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**Opinion of the Comité d'orientation
de la formation du personnel enseignant**

Creating
a New Culture
of Professional Development
in Teaching

**CREATING A NEW CULTURE
OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING**

**Opinion of the Comité d'orientation de la formation
du personnel enseignant**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Part One: The Context	
1.1 Professional development in teaching as seen by COFPE.....	5
1.2 The new orientations of the Ministère de l'Éducation.....	5
1.3 Principles formulated by COFPE in its previous opinions	8
1.4 The legal context.....	9
Part Two: Findings on Professional Development and Needs Identified	
2.1 Data gathered by COFPE	13
2.2 Data from other studies	13
2.3 Involvement in the process of professional development	14
2.4 The form of professional development activities: Reality and expectations	15
2.5 The content of professional development: Current choices and expectations ...	17
2.6 Satisfaction with professional development activities	18
2.6.1 The types of activities	18
2.6.2 The relevance of the activities.....	19
2.7 Resources and support.....	20
2.8 Sharing of responsibilities: Participation and follow-up.....	21
2.9 Other obstacles to be overcome	22

Part Three: **The Implementation of Professional Development for Teachers**

Actions to promote and support quality professional development.....	25
Conditions to be established.....	26
1. Time for professional development.....	26
2. Use of pedagogical days.....	28
3. Diversification of types of training and use of peer training.....	29
4. Material and financial resources	32
5. Teachers as resource persons	34
6. Adaptation of the university model of training	36
7. The contribution of colloquia and conferences.....	38
8. The role of principals and school boards	39
The quality of professional development.....	41
1. The relevance of professional development.....	41
2. Certification of outside training providers	43
3. Making professional development activities more consistent.....	45
4. Evaluation of professional development activities.....	46
Conclusion.....	48
Appendix 1 Members of the Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant (COFPE)	
Appendix 2 Mandate of the Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant (COFPE)	
Appendix 3 Recommendations of the Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant (COFPE)	

Bibliography

Introduction

In a field like teaching, professional development is a necessity, not only because disciplines, programs of study, regulations and educational policies are evolving, but also because the social context is undergoing changes that are reflected in the students, in both the youth and adult sectors. Similarly, in vocational education, the rapid evolution of occupations and work environments makes professional development for teachers even more important in order to keep programs of study up to date.

Over the years, teachers have experienced changes of all kinds, stressful situations and transformations of pedagogical approaches and subject content. Teaching is a demanding profession, yet teachers receive little support in enhancing their training and renewing their practices as changes occur in the profession.

The orientations that have been set out for initial teacher training recognize the necessity of professional development in that their explicit purpose is to prepare future teachers to enter the profession. The initial training is basic training, which must constantly be updated and renewed, in the subjects taught, the field of education and personal development and general culture.

This professional requirement gives rise to responsibilities. These responsibilities are individual in origin, which implies, first of all, a personal commitment to professional development activities that meet specific needs. They are also collective, which implies that professional development should be enabled, supported and facilitated by means of appropriate conditions and resources.

The first place where this responsibility should be exercised is the school, but the shift in focus to the school that is being advocated here does not diminish the responsibility of the Ministère de l'Éducation or the school boards for professional development for teachers. The Ministère's responsibilities are based on its educational policies and the regulations and programs of study. It has to establish the general orientations of professional development¹ and participate in their implementation, just as it has responsibilities related to its role as employer and first manager of the public resources devoted to education.

As several studies show, a large proportion of teachers are already fulfilling their responsibility in professional development. Unlike initial training, professional development is still seen as an individual responsibility.

To create a new culture of professional development in teaching, we must consider professional development part of the organization of work. The challenge for the school will then be to become a community of learners, and not only an organization whose mission is to make students learn.

1. In this document, the term *professional development* is used to refer to professional development specifically for teachers.

The fulfillment of this responsibility cannot be put off. Considering professional development a necessity and seeing it as an individual, professional and collective responsibility means that it should be accorded an important place in the teaching profession.

Enhancing professional development in teaching requires specific actions in the short and the longer term. In its study of the situation, the Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant (COFPE) identified a certain number of problems to be solved and obstacles to be removed in order to make professional development more accessible. The committee also identified the achievements and the facilitating conditions it would be appropriate to build on in order to reach the goals that have been set; in every case, the question of the time allotted to professional development is crucial.

It is also important to put greater stress on the quality of professional development—more specifically, its relevance, continuity and consistency for individual teachers and school teams, and its effectiveness in relation to the resources allotted.

The announcement of new orientations for professional development for teachers by the Minister of Education provides an excellent opportunity to define a new organizational culture. Essentially, COFPE supports these orientations, in which several schools and school boards have already been involved; in fact, it is part of the follow-up and complementary measures related to these orientations.

For all partners in education, professional development is a necessity in order to meet current and coming challenges, in particular, the implementation of the reform that arose out of the Estates General on Education, since any reform or evolution must be accompanied by mechanisms for training in order to help students to benefit from the evolution of education and knowledge in various subjects. This necessity also arises from social and parental expectations, and it is in keeping with the professionalization of teaching. The reaffirmed desire to have all students succeed requires the enhancement of competencies acquired in initial training and developed through experience and also demands the construction of new competencies.

COFPE therefore proposes to create or strengthen the conditions that contribute to establishing a new culture of professional development and indicates various lines of action to ensure the quality of professional development.

This opinion is divided into three parts. Part One describes the context of professional development in teaching; Part Two provides observations and findings from studies conducted concerning professional development needs, including COFPE's own survey; Part Three makes recommendations to the Minister of Education on establishing a new culture of professional development in teaching in order to increase educational success.

COFPE urges the various players in education to join together and take action.

PART ONE

THE CONTEXT

1.1 Professional development in teaching as seen by COFPE

Following directly from the definition it proposed in a first opinion² on this subject, COFPE considers that the concept of professional development should be applied to all actions and activities in which teachers engage, individually or collectively, in order to update and enrich their professional practice.

Although this definition includes the concept of in-service training, it covers not only sporadic activities but all training throughout a teacher's career, and stresses *continuity* in this training, which implies activities that are ongoing, progressive and coherent as well as short-, medium- and long-term planning.

The proposed definition obviously applies to training sessions for which credit is granted, that is, training leading to attestations or diplomas. However, it has the advantage of covering the diverse range of forms of training, including experience and learning through professional activities.

In a similar vein, COFPE feels that the orientations set out in the MEQ document on professional development for teachers³ deal with the essential aspects. In this document, professional development activities are grouped in three broad categories: improvement of teaching practices, adjustment to organizational change, and personal development.

This being said, COFPE would like to suggest some qualifications to these concepts, which are guidelines for professional development. It would like to stress that professional development is generally in-service training and that it presupposes that initial training has provided the competencies required for entering the teaching profession. Finally, the concept favoured implies that professional development is integrated into working life.

1.2 The new orientations of the Ministère de l'Éducation

On June 7, 1999, the Minister of Education published *Orientations for the Professional Development of Teachers—Taking an Active Approach to Change*.⁴

In this document, the Ministère first provides a picture of the situation of professional development in teaching. After observing that teachers have taken many courses over the years to increase their scolarity, as a result of the creation of teachers' centres (Centres d'enseignantes et enseignants; CEE) and training centres in educational technology (Centres d'enrichissement

2. Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant, *Avis du COFPE sur la formation continue* (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, June 1997).

3. Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la formation et de la titularisation du personnel scolaire, *Orientations for the Professional Development of Teachers: Taking an Active Approach to Change* (Québec, 1999).

4. *Ibid.*

en micro-informatique scolaire; CEMIS), the document concludes that professional development for teachers has a solid foundation on which to build.

However, the Ministère feels that the professional development activities available have not always provided a satisfactory response to teachers' needs. Furthermore, until now they have been offered in a piecemeal, sporadic fashion. Finally, they have probably not had as great an impact as they should have.

Among the modifications proposed are the following: moving from ad hoc activities to an integrated training process; placing greater importance on the acquisition and development of collective competencies in a community of learners; determining the activities on the basis of the specific needs to be met; completing and improving the training process by analyzing the results achieved.

The document then points out that both the *Act to foster the development of manpower training* (adopted in 1995) and the *Education Act* make the development of occupational competencies an obligation.

As COFPE had already proposed,⁵ the definition used by the Ministère is more open, less restrictive; it adds to the concept of professional development a structured, coherent organization of activities. It realistically integrates all forms of training, not only courses that are recognized for credit towards a diploma. Thus it includes all opportunities for learning that are part of the teacher's work, including self-training and peer support, collaborative research, the production of pedagogical materials and mentoring of novice teachers. From this perspective, professional development is a natural extension of initial training.

The principles underlying the Ministère's orientations draw substantially on those COFPE proposed to the Minister in 1997. These principles are essentially the following:

- Professional development for teachers is a necessity that must be addressed by the various partners in the education system; this responsibility includes contributing to the resources provided for it.
- Professional development is an individual responsibility of teachers, who are responsible for consolidating the competencies they have acquired.
- Professional development is a collective responsibility of teachers, in particular with respect to defining the specific needs of their school.

According to the orientations set out by the Ministère de l'Éducation, professional development for teachers should:

— be accessible to all teachers, regardless of their employment status

5. Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant, *Avis du COFPE sur la formation continue* (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, June 1997).

- be part of an ongoing plan that is in constant evolution, i.e. be structured and coherent in the short and long term, while being adaptable to different needs and circumstances
- meet the needs of people working in an organization whose mission is success for all students, while the organization should support the teachers in their individual and collective process of professional development
- be a lever for adapting educational services to social imperatives with respect to education
- be based on a variety of methods and, more specifically, on the expertise of teachers
- be subjected to formative evaluation so as to ensure its relevance and efficiency
- be officially valued and recognized

Orientations for the Professional Development of Teachers—Taking an Active Approach to Change also points out the responsibilities of the main partners: the identification of professional development needs is essentially up to teachers; the organization of activities is the task of school administrators; finally, the equitable sharing of resources is the responsibility of school boards.

COFPE essentially sees these orientations as constructive. It therefore urges the various partners in the education system to base their professional development activities on them, as they represent a broad consensus and have been the focus of interesting experiments.

However, COFPE feels that for these orientations to be implemented, they need to be supplemented by the creation of certain collective tools and by arrangements in the organization of work in teaching.

Assuming that financial resources for professional development remain at their present level despite notable efforts in implementing the education reform and new technologies, COFPE feels more innovative solutions are needed.

One of the reasons for this opinion is to encourage these efforts to show creativity in fulfilling new responsibilities and thus to contribute to translating the Ministère's orientations into actions.

Another element of the orientations for professional development in teaching could be the forthcoming policy on continuing education that has been in the process of preparation jointly by several ministries since the Estates General on Education. However, it is difficult to foresee when this policy will come into force, and it would be imprudent at this time to try to predict what orientations or measures it will contain. COFPE has already given its opinion on one of the hypotheses presented in a consultation document.

While awaiting a more general policy on continuing education in Québec, the Ministère's recent orientations constitute the main basis for determining actions in the short term.

1.3 Principles formulated by COFPE in its previous opinions

In its opinion to the Minister of Education in 1997,⁶ COFPE asked that the orientations of a policy on professional development for teachers be defined, including the financial and organizational means for implementing the policy.

From this perspective, COFPE recommended:

- that a policy on professional development be adopted that, in both its orientations and application, will meet the need for support and upgrading of teachers' competencies in order that they may continue in the profession
- that managers be encouraged to adopt a new model of participatory management that gives teachers a great deal of professional autonomy
- that a flexible, comprehensive professional development plan be created that allows for the possibility of adapting methods and leaves room for ad hoc activities to deal with specific problems of the teachers or the school team
- that the financial and organizational means required for the implementation of this policy be made available
- that the proposed definition be enlarged to include all types of professional development activities
- that three principles be adopted as the basis for a culture of professional development: professional development is a necessity for the teaching profession, an individual responsibility and a collective responsibility
- that any reference to evaluation being based on the control of professional development activities be avoided
- that participation in the activities be voluntary
- that a procedure and tools be adopted for use in determining needs
- that the need for a partnership between the groups targeted in the sharing of roles and responsibilities be demonstrated
- that ways of providing recognition of professional development be adopted that are equitable and that validate and encourage teachers

6. *Ibid.*

- that support be provided for the dissemination of information on experiences with peer training and the creation of teachers' centres
- that schools be encouraged to set aside more pedagogical days for professional development and that they entrust the organization of these activities to the school team
- that flexible mechanisms be created for the management of the professional development policy

COFPE essentially maintains these same principles in this document.

In addition, in its opinion entitled *Une formation de qualité pour un enseignement professionnel*,⁷ COFPE stressed how important it is for teachers in vocational education to keep up in their speciality. It therefore proposed that the upgrading of knowledge and competencies in the speciality be an integral part of provisions for professional development. It is even more important in vocational education than in other areas that the instruction given to students be relevant, not only to prepare them adequately to work in their occupation but also to keep up with rapid technological change, in particular computerization, in the occupations. Keeping up with the job market is an important responsibility for teachers, which brings out the necessity of seeing professional development as “continuing” education.

Similarly, in its opinion on changes needed to teacher training as a result of the education reform,⁸ COFPE made several recommendations on professional development to the Minister. Other than providing a retraining plan for teachers whose subjects are not part of the new curriculum, the successful implementation of the reform requires appropriate information and education activities for school personnel. In this case, given the scope of the changes involved in the reform, COFPE felt additional funds should be allocated.

This opinion follows logically from the previous ones. If further details are still required on the orientations to be adopted in professional development, it would be appropriate to apply these efforts primarily to the means to be used to meet the objectives.

1.4 The legal context

Among the contextual elements taken into account in this opinion are the legal provisions concerning professional development for teachers. In addition to the *Education Act* and collective agreements, this context is defined in part by the *Act to foster the development of manpower training*; furthermore, the future application of the *Pay Equity Act* should also be taken into account.

7. Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant, *Une formation de qualité pour un enseignement professionnel* (June 1998).

8. Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant, *Consolidating, Adjusting and Improving Teacher Training*, abridged version (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, June 1999).

Section 22 of the *Education Act* states that teachers have a duty to take appropriate measures to attain and maintain a high level of professionalism. The necessity for professional development is thus written into the basic law concerning education in Québec.

Section 96 of the *Education Act* defines the responsibilities of principals in the organization of professional development and stipulates that the definition of needs is necessarily a matter for shared decision making.⁹

The collective agreement for 2000-2002 between teachers and the Québec government includes the financial parameters of support by the employer, the principle of cooperation on the distribution of the funds allocated¹⁰ and the responsibilities of the school boards with respect to professional development related to the implementation of the new programs.¹¹

The *Act to foster the development of manpower training* (adopted in 1995) is another element of the legal framework that must be taken into consideration by the school boards; they must devote at least one per cent of their payroll to professional development for personnel. Admissible expenses include the preparation of a professional development plan and the assessment of professional development needs.

Finally, the *Pay Equity Act* has an important effect on professional development in that less emphasis is placed on increasing scolarity and hence there is a diversification of the nature and forms of professional development.

9. **96.20.** After consulting with the school staff, the principal shall inform the school board, on the date and in the form determined by the school board, of the needs of the school in respect of each staff category and of the professional development needs of the staff.

96.21. The principal shall see to the organization of such professional development activities for the school staff as agreed with the staff, in accordance with the provisions of the applicable collective agreements.

10. **7-1.01** For purposes of calculating the amounts allocated under this article, for every school year, as of the 1998-1999 school year, the board shall have one hundred and sixty dollars (\$160) per full-time teacher, excluding teachers on availability, in the service of the board on October 15 and covered by this article. (Translation.)

7-2.02 The Ministère, the Fédération and the Centrale shall form, within sixty (60) days of the coming into force of this entente, a national parity committee whose role shall be to distribute this amount among the aforementioned boards. (Translation.)

11. **8-3.01** When the board introduces a new program, it shall . . . ensure that the teachers have or will receive adequate training. (Translation.)

PART TWO

**FINDINGS ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND NEEDS IDENTIFIED**

2.1 Data gathered by COFPE

In spring 1999, COFPE consulted teachers to find out what professional development activities they had taken part in in 1996-1997 and 1997-1998, and what their expectations were for professional development.¹²

Aside from the high response rate, COFPE noted a consistency in the respondents' professional development practices. According to the survey, teachers are accustomed to taking part in professional development concerning the various aspects of their profession. Indeed, virtually all the respondents were involved in professional development activities provided by their school, their school board or the Ministère de l'Éducation, or activities they were pursuing on their own initiative. Their involvement included a financial contribution.

The teachers' professional development activities concerned information and communications technologies (ICT), further study in specific subjects, and the implementation of new programs or pedagogical approaches (adaptation of instruction to students' characteristics, cooperation in the classroom, project learning, etc.). Professional development generally took the form of participation in a pedagogical day or a conference or colloquium.

2.2 Data from other studies

In order to gain a good understanding of the professional development situation and to define its expectations appropriately, COFPE also analyzed three studies.

The first study is a report on research carried out with teachers in 1991 by Michèle Berthelot and her team, which was included in the 1990-1991 annual report of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, on the subject of the renewal of the social contract with the teaching profession.¹³ This study allowed COFPE to measure the evolution of the situation with respect to the subjects covered in this opinion and in its own survey on the question. The period covered in this study was 1986 to 1991.

The second study¹⁴ is a survey of the perceptions and expectations of Québec teachers, conducted by a research team on teacher training from the education department of the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR). Published in February 1999, the study, entitled

12. The document *Sondage sur les pratiques de perfectionnement du personnel enseignant des commissions scolaires* is available from the office of COFPE.

13. Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Michèle Berthelot, *Enseigner : qu'en disent les profs? Rapport d'une recherche auprès du personnel enseignant du primaire, du secondaire et du collégial*, "Études et recherches" collection (Québec, novembre 1991).

14. Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Département des sciences de l'éducation, *Le rôle des universités québécoises en matière de formation continue des enseignantes et des enseignants du milieu scolaire – Rapport d'une enquête sur les perceptions et les attentes des enseignantes et des enseignants québécois* (Trois-Rivières, February 1999).

Le rôle des universités québécoises en matière de formation continue des enseignantes et des enseignants du milieu scolaire, covered 1994-1995.

The third study COFPE drew on was done by the Direction de la formation et de la titularisation du personnel scolaire (DFTPS) of the Ministère de l'Éducation in April 1997. Published under the title *Rapport d'évaluation des activités de perfectionnement du personnel enseignant*, this study looked at professional development activities related to the implementation of programs of study and ministerial policies. The period covered was 1993 to 1996.¹⁵

The data provided by these studies were taken into consideration in the formulation of the recommendations in this opinion.

2.3 Involvement in the process of professional development

Teachers are involved in the process of professional development; all the studies confirm this.

Nearly a quarter of the teachers who took part in COFPE survey were involved, in 1996-1997 or 1997-1998, in professional development activities leading to a certificate or diploma. A minority of them (8.5 per cent) undertook these activities in order to be able to obtain a management position in education; the majority of them did so either to increase their scolarity (45.1 per cent) or for some other reason (46.3 per cent). The data on teachers pursuing studies leading to a certificate or diploma vary according to the sector of instruction. The highest proportion of teachers doing so was found in vocational education.

Similarly, more than a quarter of the respondents participated in professional development activities offered by their union, with English-speaking teachers doing so in relatively higher proportions.

In addition, more than nine out of ten teachers took advantage of professional development activities organized by their school, their school board or the Ministère de l'Éducation. Those working in preschool or elementary education and those with a permanent job or a job leading to a permanent job were relatively more numerous.

Finally, more than half of the respondents (54.2 per cent) took part in professional development activities on their own initiative in order to obtain support in doing their work; the teachers themselves paid the cost of these activities.

These recent data show that the situation has changed since the 1980s, when, according to a study published by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 73.8 per cent of elementary school teachers and 82.6 per cent of secondary school teachers had increased their scolarity through professional development, with an average increase of just over two years. Today, the purpose of professional development is less often to increase scolarity, and it thus takes forms other than that of courses for credit towards a diploma.

15. Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la formation et de la titularisation du personnel scolaire, *Rapport d'évaluation des activités de perfectionnement du personnel enseignant* (April 1997).

The UQTR survey also looked at involvement in professional development activities, and found that 89 per cent of the respondents had taken part in at least one professional development activity in 1994-1995. In addition, 73 per cent of elementary school respondents and 87 per cent of secondary school respondents said they needed professional development, either in terms of personal development (88 per cent) or to meet organizational needs (85 per cent).

This coincides with the data obtained in COFPE's survey, which found that 89.9 per cent of the respondents felt professional development activities provided them with support in doing their work. This was even more the case for respondents in preschool and elementary education, those with ten years of teaching experience or less, and those without job security.

The number of professional development activities provided by the Ministère de l'Éducation went from 38 in 1993-1994 to 30 in 1994-1995, and then to 31 in 1995-1996. In addition to these activities, which were generally related to the implementation of new programs of study, there were 11 experimental projects and activities organized using the annual budget for professional development established in the collective agreement.

Thus, contrary to received wisdom, large numbers of teachers participate in professional development activities, not only those provided for them but also some they take part in on their own initiative.

It seems that the involvement of teachers in professional development activities should continue. What is required now is not to create a culture of professional development—that already exists. However, there is a need to provide greater support for these activities, to remove obstacles that hinder involvement and to define the organization of work according to this professional requirement that has become essential, because the challenges to be met are many and demanding, of course, but also because the education reform has created an urgent situation in teacher training.

2.4 The form of professional development activities: Reality and expectations

The evolution of approaches to professional development and the expectations expressed clearly show that teachers prefer activities that are tailored to their individual and collective needs. Increasingly, there has been a shift from offering a choice among a variety of activities to designing activities according to clearly defined needs. This implies the establishment of a communication network between the schools and resource persons in professional development. Links such as these need to be reinforced.

According to the study published by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation in 1991, pedagogical days and conferences are by far the main forms of professional development, followed by university courses and internships. The establishment of a bank of professional development days on an individual basis, the organization of training sessions in schools, and access to a resource and professional development centre were favoured by 90 per cent of the respondents. To put it another way, the approaches chosen were those that leave room for autonomy and are nearer to the teachers' needs and environment. Conversely, university courses and internships in

the job market elicited less interest (except in the case of vocational education teachers, who naturally have a greater interest in this type of approach).

The UQTR study shows the evolution of the situation. In 1994-1995, lectures at the school (45 per cent), workshops given by outside consultants (45 per cent) and conferences and colloquia (35 per cent) were the approaches teachers expressed the most interest in, followed by mini-courses and university courses, and training by peers or administrators; finally, research projects (5 per cent) and distance education (4 per cent) elicited little interest.

According to the same study, 48 per cent of teachers felt that universities should cooperate with teaching teams in developing instructional materials; 42 per cent of them felt universities should design customized programs; and finally, 43 per cent were interested in activities leading to credit in disciplines other than those they teach.

In addition, the UQTR study shows that sharing knowledge and experience is very important to teachers. Finally, concerning the providers of professional development activities, it notes that the respondents favoured their colleagues (76 per cent), universities (68 per cent)—on the basis of needs already defined by people in the schools—and outside consultants' firms (50 per cent).

According to the evaluation report of the DFTPS, people in the schools would like professional development activities to draw more on the experience and expertise of teachers. Similarly, they would like more meetings and discussions of ideas among colleagues. Here, as well, peer training was clearly the preferred approach. Teachers would also like to see various forms of partnership between the universities and the schools.

It was felt that more use should be made of technology: transmission of information over the Internet, direct communication, video teleconferencing, distance education, etc. This demand was also expressed in the UQTR study, in which 76 per cent of the respondents said they would like the Internet and other technologies to be used to make training more readily accessible. These findings and these trends are consistent with the data gathered by COFPE.

Thus, according to COFPE survey, participation in a pedagogical day is the most common professional development activity, with 88.3 per cent of teachers having taken part in this type of activity. In addition, 43.8 per cent attended a conference or colloquium, while 37.4 per cent took part in a professional development activity related to teaching (work group on pedagogical development, action research, discussion group among colleagues, etc.); 23.7 per cent mentioned self-training by various means, for example, courses, reading specialized documents and research on the Internet.

More than half of the respondents participated in professional development activities on their own initiative. These activities involved, in decreasing order of importance, study in the teacher's subject, information and communications technologies and pedagogical approaches (adaptation of instruction to the students' characteristics, cooperation in the classroom, project learning, etc.). Nearly 40 per cent took part in a conference or colloquium; more than a third took part in self-training of various kinds (courses, reading specialized documents, research on the Internet, etc.) or pedagogical days; nearly a third chose professional development activities related to teaching (work

group on pedagogical development, action research, discussion group among colleagues, etc.) or college or university courses. Finally, 8 per cent took part in training sessions outside school hours.

Concerning the form of professional development activities, 74.8 per cent of the respondents favoured participation in pedagogical days; 58.3 per cent, participation in conferences or colloquia; 43.7 per cent, professional development activities related to teaching (work group on pedagogical development, action research, discussion group among colleagues, etc.). In addition, 33.6 per cent of the respondents favoured self-training, while 27.2 per cent favoured college or university courses.

Thus, the findings of all these studies are consistent in favouring a variety of professional development activities customized to meet the needs defined by teachers, especially school-based professional development but also conferences with colleagues and training leading to increased scolarity.

2.5 The content of professional development: Current choices and expectations

Concerning the content of professional development, COFPE survey shows that the activities in which more than half of the respondents participated were in the following areas, in decreasing order of importance: information and communications technologies, further study in the teacher's subject, pedagogical approaches (adaptation of instruction to the students' characteristics, cooperation in the classroom, project learning, etc.) and the implementation of new programs. Others mentioned the integration and supervision of student teachers and the training of cooperating teachers. These choices made by teachers are a reflection of their needs in terms of professional development.

When the teachers themselves chose their professional development activities, the percentages for these areas were lower.

As for the areas teachers put a priority on, they were, in decreasing order of importance, the new information and communications technologies (63.2 per cent), the implementation of programs (59.9 per cent), pedagogical approaches (48.9 per cent) and further study in the teacher's subject (44.1 per cent). In addition, 6.1 per cent of teachers felt that professional development activities should be related to students' psychosocial characteristics (learning difficulties) and to further study in the teacher's subject.

The UQTR study shows the importance of improving the teaching strategies and the content of professional development activities. For secondary school teachers, there is also a need to improve student learning. Teachers would like these activities to serve as an opportunity to learn about pedagogical innovations and enrich their theoretical and practical knowledge in order to apply it in their teaching. Finally, aside from collective (organizational) professional development, meeting individual needs was considered important.

The evaluation report of the DFTPS found that teachers, especially those in elementary school, would have liked to be given more examples related to teaching. Other teachers, particularly those in secondary school, would have liked more emphasis to be placed on the basis of the new programs.

Thus, teachers showed interest in the competencies related to their profession, in terms of pedagogy, knowledge of their subjects, and other aspects of teaching, in particular the use of technology for professional purposes. However, they felt that current professional development was too theoretical, not readily applicable to their teaching practices and sometimes inconsistent with respect to the content and the effects sought. This is undoubtedly part of the reason why they tended to favour peer training and professional development in the workplace. This gives a message to the providers of professional development services: professional development must more directly meet the needs expressed.

2.6 Satisfaction with professional development activities

According to the studies cited, teachers were moderately satisfied with their professional development activities. Their degree of satisfaction concerned the form and usefulness of these activities more than their content, the conditions of access to the activities more than the activities themselves, the lack of support and follow-up provided more than the efforts required of the teachers.

2.6.1 The types of activities

We will look at the various types of professional development activities suggested or desired.

Essentially, there was most satisfaction with voluntary activities taking place in the school and run by colleagues.

Thus, according to the study by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, the fact that an activity was voluntary and was created as a result of consultation was a reason for greater satisfaction. The same was true for professional development activities related to teaching practices and peer training. The study notes that the general level of satisfaction with professional development activities was "moderate," with few respondents saying they were very satisfied.

The UQTR study clearly showed that teachers were satisfied with certain types of activities: the highest level of satisfaction was with lectures at the school (83 per cent), workshops given by consultants (88 per cent) and, especially, peer training (92.5 per cent). A high level of satisfaction was observed in those who had taken university courses, who made up one out of eight respondents; similarly, the mini-course format seemed especially popular. Distance education was also viewed positively. The judgment concerning professional development activities run by principals was less favourable, at least with respect to their meeting the needs of teachers. Generally speaking, secondary school teachers seemed less satisfied, or more critical, than their elementary school colleagues.

According to the evaluation made by the DFTPS, the format generally used by the Ministère in collaboration with school boards was much criticized as not being very effective. Meetings and discussions among colleagues were suggested to replace the current approach in which the Ministère designs the activities and the school boards organize them, using resource persons who have received training and are expected to transmit it to their colleagues. However, it was the

content of the training that was most criticized, with the form seen as largely driven by the content to be transmitted.

According to COFPE survey, apart from pedagogical days and colloquia, teachers took part in professional development on their own initiative, through self-training and activities related to teaching (pedagogical development, action research, training of student teachers, etc.). This is an indication that traditional forms of professional development are giving way to other approaches and are being diversified, which shows as well that the traditional forms are not meeting all expectations.

While the respondents generally appreciated the professional development provided, they were somewhat critical of certain types of activities, which they judged in terms of the improvement of their teaching competencies. This was the case for training sessions organized by the school administration, lectures and workshops given by outside consultants and participation in research projects. The choice of format is also indicative of the teachers' preferences: peer training was very popular, as were voluntary short-term activities taking place at the school.

Concerning training given by universities, teachers felt that partnerships between school teams and universities should be developed in lieu of courses based on initial training, especially with respect to the design of instructional materials. They also felt that professional development should be enriched and should include more short-term activities and activities designed at the request of school teams.

The formats favoured were peer training and sharing of knowledge and experiences among colleagues. Pedagogical days were still preferred for professional development activities. The improvement of professional development should be based on these approaches.

2.6.2 The relevance of the activities

It is important to make a distinction between training that is useful and training that meets the needs of teachers who want to improve their pedagogical practices. While the respondents in COFPE survey almost unanimously felt that the professional development activities they had taken part in were useful to them, their judgment concerning the relevance of these activities was less favourable. It cannot always be shown that the training received was applicable to the improvement of pedagogical practices in the classroom.

Training can be useful without having an immediate impact on school life and the teachers' career plans. According to the UQTR study, this is explained in part by the fact that teachers did not see professional development as an opportunity to advance in their career. The same was true for objectives concerning satisfaction at work and meeting challenges, which were considered side benefits. It also appears that younger teachers, more than their elders, felt that professional development activities met their needs. Finally, the professional development activities teachers enrolled in to satisfy their intellectual curiosity or for the sheer pleasure of learning fulfilled their expectations. These are basic sources of motivation that should be drawn on in creating a culture of professional development, because the relationship to knowledge is important in the teaching profession.

Teachers would like to enroll in more activities involving teaching strategies, student learning and subject content. They wanted to know about pedagogical innovations and to enrich their theoretical and practical knowledge in order to apply it immediately in the classroom.

The DFTPS evaluation of professional development activities related to the implementation of programs of study and MEQ policies is revealing in this regard. The majority of people spoken to felt that this type of training did not attain the objective of aiding the assimilation of the programs of study. This is a harsh judgment. The result is that the programs are not necessarily taught as they were designed to be by the MEQ. The dissatisfaction, here again, was expressed in two ways: both a demand for more tools and practical models and a desire to know more about the underlying spirit of the programs.

In short, it is not enough to satisfy intellectual curiosity; teachers want professional development activities to better meet their expressed needs, whether those needs are individual or organizational and collective. Since the resources—especially the time—devoted to professional development are minimal, the benefits must be tangible.

2.7 Resources and support

While the formats and content of professional development are bound to evolve, teachers were still extremely critical of the conditions surrounding professional development: the resources devoted to it (time, organizational support, follow-up), the division of responsibilities and the recognition of learning acquired through professional development.

Generally speaking, teachers have already laid the groundwork for a culture of professional development, which they would like to consolidate and broaden in response to the needs they have experienced and the challenges facing them. In this regard, it appears that the involvement of other partners in education is not sufficient to create a true culture of professional development.

The study published by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation deplored the lack of funding and time devoted to professional development; the main source of dissatisfaction reported was the insufficient funds allotted (release time from teaching and reimbursement of expenses) and the limitations of access with respect to certain professional development activities and teachers without job security.

Similarly, the UQTR study showed that in 1994-1995, an average of 4.2 out of 16.8 pedagogical days were spent on professional development activities at the preschool and elementary levels, compared with only 2.7 out of 15.2 pedagogical days at the secondary level. This makes an average of 3.5 pedagogical days (out of 16.0) used for professional development. In adult education, where the number of pedagogical days is very small, there appears to be no place for professional development activities. Yet pedagogical days were created largely to meet professional development objectives. Finally, 89 per cent of the respondents felt that teachers who wanted professional development should be given release time from teaching.

As for the professional development provided for in the collective agreement, the DFTPS report shows that about 80 per cent of the budget allocated is used for participation in colloquia or conferences. This limited budget (\$160 per permanent teacher) forces the parties responsible for distributing it to engage in a difficult exercise of establishing priorities; teachers with no job security and those paid by the hour are not included in this provision.

COFPE survey reveals that teachers make a significant financial contribution to their professional development activities.

As for the monies that are in principle to be allocated for professional development as provided in the *Act to foster the development of manpower training* (1 per cent of the total payroll), there do not appear to be any standardized data on them. COFPE feels that the Ministère de l'Éducation should carry out an analysis of these data in collaboration with the Ministère de l'Emploi in order to verify the conduct of the education system in relation to the letter and the spirit of this law. COFPE would like to know if 1 per cent of the total payroll of all the school boards is indeed being allocated to staff professional development.

2.8 Sharing of responsibilities: Participation and follow-up

In the study by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, about half of the respondents felt teachers did not have enough say in the use of pedagogical days.

Concerning the question of whether management provided any follow-up of professional development activities, the teachers in the UQTR study generally said no, especially at the secondary level, where the majority of the respondents said they had received no follow-up or support from the managers of their school.

The evaluation report of the DFTPS shows that all the groups consulted stressed that no follow-up to professional development activities was organized by the Ministère. The report points out that teachers have been asking for more pedagogical support in their schools and greater involvement by the Ministère. Managers in the school system, however, are not in favour of overly direct action by the Ministère. Perhaps the key would be for the Ministère to help managers assume this responsibility and to ensure that they do so. Furthermore, there was an explicit request that school administrators make a greater commitment to professional development.

In short, the studies all found that teachers deplored the absence of follow-up and support by school management and that they wanted to play a greater role in the choice of the type of professional development activities. COFPE emphasized this in its previous opinion, while the orientations of the Ministère in 1999 and the legal provisions stress the role teachers should play in the choice of the type of professional development they receive.

Concerning the recognition of learning acquired through professional development, the studies provide little information. The types of training chosen or desired seem to indicate that teachers' primary goal was not credits but that many of them still valued credits, especially because this is the form of recognition that is best established in the system. For COFPE, the recognition of the

competencies acquired and the recognition of professional development as such implies new approaches in order not only to enhance professional development and acknowledge those who take part in it, but also to make it an integral part of the teaching profession considered in a systemic way.

2.9 Other obstacles to be overcome

In addition to providing increased resources and a greater commitment by all the partners in the system, other changes are needed to meet the professional development needs of individual teachers and the organizational needs of school teams.

The UQTR study notes that the main factors that led teachers not to participate in professional development activities provided by universities were, in decreasing order of importance, the schedule and availability of the activities and the failure of university programs to take into account individuals' prior learning, needs, experience or the distance between their residence and the training centre. These are major obstacles, and a great deal remains to be done to overcome them, particularly with respect to changing attitudes.

Other negative factors noted in this study were the length of programs, the feeling that the training was too theoretical or not transferable, the fees and other costs, lack of time to do the assignments, lack of job security and, to a lesser extent, personal reasons. Finally, respondents spoke of a lack of training and support for dealing with problems resulting from new social trends.

The evaluation report of the DFTPS is consistent with these findings. Teachers said they receive the information but have little time to reflect on it or discuss it or to develop innovative projects. Lack of time was also cited by pedagogical consultants. The report also mentions the fragmentation of the activities, the lack of flexibility of the school calendar and the use of pedagogical days for multiple purposes. In addition, the implementation calendar for programs of study often does not allow time for the necessary training to be provided before and during implementation. The people consulted felt that to compensate for these limitations, major training activities should last two or three days and be interspersed with periods of classroom experimentation followed by periods of reflection and discussion.

Similarly, as already stated, teachers questioned the use of resource persons who have received training and are expected to transmit it to their colleagues, because their ability to transmit their knowledge was seriously compromised by the lack of time or permanent resources.

In short, there are still obstacles to the true integration of professional development with the organization of work. These obstacles concern the consideration of people's needs and professional experience, the accessibility of the training, the human and financial resources and, perhaps most of all, the organization of the school, defined as a community of learners.

PART THREE

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR TEACHERS**

Actions to promote and support quality professional development

In formulating its recommendations for this opinion, COFPE has taken into account the conclusions of recent studies of the professional development needs of working teachers.

In particular, it has considered the legal context of school organization, funding at present and in the foreseeable future and factors that favour or hinder teachers' participation in professional development activities.

As a result of this process, COFPE recommends the following lines of action:

- Base professional development on teachers' individual and collective professionalism
- Stress personal motivation
- Integrate professional development into the organization of work for teachers
- Use creativity to overcome certain obstacles and employ imagination in the use of resources
- Strengthen the conditions for participation in professional development, take the appropriate measures and eliminate the obstacles related to the organization of the school
- Ensure the quality of professional development
- Increase the efficiency of the system of professional development

In order to establish a new culture of professional development in teaching, COFPE makes the following recommendations to the Minister of Education and his partners.

These recommendations concern the **conditions to be established to make this new culture of professional development possible** and the **means to be provided to ensure the quality of professional development**.

CONDITIONS TO BE ESTABLISHED

1. Time for professional development

COFPE feels it is necessary to point out that translating intentions into action on professional development requires time: time to define the needs, prepare the activities, participate in the activities, follow up the training sessions and provide support for people and projects, as well as to assess the training received and evaluate it in relation to decisions concerning teachers' advancement in their careers.

Time may be found in various ways. COFPE in this opinion stresses certain short-term measures and suggests other lines of action in the longer term.

The first line of action COFPE proposes to promote the development of a culture of professional development in teaching is a general one.

Recommendation 1:

Find and reserve time for professional development within the organization of work.

Comments

Reserving time for professional development provides positive reinforcement because it shows that the education system recognizes its importance. This is true for all teachers, regardless of their status or the sector they teach in.

The following measures are priorities for implementation:

- Make better use of pedagogical days for professional development. Originally, pedagogical days were created for purposes of professional development and transmission of information.
- Make professional development accessible to teachers who do not have job security and give them time and resources in proportion to their workload.
- Free certain teachers of part of their teaching load so that they can provide support for their colleagues in setting up collective professional development projects.
- Find time for professional development within the organization of work. There are various ways of organizing classroom time while respecting the basic school regulations, with the participation of the childcare service in elementary school, or that of community groups, for example, or by using a split schedule during the year-end examination period. Other measures and other models that lead to the desired result should also be considered: allocating a bank of days for professional development to each teacher when he or she enters the profession (for example, 100 days) or freeing each teacher for a certain number of hours a

year; freeing teachers who provide support for their colleagues from their full teaching load, with funding provided through allocations to specific projects.

Other approaches that are different and complementary may be envisioned in the medium term: sabbaticals, summer courses, individual arrangements of workloads, work schedules or other elements of the organization of the school.

Finally, the possibility of including some responsibility for professional development in the teachers' workload should be considered, in the same way as new responsibilities have been given to principals in the changes to the *Education Act* and by various other legislative provisions as well as the Ministère's orientations.

The means used may vary, but the orientation to be followed remains the same: a significant part of professional development should be integrated into the work in a community of learners.

CONDITIONS TO BE ESTABLISHED

2. Use of pedagogical days

Among the more immediate measures to be taken to make time for professional development, COFPE makes the following two recommendations:

Recommendation 2:

Devote more pedagogical days to organizational and collective professional development.

Recommendation 3:

Define collegially the precise nature and the use of pedagogical days that are reserved for collective professional development.

Comments

Pedagogical days were created for professional development and the transmission of information to personnel. It would make things clear to use the term "pedagogical days for professional development" for those days reserved for this purpose. Twenty days are theoretically available at the preschool, elementary and secondary levels. However, the actual number is around 15 days. Furthermore, days off as a result of snowstorms and other unforeseen events that are not part of the school calendar should not be counted as pedagogical days.

- There is not even a consensus in favour of the principle of using pedagogical days for professional development. It would thus be appropriate to start by adopting this principle before determining a number of common, obligatory days. In the view of many teachers, pedagogical days are their personal property, just as in the view of many principals they belong to the school administration. This is an additional reason why pedagogical days, and especially their use for collective professional development, need to be better defined collegially.
- A significant number of pedagogical days should be reserved for professional development in vocational education and adult education. In the application of this measure, all partners should aim for the utmost effectiveness and efficiency.
- The wise use of pedagogical days for professional development makes it possible not only to avoid the cost of hiring substitute teachers but also to integrate professional development into the organization of work.

CONDITIONS TO BE ESTABLISHED

3. Diversification of types of training and use of peer training

Professional development must suit a variety of situations, expectations and needs, and collective, organizational and person interests. This is why a variety of types of training should be provided.

From this perspective, COFPE makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 4:

Place the priority on peer training in the shift to diversification of methods, contexts and content of professional development activities.

Comments

An important part of professional development could advantageously be provided by working teachers, that is, by colleagues capable of doing so, and in their own environment, that of the school.

- Peer training is the method usually chosen by a group of professionals to assume and to share responsibility for professional development. This kind of teamwork makes a school team very dynamic and allows for exchanges of views that can in part compensate for the lack of support felt by some teachers; it is more training *among* colleagues who share their experience as teachers than training *by* colleagues.

This type of training has its requirements: it presupposes that the teacher-trainers have sufficient preparation, especially in theory. As well as the experience they have acquired, this preparation mainly involves training they have had in their speciality. It requires time for the planning and organization of professional development activities and then for participation in the evaluation of these activities.

The fact that teachers show a clear preference for peer training should be a determining factor in the choice of activities by those in charge of professional development.

Everyday contact among colleagues is also part of the professional model of the organization of teaching and it favours discussion of pedagogical practices, which is a basic element of a culture of professional development.

- The intention here is not to add to teachers' responsibilities any tasks other than those of teaching itself. Rather, peer training necessitates adjustments in the workload of the teacher-trainers.

Peer training also has the advantage of being easier to organize and possibly even of reducing costs. Furthermore, a common language is used, which is therefore better understood, the examples and problems are drawn directly from the real context of the school, and it is easier to agree on further examination of the questions raised. Along with the use of pedagogical days, it is the main means to be adopted for creating a new culture of professional development.

While COFPE feels that training by colleagues should be part of the diversification of methods and contexts of professional development, it is also concerned about the risks involved in choosing one type of professional development exclusively. Indeed, professional development should allow teachers to distance themselves from everyday life and discover other horizons. Making peer training a priority does not imply the exclusive use of this type of professional development. What is most important is to diversify the forms, contexts and methods of professional development in order to better meet the various needs of individual teachers and school teams.

COFPE has identified five other aspects of professional development to be favoured, after pedagogical days and peer training: teachers' centres, university training with "variable geometry," collaborative research, information and communications technologies and training provided by trade union organizations.

- Teachers' centres, which use peer training and information and communications technologies a great deal, are an approach to professional development that has been proven in several countries. This category includes the network of centres for intercultural education and international understanding (Centres d'éducation interculturelle et de compréhension internationale; CEICI) and the centres for computers in education (Centres d'enrichissement en micro-informatique; CEMIS).
- The universities bring together people with high levels of competence in the field of education and the subjects taught in schools and produce new knowledge through research. They also possess expertise in teacher training, since they have the primary responsibility for initial teacher training. Contact with teachers gives university researchers a view of the teachers' situation and needs.

COFPE urges the universities to provide training that is more in keeping with the needs expressed in the schools in general and by school teams in particular. In addition, the universities would do well to continue in their effort to develop partnerships with the schools in the areas of theoretical research or action research, development of materials and pedagogical approaches, institutional analysis, individual and collective activities to meet specific needs, or more broad-based training sessions to attain specific objectives. As for collaborative research, adjustments should be made in the kinds of funding provided so that monies allocated for research may be used to fund this type of activities directly. Research in general, and collaborative research in particular, should be encouraged and supported financially, because they give rise to educational innovation and pedagogical experimentation, which should be stressed.

- Information and communications technologies (ICT) facilitate distance education and thus the accessibility and individualization of training and the sharing of knowledge and experiences. Despite the progress that has been made, the exploitation of these technologies is still too limited. Efforts to make better use of ICT should therefore be continued.
- Trade union organizations are involved in organizing professional development activities based on permanent structures and effective mechanisms of interactive communication. This approach should be made better known and developed further.

CONDITIONS TO BE ESTABLISHED

4. Material and financial resources

COFPE is eager to carefully measure its proposals that have financial impacts and whose purpose is to ensure the relevance, efficiency and consistency of professional development in order to improve teaching and thus student learning and ultimately student success, which is in keeping with both the consensus in society and the government's objectives in education.

Taking into account the financial resources currently devoted to professional development, and not counting monies spent by individuals, COFPE makes three recommendations:

Recommendation 5:

Redirect financial resources for professional development toward the schools and increase those resources.

Recommendation 6:

Place the school's material resources at the disposal of the teachers, which will facilitate the implementation of professional development activities.

Recommendation 7:

Provide special support for specialized pedagogical resource centres.

Comments

- As provided in the *Education Act* and the new MEQ orientations, professional development activities should henceforth be based on an analysis of local needs and be part of an individual, collective and organizational approach. In practice, this means the responsibility for professional development should be returned to the school through the redistribution of the monies allocated toward the schools and a redefinition of the role of school boards and parity committees on professional development.

With the decentralization of responsibilities in professional development, the role of school boards will be to provide administrative support to the schools. Thus they will have to distribute the budget for professional development equitably and adopt effective communication strategies to inform teachers of the financial, human and material resources allotted for it and the criteria used to meet the needs. They will have to establish links between the schools and the partners in professional development, including the universities. It would be to their advantage to create a stable core group of human resources that would be capable of rapidly meeting the needs defined by the schools. Finally, the school boards' annual reports should provide information on the resources used and explain their distribution of these resources among their schools.

- In addition, an important aspect of the redistribution of resources toward the schools that COFPE is proposing is that local characteristics (multi-ethnic communities, disadvantaged areas, small village schools, etc) should be taken into consideration in the method of allocating financial resources for professional development.

The material resources of the school—classrooms, computer equipment, photocopy machines, multimedia materials—should be used for professional development without administrative constraints or charges of more than token amounts. The schools have an interest in working together in order to reduce costs, but also to share their experiences and knowledge and to prevent the isolation that could arise from the transfer of responsibilities toward school teams.

- Similarly, it would be to the schools' advantage to join with partners, particularly universities, because of the human and material resources and expertise available and the research they are doing in teacher training.
- COFPE feels that teachers' centres should be strengthened and developed. These centres could bring together a range of specialized resources, make possible economies of scale and lasting partnerships, and increase the number of ways of meeting the needs.

CONDITIONS TO BE ESTABLISHED

5. Teachers as resource persons

Many teachers have varied experience and high-level diplomas showing they have undertaken sustained studies and often done action research on education in general and teaching in particular, which enables them to play an advisory role for their colleagues. The value of the teaching profession should be acknowledged by recognizing the contribution of these teachers to enhancing culture in the school and training or mentoring their peers.

Especially in a context of scarce resources, COFPE feels it is necessary to find a mechanism to allow the education community to take advantage of the experience, expertise and knowledge acquired by certain teachers.

Thus, COFPE is making the following recommendation:

Recommendation 8:

Introduce the concept of resource teachers who are freed of part of their teaching load to work on the development and implementation of a school professional development plan.

Comments

- To make the school a community of learners, COFPE feels teaching positions should be created in which experienced teachers recognized for their leadership would have the responsibility of sharing their experience and knowledge with their colleagues. A certain number of these teachers already hold lectureships in universities. More use should be made of teachers who are recognized by their peers, mentoring should be encouraged and the professional involvement of career teachers should be fostered.

This proposal is consistent with the priority placed on peer training and teachers' centres and with the redistribution of resources toward the schools. In addition, this approach is completely in keeping with the prospects opened up by the development of the school team's responsibility in professional development.

Several European countries have tried various types of organization of work in education, particularly with respect to the recognition of the professionalism¹⁶ and leadership of many teachers. In Sweden, experienced teachers chosen by their colleagues are relieved of part of their teaching load but keep their status, and mentor new or less experienced colleagues as they learn their profession. In Scotland, there are several categories of teachers; a higher status confirms some teachers' pedagogical skills and experience without their taking an administrative position.

16. See Christian Payeur, *Une autre façon de faire – L'éducation au Danemark, en Finlande, en Suède et en Écosse*, Report of the CEQ mission on teacher training (Québec: Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec, 1993).

- COFPE's position on this issue is clearly in favour of a horizontal broadening of the teacher's tasks that is similar to the role cooperating teachers have with student teachers. The role of resource teachers should be temporary and they should not take the place of pedagogical consultants, interfere with management functions or have special financial advantages. The principal and pedagogical consultants should continue to fully assume their responsibilities in professional development.

This diversification of the teacher's role should not give rise to the concept of a hierarchy, as is the case with the university model. Rather, it is a matter of acknowledging the expertise of certain teachers and making them available to new teachers and those with special needs, in the context of a community of learners that gives theoretical and practical knowledge the place it deserves and fosters the development of its members.

CONDITIONS TO BE ESTABLISHED

6. Adaptation of the university model of training

The universities have a role to play in professional development for teachers, particularly because they have the primary responsibility for initial training.

However, given that the definition of professional development needs by the school is now the determining factor in the new culture of professional development that is to be created, given the desire for diversification of the models offered and the greater control of professional development by teachers, and given that university training leading to a diploma is less sought after, COFPE feels that it would be to the advantage of the universities to rethink the training they provide and the forms in which they provide it.

For these reasons COFPE is making the following recommendation:

Recommendation 9:

Adapt the university model of training to the new orientations for professional development.

Comments

- Since the spirit of this proposal is that of a renewal of professional development, COFPE wants first of all to emphasize the advantages of university training:
 - The quality of the universities' human and material resources goes well beyond those of their faculties or departments of education.
 - The universities' expertise is based on a critical mass of relevant, diversified research: basic research, applied research, collaborative research, action research, etc.
 - The universities have a long intellectual tradition, which helps to protect them from the whims of fashion and to guarantee critical reflection and self-criticism on educational practices in general.
 - Universities can make cooperation agreements over long periods, independently of considerations of profitability other than self-financing.
 - The universities' expertise in certifying resource persons is a guarantee of quality for all partners in the field of education.
- The universities are thus a key place for professional development; however, they would do well to create partnerships with schools in such areas as action research, design of materials and pedagogical approaches, institutional analysis, ad hoc individual and collective professional development activities, and longer training sessions. Strong partnerships between universities and schools will give rise to dynamic pedagogical projects and increase opportunities for interaction, self-analysis and collaborative practices that recognize and highlight the local aspects and the individuality of the schools.

The establishment of such partnerships is not without difficulties. In addition to the organizational problems to be dealt with, the financial constraints to be respected, the travel required and the channels of communication to be activated, there is a climate of genuine trust and cooperation to be created. As several universities have shown, these obstacles can be surmounted.

- COFPE also urges the universities to recognize teachers' expertise. This is necessary for both credit and noncredit training and for the competencies and knowledge acquired through experience in a context in which teachers' time is valuable and financial resources limited. The time has come to take experiential learning into account and, therefore, to adapt professional development activities to the requirements of everyday classroom practice.
- Similarly, it would be appropriate for the universities to make their admission requirements for professional development more flexible, since the current model and content have largely been inherited from initial teacher training. The universities would do well to diversify the types and places of training, to customize training, in keeping with a target group that has a choice of ways to meet its needs. To increase access and reduce costs as well as to individualize training, universities should rely more on information and communications technologies.

COFPE feels that these are the paths faculties of education should take. It urges them to make this change as soon as possible, so that the wealth of their expertise and their role as producers and disseminators of knowledge can be used to better advantage by the partners of an education system facing major challenges.

CONDITIONS TO BE ESTABLISHED

7. The contribution of colloquia and conferences

Concerning the contribution of colloquia and conferences to professional development, COFPE reiterates that an effort must be made to integrate professional development into the organization of work, taking into account the optimization of the results.

Therefore, COFPE makes the following two recommendations:

Recommendation 10:

Review the customized approach in the area of colloquia and conferences so as to significantly reduce the cost of this type of professional development and increase the positive effects.

Recommendation 11:

Strengthen the multidisciplinary nature of province-wide or regional colloquia and invite the speakers to visit the regions.

Comments

- Teachers want to participate in colloquia and conferences. For COFPE, this extrinsic motivation to meet with colleagues and experts should be maintained. However, measures should be taken to allow more teachers to take advantage of these activities and to reduce their cost. Thus, it would be advantageous to move some colloquia to the regions. As well, the multidisciplinary nature of province-wide or regional colloquia should be strengthened. This would give rise to intellectual, professional and financial advantages.
- These new approaches are part of the extension of COFPE's orientation concerning the use of pedagogical days that have been decided on the regional or provincial level, since teachers need to be available for the organization of collective professional development activities. Trade unions and professional associations can also be involved in holding these activities. Here, too, creativity and innovation are needed to integrate professional development into the organization of work.

CONDITIONS TO BE ESTABLISHED

8. The role of principals and school boards

The changes made to the *Education Act* give principals and school boards a new role in implementing professional development for teachers.

In keeping with the Act, COFPE makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 12:

Design appropriate processes, methods, working tools and mechanisms for reporting on the administration of professional development.

Recommendation 13:

Change the method of allocating financial resources for professional development to allocations by school, calculated according to parameters that reflect the school's internal characteristics.

Recommendation 14:

Adopt management methods and professional development strategies that target all teachers in every school.

Recommendation 15:

Reduce to a minimum the intermediate structures, rigid rules and multilevel administrative procedures involved in professional development.

Recommendation 16:

Redefine the responsibilities of school boards and parity committees on professional development in keeping with the primary responsibility of teachers, which is to define their needs, and that of principals, which is to organize the professional development activities agreed on with the teachers.

Comments

- Among the responsibilities defined in the Act, those that should be emphasized are shared decision making between principals and teachers concerning professional development needs, the efficient organization of the activities planned, the process of follow-up and supervision, the evaluation of the results and the recognition of professional development activities.

- COFPE feels that these new responsibilities require the development of practical conceptual or administrative tools to help school managers in both the evaluation and the organization of needs and activities and their supervision and follow-up. It would be appropriate to ask the universities to help in creating these management tools.
- The responsibility of the school boards concerns financial and technical support at the request of the school and in keeping with methods established by the school. Effective communication strategies should be adopted to make known the financial, human and material resources available and the criteria that will be used to meet professional development needs.
- The budget should be properly distributed, since the schools are legally responsible for defining their needs and organizing and assessing professional development. COFPE feels that new parameters that take into account certain characteristics of the school (size, number of teachers, educational project, success plan, etc.) should be adopted for the allocation of financial resources, since equity cannot be measured only by the number of teachers or schools in a territory.

Similarly, the school boards should see that most of the monies allocated for professional development are distributed to the schools, since the services they provide to the schools in this area are essentially administrative and thus chargeable to the general budget. There is therefore no question of adding the monies established in the collective agreements or those provided by the MEQ for professional development to the general budgets of school boards, nor of billing the schools for administrative services related to the distribution of these funds or of using them for other purposes. In this area, the model developed by vocational education centres and adult education centres may be used.

- COFPE would like to reiterate here that it would be desirable for the Ministère de l'Éducation, the school boards and the schools themselves to encourage a voluntary pooling of the resources distributed to the schools in order to improve the professional development offered and to increase its use through economies of scale and through the creation of a critical mass of tools, expertise and services.

THE QUALITY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For COFPE, creating and developing a new culture of professional development involves establishing mechanisms to ensure the quality of professional development activities. Quality is measured according to the following criteria: the relevance of the training; the consistency of the activities, that is, their continuity over time and their coherence with each other; and finally, effectiveness in results achieved in relation to resources used. In short, professional development for teachers must now be more efficient.

1. The relevance of professional development

To say that professional development should be relevant does not prevent teachers from learning for the pleasure of learning or to enrich their own culture. Goals such as these should be established and individual and collective professional development choices should be made on an informed basis.

For COFPE, professional development activities should be designed, chosen and evaluated in response to individual, organizational and collective needs that have been defined collectively by the teachers.

To ensure the relevance of professional development, COFPE is making the following recommendation:

Recommendation 17:

Design professional development activities in response to individual and collective needs defined collegially.

Comments

- The *Education Act* gives teachers, jointly with principals, responsibility for defining their individual and collective professional development needs (sections 96.20 and 96.21; section 110.13 for the administrators of vocational education centres). This distribution of responsibilities is confirmed and detailed by the Minister in the orientations published in 1999.

While these provisions are compatible with the definition of teachers' responsibilities in the collective agreements in force, in particular in the roles given to the province-wide parity committee, the distribution of responsibilities in professional development provided in the Act and the MEQ orientations differs substantially from the "managerial" approach that prevailed in the recent past.

- The identification of professional development needs by school teams would be facilitated by the definition of medium- and long-term focuses of professional development at the provincial and regional levels. Schools are in large part dependent on the government's

orientations and decisions and on regional social and economic development. In addition, broader perspectives such as these would help schools plan their professional development and make informed decisions on priorities. The Ministère de l'Éducation would do well to provide support for the development of appropriate tools and university researchers would do well to get involved.

- Concerning the satisfaction of individual professional development needs, teachers should be made aware of the usefulness of keeping a record (such as a portfolio) of the knowledge and competencies they have acquired and developed through both training and experience.

2. Certification of outside training providers

To better ensure the relevance of professional development, in particular collective and organizational training, COFPE is making the following recommendation:

Recommendation 18:

Establish a mechanism for certifying outside training providers, particularly those who provide consulting services or give lectures.

Comments

- The introduction of a true professional development policy implies that training providers must possess subject-related and pedagogical competencies that ensure that the objectives sought will be attained and must have good credibility in the school system.
- In a context of scarce resources, and taking into account the needs expressed by teachers, it is important to make sure that the training providers recruited are qualified. COFPE is therefore proposing a system of certification of outside training providers.

Since school boards and principals are responsible for organizing professional development activities, it is up to them to establish such a mechanism. The Ministère de l'Éducation may propose criteria to the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec and the Quebec English School Boards Association, who would decide to what extent to apply them.

The criteria should include the following:

- education and training deemed adequate for the professional development to be provided
- relevant teaching experience
- legal status (as a certified training provider)
- presentation of a professional development plan in keeping with current standards: measurable objectives, pedagogical approaches, learning activities, evaluation
- communication of the observable results of their learning to the participants
- activity report given to the employer

According to COFPE, these criteria could be made more precise and more stringent if they proved insufficient either to ensure the quality of professional development or to meet the needs. Any problem raised by a training provider should be reported to the school boards and schools. For this purpose, but especially to establish a simple process of certification and make public the list of certified individuals, it would be appropriate for the interested parties, that is, the Ministère de l'Éducation and the school boards, to create a Web site on which a list of certified outside training providers is posted. Following the evaluation of a professional development

activity, a person's name could be removed from the list or comments could be added to his or her curriculum vitae.

The creation of this Web site would require funding by the MEQ after the publication of its orientations on professional development, or as part of the allocations to integrate information and communications technologies into education.

3. Making professional development activities more consistent

The absence of follow-up of professional development activities and the lack of support for teachers are the main weaknesses observed in the organization of professional development.

To correct this situation, COFPE is making two recommendations:

Recommendation 19:

Provide individual follow-up of teachers' professional development activities.

Recommendation 20:

Provide rigorous supervision of the implementation of the school's professional development plan and the steps and activities involved.

Comments

The follow-up of professional development is a responsibility of managers in the school system, primarily principals. According to section 96.21 of the *Education Act*, the principal "shall see to" the organization of professional development activities. The recent MEQ orientations on professional development stipulate that follow-up and evaluation of individual and collective professional development projects are part of the principal's role.

More broadly, principals are responsible for professional development. This responsibility must be exercised consistently with the definition in the Act of the professional responsibility of teachers, who are given the obligation of taking appropriate measures to attain and maintain a high level of professional competencies.

For COFPE, professional responsibility should take precedence over all other responsibilities in the definition of the role of teachers proposed as resource teachers who provide support to their colleagues in their professional development process. These teachers may take part in follow-up of professional development, not as school managers nor by interfering with the work of pedagogical consultants, but by providing follow-up of a pedagogical nature, in the broad sense of learning support. COFPE feels it would be appropriate to develop theoretical models and tools to help managers fulfill these responsibilities. The universities, the Ministère de l'Éducation and the associations of school boards and of managers in the education system should also contribute to developing evaluation tools.

4. Evaluation of professional development activities

Concerning the evaluation of professional development, COFPE feels that the emphasis should not be on the people receiving the training but rather on the scope of the activities as a response to the needs expressed, the teachers' satisfaction and the attainment of the objectives set by the school team.

Since feedback and follow-up on professional development activities are not yet widespread, COFPE is making two recommendations to correct the situation:

Recommendation 21:

Evaluate professional development activities rigorously and systematically and make the adjustments and improvements needed to carry out the school's professional development plan.

Recommendation 22:

Define models and tools for observing the tangible results of the professional development provided in relation to the needs to be met.

Comments

- To improve and update the school's professional development plan, all the steps in the professional development activities should be evaluated, from design to execution, through follow-up of the training and the transfer of the new learning to the classroom for the students' benefit. From this perspective, for training sessions that are likely to be repeated, a trial stage and one of reflection on the training given should be added to the activity.
- Tools should be created to support teachers in their professional development process, to help them assess their previous learning, define their needs and plan their professional development in the long term. This will aid in the recognition of professional development activities leading to a diploma and help teachers to become resource teachers for their colleagues or to carry out other personal or organizational projects.

Recording the various elements of a professional development process on a sheet or in a portfolio, for example, is not an end in itself. This said, the schools should develop various methods of recording professional development activities and promote, test and critique them in order to adapt them to different environments because, in order to be properly recognized, professional development activities have to be recorded.

The desire to learn, the wish to constantly improve one's professional skills, the need for self-esteem and the goal of personal satisfaction are what motivate people to pursue professional development.

COFPE stresses the point that **professional development should be recognized**, that is, **acknowledged and integrated into the organization of work**. In doing so, the priority should be placed on the implementation of the orientations presented by the Minister, on which there is a broad consensus. The quality of professional development, its relevance, the follow-up provided and the efficiency of the approaches used are the main issues involved in the introduction of a new culture of professional development.

Conclusion

In this opinion, COFPE stresses the importance of following up the MEQ orientations on professional development that were published in 1999.

This need for action arises primarily for three fundamental reasons: the current system of teacher training in Québec, defined as initial training, constitutes a threshold that marks a step in truly professional training, which must continue throughout a teacher's career; teaching involves forming and maintaining a special relationship with an area of knowledge that is constantly changing and that borrows from several fields; given the challenges involved in the education reform, it is time to create a true culture of professional development in teaching.

There are other reasons for intensifying efforts to provide professional development for teachers. With the arrival of graduates from the new system of teacher training, increasing scolarity and obtaining the advantages associated with this added value will increasingly give way to other professional development objectives. Similarly, measures that will probably be taken under the *Pay Equity Act* will orient professional development toward activities that are less directly centred on increasing scolarity.

Furthermore, the rationalization of resources in education necessitates the optimal use of these resources, in particular to ensure that professional development meets the needs defined and that the various types of training provided are efficient. Finally, the professionalization of teaching gives rise to a need not only for the acquisition, but also for the upgrading and development of knowledge and competencies.

Teachers have always taken part in professional development, whether in activities organized by schools and school boards, activities or courses approved by parity committees on professional development, or training sessions undertaken for personal reasons with their own resources. The step required to create a new culture of professional development involves ensuring the relevance and consistency of individual and collective professional development activities. Now the organizational means and structural mechanisms need to be found and the conditions created for the introduction of this culture.

COFPE is making several recommendations to this end, recommendations that it feels are realistic in the context of the organization of work in education. It is convinced that the new culture of professional development will develop more surely and quickly as the measures set out in the MEQ orientations defined in 1999 are implemented and refined.

COFPE's recommendations include the fundamental principles of professional development for teachers: voluntary action, professional responsibility and the need for ongoing training. Teachers have a professional duty to keep their competencies and knowledge in their profession up to date: this is a necessity that arises not only from their professional obligations but also from their special relationship to knowledge and their place in a society that is marked by rapid changes and intergenerational differences.

This necessity and this responsibility do not need to be imposed in any way. On the contrary, voluntary action is an integral part of the concept of responsibility. Indeed, extrinsic obligation is the opposite of personal responsibility, which involves obligations that are freely accepted. The necessity for professional development is a necessity imposed by one's personal and professional conscience.

Now that the principles have been stated, the orientations defined, and consistent and reliable data provided by studies, COFPE urges the Minister of Education, school boards, school administrators, teachers and training providers to take action to improve the quality, relevance, consistency and efficiency of professional development for teachers, and by doing so, to create communities of learners and thus to better meet the educational needs of students and of Québec society.

**MEMBERS OF THE COMITÉ D'ORIENTATION DE LA FORMATION
DU PERSONNEL ENSEIGNANT (COFPE)**

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**MANDATE OF THE COMITÉ D'ORIENTATION DE LA
FORMATION DU PERSONNEL ENSEIGNANT (COFPE)**

Extract from the *Education Act*

Establishment

477.16. A teacher training policy committee is hereby established under the name "Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant".

477.17. The committee shall be composed of sixteen members, fifteen of which shall be appointed by the Minister as follows:

- (1) a committee chair;
- (2) six persons holding a pedagogical position at the elementary and secondary levels;
- (3) three members chosen from among the commissioners and the members of the managerial staff of the school boards, including a principal of an institution;
- (4) three representatives of the university education sector;
- (5) a member chosen from among the parents, students or enterprise executives;
- (6) an employee of the Ministère de l'Éducation.

At least two members of the committee must represent the English-language education sector.

The chair of the Comité d'agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement shall also be a member of the committee.

Mission and functions

477.19. Members of the council or of the committees shall be appointed for three years.

However, the Minister may appoint one-third of the first members designated by the Minister for one year and another third of the members designated by the Minister for two years.

477.20. At the expiry of their terms, the members shall remain in office until reappointed or replaced.

The total duration of successive terms of a member and of any period in which the member remained in office between terms shall not exceed six years. At the end of such a six-year period, a member shall remain in office until replaced.

477.21. Any vacancy during a term of office shall be filled, in the manner prescribed for the member's appointment, for the unexpired portion of the term.

477.22. Members of the council or of the committees shall receive no remuneration except in such cases, on such conditions and to such extent as the Government may determine. They are, however, entitled to the reimbursement of expenses incurred in the exercise of their functions on the conditions and to the extent determined by the Government.

477.23. The chair shall preside at the meetings of the council or committee and manage its operations.

The Minister shall designate a member of the council or committee to replace the chair if the chair is absent or unable to act.

477.24. The quorum at meetings of the council or a committee is the majority of its members.

477.25. The council and the committees may hold their meetings anywhere in Québec.

477.26. The Minister shall place at the disposal of the council and the committees the department personnel and physical resources they need for the exercise of their missions.

Annual report

477.27. The council and each of the committees shall submit to the Minister, not later than 15 November each year, a report of its activities for the school year ending on the preceding 30 June.

477.28. The Minister shall table the reports in the National Assembly within 30 days after receiving them if the Assembly is in session or, if it is not sitting, within 30 days of resumption.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMITÉ D'ORIENTATION
DE LA FORMATION DU PERSONNEL ENSEIGNANT
(COFPE)**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1:

Find and reserve time for professional development within the organization of work.

Recommendation 2:

Devote more pedagogical days to organizational and collective professional development.

Recommendation 3:

Define collegially the precise nature and the use of pedagogical days that are reserved for collective professional development.

Recommendation 4:

Place the priority on peer training in the shift to diversification of methods, contexts and content of professional development activities.

Recommendation 5:

Redirect financial resources for professional development toward the schools and increase those resources.

Recommendation 6:

Place the school's material resources at the disposal of the teachers, which will facilitate the implementation of professional development activities.

Recommendation 7:

Provide special support for specialized pedagogical resource centres.

Recommendation 8:

Introduce the concept of resource teachers who are freed of part of their teaching load to work on the development and implementation of a school professional development plan.

Recommendation 9:

Adapt the university model of training to the new orientations for professional development.

Recommendation 10:

Review the customized approach in the area of colloquia and conferences so as to significantly reduce the cost of this type of professional development and increase the positive effects.

Recommendation 11:

Strengthen the multidisciplinary nature of province-wide or regional colloquia and invite the speakers to visit the regions.

Recommendation 12:

Design appropriate processes, methods, working tools and mechanisms for reporting on the administration of professional development.

Recommendation 13:

Change the method of allocating financial resources for professional development to allocations by school, calculated according to parameters that reflect the school's internal characteristics.

Recommendation 14:

Adopt management methods and professional development strategies that target all teachers in every school.

Recommendation 15:

Reduce to a minimum the intermediate structures, rigid rules and multilevel administrative procedures involved in professional development.

Recommendation 16:

Redefine the responsibilities of school boards and parity committees on professional development in keeping with the primary responsibility of teachers, which is to define their needs, and that of principals, which is to organize the professional development activities agreed on with the teachers.

Recommendation 17:

Design professional development activities in response to individual and collective needs defined collegially.

Recommendation 18:

Establish a mechanism for certifying outside training providers, particularly those who provide consulting services or give lectures.

Recommendation 19:

Provide individual follow-up of teachers' professional development activities.

Recommendation 20:

Provide rigorous supervision of the implementation of the school's professional development plan and the steps and activities involved.

Recommendation 21:

Evaluate professional development activities rigorously and systematically and make the adjustments and improvements needed to carry out the school's professional development plan.

Recommendation 22:

Define models and tools for observing the tangible results of the professional development provided in relation to the needs to be met.

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