



Policy Name:	Policy on Introducing Students to Democracy
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1. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- To promote the concept of democracy for all students at Riverside School Board;
- To acknowledge other systems of government;
- 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 Sections 211.1 of the Education Act. It also takes into account 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 centres and to get involved in the decision-making that directly affects them;



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- 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 (e.g., students, teachers, administrators, commissioners, taxpayers, etc.);
- 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 or centre.

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., sustainability initiatives, school life events, entrepreneurship, conflict resolution, etc.).

By encouraging student participation in school life and by exposing them to special projects, students will develop an understanding of citizenship and the foundations of democratic principles.

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.

¹ Sections 96.5 – 96.7 of the Education Act



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The School 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 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 Adult General Education and Vocational Training Centre (ACCESS)

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

6. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

A Student Advisory Council comprised of two (2) student representatives from ACCESS; two (2) from Saint-Lambert International High School; two (2) from St. Johns High School; 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 THE 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.