

The educational project and the success plan of the school

Illustration: Marc Mongeau



A document prepared as an aid to governing boards



Introduction

The adoption of **Bill 124** by the National Assembly on December of 2002 **resulted in major changes to the Education Act**. The notion of the educational project was modified: it will now include, as well as the school's particular aims, objectives intended to improve student success and it will be implemented by means of a success plan.

The process has also been clearly set out. The educational project is to be developed on the basis of an analysis of the situation of the school as well as the school board's strategic plan. In other words, schools will now prepare their educational projects with this new perspective in mind and develop their success plans accordingly.

The various organisations of the education system have agreed on a common interpretation of the changes contained in Bill 124. The pamphlet *The New Provisions of the Education Act*, produced as part of this joint endeavour, has already been circulated to schools and centres by the Ministry of Education. This document also contains a schedule for the first year of implementation.

With a view to keeping our members up to date, **we have joined forces to prepare material that will respond to the needs that have been identified. The result is this supplementary document** for governing boards. **It is**

intended to help those in schools to analyse their situation, review their educational project and success plan, and to evaluate the two. **The role of the governing board is critical in each step**, since the educational project is at the heart of its responsibilities.

The law now specifies that parents and staff of the school must be informed about the content of the educational project and the success plan and that the governing board must report on the evaluation of the implementation of the latter. This presumes the choice of a medium for communicating this information.

This document attempts to respect local autonomy and may be supplemented or adapted to meet the needs of the community. We are proposing a flexible approach while respectful of legal obligations. Those obligations should not, however, become so rigid as to distract the school from its basic mission—to educate, socialize and qualify students, while respecting the principle of equality of opportunity.

Finally, **we operate on the assumption that all those involved will put the success of students before any individual interests**. We hope this document will be useful to governing boards in their work.

Organizations involved:

Association of Administrators of English Schools of Quebec (AAESQ)

Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)

Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels de l'éducation du Québec (FPPE)

Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (FSE)

Fédération du personnel de soutien scolaire (FPSS)

Fédération québécoise des directeurs et directrices d'établissement d'enseignement (FQDE)

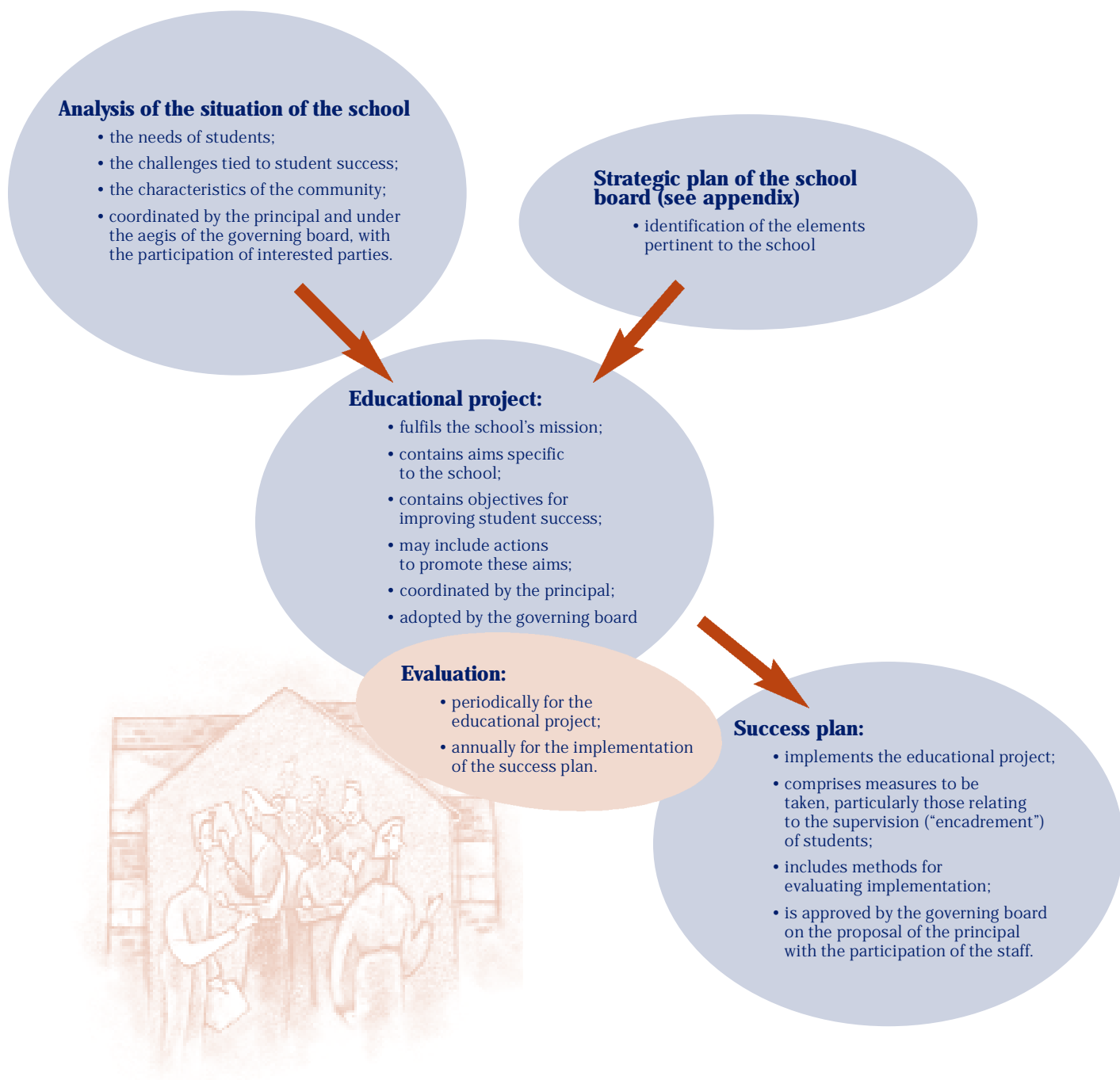
Quebec Federation of Parents' Committees (FCPQ)

Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT)



Educational project and success plan

New provisions of the Education Act



Analysis of the situation

The analysis of the situation prevailing at the school is a prerequisite to the development of the educational project. With the relevant aspects of the school board's strategic plan, it forms the basis on which the educational project is adopted, implemented and evaluated (Art. 74).

1 • What is the analysis of the situation?

The law stipulates the elements this analysis should include (Art. 74). The governing board must, in particular, consider:

- **the needs of the students;**
- **the challenges** tied to student success;
- **the characteristics and expectations of the community** served by the school.

There is no reason why the analysis cannot include other elements, but the **school can confine itself to only those elements specified in the law**. At the same time, **there are a number of items** relating to staff (management, training, etc.) and pedagogical supervision **that should not figure in the analysis**, since they are an administrative prerogative. Similarly, matters concerning individual and collective professional autonomy, as recognised by law, should not be included.

However, the administration, with the participation of the school team, may feel it important to include in the analysis of the situation information regarding school-team initiatives that it wishes to communicate to the GB.

Throughout this operation, **the primary objective should be kept in mind: to enable the school to better fulfil its mission** to educate, socialize, and qualify students, while respecting the principle of equality of opportunity (see definitions on p. 10). The evaluation should therefore focus on those elements.

2 • Who conducts the analysis of the situation?

The law defines responsibilities in this as well as a number of procedural obligations.

- **The governing board is responsible for analysing the situation** of the school (Art. 74).
- The GB must ensure participation of all interested parties (Art. 74);

- **The GB must encourage dialogue** and concerted action amongst these groups (Art. 74);
- **The principal coordinates** this analysis and encourages the desired concerted action (Art. 96.13, para. 1^o).

The GB is not required to adopt this analysis. It serves rather as a common vision, a consensus the GB arrives at prior to proceeding with discussion and adoption of the educational project.

3. What does the analysis of the situation contain?

It is the principal's responsibility to coordinate the collection of the necessary information. However, the GB should be involved from the very beginning to provide its point of view on the matter. **This process can occur in various phases**. One could, for example:

• determine the elements to be considered, the process, the timeline;

• proceed with the collection of data and prepare the draft analysis;

• discuss the draft analysis in the GB.

Information on the themes specified in the law can be gleaned from various sources using a variety of means. Such information can then be tabulated on the worksheet provided for that purpose. Since this information could be useful in the evaluation of the success plan, **it is important to note the year to which data pertain** in order to ensure the validity of the evaluation.

Using these data, the GB proceeds with the analysis of the situation by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school and identifying certain priorities in the development or revision of the educational project.

The following table summarises the main themes on which the law requires the analysis to be based. It also includes examples of possible sources of information that may be useful. Based on the needs of the community, other themes and sources may be added. In some cases, it may be useful to compare people's perceptions with the data that have been gathered.



Table 1: *Analysis of the Situation of the School*

Theme of analysis	Source of information
— Socio-economic context of the school	— Information provided by the school board or the MEQ; additional local observations may be added.
— Characteristics of the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethno-cultural diversity; • community resources; • size of territory; • involvement of parents; • etc. 	— Some information provided by the school board, but most will arise from knowledge of the community by the various groups, on the basis of their particular concerns.
— Expectations of the community	— Consultation of GB, parents, staff, students and the community at large.
— Needs of students, according to the characteristics of the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consideration of diversity; • needs in services; • special problems: nutrition, homework, physical activity, etc.; • etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding the school or the community; • availability of student and complementary services; • analysis of GB on strengths and weaknesses of the school; • consultation of various groups on the basis of their particular concerns and expertise; • short questionnaire circulated to parents, students and staff.
Challenges tied to student success, with regard to the school's mission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • instruction: local programmes, enrichment, difficulties encountered, etc.; • socialisation: violence, climate in the school, absenteeism, citizenship; • qualifications: academic delays, graduation rate, pass rate from one cycle to another; • equality of opportunity: based on socio-cultural origins, handicaps, socio-economic circumstances; • etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation of staff regarding students' particular difficulties, as within the purview of the GB; • school data regarding violence, climate (instruments are available), absenteeism; • MEQ data regarding delays and graduation rates, analysed in the context of the school reality; • differentials in success on the basis of sex or origin; • etc.



Worksheet *for analysing the situation of the school*

1 • Socio-economic status of the school

Data _____

2 • Characteristics of the community

Data _____

Comments _____

3 • Expectations of the community

Of the Governing Board (GB) _____

Of parents _____

Of staff _____

Of students _____

Of members of the community _____

Comments _____

6 • The educational project and the success plan of the school

4 • Needs of students

Based on the characteristics of the community _____

In services _____

Special problems _____

5 • Challenges tied to student success

Instruction _____

Socialisation _____

Qualifications _____

Equality of opportunity _____

6 • Other themes

7 • Elements of the analysis of the situation of the school

Once the data are collected, the analysis of the situation may be made

The educational project

The school has already adopted an educational project. The changes in the law, however, **require that schools review the content** of their projects in light of those changes.

1 • What is the educational project?

The law describes the principal content of the educational project (Art. 36, 36.1, 37):

- **it targets the fulfilment of the school's mission** — to educate, socialize and qualify students, in respect of the principle of equality of opportunity (see note, p. 10);
- **it includes the aims specific** to the school;
- **it contains the objectives for improving student success**, success being understood in the broadest sense of the mission;
- **these aims and objectives target the implementation**, the adaptation and the enrichment **of the national framework** ("cadre national") defined by the law, the basic school regulation and the programmes of study established by the Minister;
- **it may include actions to promote these aims** and integrate them into the life of the school;
- **it must respect the freedom of conscience** and religion of students, parents and staff.

In contrast to the previous requirements, the educational project must contain aims and objectives; it may also include specifically defined actions. It no longer, however, includes measures for ensuring implementation, as these now form part of the success plan.

2 • Who is responsible for the development of the educational project?

The law is clear regarding the process for the development and adoption of the educational project:

- **the principal coordinates its development**, implementation and periodic evaluation (Art. 96.13, para. 1.1°);
- **the governing board ensures that all** interested parties **have the opportunity to participate** in the process (Art. 74) and the principal assists in this responsibility (Art. 96.13);
- **The GB adopts the educational project** based on the analysis of the situation of the school and the school board's strategic plan (Art. 74);

- **The GB oversees its implementation** and conducts a periodic evaluation (Art. 74);
- **The GB publicises it** and ensures that an explanatory document written in clear and accessible language is circulated to parents and to members of staff (Art. 83).

3 • What does the educational project contain?

Given the importance of the educational project to the life of the school and the role the GB plays in its development and adoption, it is desirable to proceed in phases. Each school already has an educational project, containing its particular aims. **The first step should involve consideration of whether these aims should be reviewed** in light of the evaluation made of them, of the analysis of the school's situation and of the school board's strategic plan.

Once these aims have been determined, the objectives to be included in the educational project **can be considered**. If the GB considers it appropriate, actions to promote these aims and integrate them into the life of the school can be initiated.

a) The aims

The aims of the school are intended to give the prescribed mission a local character. As such, they can focus on one particular aspect of the mission or interpret it in light of local realities. **They should also stress particular values, the philosophy of the school**, or certain qualities that the school attempts to develop in its students.

The existing educational project already contains the aims of the school:

- **Are the current aims clear** and precise?
- Are the values to be stressed identified?
- Does the project respect the national framework and the principle of equality of opportunity?
- **Are there elements that should be reviewed** in light of the analysis of the situation or the evaluation of the existing project?

These aims must now also take the school board's strategic plan into account. It is up to the school to decide, in light of the analysis it has made of the situation, on the need or not to include a particular strategic orientation of the school board. The interpretive document The New Provisions of the Education Act provides examples showing how these various aims go together.

b) The objectives

The objectives are intended to improve student success. They should be defined in terms of the school's particular aims as well as on the basis of the analysis of the situation and those elements deemed relevant in the school board's strategic plan. **"This means that it supports the school's threefold mission** – to educate, socialise and qualify students while respecting the principle of equal opportunity." (*The New Provisions...*, p. 4)

These objectives are not necessarily quantifiable. It all depends on the elements that have been identified. As the interpretive document explains, **it is the GB's function to identify these**, taking into consideration their compatibility with those of the school board. In any event, **they should be defined in such a way as to permit evaluation of progress.** However, the means should not be specified, since the success plan.

The accent should be placed on the elements over which the school has control and on those factors which affect the mission of the school. The function of the GB should be to reinforce the dynamism of the school team as well as the cooperation of parents in the community in pursuit of the school's mission.

For example, **the following concerns could be addressed:**

- absenteeism;
- the amount of time students spend at paid employment;
- the extracurricular activities offered by the school;
- verbal or physical violence;
- integration of students from different cultural communities;
- parent participation;
- persistence at critical stages in secondary;
- differentials between boys and girls based on given indicators;
- academic delays;
- intercultural education;

- interest in reading;
- practices relating to the school's particular aims.

c) Actions for heightening awareness

As the interpretive document makes clear, **"the GB has the discretion to include such actions"** in its educational project. These actions are specific. They are not intended to implement the educational project (which is the function of the success plan), but to promote its aims and ensure their integration into the life of the school.

They may include:

- school beautification;

school in its
and the community;
the community

the student agenda;

provided at
meetings.

ion of the mal project

educational project should be
regularly but not on an annual basis.
It should be determined by the GB
taking into account local needs.
The GB may employ a variety of evaluation methods:
discussion at the GB, a questionnaire circulated to parents, the views of staff and students, etc.

Meanwhile, the GB should pursue its analysis through evaluation of the implementation of the success plan and, on that basis, submit an annual report to the community. The definition of objectives may vary so that progress can be evaluated and facilitate the development of the project, which can in turn be used to assess progress.

Progress can be done in a variety of ways. It is the function of the GB to select the means, keeping in mind that the objective is to improve the lives of the students.





Note on the mission of the school

The definition of the mission of the school is found in the MEQ's policy statement *Québec Schools on Course* and restated in the *Québec Education Program*:

PROVIDE INSTRUCTION, with renewed conviction

"Schools play a vital role in the transmission of knowledge. To reaffirm this purpose, we must recognise the importance of students' intellectual development and mastery of knowledge. In today's knowledge-based society, the development of students' minds must be a priority for all schools.

SOCIALISE, in order to learn how to live together better

"In a pluralistic society such as ours, schools bring people together. Our schools must not only help students develop a feeling of belonging to the community but also teach them how to "live together." In doing this, they must pay attention to students' con-

cerns about the meaning of life. They must promote the fundamental values of democracy and prepare our youth for their role as responsible citizens. They must likewise prevent exclusion, a phenomenon which jeopardises the future of too many young people.

PROVIDE QUALIFICATIONS, through a variety of options

"Schools are responsible for enabling all students to undertake and successfully complete studies or to integrate into society after having mastered occupational skills. For this purpose to be fulfilled, the State must set the standard basic curriculum and education institutions must diversify their offerings to suit the interests and abilities of students, particularly beyond the compulsory basic portion of their education. The time has come to pay closer attention to student guidance and counselling and to reinstate vocational education as a valid educational option.

Equality of opportunity implies that the school, among other things, commits greater resources to certain categories of students and their parents so that all have an equal chance to succeed. Respect for the principle of equality of opportunity thus implies that the GB will take decisions that are in the interest of educational success for all of the students collectively.

Worksheet *for the educational project*

1 • Aims

The school's mission is colored by its own aims. They can be defined on the basis of the existing educational project, of the analysis of the school's situation and of the relevant elements of the school board's strategic plan.

a) The existing educational project

Are the aims of the existing educational project satisfactory? _____

b) The analysis of the situation

Should any aims be reviewed or added in light of the analysis of the situation of the school?

c) The school board's strategic plan

Which directions of the strategic plan seem relevant on the basis of the analysis of the situation of the school? _____

2 • Objectives

Are there aims of the educational project that should be translated into objectives? For example, for a green school, one might establish objectives relating to recycling, school food services, *etc.*

a) The aims of the educational project

Are there aims of the educational project that should be translated into objectives? For example, for a green school, one might establish objectives relating to recycling, school food services, *etc.*

b) The analysis of the situation

What elements of the analysis of the situation require the determination of objectives to improve success? Such objectives could deal with various elements of the mission of the school.

c) The school board's strategic plan

Do any objectives of the school board's strategic plan concern the school in light of its analysis of the situation?

The school may note that certain elements of the strategic plan are of direct concern and determine objectives accordingly. _____

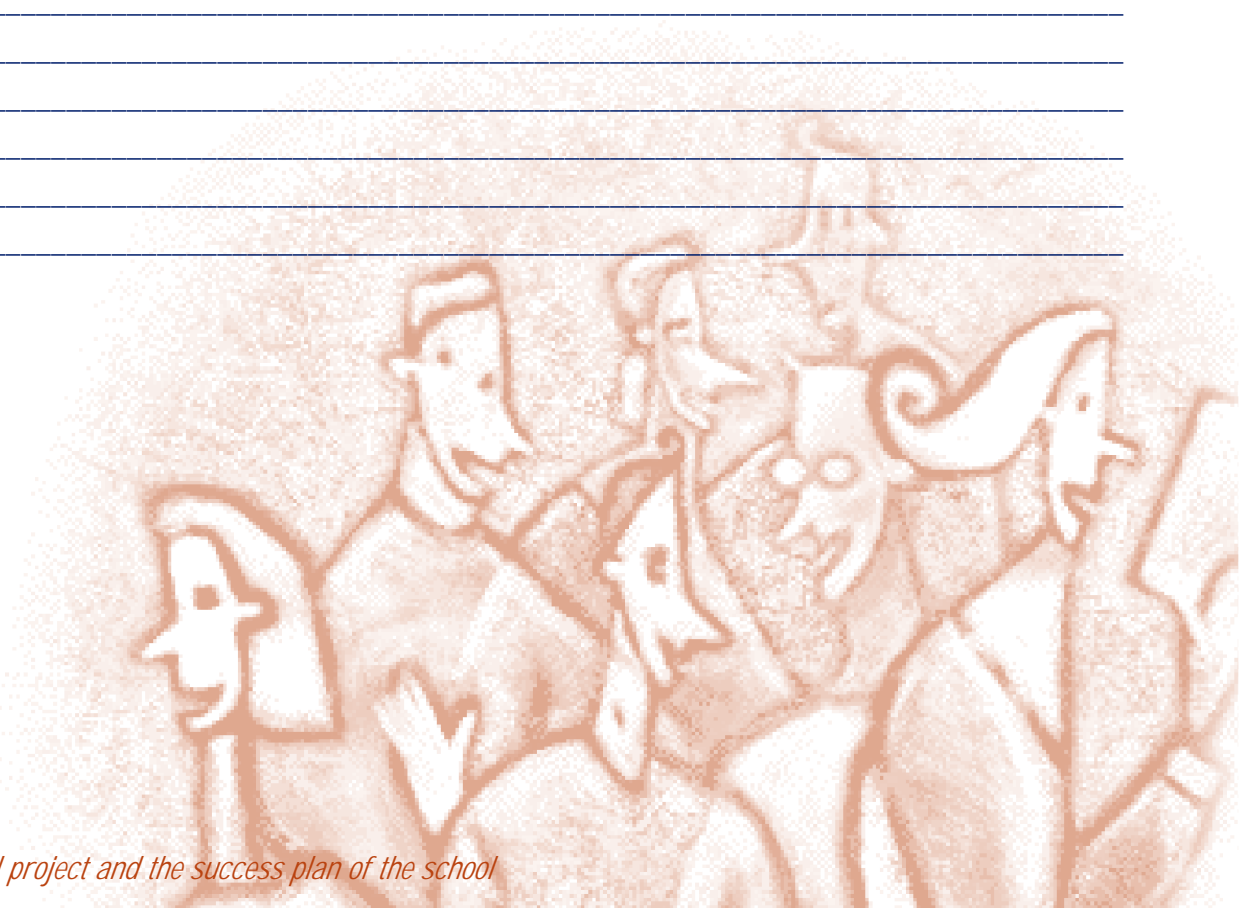
3 • *Actions for heightening awareness*

These actions are optional and closely tied to the aims identified in the educational project.

4 • *Evaluation*

When will the GB conduct evaluation of the educational project?

What methods will it use?



The success plan

The law now requires each school to have a success plan. It specifies the goals of the plan, the elements it should include and the procedure for its development.

1 • What is a success plan?

The success plan is a tool for implementing the educational project. The law stipulates that it include (Art. 37.1):

- **the measures appropriate** to the aims and objectives of the educational project;
- particularly, **the procedures for the supervision** (“encadrement”) of students;
- **the methods for evaluating** its implementation.

The success plan is normally intended to cover a period of several years, though it should be reviewed and, if necessary, updated annually.

2 • Who is responsible for developing the success plan?

The law stipulates:

- that **the school principal coordinate the development**, the review and any updating of the success plan (Art. 96.13, para. 1.1°);
- that **the principal prepare a proposal with the participation of members of staff** in accordance with the procedures established by the persons concerned at general meetings called for that purpose by the principal (Art. 77);
- that **the GB approve** the plan (Art. 75);
- that the **GB report annually to parents and school staff on the evaluation of the implementation** of the success plan (Art. 83).

3 • What should the success plan include?

The success plan is related to the aims and objectives of the educational project and describes the means to implement them. The plan should be restricted to matters within the school's competence. It should also define the evaluation methods that will apply to the entire plan.

With regard to the required procedures for student supervision (“encadrement”) in the success plan, **the majority of schools already have a supervision** (“encadrement”) **policy**. Consequently, it should not be necessary to start from scratch. **The principal might wish**, once evaluation and analysis have occurred, **to develop with staff a proposal to continue the same policy**, in whole or in part, as part of the success plan to be submitted

for approval by the GB. Two questions should be considered here taking into consideration the analysis of the school's situation:

- Is the supervision (“encadrement”) policy satisfactory?
- Are there elements that should be added to or removed from the policy?

4 • Evaluation

The law prescribes three elements for the evaluation of the success plan:

- **the plan must include methods for evaluating** its implementation (Art. 37.1);
- **the GB must report annually** on the evaluation of the implementation of the success plan (Art. 83);
- **a document** explaining the evaluation of the implementation of the success plan **must be distributed to parents and the staff** (Art. 83);

The evaluation of the implementation of the success plan implies evaluating whether measures provided in the plan have been put in place; the plan should specify the methods of evaluation to be used. It is then up to the GB to report.

It also involves evaluating whether the measures in place have been effective. This evaluation should not involve the bureaucratisation of school life to the extent that it consists of nothing more than completing questionnaires or acquiring data. Instead, as simple a system as possible should be devised to determine whether the success plan has been effective. A variety of evaluation instruments are possible: surveys, data, the GB's analysis, consultations with parents, staff and students, etc.



Worksheet *for the success plan*

1 • Aims of the educational project

An aim of the educational project may imply specifying the means for implementing it.

Means arising from the aims.

2 • Objectives of the educational project

Specify the means selected for each of the adopted objectives.

a) Objective 1 _____

b) Objective 2 _____

c) Objective 3 _____

3 • Procedures for “encadrement”

You may wish to proceed from the existing policy and those elements that had to be included.

a) Use of non-instructional time and time outside the timetable _____

b) Organisation of extracurricular activities _____

c) Other _____

4 • *Methods of evaluation*

You should specify the procedures for evaluating the implementation of the success plan.

a) First procedure _____

b) Second procedure _____

5 • *Evaluation of the success plan*

This evaluation should be conducted annually in order to review and implement the plan.



APPENDIX

The school board's *strategic plan and the provincial indicators*

The GB establishes its educational project on the basis of the analysis of the school's situation and the school board's strategic plan. It should, therefore, be familiar with the latter or, at least, those elements of it that pertain to the school.

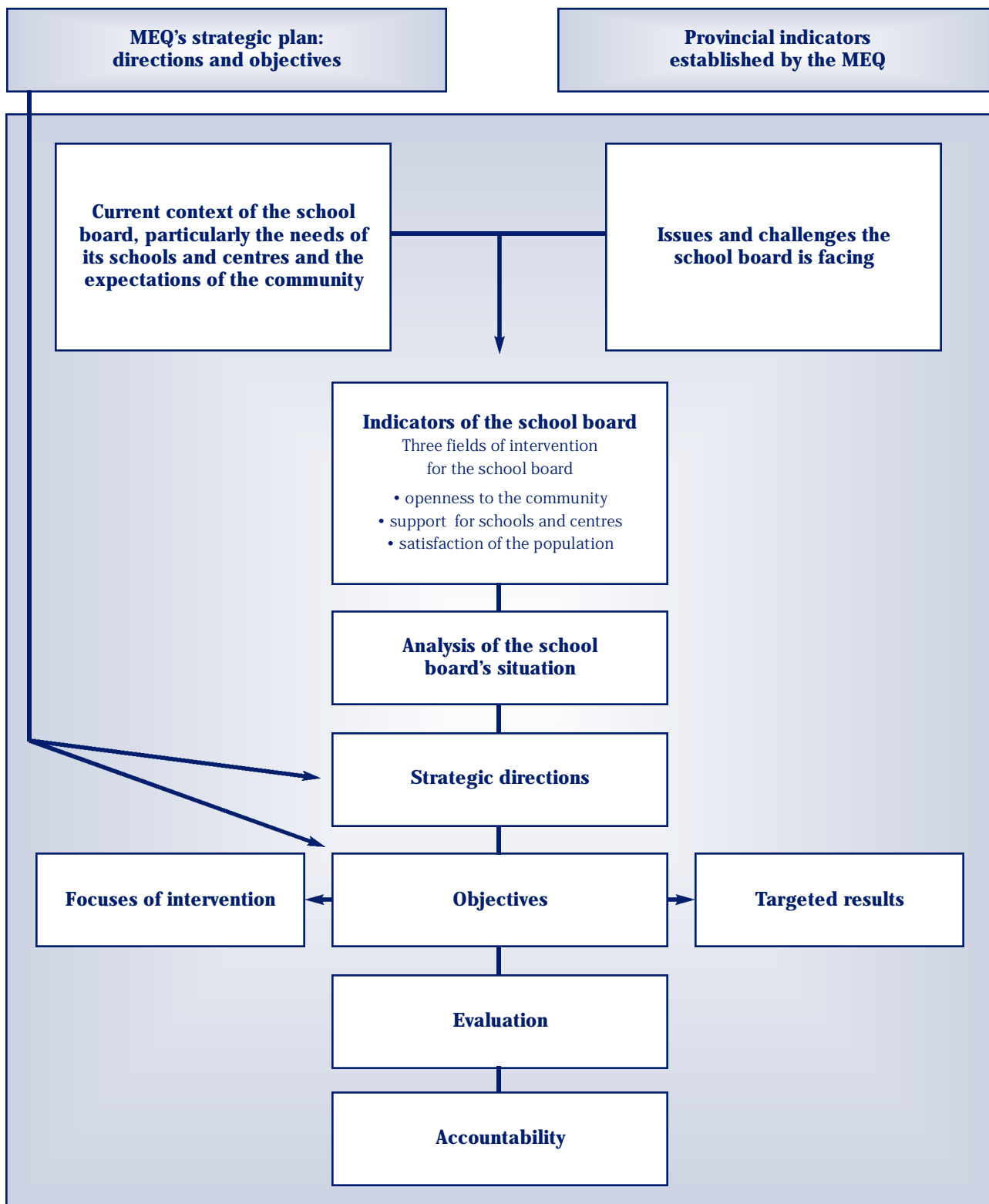
It may also be useful for the GB to be familiar with the provincial indicators that the plan should take into account.

1 • The school board's strategic plan

The law defines, in Article 209.1, the principal elements of the strategic plan. This plan should cover a period of several years. According to the interpretation, "the strategic planning exercise presupposes consultation of interested parties (p. 7)." The law also requires that the parents' committee be consulted and that the administration participate in development through the advisory committee on management. The following diagram summarises the content:



Figure 1: The school board's strategic plan



2 • Provincial indicators

The Minister has already provided school boards with the provincial indicators for the period 2003-2006. The data relative to these indicators should be available each year. Other qualitative indicators should be added during the coming year.

The following are the indicators identified for the two fields of intervention applicable to the schools. The ministerial document *Les indicateurs nationaux des plans stratégiques des commissions scolaires* contains a more complete definition of each.

Youth sector

Elementary:

- age of students entering a cycle;
- extension of studies in a cycle;
- age on leaving elementary;
- attendance in classes d'accueil;
- integration of special needs students into regular classes.

Secondary:

- age on entering secondary;
- leaving without qualifications, by cycle;
- graduation after secondary 5;
- high school leaving with diploma or qualifications;
- success in MEQ examinations;
- integration of special needs students into regular classes.

3 • Indicators determined by the school board

The school board determines indicators for the following three elements:

- openness to the community;
- support offered to schools and centres;
- satisfaction of the population with services provided by the school board.

Notes: _____

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professionnels de l'éducation
du Québec (CSQ)

FSE Fédération
des syndicats
de l'enseignement (CSQ)
Enseigner, c'est s'engager de A à Z.



Fédération du personnel
de soutien scolaire (CSQ)



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