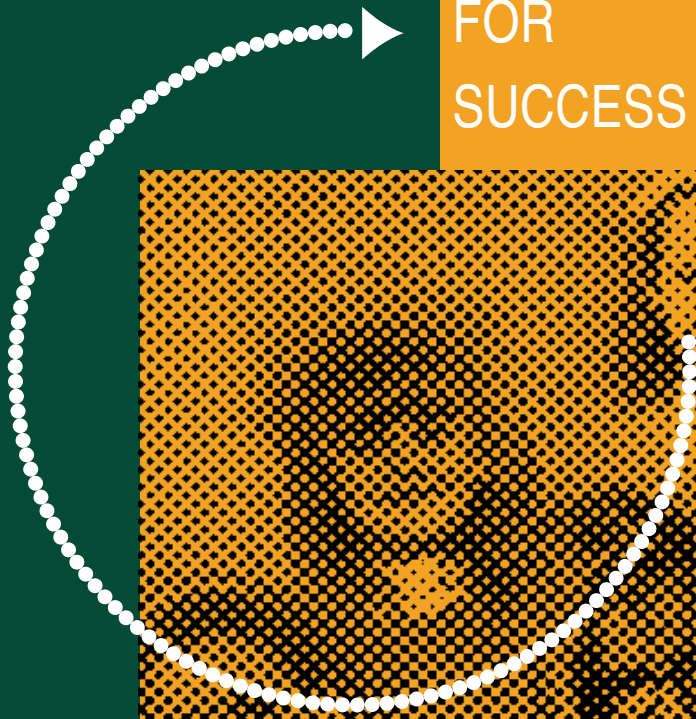


Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students

A NEW
DIRECTION
FOR
SUCCESS

POLICY ON
SPECIAL EDUCATION



Québec 

Ministère
de l'Éducation

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As we begin the new millennium by emphasizing the importance of youth for the future of Québec, it seems to me particularly appropriate to focus on the conditions required to ensure that all young people have an equal opportunity for educational success and full participation in society. We cannot allow ourselves to neglect any of our youth, and those whose needs are greatest are of special concern.

Therefore, the policy on special education that I am submitting to the school system and to parents proposes new avenues toward success and social integration for the thousands of young people with special needs.

In order to truly lead these students to success, we must go further than the current policy, which was adopted in 1992, and provide Québec with schools that are really adapted to the needs of all students. This is the direction in which the policy takes us, supplementing the efforts already made to integrate these students into the school and into society with an emphasis on detection and prevention, which are just as important. Preventive measures have been desired for a long time; everyone agrees that it is essential to intervene quickly at the first manifestations of difficulties rather than wait until the situation deteriorates to the point where success is jeopardized. This is what the policy proposes.

The lines of action of the policy have now been translated into a plan of action that defines the Ministère's commitment to provide more support to the education system in meeting the challenge of success for all. The aim of the plan of action is to facilitate the work of teachers and other school personnel, who have spared no effort to help these students achieve success in school and in life.

I already know I can count on the support of parents and of the entire school system and its partners in implementing this policy. A great deal of work has been put into the policy, and the working group on special education, consisting of the principal partners, was closely involved in this work. In addition, the comments made during the consultation of the school boards have been taken into consideration.

Young people with difficulties ask that we not only show concern for them but also help them achieve success. This is an obligation from which no one can be exempted. Thus we must all evaluate the impact of our actions in order to make adjustments if necessary.

It is with complete confidence that I am asking all those involved to work together toward the full social integration of young people with special needs.

Minister of State for
Education and Youth

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Legault', written in a cursive style.

FRANÇOIS LEGAULT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I PRESENTATION OF THE SITUATION	3
Basic Data	3
Supplementary Data	4
Social and Employment Integration	6
Information from Other Sources	6
Main Concerns	8
CHAPTER II THE NEW CONTEXT RESULTING FROM THE EDUCATION REFORM	9
Changes to the <i>Education Act</i>	9
Other Elements of the Context	12
CHAPTER III BASIC ORIENTATION AND LINES OF ACTION	15
The Basic Orientation of the Special Education Policy	15
To help students with handicaps or social maladjustments or learning disabilities succeed in terms of knowledge, social development and quali- fications, by accepting that educational success has different meanings depending on the abilities and needs of different students, and by adopting methods that favour their success and provide recognition for it.	
Lines of Action	16
• Recognizing the importance of prevention and early intervention, and making a commitment to devote additional effort to this area	16
• Making the adaptation of educational services a priority for all those working with students with special needs	18
• Placing the organization of educational services at the service of students with special needs by basing it on the individual evaluation of their abilities and needs, by ensuring that these services are provided in the most natural environment for the students, as close as possible to their place of residence, and by favouring the students' integration into regular classes	20
• Creating a true educational community, starting with the child and the parents and continuing with outside partners and community organizations working with young people, in order to provide more consistent intervention and better-coordinated services	23

- Devoting particular attention to students at risk, especially those with learning disabilities or behavioural difficulties, and determining methods of intervention that better meet their needs and abilities25
- Developing methods for evaluating students' educational success in terms of knowledge, social development and qualifications, assessing the quality of services and reporting results27

CONCLUSION31

APPENDIX33

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1	Distribution of students with handicaps and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities – Public sector, 1997-98
TABLE 2	Distribution of students with handicaps and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities according to sex and level of instruction, 1997-98
TABLE 3	Distribution of students with special needs (SN) according to type of difficulty and level of instruction, 1997-98
TABLE 4	Changes in declaration rates for students with special needs in each region for the years 1995-96 to 1997-98
TABLE 5	Number and percent of students with handicaps and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities in each region – Deviations in declaration rates, 1997-98
TABLE 6	Distribution of students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities and students with handicaps according to language of instruction, 1997-98
TABLE 7	Percentage of at-risk students integrated into schools
TABLE 8	Percentage of students with handicaps integrated into regular schools
TABLE 9	Percentage of at-risk students integrated into regular classes
TABLE 10	Percentage of students with handicaps integrated into regular classes
TABLE 11	Changes in student services (professional) staff (FTE) for all administrative regions, youth sector, 1990-91 to 1997-98
TABLE 12	Changes in student services (technical) staff (FTE) for all administrative regions, youth sector, 1990-91 to 1997-98
TABLE 13	Distribution of students enrolled in temporary individualized paths for learning according to type of difficulty and year of secondary school, 1997-98
TABLE 14	Distribution of students enrolled in continuous individualized paths for learning according to type of difficulty and year of secondary school, 1997-98

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1996, following the Estates General on Education, the Minister of Education announced the general orientations of the 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. It is therefore essential that the underlying principles of the reform be well understood and that we look at how these principles apply to students with special needs. It is of prime importance that measures be defined to help the largest number to succeed.

At a time when we are taking the new direction for success that has been proposed, it seems important that the policy on special education be in keeping with the changes recommended in the reform and that it provide clear orientations adjusted to the current context and lines of action to attain the objectives set for these students.

The policy on special education comprises three chapters. After examining the changes in the situation of students with special needs in recent years, it presents 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 adopted are presented. The policy is accompanied by a plan of action that consists of concrete measures the Ministère intends to take to help the school system meet the challenge.

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 graduation 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 1997-98, there were 1 033 099 students registered in preschool, elementary and secondary education in the public sector, including 128 343 students, or 12.42 percent of the student population, with special needs (see 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.

In addition, for the same school year, 2939 students with special needs were enrolled in private educational institutions; this figure represents 2.3 percent of the total number of students with special needs (in both public and private schools). The majority of them (61 percent) were students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities; specifically, 31.2 percent had learning disabilities and 29.9 percent had behavioural difficulties. The other groups of students that were most numerous were those with speech impairments (8.1 percent) and with moderate intellectual impairments (7.2 percent). These students were generally (75 percent of cases) enrolled in private institutions following agreements for the provision of instructional services between school boards and specialized private schools.

Although in the public sector 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 main demand of the 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 becoming increasingly prevalent 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, in all categories of students with special needs, 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 changes in staff (professional and technical) since 1990-91. 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 1990-91.

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 1997-98, 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 impairments 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 analyze. 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 graduation 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 graduation 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 graduation 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 graduation 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 graduation 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

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

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 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* of the Commission for the Estates General on Education cites 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.”⁷

“People who are opposed to the integration of students with special needs into regular classes or regular school 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: detection takes place too late; the diagnosis is not always accurate; the classifications, like the individualized education plans, meet administrative requirements rather than the needs of the students and the people working with them; specialized services and personnel are insufficient or are not

2. CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION, *L'Intégration scolaire des élèves handicapés et en difficulté* (Québec, 1996), p. 33.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

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 Direction de la production en langue anglaise [DPLA] of the MEQ.)

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

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, has shown 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 graduation 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 students 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 graduation 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. Moreover, 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 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 Direction de la production en langue anglaise [DPLA] of the MEQ.)

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 establishment of the new linguistic school boards throughout Québec. In addition, the changes made to the *Education Act* give the schools more room to manoeuvre and more powers in order to allow them to make the most appropriate choices for students. These changes make it necessary for the school boards to review their policies and regulations concerning the services to be provided to students with special needs in order to harmonize their actions. It is in this context, which is conducive to reflection, that the education reform and the revision of the special education policy are taking place.

The essentials of the reform and the means for carrying it out may be found mainly in the amended *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 a 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 partners 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 partner'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 Cycle Two students in secondary school 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 the educational services provided to students with special needs according to each 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 individualized 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 be in keeping with the abilities 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 or groups 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).

The policy must include methods for evaluating students with special needs, integrating them into regular classes or groups, grouping them together, and developing and evaluating individualized education plans for them.

Service Agreements

The organization of educational services, by the school board that has jurisdiction, as near a student's place of

residence as possible is preferred. The school board must itself organize educational services for students with special needs who come under its jurisdiction. However, if it can establish that its resources are insufficient or if the parents request it, it may 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 handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities (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. Québec society as a whole and the structure of its services are in the process of changing. The

difficult economic situation 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, school staff 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 services network, and in the next few years they should show results at the various levels of planning and provision of services. 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 the justice and public security systems, is also increasing. At the provincial and regional levels, a variety of working groups made up of these partners 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 to reduce human and social costs in the long term. It is thus natural that young people of school age should be targeted in this regard. Furthermore, this message has been well understood by the various partners that work with young people.

The development of information and communication technologies is another area that should not be neglected. Now that 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 intent of the Ministère de l'Éducation 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 adaptations 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 effectively as 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, additional efforts should be made to 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

The 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 sends 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 targets the reform is aiming to reach more successfully. The basic orientation of all action in special education is defined as follows:

To help students with handicaps or social maladjustments or learning disabilities succeed in terms of knowledge, social development and qualifications, by accepting that educational success has different meanings depending on the abilities and needs of different students, and by adopting methods that favour their success and provide recognition for it.

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.

Success means obtaining observable, measurable, recognized results concerning the student's development, an ongoing record of the student's progress. It is the culmination of the concerted effort of the student, the parents and the school staff. Thus it is important to formulate clear, concrete, realistic objectives in terms of knowledge, social development and qualifications; to help students attain these objectives and achieve the best possible results; and to recognize their learning.

Observation of the situation leads us to conclude that the efforts of recent years have resulted in some progress in the 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.

The basic orientation, focused on success for students with special needs, puts our actions with these students in a new perspective. It encourages the school and its partners to think about how the adaptation of educational services can contribute to the students' educational success and to

rely on the creativity and genuine commitment of school staff in adjusting their practices and meeting the challenge involved in this basic orientation.

In order to implement this basic orientation, six lines of action have been chosen. They define where our efforts should be brought to bear, in other words, the broad objectives to be sought in order to ensure success for students with special needs, and state the expectations as to what the school can contribute toward the attainment of these objectives. Some schools have already embarked on these lines of action, and it is important that they receive help in continuing to do so. Others require more support in their efforts to meet the objectives.

The Ministère de l'Éducation is aware that the new special education policy requires schools to make additional efforts to help students with special needs take a new direction for success. The plan of action associated with the policy shows the Ministère's genuine intention to provide concrete support for the schools' efforts.

Lines of Action

Recognizing the importance of prevention and early intervention, and making a commitment to devote additional effort to this area

Where should one start in order to ensure success in school? The answer is simple: start at the beginning, and do so as soon as possible, by preventing problems before they even appear or by preventing them from becoming more serious. Prevention is therefore the first step toward achieving lasting results, and it must be carried out with the help of all partners, especially parents.

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

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

A school that takes into account the diversity of students' needs and abilities from the outset, adopting a flexible, open approach that respects differences, will foster learning and increase the number of students who are successful, including those with special needs. The school's educational project, which is developed by the administration and adopted by the governing board, can be useful for discussing and planning concrete action in this regard.

It is for this reason that a revision of the curriculum has been undertaken as part of the reform. The Québec Education Program, which supplies the framework for the programs, provides a comprehensive, integrated vision of education that recognizes all the student's learning in the official courses and programs of study as well as in the other educational activities offered by the school. In addition, the diversity of needs and abilities of the students, in particular those with handicaps or social maladjustments or learning disabilities, is being taken into account in the development or revision of the programs of study; the objective is to adapt the programs at the outset.

Although the attitude of the school is important, there are no magic solutions. Conditions favourable to new ways of doing things must be put in place, and the role of the school administration is a determining

factor. Specifically, the school administration must encourage and support the school staff in developing innovative approaches and strategies and foster the management of diversity. It must also take measures to allow for change: planning time in the schedule for the sharing of expertise, teamwork and professional development.

To recognize the first manifestations of problems and intervene quickly

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. Without early intervention, they may be at risk of failing in school. 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.

Furthermore, there are certain points in school life when students are particularly vulnerable. It is important to take the time to help students get through these periods, which include starting school, going from elementary to secondary school, and making the transition from school to the job market.

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 students who show signs of difficulties, in order to find the approach best suited to their needs as quickly as possible. Moreover, these students should continue to be given special attention

throughout their school years, at every stage of their development, 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. It must ensure that its actions take into account what has been achieved from the students' early childhood by the parents and the school's other partners, particularly early childhood centres and the health and social services network. The parents' role in early childhood is crucial. It is essential that measures be taken to help those parents who require assistance in developing their parenting skills and to cooperate effectively with them with a view to the prevention or early detection of their children's difficulties.

It seems that those involved in intervention efforts are already convinced of the benefits of prevention. In fact, a number of schools are already exploring new methods that foster the management of diversity and respect for differences. Examples include various approaches to teaching and classroom management. Other schools favour early intervention for students with special needs, as a way of alleviating difficulties or preventing them from becoming worse. Still others are putting their efforts into projects 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.

The challenge now consists in making prevention a priority and committing the financial and human resources required to carry it out. In a situation where resources are limited, there is a tendency to meet the

most pressing or obvious needs first and to forget the fact that preventive action can often help alleviate some manifestations of difficulties.

It goes without saying that the school should not bear this responsibility alone. The Ministère de l'Éducation must clearly demonstrate the importance it places on prevention by providing concrete support to the school in its efforts in this area. Specifically, the Ministère should collaborate with its partners to determine the best services to offer for four-year-olds with a handicap. It should encourage the development of knowledge concerning intervention to prevent or reduce the effects of difficulties. It should provide concrete support for the school's activities in the prevention and detection of difficulties and intervention at their first manifestations.

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

With regard to the organization of services for students with special needs, the adaptation of services is the basic orientation of the Act. Most students receive educational services in regular school, in regular classes, and adapting these services should be the first line of response to students with special needs. This may be done in a variety of ways: developing programs that take account of student diversity, adapting teaching methods and instructional materials, adopting flexible pedagogical approaches that respect the students' learning rates, using the new information and communication technologies and so on.

The organization of elementary school programs of study in two-year cycles should give school personnel the leeway they need in order to help the students consolidate their learning. The use of information and communication technologies in the school should be seen as a new means by which school personnel can help students acquire and develop knowledge and skills. For some students with special needs, this technology represents much more than an attractive additional resource: it is a communication tool that is essential for them to be able to learn; this is the case for some students with major physical disabilities, for whom the computer is the only means by which they are able to communicate with those around them.

The concern with the adaptation of educational services should extend beyond the classroom, so that other school activities (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 is, however, the first line of response in the adaptation of services. For teachers in charge of a class, the task is not an easy one, since they have to meet the students' individual needs while being responsible for the learning of the entire group. They must be supported in this endeavour and they must be provided with suitable working conditions. The cooperation of their colleagues, especially those whose specialty is special education and those in student services, can be invaluable in helping them envision different ways to help the students succeed.

It goes without saying that school administrators have a particularly important role to play in the adaptation of services. They must support their personnel in their efforts, and they must see that this concern is integrated into the practices of the whole school. They must adopt appropriate measures, such as setting aside time in the schedule for the sharing of expertise and the adaptation of materials. Educational activities other than those related to the teaching of the programs must also be adapted; these include daycare services. The professional services needed for intervention with students or support for teachers must also be available. School administrators should also encourage the school staff to seek professional development concerning the adaptation of services in such areas as information and communication technologies.

To offer students various options

To ensure that students with special needs have a better chance of obtaining

qualifications, it is important that educational institutions offer a variety of paths suited to the interests and abilities of all students, that they provide access to the existing paths, especially those in vocational education, and that they facilitate the transition between the different paths. These students should be offered new options designed to maximize their chances to obtain qualifications. Student evaluation procedures and the rules for certification must follow this line of development and allow for the recognition of achievements and qualifications.

The link between school and the job market must be better established. Academic and occupational choices are particularly difficult and decisive for the future in the case of students with special needs. They need guidance in order to make informed choices. The entire process needed to help these students succeed in school and make the transition to the job market should be included in their individualized education plans.

Preparation for the job market, through practicums in the workplace, social and employment integration programs or other means that facilitate the transition between school and the job market, must be given special attention in the case of students with special needs. Measures should be taken to better prepare young people for the job market. They should be given opportunities to do practicums, and there should be cooperation with outside partners such as employment outreach services, local employment centres (Centres locaux d'emploi; CLE), and the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (OPHQ) as well as with employers and rehabilitation personnel in order to create effective mechanisms for employment integration.

Educational paths that are planned with a view to preparing students for the job market can greatly increase students' chances of success. There has been progress in this area in recent years. For example, consider the practicums done by students with special needs in individualized paths for learning in social and employment integration, or the testing, begun in 1996 in secondary schools, of programs of study for students with intellectual impairments. Nevertheless, much remains to be done.

Giving students qualifications is a key element of the education reform. To take this new direction for success, certain adaptations and choices must be made in order to ensure that students with special needs have an equal chance to succeed. This is a significant challenge, and all levels of the education system must do their part.

The Ministère de l'Éducation has a particularly important role to play in helping schools meet the challenge of adapting educational services. First of all, it must ensure that initial training and professional development prepare school personnel to do what is expected of them. It must help establish conditions to encourage adaptation, specifically in terms of the time required for concerted action. It must recognize that additional resources are needed in the schools to help teachers meet the varied and complex needs of students with handicaps or social maladjustments or learning disabilities, and it must be ready to make significant efforts in this regard. It must also reduce the obstacles that can hinder progress in school and integration into the job market for students with special needs.

Placing the organization of educational services at the service of students with special needs by basing it on the individual evaluation of their abilities and needs, by ensuring that these services are provided in the most natural environment for the students, as close as possible to their place of residence, and by favouring the students' integration into regular classes

To understand the situation of students with special needs

First of all, the needs of these students must be well understood and their interests taken into account when decisions that could affect them are 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 the governing boards be fully aware of the presence of students with special needs and take them into account in their decisions, especially those concerning the school's educational project and supervision policy.

It is thus important that governing boards be made aware of the situation of students with special needs. The advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities should be involved, since it knows what these students need. And other means should also be found to promote awareness of special education among the members of the governing boards.

To organize the services on the basis of an individual evaluation of the students' needs and abilities and to favour the students' integration into regular classes or groups

The first obligation of the school board is to adapt educational services to every student with special needs, following an evaluation of the student's needs and abilities. The *Education Act* stipulates that educational services must be organized on the basis of an individual evaluation of the needs and abilities of students with handicaps or social maladjustments or learning disabilities. This evaluation must be carried out by the school board upon the student's admission, before enrollment and placement in a grade. It must be carried out according to the conditions set out in the policy on the organization of services. The student's parents must be in attendance, as should the student unless he or she is unable to be present.

Once the student is enrolled in a school, the *Education Act* states that an individualized education plan suited to the student's needs must be established, which describes in detail how educational services will be provided to the student in the school and what support services the student will be entitled to receive. This plan, which is established by the school principal with the help of the parents, the personnel involved and the student, if he or she is able, must favour the coordination of the interventions to be carried out and the services to be provided. Adapted educational services should be organized in the most natural environment for them. The general standard is the integration of the students into a regular class or group because of the advantages this approach generally provides.

When the individual evaluation of a student with a handicap shows that full or partial integration into a regular class will be the most advantageous measure for the student in terms of maximization of learning and social integration, the school board must proceed with the integration of the student and provide the means deemed necessary, unless that would constitute an excessive constraint for the school board or significantly undermine the rights of the other students.

The *Education Act* stipulates that the policy concerning the organization of services adopted by the school board must ensure the harmonious integration into a regular class or group of every student for whom an individual evaluation of abilities and needs shows that such integration would facilitate learning and social integration. Only if integration would impose an excessive constraint on the school board or significantly undermine the rights of the other students can a school board choose a course of action other than to integrate the student into a regular class or group. However, since rights are protected by charters, the school board would have to prove the existence of an excessive constraint; an unjustified refusal could constitute discrimination on the grounds of the handicap of the person about whom the decision was made.

What constitutes an excessive constraint and what significantly undermines the rights of the other students are questions of fact that must be assessed according to the circumstances. These reasons should only be adduced exceptionally, such as when the measures required would entail exorbitant costs, would be inapplicable from a pedagogical point of view or would endanger

the safety of the student concerned or other students. Here again, it is the responsibility of the school board to provide proof.

The Act expresses a clear preference for integration into regular classes when it is established that this would be to the student's benefit. More specialized adapted services may be deemed necessary to maximize learning and social integration for some students with special needs; school boards should be able to offer these services. Only on this condition will the organization of services genuinely benefit the students.

The Act favours the organization of services for students with special needs by the school board whose jurisdiction they come under, generally the original school board, as near to their place of residence as possible. The school board may conclude a service agreement with another organization, such as a specialized private educational institution, only if it proves that it does not have the resources necessary to organize the educational services itself, and it must first consult the parents of the student with special needs, or the student himself or herself if he or she is of full age, and the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities.

The school board must carry out the overall planning of services for students with special needs on the basis of individual evaluations and in accordance with its policy on the organization of services for students with special needs.

The challenge for school administrators remains to plan the overall organization of services, taking into account the individual evaluations of the students. The challenge is all the greater because the rules on the funding of services for students with special

needs refer to categories of students. Although these rules are not intended to orient the organization of services, but rather to ensure the equitable distribution of resources, the direct link between funding and organization gives rise to confusion and discontent for some partners. In recent years, there have been calls for a simplification of the rules on funding services for students with special needs and for greater transparency concerning the financial resources allotted. The work already begun in this area should be continued and special attention should be given to clarifying the real impact of these rules on the organization of services for students with special needs.

The social development of the students is an important objective in the school's mission. This objective takes on a particular meaning in the case of students with special needs. The school is one of the first contexts of life in society. It is essential that students with special needs find their place in it and prepare to become responsible citizens, as other young people do. In recent years efforts have been made in this regard, and have shown positive results, but there are still important gaps between students. More progress and more successes are required to ensure genuine equality of opportunity for these students.

The Ministère de l'Éducation must help the schools put their organization at the service of the students. Specifically, it must reduce the administrative constraints associated with the declaration of students as having special needs and pursue its efforts to clarify the rules on funding. It must also draw up a list of specialized services to meet the very specific needs of certain young people for whom not all schools may have the expertise required.

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

To consider the student the main author of his or her own success

Students are the main authors of their own success in school. However, they still need guidance and support to develop autonomy and fully exercise their responsibility. Parents, since they are the most closely involved, have a major role to play in their children's education. The school and its partners must also lend their support, so that the students acquire the learning they need to actively participate in their own success.

To welcome the parents to the school and support their participation

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 the emphasis on partnership in order 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 school administration has an important role to play so that all parents are actively involved in their children's success.

It has to support its staff in finding ways to encourage cooperation with parents, such as by setting aside time in the timetable for regular communication with them concerning their children's progress or difficulties. Communication should not be seen solely as a means of solving problems, but rather primarily as an opportunity for cooperating with parents and working with them to ensure success 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 individualized education plans and closely follow their children's progress through school. These are demanding responsibilities, and it is essential that the school administration establish conditions conducive to parental involvement in order to help parents fully assume these responsibilities.

To provide better coordination of interventions

The individualized education plan remains the essential tool for planning interventions to be carried out with students with special needs. This plan, which is adapted to the needs of the individual student, should foster cooperation among persons providing services to students with special needs. In addition, the individualized education plan should take into account the evolution of the situation and allow the students' progress to be followed and the results of the interventions to be evaluated.

Some people have associated these plans with administrative constraints imposed by the *Education Act*. It is important that this perception be corrected, and that the school see in them an opportunity for cooperation and monitoring with regard to the services to be provided to the students. Connections should be established with the individualized education plan when persons from outside the school are involved in the help provided to a student.

The school administrators must ensure that the development of individualized education plans provides a special opportunity for parents of children with special needs to take an active part in the entire process, and specifically in determining the objectives that the school and family should seek for the children. Such participation guarantees greater consistency and continuity in interventions at home and in the school. If need be, the school administrators may provide parents with support in order to facilitate their participation.

To open the school to partners, starting with parents, in order to create an educational community

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 representatives of the community—such as community, municipal and recreational organizations—introduces a new dynamic into the relationship with partners, one that changes the vision of the school. This partnership is intended to create an educational community of all those who, in one way or another, are responsible for young people and who share a common

concern for their well-being and optimal development. In this respect, parents are certainly the most closely involved, and their vital contribution must be recognized.

While respecting the roles, responsibilities, competence and expertise 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.

The school administrators must ensure that the openness to parents and the community that is provided through the establishment of the governing boards translates into real cooperation. They must welcome and support the participation of parents by providing them with information and making them aware of the various aspects of school life that have repercussions on the decisions made by the governing board. They must also see that the governing board itself is made well aware of the situation of students with special needs.

It is important that the specific needs of students with handicaps and or social maladjustments or learning disabilities be well understood, and that these students be well represented in decisions that concern them. As provided in 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 the services offered to these students. In addition, a representative of this committee 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 in ensuring the collective representation of students with special needs and their parents. The school board must ensure that these structures for the representation of parents that are provided in the Act (the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, and the parents' committee) are set up and consulted under conditions conducive to the full exercise of their functions.

However, the services that students with special needs may require are not provided only at school. They also come from other sectors (such as daycare, early childhood, health, social and public security services), which must work together to provide better-coordinated services.

The partnerships among the various sectors must be developed first at the local level, particularly on the governing boards, with parents, school staff and community organizations, but also at the regional and provincial levels through the establishment of mechanisms for cooperation with a view to better planning and harmonization of services. This collaboration among the different sectors must first of all translate into a better understanding of the roles and realities of intervention, so that expectations by all parties are more realistic. It must aim for the best possible use of resources as well as a better integration of the services offered to students with special needs.

School boards must establish concrete ways of working with outside partners, particularly those in the health and social services network, so that their organization of services makes good use of the available expertise and resources and respects the

orientations of the two ministries concerned. They must also contribute to regional planning in the two sectors, so that the needs of the school are taken into account in the distribution of resources in the region.

The Ministère de l'Éducation must help the school establish this educational community. It must support the school in its use of the individualized education plan as the primary means for coordinating interventions and, especially, ensuring the active participation of the student and parents. It should also continue its cooperation with its partners, particularly those in the health and social services network, to define orientations that facilitate the harmonization and integration of services for students with special needs.

Devoting particular attention to students at risk, especially those with learning disabilities or behavioural difficulties, and determining methods of intervention that better meet their needs and abilities

To acquire more knowledge and determine appropriate methods of intervention

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 change in residential services in the health and social services system, which has brought back into the regular school system students who were previously schooled in rehabilitation centres.

Various aspects of the situation of students with special needs are 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 parties concerned in order to develop consistent strategies.

Boys account for a high proportion of students with learning disabilities or behavioural difficulties and those with certain categories of handicaps. Recent reports and studies have brought out the differences between boys and girls in various facets of school life; one such difference is that observed with respect to academic success. We must continue to acquire knowledge in this area in order to be better able to define appropriate strategies.

In addition, we cannot ignore the fact that some students who have not been officially declared as having learning disabilities or behavioural difficulties nonetheless experience difficulties that make them vulnerable unless there is immediate intervention. This concern with students who are in difficulty or at risk is widespread in Europe and the United States, where the importance of preventive intervention with students who show signs of vulnerability or who are in danger of experiencing difficulties is recognized.

This is an important issue, and one which researchers must study in order to develop

appropriate intervention strategies. Schools must also take part in this endeavour.

Concrete action should be taken with regard to students who are in difficulty or at risk. For example, the school administrators, with the governing board, should consider 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 a comprehensive view of the situation and take into account measures that have been taken to prevent or deal with social problems, as well as those related to the differences observed between boys and girls.

School administrators must help their personnel adapt their strategies to these students. They must take account of the professional development needs of their personnel and create conditions conducive to the sharing of expertise.

The school board should devote particular attention to these students when developing its policy concerning the organization of services for students with special needs. Specifically, it should ensure that the schools have the resources they need to provide services that are appropriate for these students.

To develop a comprehensive, integrated view of the difficulties experienced by young people with social maladjustments or learning disabilities and of strategies for intervention

One cannot think about students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities 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 the growth of these needs. Strategies aimed at solving these problems must be viewed from the overall perspective of solutions to help young people in difficulty, in cooperation with the partners concerned.

This poses a particular challenge to the schools with respect to the resources required for the provision of such services. The expertise required to meet the needs and abilities of these students remains to be developed in the school and with the school's partners. Cooperation among sectors of intervention to define a shared view of the situation and ensure the complementarity and continuity of the services provided for these students is essential. This cooperation should exist on the provincial, regional and local levels.

Much work remains to be done to improve current understanding and to determine appropriate strategies to ensure the educational success of students at risk, especially those with learning disabilities or behavioural difficulties. One avenue that appears particularly promising for these students as well as for those with handicaps is prevention. The soundness of this approach seems to be well established. However, whether prevention or some other strategy is adopted, we must be ready to devote the necessary resources to it.

The Ministère de l'Éducation recognizes that students with learning disabilities or behavioural difficulties pose a special challenge for schools, and that they need help to find appropriate intervention strategies while maintaining a comprehensive, integrated view of the young people's difficulties. It must foster the development

of knowledge and research concerning these students, define the orientations to be followed and give the schools information that will allow them to make informed decisions in order to develop the most appropriate approaches.

Developing methods for evaluating students' educational success in terms of knowledge, social development and qualifications, assessing the quality of services and reporting results

To help students with special needs succeed, an accurate picture of their situation and the factors favourable and unfavourable to their success is required. The information gathered must concern the students, their progress and their successes as well as their difficulties and needs. It must also cover school organization and the measures taken (e.g. services, adaptations, joint efforts) to help the students make progress.

The challenge of evaluation consists in selecting 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 is to obtain the information required to make sound decisions, improve the situation and account for results.

Although the merits of evaluation are generally recognized, it gives rise to some anxiety for people who feel it is used to label situations instead of changing them in positive ways. The fact that very few indicators are currently used has certainly helped create confusion and led to incorrect conclusions. New indicators should provide more complete information on the situation and lead to better-informed decisions, which is 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 the goals sought and that they are useful to those working with students, so that evaluation becomes an integral part of their work.

To evaluate students' progress in order to adjust intervention strategies

In recent years, discussions concerning students with special needs have tended to focus on their integration into regular school or regular classes. This is a good indicator for evaluating the efforts that have been made to foster their social integration. However, there are few indicators that allow us to evaluate other aspects of their learning and overall development, or measure their academic success or 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, 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 and 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 be used to measure the work that has been done in

adapting services, the conditions created to foster this adaptation and 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 results sought and make informed decisions with respect to the priorities to be set in improving services. These indicators must make it possible to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the services, and they should cover the state of the services, their quantity and quality, and their organization, as well as the results obtained.

The use of these indicators must be associated with an evaluation procedure that aims, on the one hand, to adjust the services according to the orientations of the policy on special education and, on the other hand, to improve the quality of the services on an ongoing basis. This procedure should draw on contributions by the school authorities, the personnel involved, the governing board and the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, and it should cover the various aspects of life at school, with a view to the improvement of the services.

To report the results obtained

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

In fact, the *Education Act* contains certain provisions requiring schools and school boards to report the results obtained. Thus, school boards must show how the resources allocated to services for students with special needs are distributed. It 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. It is accountable for the services provided for the monies allocated. Transparency in the management of these monies and efforts to report results are expected. Among other things, it must produce annual reports including information on activities. As for the schools, they must inform the community of the services they provide and report on their quality.

The school boards have an important role to play in giving concrete expression to the desire to evaluate the results obtained in special education. They must take steps to ensure that evaluation is carried out. Specifically, they must set aside the resources required to plan and organize the evaluation. They must make available all information that makes it possible to have an overall picture of the situation. They must support the schools so that the schools can properly carry out their role in conducting the evaluation, particularly by providing information and training sessions for staff.

The school administrators also have a role to play in the evaluation of results. They must, for example, make the governing board and the school staff aware of the importance of evaluation with a view to improving the quality of services. The governing boards and the school staff should

participate in the evaluation process, specifically by giving their opinion with respect to the focuses of evaluation and the means of carrying it out, so that they are involved in the decisions that arise as a result of the evaluation.

Evaluation will also be a major concern of the Ministère de l'Éducation in the years ahead. This constitutes an important challenge, since the Ministère must propose feasible evaluation procedures in cooperation with the players in the school system. It must also define 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 the education reform and the adjustments to be made. The policy on special education will also be a focus of evaluation.

Equality of opportunity in education is a fundamental value of Québec schools. Equal opportunity for students with special needs is made possible through the adaptation of educational services. This principle is unconditional. However, given the financial and human resources invested in this area, the results obtained have to be accounted for in terms of the choices made. This is a matter of equity with respect to all students and a matter of openness with respect to the adjustments to be made in order to obtain the best results.

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 education system and its partners.

However, the future of young people with special needs is not the responsibility of the school alone. 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, one must not forget the major roles and responsibilities of the other social and economic partners. Each one must do his or her part to improve the chances of success for students with special needs.

The special education policy, by helping *adapt our schools to the needs of all students*, is the contribution of the education sector to the success of these students.

APPENDIX

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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

