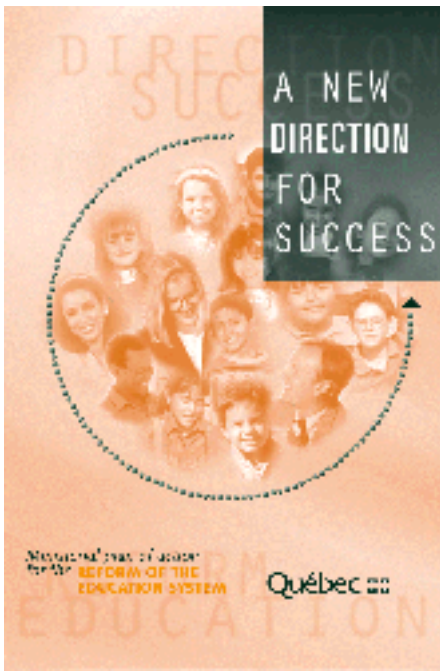




# A NEW DIRECTION FOR SUCCESS

## MINISTERIAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE REFORM OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Dear students,

**Dear parents,**  
**Dear partners in the education community,**

I am inviting you today to combine your efforts with mine in order to steer our education system on the road to success. In reading the following pages, you will see that, from the outset, the adopted lines of action place students at the heart of the reform.

Schools that promote success are schools that get all children off to a good start by giving them access to educational services tailored to their needs from early childhood. They offer all students a selection of activities that are demanding yet adapted to a wide range of needs, that stimulate students' desire to surpass themselves and that shape them into creative, independent and responsible individuals.

These schools are responsive to the labour market and equip students with the skills they will need to take their place in society and in the work force. They also meet the needs of students who choose to pursue higher learning and contribute to the advancement of knowledge. Similarly, they are aware of adults' needs for career renewal and continuing education.

For all to have an equal chance to succeed, our education system must acknowledge that it must devote more of its resources to certain categories of students and their parents. It must, for example, provide greater support to students who live in disadvantaged areas, who come from immigrant families, or who have handicaps.

However, ministerial orientations cannot dictate all aspects of school life. Our schools must make the most of every day, every opportunity, to help students succeed, and, to do this, they must have more freedom. Schools must have the power to make the educational and budgetary decisions that will allow them to better meet students' needs. Smooth progress in a new direction for success will be possible only by making extensive use of teachers' expertise, by promoting concerted action within our schools under the strengthened leadership of school principals, and by mobilizing the support of parents and the community at large.

Likewise, our postsecondary institutions must have all of the leverage they need to encourage students to commit themselves to their studies and obtain a diploma. At the college level, a renewal is already under way but we must take it further and streamline the administrative framework in order to give institutions more latitude, especially as regards academic matters. We must also encourage consultation and cooperation between institutions. As for universities, the challenge lies in reconciling their dual role as independent and public service institutions. Here again, their capacity to meet society's expectations is the key to their success.

For my part, I intend to keep a steady course towards the goals we have set. Openness, dialogue and concerted action will be the *modi operandi* as we work to implement this far-reaching reform.

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Fall 1996*

On October 24, 1996, following the recently completed Estates General on Education, Minister of Education Pauline Marois published the main guidelines for the reform of the education system.

She stated that it was urgent to renew the education system, without necessarily rebuilding it from the ground up. Québec society as a whole, and not just the education community, was invited to take up the challenge of **defining a new direction for success in education**.

The change of direction involves moving on from the goal of **access for as many students as possible to success** so that, in 2010, 85 percent of students of a given generation will obtain a secondary school diploma before the age of 20, 60 percent, a college diploma and 30 percent, an undergraduate degree. These are ambitious objectives.

**Seven major lines of action were defined:**

|    |                                                                      |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | <b>Providing services for young children</b>                         |
| 2. | <b>Teaching the essential subjects</b>                               |
| 3. | <b>Giving more autonomy to schools</b>                               |
| 4. | <b>Supporting Montréal schools</b>                                   |
| 5. | <b>Intensifying the reform of vocational and technical education</b> |
| 6. | <b>Consolidating and rationalizing postsecondary education</b>       |
| 7. | <b>Providing better access to continuing education</b>               |

This document sets out, under each of these seven lines of action, the measures adopted to implement the reform.

**Immediate, concrete action**

Some of these measures are simply an extension of current activities, while others imply exploring new avenues. Where **the necessary changes are clearly identified**—which is the case as regards early childhood services, Montréal schools, and vocational and technical education—the ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ) has made commitments which will translate into immediate, concrete action.

**Work to be continued**

In other areas, **work must be continued** to clarify the appropriate orientations. On issues such as the revision of elementary and secondary school curricula, the rationalization of university education and continuing education, for example, hasty action would be unwise. Committees or task forces have been created and the results of their work are expected before the end of the school year.

**Amendments to legislation and regulations**

Other measures, such as giving more power to the schools, entail **amendments to legislation and regulations**. In such cases, the measures described in the following pages are obviously conditional on the adoption of the amendments by the legislative or executive authorities.

And, of course, a change in our attitudes and practices will also be required as an essential condition for our collective success!

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**FIRST LINE OF ACTION**

**PROVIDING SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

**THE NEW DIRECTION WILL INVOLVE:**

- **recognizing the vital contribution of early childhood services to student success and persistence in school;**
- **broadening the range of services to meet needs;**
- **providing special support to parents and children in certain communities;**
- **increasing the effectiveness of government intervention by better coordinating the actions of the various ministries, organizations and agencies.**

**PROVIDING SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

**BY:**

## Broadening the range of services

*September 1997*

The new provisions of the family policy stipulate that the MEQ and the Office des services de garde à l'enfance will extend **educational services for 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds**. This will give all children an opportunity to develop and acquire skills that will give them equal chances for success in school. The MEQ will also encourage the extension of **school day care services** and will confirm their role in the educational process.

### 5-year-olds

Full-time kindergarten for **5-year-olds** will be available from September 1997. All school boards will be required to offer this service, but attendance will not be compulsory. As a result, 85 000 children who currently attend kindergarten for half of the day will now be able to do so on a full-time basis. At the moment, only 10 000 children, mainly in disadvantaged areas, are registered for full-time kindergarten.

### 4-year-olds

As provided for in the family policy made public on January 23, 1997, early childhood centres will gradually be developed and will offer low-cost services for **all 4-year-olds**. Children will thus be assured of care and supervision that will promote their development. They will also have the opportunity to gradually become acquainted with a stimulating learning environment and to acquire skills that will give them an equal chance for success in school.

For **4-year-olds with special needs**, especially children with handicaps and children living in disadvantaged areas, the current half-day kindergarten will be maintained. Free educational services offered by school day care personnel will gradually be added for the other half-day. In addition, for a fee, school day care services will be made available to these children in the morning, at lunchtime and at the end of the day. Where half-day kindergarten for 4-year-olds is not offered by schools, early childhood centres, under the authority of the Office des services de garde à l'enfance, will provide free educational services for children with handicaps and children living in disadvantaged areas for a total of 23.5 hours per week. This measure will be introduced gradually, first in the Greater Montréal region, then in disadvantaged areas in other regions, and finally throughout Québec.

### Children in school day care

**School day care services** will be extended to more elementary schools. Currently, only 40 percent of Québec elementary schools, mainly in urban and semi-urban areas, provide such services. All

school boards will be invited to develop them and to ensure that some of the time spent by students in day care will be devoted to helping them with homework and lessons.

The parents of children who are now in elementary school will continue to qualify for existing fiscal measures relating to child care expenses until the end of their children's elementary studies. As of September 1997, however, the parents of children coming into the new system will not qualify for these fiscal measures. The MEQ will adjust school boards' budgets to reflect the new provisions of the family policy.

## **The necessary resources**

In its basic allocations to school boards, the MEQ will provide the **resources required** to pay for the additional costs generated by the extension of educational services for 5-year-olds (operations and new teaching staff). These costs are estimated at \$138 million for 1997-98 and will be covered mainly through a fiscal reorganization resulting from the new provisions of the family policy. Also, in its capital expenditure planning, the MEQ will give priority to projects aimed at converting or adding space to accommodate these children.

## **PROVIDING SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

**BY:**

### **Reviewing the preschool education program**

*May 1997*

In view of the fact that kindergarten will be available on a full-time basis for all 5-year-olds from September onwards, and that existing kindergarten services for 4-year-olds will be maintained, the MEQ will shortly begin **a review of its preschool education program**. To do this, it will seek the advice of early childhood specialists. The revised program will be submitted in May 1997.

It will also be necessary to **coordinate the educational services** provided through schools and early childhood centres for 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds. The MEQ and the Office des services de garde à l'enfance are working together on an integrated preschool education program.

## **PROVIDING SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

**BY:**

### **Continuing to support parent effectiveness training**

**For parents, guiding and helping their children as they progress through school** is a task that is

both demanding and essential. However, educators' actions are more effective when they are well coordinated with parents' efforts. This kind of partnership between schools and families improves the quality of parents' interactions with their children and raises parents' educational and occupational aspirations for their children. The MEQ will therefore maintain its support for the Passe-Partout program, which helps some 10 000 economically disadvantaged families with 4-year-olds. The school boards will also be invited to continue the activities currently available to the parents of 4-year-olds in half-day kindergarten. These include, for example, the involvement of parents for one half-day per week in activities aimed at developing the children's vocabulary, language and general knowledge.

## **PROVIDING SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

**BY:**

### **Supporting initial training and professional development of educators**

Broadening the range of early childhood services, reviewing the preschool education program and coordinating the educational measures aimed at 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds will entail providing early childhood educators with access to quality initial training and professional development.

The MEQ and the Office des services de garde à l'enfance, in cooperation with the school boards and organizations concerned, will see to it that the initial training and professional development available to early childhood educators is adapted to suit the new situation.

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## **SECOND LINE OF ACTION**

|                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|
| <h3><b>TEACHING THE ESSENTIAL SUBJECTS</b></h3> |
|-------------------------------------------------|

### **THE NEW DIRECTION WILL INVOLVE:**

- coming to a consensus on the content of the core curriculum and on the desired diversification;
- selecting the subjects to be taught;
- updating and enriching program content.

### **TEACHING THE ESSENTIAL SUBJECTS**

**BY:**

## **Reviewing the curriculum**

*June 1997*

The term **curriculum** refers to the elements that structure what students learn in school: subjects to be taught, teaching time, programs, evaluation of student learning, certification of studies, and the organization of the various learning paths.

At the elementary and secondary levels, most of these elements have not been reviewed to any significant degree in the last 15 years. A review is now necessary to adapt the curricula to social, economic and cultural changes, so that they take account of the growing diversity of the school population and equip both general education and vocational education students to face the challenges of the next century.

A task force, chaired by Paul Inchauspé, will be mandated to make recommendations to the Minister on changes to the elementary and secondary curricula. In executing its mandate, the task force will take into account the impact of any recommendations on teaching personnel.

The task force will table its report in June 1997; its recommendations and the ensuing decisions will take account of the MEQ's intention to implement the new programs in the first years of elementary school beginning in September 1998. All of the programs will be reviewed within the next three years.

### **The task force's proposals will deal with:**

- overall educational content (educational mission, learning profiles);
- subjects to be taught (compulsory and optional subjects, the importance to be assigned to subjects, particularly to the language of instruction, the second language, a third language, history, mathematics, science and civics);
- teaching time;
- the diversification of educational paths;
- the revision of programs;
- the evaluation of student learning, the format of report cards and the certification of studies;
- the use of new information and communications technologies for educational purposes.

The task force will also be required to make recommendations on the mandate and modus operandi of a projected provincial curriculum committee.

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## THIRD LINE OF ACTION

### GIVING MORE AUTONOMY TO SCHOOLS

#### THE NEW DIRECTION WILL INVOLVE:

- increasing the responsibility and scope of action of schools;
- decentralizing the organization of work;
- strengthening the pedagogical leadership of school principals;
- giving better recognition and support to teachers' expertise;
- strengthening the links between schools, school boards and local communities, and clarifying their accountability.

#### GIVING MORE AUTONOMY TO SCHOOLS

##### BY:

##### Making legislative changes

One of the main levers in the process of ensuring that as many students as possible achieve success is the capacity of individual schools to adapt their services to the needs and characteristics of the populations they serve. If each institution is truly to be able to exercise its responsibilities, it must be able to make—and act on— pedagogical, administrative and budgetary decisions. This calls for a **new division of responsibilities** between schools, school boards and the MEQ. The Education Act will be amended accordingly.

##### The revision process

*Spring 1997*

This spring, a **draft bill** will be submitted to a parliamentary standing committee for public consultation. It will include, among other things, a detailed proposal for the division of powers between schools, school boards and the government. The bill will be tabled in the National Assembly for adoption in the fall of 1997.

##### Amendments concerning:

##### The functions and powers of schools

Schools will assume a set of functions and powers currently exercised by school boards, but the

links between the two levels will remain in place. The increased powers of schools will involve certain obligations, especially with regard to support and supervision of students and institutional evaluation.

**Institutional councils** will be created to consolidate the autonomy of schools and strengthen their links with the community. The new councils will replace the current orientation committees and may also replace the school committees, both of which play an almost exclusively advisory role. Each council will be composed of parents and representatives of the community, teachers, professional and support staff members, student representatives (for the second cycle of secondary school) and the school principal. The new functions and powers of the schools will for the most part be exercised by the council, based on proposals by the school principal and after consultation with the teaching staff. The Act will specify the responsibilities of school principals with regard to the quality of educational services, the proper operation of schools and the application of regulations.

An **annual report of activities** will be produced by the schools to inform the community of the services offered and the results obtained.

### **Amendments concerning:**

#### **The respective roles of school boards and the State**

**School boards** will be maintained as intermediary authorities elected by universal suffrage and will retain the power to impose taxes. They will continue to ensure that the populations in their respective territories receive the educational services to which they are entitled, in accordance with government legislation, regulations and policies. They will retain their planning, control, evaluation and school support functions.

The **parents' committees** will be maintained and will in future be composed of the parents who sit on the institutional councils.

The **State** will continue to set the general orientations of the education system, distribute resources and monitor activities. The norms enacted by the government and the Minister of Education will be reviewed to limit across-the-board uniformity and give schools more latitude. Consequently, school boards will also be required to review their supervisory and administrative practices to provide for decision-making by the schools.

## **GIVING MORE AUTONOMY TO SCHOOLS**

**BY:**

### **Rethinking work organization**

Duties and responsibilities should be divided among school staff in such a way as to provide for the

varying needs of students during the time they spend in school. This calls for greater flexibility in work organization. Schools—in other words, school principals, teachers and all concerned—should be able to make choices concerning budget and human resources management.

To achieve this, the MEQ intends to hold discussions with its partners at the bargaining table concerning changes to certain rules in order to give school boards and schools the latitude they need to organize their services according to local needs. The proposals put forward will be concerned with **increasing the scope of local negotiation** and encouraging **collegial management** of schools.

## **GIVING MORE AUTONOMY TO SCHOOLS**

**BY:**

### **Supporting school principals**

The goal is to transfer certain pedagogical and administrative responsibilities to the schools in order to open the schools to their respective communities and to enhance their accountability. This will require **stronger pedagogical leadership** from school principals, as well as an open-minded attitude to collegial management, strong skills in administration, and the qualities needed to promote dialogue and transparency.

School principals must be offered ongoing training to help them assume this enhanced role. Current orientations and mechanisms for the selection, training and professional development of school principals will therefore be examined and subsequently revised in cooperation with the appropriate representative bodies.

## **GIVING MORE AUTONOMY TO SCHOOLS**

**BY:**

### **Relying on teachers' expertise**

*June 1997*

In implementing the reform, we will rely extensively on the **expertise of teachers**, particularly as regards the selection of teaching methods and materials, the evaluation and classification of students, and the division of the workload among the teaching staff. A professional development culture must be instituted in each school to give teachers a say in their ongoing training. Such a culture must also spread to all school staff.

The MEQ, supported by its various partners, would like its teacher training orientations—enrichment of the teaching function and recognition of its professional nature—to

extend to **professional development**.

A number of studies have been carried out in this respect within the MEQ or by committees of university and school representatives. Experimental projects have also been conducted in most regions of Québec. As a result, guidelines have been established to direct the action of the various partners as regards professional development. Professional development should be available to all personnel, should be part of an integrated plan, and should be based on teacher participation and concerted action. It should meet the needs of both the individuals and the organization. It should be based on the expertise of the teachers, and involve a variety of methods and venues. Finally, it should be recognized and evaluated periodically.

A document based on these findings will be submitted for consultation in February. After establishing principles and guidelines, it will describe the division of roles and responsibilities between the different players. This document will be discussed by the standing committee on teacher training. The ministerial orientations will then be made public in June 1997.

## **GIVING MORE AUTONOMY TO SCHOOLS**

**BY:**

### **Taking advantage of new information and communications technologies**

Schools must make greater use of new technologies in producing and disseminating knowledge. New technologies will be integrated into the educational process all the more effectively if students' needs and the goals pursued by the school team are taken into account.

The plan of action on new information and communications technologies made public in June 1996 invites each school to draw up its own plan for the integration of new technologies. This plan must include provisions to ensure professional development and the acquisition of computer hardware and educational software. The school boards, for their part, are responsible for consolidating the plans drawn up by their various schools and supporting their implementation.

The plan of action provides for a yearly outlay of \$45.8 million by the MEQ over five years, while the school boards are expected to invest \$17.8 million. One of the objectives is to achieve a ratio of one computer for every ten students.

The plan of action includes a section on the enrichment of initial teacher training with respect to the use of new technologies. It earmarks a budget of \$2 million to allow education faculties to acquire the necessary hardware and software.

The MEQ, relying on concrete support from the private sector (particularly Vidéotron, Cogeco, Bell, Télébec and Québec- Téléphone), will see to it that all Québec schools have access to the

information highway by the end of 1997.

## **GIVING MORE AUTONOMY TO SCHOOLS**

### **A CONSEQUENCE: Reorganizing the structures**

#### **Fewer school boards**

*July 1998*

The government intends to reduce the number of school boards and modify their territories to correspond more closely to the territories of the regional county municipalities (RCMs). The territories will be reorganized in light of the government's intention to create linguistic school boards. This operation, which is consistent with the increased responsibilities to be given to schools, will foster cooperation between the partners from the various sectors of each territory, and will help reduce administrative costs.

Data compiled by the MEQ will be used to assess the consequences of different reorganization scenarios, since simply duplicating RCM territories will in many cases be inappropriate. The MEQ, with a view to completing the operation by July 1998, will shortly be submitting these scenarios to the Québec-school boards consultation table, which will decide how the school boards should be consulted on this issue. Consultation should nevertheless be held in the spring of 1997 around an objective of 70 school boards.

The MEQ also intends to give priority to all voluntary merger projects which comply with the parameters described above and could be carried out by July 1997.

As regards the Island of Montréal, the **Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal** will be invited, in cooperation with the school boards concerned, to submit an opinion on various hypotheses for reorganization.

#### **Regional coordination**

*Spring 1997*

The MEQ wishes to establish an **inter-level advisory authority** in each of the administrative regions in order to promote consistent application of the reform and better harmonization between the different levels of education.

The new authority's mandate will include **research** on issues of regional interest—for example, the elements that promote or hinder student success—**planning of options** for vocational and technical education, and **joint action** by the education community and regional and economic development

organizations. The authority will be composed of representatives from early childhood centres, school boards, colleges and universities.

To facilitate the creation of the new authority, the MEQ, through its regional directors, will call a meeting of the partners before the spring. The members themselves will then decide on rules, procedures and liaison mechanisms with other regional advisory bodies.

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## **FOURTH LINE OF ACTION**

### **SUPPORTING MONTRÉAL SCHOOLS**

#### **THE NEW DIRECTION WILL INVOLVE:**

- **taking immediate action to ensure that all Montréal public schools are able to promote success, by providing special support to the schools facing the dual challenge of poverty and the integration of newly arrived immigrant students;**
- **using Montréal's intellectual, financial and community resources more effectively to promote student success;**
- **promoting partnerships between schools and local communities.**

#### **SUPPORTING MONTRÉAL SCHOOLS**

##### **BY:**

##### **Introducing specific measures for some Montréal schools**

Not all Montréal schools are in difficulty. The relatively low success rate in many of the city's public schools is due mainly to the significant percentage of disadvantaged children and an equally significant percentage of immigrant students who arrive in Québec partway through their education and who are undereducated.

The proportion of students who are behind in their schooling is much higher in schools in Montréal's low-income areas than in other schools on the Island. In 1995, 34 percent of students in the last year of elementary school and 65.1 percent of students in the first year of secondary school had fallen behind, compared with 18 percent and 36.5 percent, respectively, in other schools. **Remedial measures** exist, but they are insufficient to give these students equal chances for success.

**Priority** must be given to the schools with high concentrations of these students in order to provide them with the support they need. Based on the classification of the Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal, the MEQ will target **95 elementary schools** and **23 secondary schools** considered to be the most disadvantaged. These schools have a total of 50 000 students and are attended by three-quarters of all disadvantaged students on the Island of Montréal. Most are located in the centre and east of the Island.

To take up the challenge of success, schools should be able to count on the support of parents, community, economic and social organizations, postsecondary establishments and other institutions. This support may take various forms: sponsoring of schools, presentations by resource persons, and so on. The idea is to stimulate students' desire to learn, to succeed and to surpass themselves. Schools should reciprocate by getting actively involved in the community.

In Montréal, the reform implementation strategy will rest on the creation of a **strengthened zone of cooperation** around the target schools. The MEQ will establish a representative group of the main social, educational and economic players whose job will be to make sure that the orientations selected for these schools are in line with the expectations of the community, and that the reform is implemented at a pace that reflects the community's realities and constraints.

In addition to the \$10 million it already allocates to the Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal, the MEQ will set aside approximately **\$10 million** from its budget for this plan of action, plus an additional \$10 million for the development of services for 4-year-olds, in accordance with the new provisions of the family policy.

### **A strategy for: Early childhood services**

*September 1997*

Half-day kindergarten for 4-year-olds is currently available in disadvantaged areas. However, some 2 000 children living in the target school areas do not attend kindergarten, either because some schools do not offer it, because a limited number of places are available, or because the parents choose not to use the service. The number of children attending school day care as well as kindergarten is relatively small, since many parents find the service too expensive.

The Greater Montréal region will be the first to offer **free educational services for 4-year-olds in disadvantaged areas, for a total of 23.5 hours a week**. As of September 1997, 86 of the target schools will offer half-day educational activities through their school day care services to complement existing half-day kindergarten services. Early childhood centres established under the family policy will gradually increase the current supply of services in order to offer free educational services for 23.5 hours per week to the 1 800 4-year-olds living in disadvantaged areas who do not have access to the services offered by the 86 schools.

Full-time kindergarten for 5-year-olds, which is not yet offered in all of the target schools, will be made available throughout Québec from September 1997 onwards. In the target schools alone, this will give 1 500 additional children the opportunity to attend full-time kindergarten.

#### **A strategy for :**

#### **Elementary schools and the first cycle of secondary school**

Schools should be able to adapt their organizational framework and teaching to the characteristics of their students. This is one of the keys to success. Where a large percentage of the students have learning difficulties—as is the case in the target schools, for example—schools should **organize their timetable and teaching** in a way that will enable them to correct problems at the appropriate time.

The MEQ will also encourage the diversification of remedial measures by providing financial incentives for the creation of learning support and remedial mechanisms as **alternatives to having students repeat a year**.

#### **A strategy for:**

#### **Students from immigrant families**

For students from immigrant families who arrive in Québec partway through their education, especially those of secondary school age, integration into regular classes is particularly difficult. A great many of these students are undereducated. They sometimes have a poor knowledge of French and often find it difficult to catch up. For them, welcoming classes are not always a suitable alternative.

The MEQ will review its budgetary rules to give priority to students from cultural communities who **arrive in Québec partway through their elementary or secondary education** with severe academic deficits. The choice of methods will be left to the schools, which will decide, for example, between extended placements in welcoming classes, language support measures or the introduction of a complementary remedial program.

To help these students, the MEQ also intends to develop **parental support** models in cooperation with the school boards. It will obtain cooperation from the Secrétariat à la famille and the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration.

#### **A strategy for:**

#### **Immediate preparation for employment**

Nearly two-thirds of students in the target schools will have fallen behind by at least a year by the time they reach secondary school. The vast majority will abandon their studies before obtaining a diploma. Some will enter a life skills and work skills education program, but here again, only half will continue through to completion. In addition, not all of the programs lead to the MEQ's attestation of skills. Consequently, many target school students will leave secondary school without any kind of recognized preparation for employment.

The MEQ therefore intends to ask the school boards to prepare a plan to increase the availability of **life skills and work skills education programs** in all target schools in the coming year. Students must complete the two-year program and receive an attestation of skills. The development and enrichment of **work- place internships** will also be promoted, with the cooperation of the ministère de la Métropole, the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montréal and other partners who are already actively involved in this area.

### **A strategy for: Vocational education**

The number of young people in vocational education programs is abnormally low on the Island of Montréal, compared with other regions. In fact, the number of students under 20 years of age in this type of program has actually declined over the last five years. The MEQ and the Island of Montréal school boards will decide on a special plan of action to correct the situation.

### **This plan of action will include the following components:**

- information on vocational education, especially the different access paths and the trades offering the best job prospects, directed in particular at students attending target schools and their parents;
- measures to encourage school boards to introduce job exploration activities in the first year of secondary school;
- measures to enable school boards to prepare a plan of action to improve access to programs leading to semi- specialized and specialized trades;
- a review of the admission quotas for certain programs, where necessary;
- a significant increase in the capacity of vocational education institutions, through a review of organizational models and the acceleration of capital projects.

### **A strategy for: Cooperation between schools and communities**

Many parents in disadvantaged areas have expressed a need to be better equipped to support their children as they progress through school, especially when their children are having difficulties. A fairly extensive community group network is working with these parents, but there is a need to coordinate their action with that of schools.

In addition to parent effectiveness training for the parents of 4-year-olds in kindergarten, the MEQ, in cooperation with the school boards, the ministère de la Sécurité du revenu and the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, will develop a program to provide for the appointment of **liaison officers** in the target schools. These officers will be trained to coordinate relations between schools, families and community groups.

**A strategy for:**

**Complementary efforts by the education and health and social services networks**

The role of the health and social services network in the schools is to prevent and attempt to resolve social health and psychosocial problems that can hinder students' progress and success in school. There must be greater consistency between its actions and those of the schools.

The effectiveness of this type of intervention must be improved, throughout Québec and in Montréal, particularly in the target schools. The MEQ and the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, together with their partners in the education, community and municipal sectors, will prepare a plan of action in order to better coordinate the efforts of the various players and better harmonize actions aimed at school-aged children.

**A strategy for:**

**Access to cultural resources**

The cultural field offers a wide range of resources. However, the target schools do not sufficiently take advantage of these resources to enrich their program of activities.

Artistic and cultural activities motivate young people by encouraging them to make use of their inner resources, creativity and talents. Also, contact with Québec creations helps immigrant students integrate into their new social environment. For all of these reasons, the MEQ, in cooperation with the school boards and with the support of the ministère de la Culture et des Communications and its partners in Montréal, will develop measures aimed at giving students in target schools greater access to existing educational and cultural programs such as Writers in the Schools, Artists in the Schools and Specta-Jeunes.

**A strategy for:**

**Professional support for the school team**

The teachers and principals working in target schools must deal with special difficulties tied to economic disadvantage and the integration of newly arrived immigrants. Constant resourcing is a requisite if these schools are to stay attuned to students' needs. Fortunately, universities and research bodies are conducting studies on teaching approaches, the adaptation of intervention strategies for students with special needs, and methods of adapting curricula for students of different cultures. In

addition, consultants can provide support to target schools in the development of plans to improve the quality of their services.

Contacts between professionals such as these and the school community are not frequent enough to enable the school teams to make full use of their expertise and obtain better professional support. The MEQ, with the school boards and in cooperation with the ministère de la Métropole, will develop strategies to facilitate the use of **professional support resources**.

## **SUPPORTING MONTRÉAL SCHOOLS**

**BY:**

### **Developing an intercultural education and cultural integration policy**

*June 1997*

The issue of intercultural relations and the role of schools in this area concerns society as a whole. However, it is of particular importance in the Greater Montréal region, which is where the majority of Québec's immigrants live.

A government policy on immigration and integration was published in 1990. As the time has come to clarify the responsibilities of the education community in this area, the MEQ, in conjunction with the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, will present a **policy statement** on intercultural education and cultural integration. It will propose guidelines and avenues for action for the elementary and secondary levels, and will also address the consequences for college education.

### **Among other things, this policy will focus on:**

- the responsibility of schools for linguistic, educational and social integration and intercultural education;
- the concentration of immigrant students in some schools;
- the nature of welcoming services;
- ways of promoting an open attitude to ethnic, cultural and religious diversity;
- initial teacher training and professional development in intercultural education;
- relations between educators, parents and community groups in pluriethnic environments;
- ways of ensuring fair representation for the members of cultural communities in schools and school boards.

To achieve this, the MEQ will form an advisory committee composed of intercultural education specialists. This committee will make its comments and suggestions to the ministerial task force responsible for drafting the policy. The task force is expected to table the draft policy on June 30, 1997. The MEQ will then consult all of its partners in the education system to make any necessary

changes to the policy before its official adoption.

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## **FIFTH LINE OF ACTION**

### **INTENSIFYING THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**THE NEW DIRECTION WILL  
INVOLVE:**

- **designing programs that will provide students with qualifications allowing them to either join the work force or continue their studies;**
- **diversifying the paths leading to certification and diversifying the training approaches used;**
- **reviewing the general education component of vocational and technical education programs;**
- **ensuring that vocational and technical education programs better meet labour market requirements;**
- **increasing the responsibilities of vocational education centres;**
- **encouraging students to go on to more advanced programs by building bridges between the levels of education;**
- **quadrupling, over the next five years, the number of vocational education diplomas awarded to students under 20 years of age;**
- **making students, parents and the business community more aware of vocational and technical education as valid options.**

### **INTENSIFYING THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

**Providing better information**

*February 1997*

Beginning in February 1997, the MEQ will ask the school boards and colleges in each region to establish a **communications strategy** aimed at students and parents and including a section on programs leading to non-traditional occupations for women. The MEQ will also ask educational

institutions to see to it that students have access to adequate information on trades and occupations and to job exploration activities (section 3 of the experimental program) that will help them make better **educational and vocational choices**.

In collaboration with the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre, the MEQ will provide each region with information on the vocational and technical education programs that offer the best **job prospects** by publishing the results of follow-up interviews with former graduates and providing data on labour market needs.

Since the Québec Skills Olympics provide a unique way of promoting vocational and technical education among students and parents, the MEQ, in collaboration with educational institutions, socioeconomic partners and the other ministries and organizations concerned, will continue to support them financially.

## **INTENSIFYING THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

**Providing earlier access to vocational education and easier access to technical education**

*February 1997*

The diversification of access paths to vocational education will be carried out in collaboration with the education networks—the school boards and colleges—and teachers. The MEQ will seek their input before determining the terms on which the **new paths** introduced on an experimental basis over the last two years will be organized and funded.

This work will begin in February 1997, and will ensure that the new paths are introduced alongside the current intensive path, which consists of programs leading to the Secondary School Vocational Diploma (SSVD) and the Attestation of Vocational Specialization (AVS). This intensive path will be maintained in order to meet work force training needs and the needs of young adults who wish to resume their studies or change career paths.

The MEQ will put the emphasis on earlier access to programs leading to the SSVD, i.e., after the **Secondary III** level (section 5 of the experimental program). The general education component of the programs will be adapted and offered in conjunction with the vocational education component. Between now and the year 2000, all school boards offering vocational education programs will be required to assess the feasibility of introducing such programs.

In order to promote continuity between the levels of education and to eliminate educational dead-ends, the MEQ will encourage the development of **integrated secondary/college programs** (section

4 of the experimental program) accessible after Secondary III. Once approved by the MEQ, integrated programs will be offered on an experimental basis in the following areas, beginning in September 1997: electromechanics, electronics, mechanical engineering and forestry.

Other integrated programs may be offered on an experimental basis in 1998, in the following sectors: Administration, Commerce and Computer Technology; Food Services and Tourism; Buildings and Public Works; Mechanical Manufacturing; Forestry and Pulp and Paper; Communications.

The underrepresentation of female students in many vocational education programs calls for special attention. Currently, 90 percent of girls and women enrolled in vocational education programs are concentrated in only four sectors. In order to significantly increase the number of girls and women in other sectors, the MEQ will ask school boards to identify and implement measures to give them better access to programs leading to non-traditional occupations.

## **INTENSIFYING THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

### **Developing programs leading to semi-specialized trades**

With its partners in the school boards, the MEQ will continue the implementation of programs leading to a Vocational Education Certificate (VEC) and preparing students for **semi-specialized trades** (section 2 of the experimental program). This path will be accessible to students who have successfully completed the Secondary II level. The general education component of these programs will be redesigned to include the basic subjects students will need should they decide to pursue their studies towards an SSVD or a Secondary School Diploma. In 1997, over 100 school boards will offer programs leading to semi-specialized trades, and the MEQ estimates that, in the year 2000, all school boards will offer such programs.

The MEQ will continue to support school boards that wish to develop new VEC programs to meet local labour market needs, subject to agreement on terms for their organization and funding.

In order to encourage the establishment of bridges between life skills and work skills education programs and VEC programs, the MEQ will evaluate the possibility of issuing a statement of competencies to students in life skills and work skills education in the youth sector and students in sociovocational integration programs in the adult sector.

## **INTENSIFYING THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

## **Implementing an apprenticeship system**

*June 1997*

Together with its labour market partners, the sector-based committees, the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre and the school boards, the MEQ will take part in the implementation of a new apprenticeship system.

The MEQ's contribution will consist in facilitating agreements on shared responsibility for training between schools and businesses, funding school-based training and awarding diplomas.

Between now and June 1997, the government will make the required amendments to the *Regulation respecting the application of the Act respecting private education* to allow businesses to offer vocational training leading to a diploma awarded by the MEQ.

These amendments will exclude businesses from the application of the *Act respecting private education* and the regulations thereunder, which are not compatible with the role of businesses participating in an apprenticeship system.

However, the Minister will specify conditions to be met by businesses to guarantee the quality of the training they deliver and to justify the issue of a diploma.

## **INTENSIFYING THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

## **Encouraging work-study programs**

*Spring 1997*

With the help of its labour market partners, the school boards and the colleges, the MEQ plans to increase student enrolment in work-study programs from 4 000 to 6 000 within the next three years, with special attention being paid to the enrolment of female students in programs leading to non-traditional occupations.

The MEQ intends to promote the work-study format within **businesses and public and para-public organizations** (the ministries, their networks, government corporations, municipalities, etc.) so that they will provide work placements each year for students enrolled in work-study programs.

Beginning in February 1997, the MEQ will distribute a promotional brochure and a handbook to prepare businesses to accept trainees and to encourage them to do so. An Internet site will be set up to provide interested businesses and organizations with information on work-study programs.

In order to raise the profile of this type of program, the on-the-job training received as part of a work-study program will be entered in the **official transcript** of students in vocational education at the secondary level and technical education at the college level.

At the same time, the MEQ will continue to provide professional and technical support to educational institutions that wish to introduce work-study programs or improve their current offerings. The MEQ will hold information and awareness activities, distribute appropriate materials and organize task forces.

The provincial committee on vocational and technical education programs will act as the main link between the MEQ and its partners in the workplace and the education system. The committee's role in this respect will be to encourage support for work-study programs among corporate executives and coordinate the efforts of the education and business sectors.

## **INTENSIFYING THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

### **Increasing the supply of services and the number of places**

The MEQ will encourage the institutions to increase the supply of services and the number of places available in vocational and technical education. Possible means of achieving these goals include double shifts, year-round programs and the use of new information and communications technologies. The MEQ will contact all government organizations and municipalities and ask them to consider giving the education community access to facilities and equipment which could be useful in delivering vocational or technical education.

## **INTENSIFYING THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

### **Redesigning the general education component of college-level technical education programs**

The general education component is a stumbling block for many students in technical education programs, and sometimes even prevents them from graduating. To address this problem, the

Minister has asked the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation for advice on **the place general education should occupy within technical education programs** and on the ways in which it could be better adapted to and integrated into such programs.

## **INTENSIFYING THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

### **Improving the harmonization of programs between the levels of education**

*Spring 1997*

Some educational institutions are already involved in setting up inter-level links and mechanisms to promote such links are already in place. Both the provincial committee on vocational and technical education programs and the postsecondary education liaison committee, for example, address this issue as a part of their mandates.

To intensify current efforts to harmonize vocational education and technical education most effectively, the MEQ will, beginning in March 1997, identify the programs between which the educational institutions can establish **bridges**. Identifying the competencies that are similar from one program to the other will facilitate the recognition of prior learning and thus eliminate overlaps which are costly and demotivating for students. The secondary school and college programs will be harmonized so that students can obtain an SSVD and a DEC (college diploma or *Diplôme d'études collégiales*) in the same field within a shorter time frame than if they completed two separate programs.

To **better articulate technical education programs and university programs**, in addition to intensifying the work of the postsecondary education liaison committee, the MEQ will extend the membership of the provincial committee on vocational and technical education programs to include two members from the university community. Universities and colleges will also be encouraged to agree on bridges to facilitate the admission of graduates from college-level technical education programs into university programs.

Lastly, in April 1997, the MEQ will start a survey of the technical education and university programs which would lend themselves to harmonization. The MEQ will also publish information on projects currently under way.

## **INTENSIFYING THE REFORM OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

## Ensuring coordinated planning

The MEQ will intensify the work it has begun with its partners in the education sector to ensure that, in each region, a **three-year plan** for the development of vocational and technical education options is adopted.

### Each three-year plan will deal with the following elements:

- the consolidation and development of program offerings based particularly on regional economic structures;
- a reexamination of the authorizations granted for programs considered to be non-viable;
- an exploration of new organizational models to maximize the use of existing resources and increase enrolment capacity;
- a reinforcement of partnerships with businesses and between levels of education with the goal of better harmonizing programs and maximizing the use of both financial and material resources in the region;
- regional priorities for the introduction of new programs or the abolition of existing programs.

The MEQ will base its own three-year plan for the development of vocational and technical education on the three-year plans drawn up by the regions.

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## SIXTH LINE OF ACTION

### CONSOLIDATING AND RATIONALIZING

#### POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL, THE NEW DIRECTION WILL INVOLVE:

- leaving time for the new measures currently being implemented to have an effect;
- increasing the academic responsibilities of colleges;
- simplifying the administrative framework;
- encouraging concerted action and partnerships between institutions;
- increasing the colleges' autonomy in relation to work organization.

#### CONSOLIDATING AND RATIONALIZING COLLEGE-LEVEL EDUCATION

BY:

## Introducing amendments to legislation and regulations

In 1993, the college sector began a major process of reform following the adoption of renewal measures. These changes must be continued, but even greater change is needed to give colleges more leeway, especially as regards programs, and to encourage concerted action between institutions. After consulting its partners, the MEQ will take steps to amend the *General and Vocational Colleges Act* and the *College Education Regulations*.

### Amendments to: Increase the academic independence of colleges

The MEQ will define only objectives and standards for college-level programs and will leave colleges free to select the most appropriate means to comply with them. Currently, the MEQ not only sets objectives and standards for all college-level programs, but also determines the learning activities to be offered in the core general education component (philosophy, language and literature, physical education) and at least 50 percent of the learning activities to be included in the program-specific component of pre-university programs.

In future, all colleges will be able to develop and implement a program leading to an **attestation of college studies** (AEC or *Attestation d'études collégiales*) in any field where a program leading to a DEC is currently awarded. At the present time, ministerial authorization is required if the college does not offer the DEC program corresponding to the AEC program it wishes to introduce.

While MEQ financial support for programs leading to an AEC will be maintained, it is possible that legislative amendments will be introduced to allow colleges, where necessary, to offer self-funding AEC programs by charging fees to students.

### Amendments to: Simplify the administrative process

The rules and regulations currently in force will be reexamined during the yearly exchanges between the MEQ and the colleges. For example, the MEQ may modify the financial limit beyond which a college must seek MEQ authorization before acquiring, constructing, extending or converting a building. Current practices governing capitalizable spending may also be reviewed.

The long-standing distinction in the budgetary rules between subsidies granted for regular programs, continuing education and summer courses will be reviewed, to allow a more **broadly-based approach** to human resources management and a rational, flexible development of the supply of services at the local and regional levels.

### Amendments to:

## **Encourage the creation of regional colleges and the grouping of services**

Legislative and regulatory amendments will allow the creation of **regional colleges** and provide for changes to the budgetary rules to encourage colleges to **group** their administrative services or **to merge**. It will henceforth be possible to annul a college's charter on the recommendation of the Minister.

## **CONSOLIDATING AND RATIONALIZING COLLEGE-LEVEL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

### **Introducing a new financial incentive to encourage success**

*1997-98*

To encourage students to commit themselves to the successful completion of their studies, a new financial incentive will be introduced in 1997-98. Students failing more than one course in a given term will, before registering full time in a college for the following term, have to pay a **special \$2-fee** for every hour of instruction they received in all failed courses, except the first. The objective of this measure is not to collect extra revenue but rather to improve the pass rate from the current level of 83 percent to 90 percent by the end of the 1999-2000 academic year.

## **CONSOLIDATING AND RATIONALIZING COLLEGE-LEVEL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

### **Intensifying the use of new information and communications technologies**

Already widely used in Québec colleges, new information and communications technologies must become true resources for teachers and students.

In September 1996, the MEQ made public a three-year plan of action in which it earmarked an annual budget of \$7 million for the next three years to extend and upgrade the hardware base.

A yearly budget of \$2.2 million will be devoted to supporting projects aimed at integrating new technologies in the educational process (hardware acquisition, resource development, technical and professional support for teachers).

In addition, a yearly \$100 000 subsidy will be granted to an organization known as the "Vitrine APO," set up by the college network to showcase educational computer applications.

## SIXTH LINE OF ACTION

### CONSOLIDATING AND RATIONALIZING

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL, THE NEW DIRECTION WILL INVOLVE:

- **rationalizing the supply of university programs;**
- **reviewing funding rules;**
- **drafting a true social contract between Québec society and Québec universities.**

### CONSOLIDATING AND RATIONALIZING UNIVERSITY-LEVEL EDUCATION

BY:

**Taking advantage of the work of the commission on university programs**

*May 1997*

The Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec (CREPUQ) has set up a joint commission to examine **the relevance and complementarity of university programs**. The commission, which enjoys a completely independent status, will report directly to the institutions concerned.

The commission is made up of three administrators in the fields of teaching and research, five faculty members, a contract lecturer, three university students, a professional staff member, a support staff member, a representative of the socioeconomic sector who holds a university degree, and an observer appointed by the MEQ.

**The commission's objectives include the following:**

- to ensure the continued quality, diversity, effectiveness, accessibility and equity of the university system, especially at the regional level;
- to ensure that institutions with a general mission maintain a basic range of programs;
- to contribute to the rationalization of university programs.

The work of the commission will be guided by standards of academic and scientific excellence, will rely on the participation of members of the university community, and will respect the independence of individual institutions as regards the programs they offer.

The commission will examine programs by mini-sector and will forward its recommendations—for consolidation, specialization, merger, closure, etc.—directly to the institutions concerned. The results of its work will, however, be made public. The commission will produce public reports twice a year, the first being scheduled for the end of May 1997.

## **CONSOLIDATING AND RATIONALIZING UNIVERSITY-LEVEL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

### **Reviewing funding rules**

*March 1997*

University funding draws frequent questions and criticism. One reason for this is that the strategic orientations behind the funding rules are not always clear. Another is that the rules need to be adjusted to better reflect certain widely supported objectives, particularly those relating to student success, such as improving student support and supervision in order to reduce the dropout rate. Added to this, universities, like other organizations, are expected to keep up their efforts to reduce costs paid for out of the public purse.

A task force on university funding, chaired by Marcel Gilbert, was set up in December 1996. Its mandate is to examine the current rules for the government funding of universities. Its recommendations will be aimed at cutting costs, raising graduation rates, reducing the length of time students take to complete their studies, enriching the teaching and student supervision functions and stepping up the universities' involvement in research.

The task force will table its report on March 30, 1997.

### **The report is expected to include recommendations on:**

- the funding of new enrolment, with a view to avoiding undue competition for students between universities;
- the methods and levels of funding for certificate programs and other short programs;
- whether courses whose content is not clearly at the university level should be recognized for funding purposes;
- the means by which institutions could be encouraged to work towards reducing the number of dropouts and the time taken to complete a program;
- a review of the weighting assigned to sectors and levels of study;
- the advisability of introducing special rules for universities in the regions;
- support for distance education and the use of new information and communications technologies;
- support for research;

- an increase in the amount of working time faculty members devote to teaching and student supervision;
- whether the independent revenues received by universities from endowment funds and university foundations should be taken into consideration;
- the advisability of imposing limits on the transferability of the various types of government funding.

## **CONSOLIDATING AND RATIONALIZING UNIVERSITY-LEVEL EDUCATION**

**BY:**

### **Drafting a policy on university education**

*Fall 1997*

The government is, in many ways, the moderator of society's expectations towards its universities, since it supervises some of their actions and provides them with funding. The expectations are reflected, implicitly, in the relevant legislation and funding rules. They need clarification, however, as does the overall relationship existing between the State and the universities.

A **policy on university education** will be drafted in the form of a social contract between the two parties. Initiated by the MEQ, this operation will be continued in collaboration with the universities, since partnership is, after all, its central purpose. The MEQ will call on the services of an independent advisory group made up of individuals from the university community and representatives from various sectors of society, particularly the socioeconomic sector and the college network.

### **The policy will focus on:**

- the mission of universities;
- the expectations of society, and their translation into objectives for the university system;
- the dual role of universities as independent and public service institutions;
- the type of relationship the government intends to maintain with the universities, including the mechanisms and rules that will govern this relationship;
- the levels of performance expected of the university system;
- accountability.

A preliminary version of the policy will be submitted to university authorities for consultation in the summer of 1997. Its approval is scheduled for the fall of 1997.

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## SEVENTH LINE OF ACTION

### PROVIDING BETTER ACCESS TO

#### CONTINUING EDUCATION THE NEW DIRECTION WILL INVOLVE:

- ensuring that the concept of education as a lifelong process is taken into account throughout the education system;
- providing continuing education services that reflect the diversity of adults' needs;
- introducing effective strategies to combat illiteracy;
- clarifying the role and the responsibilities of the various players in the continuing education field.

#### PROVIDING BETTER ACCESS TO CONTINUING EDUCATION

BY:

##### Establishing a continuing education policy

*June 1997*

The ongoing renewal of skills has become a basic requirement in our society, one that can no longer be met by an adult education sector designed to provide a second chance to those with little schooling. Accessibility and the coordination of actions in the continuing education field are two other areas of major concern.

The MEQ has begun work on a **continuing education policy**. It will be assisted by an advisory committee made up of resource persons from the continuing education field.

The policy will clarify MEQ orientations with respect to the provision of services and the distribution of roles among the various players in the continuing education field.

The draft policy is scheduled for completion in June 1997, and will be submitted to the MEQ's partners for consultation before its final approval.

##### The policy, in particular, will focus on:

- the accessibility of various types of training, at all levels of education;

- the fight against illiteracy;
  - the role played by distance education and new information and communications technologies;
  - the recognition of prior learning;
  - reception and referral services;
  - ways of reducing the failure and dropout rates among adults in continuing education programs;
  - the distribution of roles among the various players in the continuing education field;
  - recognition of the role played by community groups.
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## **CONCLUSION**

As you can see, the reform of the education system is well under way.

Cooperation between the main partners involved in this reform is the key to its success. To ensure continued support for the reform at all levels, a follow-up committee will be established in February 1997. Chaired by the Minister of Education, it will give all participating partners the opportunity to provide input on relevant issues. The committee will make use of sector-based mechanisms, if needed.

Beyond the necessary cooperation of institutional partners, in order to effectively steer our education system in the new direction we have chosen, we must also—and above all—be able to count on the commitment of students, the participation of parents, the support of the community and the drive and energy of all those who work in education.

With everyone's continued cooperation, effort and enthusiasm, we will successfully change the course of education in Québec.

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