

TRANSLATION

October 29, 2020

To the Directors General of the school service centres, school boards and Heads of private educational institutions:

As you know, the epidemiological situation in Québec has led us to take additional measures in recent weeks to guarantee optimal and safe learning conditions.

We congratulate you and the entire school staff of your educational institutions on the devotion and tremendous flexibility that you have all shown since the beginning of this unprecedented school year. It is mainly thanks to these efforts that we have been able to keep our schools open and enable our students to continue to learn, socialize and develop, despite the extraordinary circumstances under which we are living.

We are aware that the additional measures announced in recent weeks combined with the more sustained use of techno-pedagogical tools and the postponement of the first report card have given rise to an increased need for planning and for training of school staff, especially in the case of all those working in a red zone. Many school system stakeholders have, in fact, articulated these needs in recent days.

Therefore, to promote conditions conducive to the deployment of distance education services, which have now become part of the education landscape in Québec, to facilitate the sharing of best practices, and to enable school teams to better plan for the months ahead, the *Basic school regulation* has been amended. This amendment adds three training and planning days to the calendar of all institutions offering preschool education, elementary education or secondary education (general education in the youth sector), regardless of the alert level in the zone where they are located. This new measure will also help teams refine the support and guidance offered to each student throughout the year.

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The school service centres, school boards and schools will have all the latitude they need to organize these days in accordance with the needs observed in their communities. These three additional days must be added to the already-established school calendar in accordance with the following compulsory conditions:

- They must be scheduled between October 29 and the end of the 2020-2021 school year.
- They must account for a maximum of one additional day per month.

To assist you in organizing these days, we would like to remind you that the Ministère de l'Éducation supports the development of training resources¹ that enable school staff to acquire digital and professional competencies. Self-directed training is offered, in French, by RÉCIT and CADRE21. In addition, Télé-université offers *J'enseigne à distance*, a program that introduces school staff to the pedagogical use of digital equipment for distance education. It is currently offered in French only, but will soon be available in English. The resource people at RÉCIT can also support and guide you at both the local and provincial levels.

Furthermore, in order to help school staff become more familiar with digital technologies and share practices, the Ministère has organized the second consecutive annual Digital Education Day. This year, it will take place entirely online, on Friday, November 13, 2020. We encourage everyone to participate. You can get more information about this event by visiting the Ministère's website at <http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/current-initiatives/digital-action-plan/training-resources/digital-education-day/>.

To assist parents in planning for these three days, preschools and elementary schools must provide free daycare services to all the children regularly enrolled in them. Funding for the three days will be entirely assumed by the Ministère; you will receive further information in this regard. We invite you to inform parents as quickly as possible of the dates selected in order to facilitate their balancing of work and family responsibilities.

Once again, please accept our sincere thanks for all the efforts you make each and every day to provide all your students with quality educational services despite the pandemic and the challenges that confront us.

Yours truly,

[Original signed by]
Jean-François Roberge
Minister

¹ <http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/current-initiatives/digital-action-plan/training-resources/>