whatsoever in their children's education. This deprives the schools of any cooperation the parents might have offered, and may lead the children to have a negative image of their family.

Regarding the schools' openness to the community in general, much remains to be accomplished. Certainly the establishment of a number of programs and activities

has improved the education students receive in civic life and citizenship. But on the whole, and despite their complementary expertise and geographical proximity, collaboration between the school and the community tends still to be sporadic and limited. The resources of the milieu are underutilized. The schools are sometimes perceived by the community as self-absorbed, and this perception sometimes leads to a power struggle, each side seeking to fulfill only its formal responsibilities, at the expense of cooperation, sharing of skills and the interests of the students and communities.

TRAINING OF SCHOOL STAFF

In the last few years, the universities have made efforts to help teachers and other school staff develop the skills needed to facilitate the integration of students recently arrived from outside Canada and to provide intercultural education within the schools. Since the 1992-93 reform of teacher training, certain university courses are now compulsory for future teachers and others are offered on an elective basis in some programs. Practicums in multi-ethnic settings have also become common. However, the actual impact of this reform, and any revision that may be necessary, remain unknown. There are no data on the number of students who take the elective courses.

In continuing education, the universities have set up intercultural education programs offering both undergraduate certificates and master's degrees for school staff. After experiencing a certain popularity in the late 1980s, some of these programs have had falling enrollments since 1990-91.

In addition, some school boards, the ministère de l'Éducation and many organizations have held sessions designed to help school staff take diversity into account in the teaching process and inject a pluralistic perspective into various educational activities. These efforts are necessary, yet there are often no links between intercultural education for teachers and the teaching itself: the theory is difficult to translate into practice. Certain school boards and organizations handle the problem by relying more and more on peer teaching and by organizing training activities that correspond more closely to the priorities defined by the schools and school staff.

Given the situation described in this overview, the need for appropriate training in this field for all teachers and other school staff (school principals, non-teaching professionals, support staff) is in no doubt.

CHAPTER 4

ORIENTATIONS

This chapter presents orientations based on the principles for action regarding equal opportunity, proficiency in French and education for democratic citizenship in a pluralistic society. The orientations do not propose specific measures, but allow schools introducing educational integration and intercultural education practices or consolidating or adapting practices that are already in place to choose those most appropriate for their needs. The orientations have been formulated with a view to reconciling the shared values and social cohesion of Québec society with respect for diversity.

On the basis of the observations set out in Chapter 3, it may be stated that in general the schools have already begun taking steps to integrate immigrant students and to provide intercultural education. However, much ground remains to be covered, notably as regards the education of students belonging to groups at risk; the acceptance of collective responsibility for the task of integrating newly arrived immigrant students, a task previously handled by a few members of the school staff; close collaboration between school, family and community; mastery and use of French; references to the common civic space and ethnocultural pluralism in the curriculum and in school life; the development of skills and attitudes that are essential in order to achieve openness to diversity among the school staff; and representation of Québec's ethnocultural and religious diversity in the composition of the school staff.

1. REGULAR CLASSES WILL BE THE PRINCIPAL CONTEXT FOR THE INTEGRATION OF RECENTLY ARRIVED IMMIGRANT STUDENTS.

This orientation, which concerns the integration into regular classes of non-francophone students recently arrived in Québec, is addressed especially to schools with a large number of such students. In schools where they are a small minority, they are integrated into regular classes as soon as they enter the Québec school system.

The purpose of establishing welcoming classes in 1969 was essentially to facilitate the entry of these students into regular classes, and the stay of immigrant students in welcoming classes was not intended to exceed 10 months. Recent research shows that, over time, the length of time spent in these classes has grown considerably in many schools, which does not necessarily ensure greater success in learning French.

It has also been observed that the linguistic and cultural origins of new arrivals have become more diverse and less familiar. Since the expectations of teachers of regular classes regarding the proficiency in French of newly arrived immigrant students have remained undiminished, this change in the students' origins burdens the teachers of welcoming classes with a greater responsibility for their students' integration.

Learning a language is a long-term process; the best way to learn is to be in real situations involving communication. Once they have acquired the basis of communication, these students should enter regular classes, with students of their own age, in their local school, where they will be able not only to master the language of instruction but also have greater opportunities for social integration in the neighbourhood. Obviously there is no question of expecting students who are just beginning to speak French to integrate into regular classes without support. It is up to individual schools to decide what measures are appropriate, but it is clear that some measures of support must be implemented in all cases.

The aim of integrating these students into regular classes as rapidly as possible is to facilitate their mastery of French and their integration, through contact with young people of their own age, and to encourage the school administration, teachers and non-teaching staff and the school's partners to share responsibility for the integration of newly arrived students.

In this situation, schools should encourage their various partners to multiply efforts to accelerate the integration of recently arrived non-francophone students into regular classes and encourage the gradual development of their sense of membership in the host society. The school boards should adopt policies favouring the enrollment of recently arrived students in their local schools and should also respect the parents' wishes concerning the school their children attend, as they do regarding other students.

The ministère de l'Éducation has already relaxed its budgetary rules in order to favour more rapid integration of recently arrived students into regular classes, depending on their level of education, while allowing the schools their choice of school organization and educational support services. The school boards must ensure that money allocated for the purpose of supporting the acquisition of proficiency in French is used for that purpose.

2. RECENT IMMIGRANTS WITH DIFFICULTY INTEGRATING INTO SCHOOL NEED FAST, EFFECTIVE HELP.

The proportion of immigrant students who experience difficulties integrating into the Québec school system has been fairly stable for many years. Without appropriate help, these young people may never graduate from secondary school, so it is vital that the system find effective remedial measures. Various approaches have been tried, in various types of school organization; some are more successful than others. What is known so far is that to be effective, measures have to be taken immediately, as soon as these students arrive in Québec, and they must be suited to the realities of the milieu and the needs of the students in question.

Taking action as rapidly as possible requires prompt identification of students with problems and an approach based on the students' learning in general, not just their ability to assimilate enough French to communicate and follow their courses; the intervention must also address their problems in other subjects. This should make it possible to avoid placing the students in a situation leading to failure, which would demoralize them. To design and apply the appropriate measures it is necessary to take into account a student's age, prior learning, the nature of the difficulties and his or her plans for the future.

The schools must develop innovative models for intervention suited to the needs of the students concerned, in collaboration with the adult and vocational education sectors. They must also offer the students' parents the support they need to play an active role in their children's educational success.

The ministère de l'Éducation has already modified its budgetary rules to allot more resources for students at the secondary level and to eliminate the obligation to conform to a preestablished educational organization, so schools and school boards can set up strategies adapted to the particular needs of students with difficulties integrating into school.

In addition, the Ministère will favour access to the experimental program for the diversification of career options in vocational education and change the orientation of the Heritage Language Program from the maintenance and development of the students' language of origin to another support measure for students with difficulty integrating into school. Because the students in the HLP program master their language of origin better than French, it can serve as the basis for learning in subjects in which the students have not been progressing, and thus help these students catch up.

3. SCHOOLS, FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY MUST TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THIS EDUCATIONAL MISSION.

The schools cannot shoulder the entire responsibility for integrating immigrant students and ensuring their full participation in the life of the community. Families and the community should share in that responsibility. Some schools have developed ways of eliciting the cooperation of these milieus that other schools may find helpful as well. In most cases, however, as indicated in the previous chapter, relations between schools take the form of periodic exchanges of resources and the occasional sharing of expertise.

This being the case, and given the schools' new freedom to adapt their services to the needs and characteristics of their students and their communities, it is important that schools, families and the community share responsibility for the educational mission.

Associating parents and community organizations in the schools' mission involves encouraging parental participation in any form, engaging in dialogue on values, supporting community initiatives and responding to needs it expresses (access to offices, resources, etc.).

The schools must involve the parents more in various aspects of school life, consult them, and inform them about Québec's education system, about the school culture and about the changes introduced by the reform of the education system. The schools should open up to the needs of the community and collaborate in community initiatives. It is to be hoped that the schools will in return benefit from the support of the community (help with homework, extracurricular activities, governing board).

Schools should coordinate their services with those of other institutions in the community (CLSCs, municipalities, police, etc.) in order to organize cultural and sports activities for young people, for example. Schools and other community institutions must share use of certain underutilized infrastructures, such as school gymnasiums and other premises, cultural centres, libraries and sports centres. The school boards should encourage cooperation between the schools and community organizations and encourage the schools to participate in activities that support their local organizations, for example by taking part in their community's consultation and coordination committees.

The ministère de l'Éducation, in addition to evaluating the actions undertaken, will collaborate more actively with other ministries (ministère de la Culture et des Communications, ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration,

ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, ministère de la Métropole, etc.), to improve and coordinate services.

4. LEARNING FRENCH, THE LANGUAGE OF PUBLIC LIFE, MUST BE SEEN AS AN ONGOING PROCESS.

There are several programs of French instruction in Québec: language of instruction; second language; welcoming class and francization; the French taught in immigrant orientation centres; adult education francization services in school boards; etc. These programs operate along parallel lines at present, and in most cases there is little continuity between the various courses.

Mastering a language is a long-term, perhaps never-ending, process, which explains why non-francophone students in the youth and adult sectors often have to move from program to program in order to attain their objectives, passing from a French as a second language course to a French, language of instruction, course, for example. Successive adaptation to programs that are not always suitable for them, especially as regards spoken French, sometimes creates an obstacle to their success in school, social integration and integration into employment. These observations suggest that learning French should be considered an ongoing process.

This perspective implies allowing all non-francophone students, in the youth or adult sector and in the English- or French-language sector, to acquire a proficiency in French that corresponds to their particular needs, such as attending school, obtaining certification in a trade or upgrading or functioning effectively in their occupation. The corollary of this perspective is that all school staff, the work context and society in general become responsible for the ongoing French-language acquisition of the non-francophones in their midst.

The ministère de l'Éducation and the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration are committed to harmonizing all French-language instruction programs: for example, adult sector francization courses will be coordinated with the programs offered in immigrant orientation and education centres (centres d'orientation et de formation des immigrants: COFIs).

It is also urgent, even if the schools have no mandate to teach the parents of immigrant students French, to overcome the difficulties created by some parents' ignorance of the language, which prevent them from offering their children the support they need for success in school. In order to respond to the communication needs of the parents, the schools, in collaboration with community organizations, should set up projects, workshops or other francization activities, with the dual

objective of helping the parents learn French and involving them in the educational mission of the schools.

5. FRENCH, THE LANGUAGE OF PUBLIC LIFE AND VEHICLE OF QUÉBEC'S CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE, MUST BE PRESENTED IN A POSITIVE LIGHT BY THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY.

Conveying a positive image of French to all students is a priority. Their active participation in cultural, economic and political development, in Québec and elsewhere in the world, will be shaped by their image of the language. Access to the culture, which is inherent in a knowledge of the language, is often left out of teaching practices that tend to see the language purely as a subject to be taught. In addition to its functional aspects, language is a vehicle of culture and thought, and a sphere of creativity.

Making French attractive is the best way to achieve the linguistic integration of non-francophone immigrant students or students whose parents are immigrants, and to favour the full participation of all students in social and cultural life.

The idea of non-francophones mastering French in order to participate fully implies that, in addition to learning the language, they will enjoy using it in everyday life and that this will enable them to understand the French character of Québec society. The ministère de l'Éducation is collaborating with the ministère de la Culture et des Communications, the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration and the Office de la langue française in the development and implementation of strategies favouring the linguistic integration of non-francophone students, based on the use of French and access to numerous and varied cultural resources.

Working together, schools and community organizations should organize activities allowing parents and students to experience the pleasure of using the French language. Suitable activities would be meetings with authors of various origins, shows, exhibitions, etc. School administrations should encourage all approaches based on the integration of skills in French, and especially twinning activities. Schools should present French in a positive light by using attractive activities such as artistic productions, introduction to various media, the use of new information technologies, in a spirit of openness to the French-speaking community and culture throughout the world. The educational community should use posters to promote French and create a stimulating environment that is hospitable to the use of French.

6. THE CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL LIFE MUST BOTH REFLECT THE HERITAGE AND SHARED VALUES OF QUÉBEC AND BE OPEN TO ETHNOCULTURAL, LINGUISTIC AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY.

The best way to bolster students' sense of common identity and solidarity is by fostering their active participation in the development and enrichment of Québec's collective heritage, which may be seen as an evolving heritage in which all can see themselves and as an ongoing process to which all can contribute. It is important that the schools share Québec's heritage, history, values and customs, and its pride in its progress in all domains with all the students, but especially with the recent immigrants. Recognition of the specificity of the host society should be a major focus of the integration approach used. It is also necessary, in an inclusive approach, to recognize fully the contributions (cultural, religious, linguistic, economic and other) of all members of Québec society, whatever their origin.

The schools have already made efforts to accommodate Québec's ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity. These should continue, and efforts should also be made to include more pluralistic perspectives in the various spheres of school life, especially in the learning content, in order to meet the present challenges of pluralistic democracy.

Special care must be taken to instill in all students, and especially immigrants and the children of immigrants, the shared values necessary for participation in society and social cohesion, without which pluralism cannot be achieved. The curriculum and school life should familiarize students with Québec's heritage and the shared values that underlie it, while reflecting openness to ethnocultural and religious diversity.

It is of the utmost importance that all students acquire a solid grounding in Québec's shared values, that program content favour openness to ethnocultural and religious diversity by illustrating the diversity of our society; that these objectives be incorporated into the context of school life; that harmonious relations between communities be promoted and that racism be combatted. This overall approach will foster a sense of belonging to Québec society among immigrant students and will encourage all students to participate in building the evolving collective heritage.

Courses and programs

The programs in general education must be adapted, and the courses enriched in order to achieve these objectives. The creation of a citizenship course will be especially helpful, as will according greater importance to the teaching of history

and other social studies and taking ethnocultural pluralism into account in a greater number of courses and programs.

The ministère de l'Éducation is therefore committed to developing a number of courses and to reviewing all programs to ensure that they both foster the shared values of Québec society and respect its cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

Education for citizenship - There are three basic reasons why education for citizenship should be a component of the democratic school's overall mission: to offer every person, in the spirit of equal opportunity, the means for achieving personal fulfillment and optimum social integration; to prevent students' withdrawal into themselves and social anomie and encourage them to participate in the democratic debate on the guidelines for a just society; and to recognize that equality before the law, social justice and the right to safety are basic elements of any democratic society.

Education for citizenship focusses on knowledge of the common rules of life in our society and understanding of relations among people and between people and the environment. It is a tool for understanding others, accepting diversity and reconciling life and school. Education for citizenship also involves letting students exercise citizenship rights within the context of the school, to prepare them for active participation in the democratic institutions of society in general.

All students should receive this education, whether they are recent immigrants or born here, young or adult, in elementary or secondary school, whatever their mother tongue, and whether they attend a public or a private school.

For this reason the Ministère will make it compulsory for all students to take a history and citizenship course from the second cycle of elementary school through Secondary IV. The Ministère will also identify student attitudes and behaviours to encourage in order to foster harmonious interpersonal and social relations, to favour full participation in the life of the community and to develop critical judgement.

Learning a third language - The ministère de l'Éducation will encourage students to learn a third language. The choice of third language may be based on the following considerations.

- A number of heritage language programs are already available. The earliest such programs, which were developed by the Ministère, were in Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Greek. Subsequently, other programs, developed by the school boards, were added: Chinese, Laotian, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Arabic, Hebrew, Creole, Algonquin and Turkish. Learning a third language spoken in one's neighbourhood seems to favour good relations with other cultures.

- The choice of language could also be influenced by a concern for international understanding, in which the six working languages of the United Nations all play a major role, so that students would be well-advised to master several of them. Obviously, English and French must be subtracted from the six, as the students already receive instruction in them. There remain Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian.
- The final consideration concerns Québec's cultural and economic relations with Central America and South America and the phenomenon of Latin American immigration to Québec, which would justify learning Spanish and Portuguese.

The ministère de l'Éducation will examine the possibility of recognizing learning in their mother tongue for immigrant students or those whose parents are immigrants, in the second cycle of secondary school.

Introduction to religious cultures - The ministère de l'Éducation could develop an introductory course on religious cultures focussing on the Christian religions that have played a major role in Québec's history and the other major religions practised in Québec. This approach would make it possible to ground the instruction in the traditional practices of the students, their parents or their extended families. In addition it would stimulate dialogue among students of different religions concerning their respective religions and the place of religion in contemporary society.

French, language of instruction, and second language - In addition to French-language literature produced in Québec by Québécois authors, francophone or not, students should read literary works produced elsewhere in the francophone world. The range may be further extended by the addition of translations of works originally written in other languages, notably English.

English, language of instruction, and second language - In addition to English-language literature produced in Québec by Québécois authors, anglophone or not, students should read literary works produced in English outside of Québec. The range may be extended by the addition of translations of works originally written in other languages, notably French.

National history - It is essential to raise cultural standards by encouraging a better knowledge of Québec's history and in particular of the material and spiritual achievements and the movements that have characterized Québec's evolution as a French-speaking society in North America. It is also important to integrate into the study of history—and not just to tack on as separate material—the role played by the anglophones and the aboriginal peoples, and by groups of other ethnic origins, in the building of Québec society and the development of the collective identity and

memory of Quebecers. (Expressions such as “the contribution of the cultural communities” and “successive waves of immigration” may mislead by implying juxtaposition in certain contexts.) The Ministère will also enrich or make compulsory history and geography instruction in Introduction to Québec Life programs in the context of support measures for students learning French.

The contemporary world - This program will enable students to learn about various civilizations and situate their development using comparative historical tables. The program will also explain population movements and their causes and sociological, cultural and demographic implications in Québec. In addition, the concept of international understanding will be introduced in the context of the problems of North-South and East-West relations and the implications of globalization for Québec society.

Arts - This program will include elements of the history of art, focussing on the works of Québec artists of different origins, and will associate art in history with international and intercultural understanding. The music program will familiarize students with instruments and types of music of different origins.

Science - The history of science will be a major focus of the science program. This will contribute to a proper appreciation of the contributions of different cultures to the development of the sciences.

School life

In addition to taking diversity into consideration in course content, the schools will introduce pluralistic perspectives in extracurricular activities, complementary services and codes of conduct. Sporting, cultural and other activities will provide an authentic initiation to the exercise of democracy and harmonious relations, free from discrimination or racism. By emphasizing cooperative activities and the sharing of knowledge and experiences, they will contribute to the construction of a collective heritage for students of all origins.

Participating in school elections, the student council and, for older students, the governing board, are also good ways to learn about working in groups, including how to respect the rights of each member of the group and how to build solidarity within the group as a whole. Special attention will be paid from an early age to the process of development and content of codes of conduct. Participating in this activity will develop the students’ ability to express themselves, listen, understand and assimilate rules with an attitude of self-respect and respect for others. The schools must ensure that the codes of conduct guarantee the students’ fundamental rights,

and combat all forms of racism and exclusion, whether among the students or the school staff.

The diversity of values, whether originating in religion, culture or personal opinion, can provoke negative reactions or result in the formulation of demands for exceptions to rules by students or parents, concerning course content, discipline, extracurricular activities or school attendance on particular religious holidays. Value conflicts and requests for exceptions must always be dealt with in a way that reconciles the basic rights of the student and the laws and rules prevailing in society and the education system. The difficult but necessary search for “reasonable accommodation” will remain the responsibility of the school staff.

Accommodation of this sort should not involve modifying Québec schools’ norms or challenging the basic values they convey. Nor can there be any question of defying the provisions of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Education Act* or other laws, or any of the various regulations concerning education in Québec, all of which are legally binding. Nor is it possible to negotiate curriculum changes: the curriculum is simply not negotiable. Finally, accommodation should not impose excessive constraints on either the schools’ capacity to function or their budget.

This said, there is a legal obligation to reach an accommodation when the failure to respect a right guaranteed by one of Québec’s laws leads to the possibility of discrimination by adverse effect.² A variety of arguments concerning the importance of partnership, the harmonization of family values with those of the school, and means to support the integration of newly arrived students will make it easier to seek mutually acceptable solutions to exceptional requests.

For example, the Ministère does not intend to modify the academic calendar in an effort to satisfy the faithful of every confession in Québec. It is up to the schools to choose, according to the religious composition of their student population, and if it is feasible, one or two pedagogical development days corresponding to religious holidays of those religions other than Catholic or Protestant that are the most strongly represented among their students. Schools may also establish guidelines in order to control the situation (a maximum of two or three days per year, indicated in writing at the beginning of the year by adult students or the parents of students who are minors), while at the same time recognizing the right of members of religious

2. Discrimination by adverse effect is said to occur when, even in the absence of overt discrimination, an ostensibly neutral rule or practice, applied in the same manner to all persons, excludes or disadvantages certain categories of person in a way that may curtail their right to equality.

minorities to be absent for their religious holidays, assuming that the absences are justified and infrequent, and that the total number of students concerned is very small.

This example illustrates the position of the Ministère regarding demands for exceptions. The Ministère, which has already published a training unit on accommodating cultural and religious diversity in the school (including an analysis of the room for manoeuvre regarding the most frequent demands), is committed to supporting the schools by preparing appropriate tools, which can be adjusted according to the evolution of the demands.

Regarding all such matters, the ministère de l'Éducation will collaborate closely with the other ministries and organizations concerned, in particular with the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the Commission des droits de la personne du Québec and the Conseil du statut de la femme.

7. SCHOOL STAFF MUST BE TRAINED TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH QUÉBEC'S ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE SCHOOLS' VARIOUS GROUPS OF EMPLOYEES MUST ALSO REFLECT THAT DIVERSITY.

Training

The teachers, and school staff in general, play a pivotal role in the carrying out of any project in the schools. Their cooperation is essential for the successful implementation of this policy.

Although a real effort is made during initial training and continuing education to give school staff, and especially teachers, a good grounding in intercultural education and, to a lesser extent, teaching in a multi-ethnic context, the task is becoming more challenging and the nature of the concerns has shifted.

It is crucial that the *school staff be trained to meet the educational challenges posed by the ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the students and by the need to ensure that they assimilate a set of shared values*. This orientation concerns both teachers and other categories of school staff, who will be in the front lines of the effort to integrate recently arrived students as rapidly as possible into regular classes.

All school staff must develop openness towards diversity; teaching skills and strategies permitting them to work in a multi-ethnic milieu and manage diversity; the ability to teach a second language and a language of instruction, and to adapt their teaching in these fields to a student's evolution; skills enabling them to convey values and

knowledge related to Québec's heritage and to communicate with allophone parents or parents who do not share their educational values and customs. Training in these skills must take into account the orientations set out in this policy proposal.

It is thus to be expected that school boards and schools will prioritize continuing education in class management and the development of teaching strategies suited to students' needs. School boards, schools and adult education and vocational education centres should encourage peer teaching based on the sharing of personal experiences and solutions, and rely on organizations whose expertise is recognized.

The universities must modify their teacher training and upgrading programs to ensure that teachers acquire the skills they need to work in a pluri-ethnic setting and to prepare their students to live in a pluralistic society, even if the students in question attend a mono-ethnic school. This concern must find practical application in all courses and practicums.

Representation

Ethnocultural and religious diversity of the teaching staff has psychopedagogical implications: by encouraging student identification with a diversified society and a variety of role models, it favours success in school and the development of a sense of belonging. These consequences benefit not only the immigrant students but all the students and the school team, who learn, through contact with others, to recognize the diversity of their society.

In order for the school staff to reflect the ethnic diversity of our society, even school boards located in so-called homogenous areas must include individuals of different origins. This may seem to be a difficult objective for school boards that have done little hiring for many years, because of the widespread fall in Québec's birth rate. In addition, a dearth of qualified candidates from varied backgrounds for teaching positions is a real obstacle to the improvement of this situation.

In consequence, it seems realistic to ask school boards to make sure that their hiring system includes no rules or practices that could have a discriminatory effect, that the diversity of society find some reflection even in the most homogenous schools, and that guidance counsellors urge young immigrants to consider careers as teachers.

CONCLUSION

This policy proposal offers a comprehensive framework for the integration of immigrant students and the implementation of intercultural education, setting out the principles for action that should guide schools in their efforts to accommodate the ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity of their students. The first principle for action, equality of opportunity, requires that all schools offer an equal opportunity for success in school to all students, whatever their characteristics. A command of French, the language of public life, is the focus of the second principle for action, which schools must apply in a manner that benefits all their students, francophones, anglophones or allophones. The third principle for action concerns education for democratic citizenship in a pluralistic society, and aims mainly to promote the acceptance by all members of society of shared values and an open attitude towards diversity.

Although the schools have made some progress in the areas of integration and intercultural education, there remain weak areas, which must be improved. This policy proposal indicates the Ministère's orientations in numerous areas: the integration of recently arrived young allophone immigrants into regular classes; success for students with difficulty integrating into school; collaboration between the school, and the family and community; the learning of French, the shared language, as an ongoing process, and the presentation of French in a positive light as the vehicle of culture and thought; promotion of Québec's heritage and shared values and of openness to ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity in all programs and in school life; ethnic diversification of school staff; and initial training and upgrading in intercultural education for school staff.

Clearly the diversity of these orientations makes them the shared responsibility of all partners in the education system, including the ministère de l'Éducation, the school boards and the schools: integration and intercultural education depend on the participation of all members of the educational community. Everyone has to contribute to the recognition and accommodation of diversity, educating students to become active citizens and participants in the democratic development of a francophone, pluralistic, Québec society. Thus, everyone will have a hand in the collective renewal of Québec schools on the cusp of the twenty-first century.

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APPENDIX

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