



Riverside School Board

Policy Name:	Introducing Students to Democracy
Policy Number:	B329-20100216
Date Approved by Council:	2010-02-16
Date of Next Review:	3 years from approval by Council

1. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- To promote the concept of democracy for all students at Riverside School Board;
- To promote, support and reinforce the importance of student participation in activities related to school democracy within Riverside schools and centres;
- To ensure a form of student representation with the Council of Commissioners.

2. APPLICATION

This Policy is intended for students in all Riverside School Board schools and centres, and it calls for the participation and support of all school and centre staff.

The Office of the Director General is responsible for the application of this Policy.

3. GOVERNANCE

This Policy emanates from Article 211.1 of the Education Act. It also takes into account Articles 42, 51, 96.5, 96.6, 96.7 and 102, as well as the Quebec Education Program.

4. PRINCIPLES

- To promote the development of specific competencies and qualities, such as: a sense of responsibility, autonomy, belonging, respect, commitment, critical thinking and creativity;
- To generate a desire among Riverside students to play an active role in the democratic processes that exist within their schools and to get involved in the decision-making that directly affects them;
- To develop ties and promote dialogue between Riverside students and the senior levels of governance and management;
- To educate students on the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders attached to Riverside schools and centres (i.e. students, teachers, administrators, commissioners, taxpayers, etc.);



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- To promote the development of interpersonal, social and political skills among Riverside students in order to nurture socially responsible citizens and to engage them in the democratic life of their school.

5. INTRODUCING STUDENTS TO DEMOCRACY IN SCHOOLS AND CENTRES

The purpose of this section is to express the expectations of the School Board with respect to introducing students, based on their age and level of instruction, to democracy in our schools and centres:

5.1 Elementary Level

Elementary schools are encouraged to elect a Student Committee. Positive leadership skills, a sense of individual and collective responsibility and an awareness and understanding of how democracy works can begin to be developed at an early age. The interaction of school life and the community served by the school play an important role in defining elementary students' view of a democratic society.

In order to encourage broader student participation, other opportunities may be identified to include students in the decision-making process and develop leadership abilities (e.g. nutrition; the environment; graduation; entrepreneurship; behaviour issues; etc.).

By encouraging student participation in school life and by creating special projects that will help or improve their health and/or surroundings (i.e.: their physical, social and cultural environment) and help develop societal values, student awareness of citizenship and democracy will begin to take shape.

5.2 Secondary Level

Each secondary school is required to have a Student Committee or Association¹ at the second cycle. During the course of their high school experience, students' social consciousness as well as their understanding of personal and collective responsibility becomes more developed. At the same time, students' interest in and awareness of leadership, social justice and government continue to grow. The existence of a Student Committee or Association provides a venue for students to assume leadership roles, to experience the results of positive action and understand the consequences of inaction.

The Board also recognizes that the Student Committee or Association plays a pivotal role in the social and political life taking place in the school. It represents the student link to school administration, school staff and the Governing Board; it provides an opportunity to students to learn how to initiate projects, debate ideas, respect opinions that are different from their own, choose strategies and experience each step of the decision-making process. This Committee or Association affords students

¹ Articles 96.5 – 96.7 of the Education Act



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the opportunity to learn the art of negotiation, collaboration and compromise within a school setting. Overall, a Student Committee or Association provides the opportunity to acquire leadership skills and to direct students toward positive action and personal growth.

5.3 General Adult Education and Career Training Centre (ACCESS)

The Board encourages ACCESS to introduce a Student Committee or Association. The benefits outlined earlier apply also to students attending programmes offered in the adult education and career training centres.

6. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

A Student Advisory Council comprised of two (2) student representatives from The Alternate School; two (2) from ACCESS; two (2) from Chambly Academy; two (2) from St. Johns; three (3) from Centennial Regional High School and three (3) from Heritage Regional High School shall be formed on a yearly basis. Other members may also include, but are not limited to, the Director General, Assistant Director General, Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

The mandate of the Student Advisory Council shall be to advise the Director General and the Council of Commissioners on matters related to student life, strategic planning, policy development, student retention, Board and school programs and services. The Student Advisory Council will meet at least three (3) times per year and a report of the meetings will be made available to the Council of Commissioners as well as to the respective schools of the students. The Student Advisory Council may also be consulted on the development of leadership activities for students in elementary.

7. REPRESENTATION WITH COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS

The Council of Commissioners welcomes the opportunity to hear directly from Riverside School Board students. At the first meeting of the Student Advisory Council, members will be given a copy of the calendar of meetings of the Council of Commissioners. The governance and management representatives on the Student Advisory Council shall inform students of their right and encourage them to attend and/or be heard at the regular meetings of the Council of Commissioners.

8. COMING INTO FORCE

This Policy shall come into force on the date of its adoption.



ARTICLES OF REFERENCE FROM THE EDUCATION ACT

42. A governing board shall be established for each school.

The governing board, which shall have not more than 20 members, shall include the following persons:

- 1) at least four parents of students attending the school who are not members of the school staff, elected by their peers;
- 2) at least four members of the school staff, including at least two teachers and, if the persons concerned so decide, at least one non-teaching staff member and at least one support staff member, elected by their peers;
- 3) in the case of a school providing education to students in the second cycle of the secondary level, two students in that cycle elected by the students enrolled at the secondary level or, as the case may be, appointed by the students' committee or the association representing those students;
- 4) in the case of a school where childcare is organized for children at the preschool and elementary school level, a member of the staff assigned to childcare, elected by his or her peers;
- 5) two representatives of the community who are not members of the school staff, appointed by the members elected under subparagraphs 1 to 4.

The community representatives on the governing board are not entitled to vote.

51. During the month of September each year, the students' committee or the association representing the students, if any, shall appoint students' representatives to the governing board.

Failing that, the principal shall preside over the election of students' representatives to the governing board in accordance with the rules established by the principal after consulting with the students enrolled at the secondary level.

96.5 During the month of September each year, the principal of a school providing education to students in the second cycle of the secondary level shall see to the formation of a student committee.

The students shall determine the name, composition and operating rules and elect the members of the committee.

The students may decide not to form a student committee or entrust the functions of student committee to an association representing them.

96.6 The purpose of the student committee is to encourage the collaboration of students in developing, implementing and periodically evaluating the school's educational project and their participation in fostering success and in school activities.



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The student committee may also make suggestions to the student representatives on the governing board and to the principal that are likely to facilitate the proper operation of the school.

96.7 The student committee or the association representing the students may, for the purpose of its functions, meet on the school premises.

102. A governing board shall be established for each centre.

The governing board, which shall have not more than 20 members, shall include the following persons, who shall become members of the board upon their appointment or election:

- 1) students attending the centre, elected by their peers according to the procedure determined by the principal after consulting with the students or the students' association, if any;
- 2) at least four members of the staff of the centre, including at least two teachers and, if the persons concerned so decide, at least one non-teaching professional staff member and at least one support staff member, elected by their peers according to the procedure set out in their respective collective agreements or, failing that, according to the procedure determined by the principal after consulting with the persons concerned;
- 3) at least two persons appointed by the school board after consulting with the socio-economic and community groups in the territory principally served by the centre;
- 4) in the case of a vocational training centre, at least two parents of students attending the centre who are not members of the staff of the centre, elected by their peers according to the procedure determined by the principal;
- 5) at least two persons appointed by the school board from within enterprises of the region which, in the case of a vocational training centre, operate in economic sectors corresponding to the vocational education programs offered by the centre.

The term of office of members of the governing board is two years.

The members of the governing board shall remain in office until they are re-elected, reappointed or replaced.

A vacancy resulting from the departure or disqualification of any other member of the governing board is filled, for the unexpired portion of the term, according to the mode of appointment prescribed for the member to be replaced.

211.1 Subject to any policy directions the Minister may establish, the school board must adopt a policy on introducing students to democracy in schools, providing, in particular, for a form of student representation with the council of commissioners.