

The Role of the High School Supporting* Teacher



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An Information Document
for Secondary Teachers
Working in the English Sector



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* Please note: *Supporting Teacher* is the correct term as per the Provincial Collective Agreement. However, this teacher is often referred to as a resource teacher.

Introduction

This information document outlines the role of the *secondary supporting teacher* in the English sector. It is the result of various consultations with local unions, provincial committees, and teachers. Based on these consultations, there was a need to clarify the role and develop a provincial information document. The document is divided into three main sections:

- Assisting students with behavioural difficulties
- Providing support (encadrement)¹
- Collaborating to ensure academic support

Each section represents a key element of the role.

At the secondary level, supporting teachers positions are allocated by the Québec Ministry of Education and distributed among the English school boards in Québec.² Teachers in this role provide support for at-risk students and students with handicaps, social mal-adjustments or learning difficulties, as well as support for teachers.³ The purpose of this document is to explain the role of the secondary supporting teacher and to provide additional resources so that students and teachers can fully benefit from this support.

The creation of this document is based on resources and legislation that govern our education system, notably:

- The Québec Education Act
- MEQ documents
- The Provincial Collective Agreement

For efficient access, all referenced documents and their web links have been included in the References and Supporting Documents section. Various terms have been marked with an asterisk (*) and defined in the Glossary. This has been done to support a common understanding of the terms used.

Examples of how this document may be used include:

- To clarify the elements of support associated with the role of the supporting teacher
- To maximize the effectiveness of this support service for students and teachers at the secondary level
- To guide new teachers or teachers new to the role
- As part of a presentation to clarify the role of the supporting teacher
- As a conversation starter to help define collaborative teaching roles
- As a complement to school board resources aimed at supporting the student with special needs such as a handbook or policy
- To discuss the orientation of this service at the school level via the Teacher Council

1 Provincial Collective Agreement (PCA) 2020-2023; 8-11.04

2 PCA 2020-2023 Appendix XXIX

3 PCA 2020-2023 Appendix XXIX; 8-11.04

Defining the Role

High school supporting teachers* have two roles:

- They are regular subject teachers
- They are released from a portion of this role to carry out the functions of a supporting teacher.⁴

The supporting teacher focuses on elements of student well-being and global success.⁵ In an effort to meet the individual needs of students⁶ and to ensure they do not drop out of school,⁷ supporting teachers choose and/or implement appropriate support measures that students may require.

Supporting teachers collaborate with the school team*,⁸ work with regular groups*,⁹ and provide elements of prevention and early intervention strategies by:

- Assisting students with behaviour difficulties
- Providing support (encadrement)* to students with various needs
- Ensuring academic follow-up and support* in various areas of school life.¹⁰



All three elements of support (listed above), that a supporting teacher may provide, are important to consider for personalized support and individual student success. They should be flexible and available as students' needs arise. The orientation of this service¹¹ may be discussed through the school-level participating body of teachers (Teacher Council).

⁴ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-11.02; 8-11.03; 8-11.05

⁵ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-11.04

⁶ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-2.01

⁷ MEQ; All Together for Student Success

⁸ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-2.01b)

⁹ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-11.02

¹⁰ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-11.04

¹¹ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-11.04

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Assisting Students with Behavioural Difficulties

Supporting teachers can assist students with behavioural difficulties¹² which may include:

- Students with under-reactive behaviour¹³
 - Fearful students
 - Disengaged students
 - Emotionally withdrawn students¹⁴



Under-reactive behaviour:

It is important to remember, these students may be shy, introverted, or isolated, and because of this their needs can be easily overlooked.¹⁵

- Students with over-reactive behaviour¹⁶ that demonstrate
 - aggressive acts
 - emotional outbursts
 - oppositional behaviour¹⁷



Over-reactive behaviour:

These students may experience difficulties due to a personal incident, family problems, or substance abuse, for example. Their behavioural difficulties may be exhibited in different ways.¹⁸

¹² 2020-2023 PCA; 8-11.04

¹³ 2020-2023 PCA Appendix XXXI

¹⁴ 2020-2023 PCA Appendix XXXI

¹⁵ QPAT Referential: Special Needs Guide for Teachers in the English Sector

¹⁶ 2020-2023 PCA Appendix XXXI

¹⁷ 2020-2023 PCA Appendix XXXI

¹⁸ QPAT Referential: Special Needs Guide for Teachers in the English Sector

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Providing Support (Encadrement)



Supporting teachers may provide support (encadrement) in the following ways:

Promoting personal and social growth by helping students to:¹⁹

- Establish positive relationships²⁰
- Resolve conflicts
- Recognize personal strengths and weaknesses
- Ask for help for self or others
- Adopt healthy lifestyle choices
- Cope with emotions and stress
- Develop strategies to resist negative influences²¹
- Etc.

Encouraging students to take responsibility of their own education through:²²

- Mentoring or arranging for peer assistance²³
- Setting and tracking goals with students²⁴
- Providing small group/individualized support²⁵
- Helping students adopt effective work methods so that they can:
 - Gather required materials
 - Select appropriate means for attaining objectives
 - Plan work to be done²⁶
 - Submit classwork²⁷ and homework on time²⁸

¹⁹ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-7.01a)

²⁰ MEQ: Reference Framework for Professional Competencies for Teachers

²¹ MEQ ÉKIP: Health, Well-Being and Educational Success of Young People

²² 2020-2023 PCA; 8-7.01

²³ QPAT Referential: Special Needs Guide for Teachers in the English Sector

²⁴ QPAT Referential: Special Needs Guide for Teachers in the English Sector

²⁵ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-7.01a)

²⁶ MEQ Chapter 3 Cross Curricular Competencies: Québec Education Program Secondary Cycle One;

MEQ Chapter 3 Cross Curricular Competencies: Québec Education Program Secondary Cycle Two

²⁷ MEQ Chapter 3 Cross Curricular Competencies: Québec Education Program Secondary Cycle One;

MEQ Chapter 3 Cross Curricular Competencies: Québec Education Program Secondary Cycle Two

²⁸ QPAT Referential: Special Needs Guide for Teachers in the English Sector

Collaborating with Teachers to Ensure Academic Support

By collaborating with teachers, supporting teachers may provide:

- Prevention and early intervention strategies²⁹
- Differentiated instruction through:
 - Pedagogical flexibility (for all students)
 - Adaptations of curriculum (for some students)
 - Modifications of QEP expectations
 - ◇ With the support of the school team and for the few students who meet the modification of QEP criteria³⁰



Prevention and early intervention should be ongoing, and are essential for ensuring student success.³¹ The non-category approach, in place since 2005, is a province-wide mechanism to ensure students receive timely support. Under this approach, it is *not* necessary for students to undergo a professional diagnostic assessment in order to access or receive services.³²

Academic support may be provided by collaborating with teachers to support:

- Students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties in regular groups
- Students entering the secondary level with a one-year delay³³
- Students that are at-risk³⁴

Supporting teachers may collaborate and support teachers and students by:

- Remaining current and sharing evidence-based practices
- Creating and sharing adapted material
- Assessing certain skills to provide pertinent information on student progress
- Planning and teaching lessons designed to meet the needs of students in difficulty³⁵
- Sharing classroom management strategies or interventions
- Adapting teaching methods³⁶
- Sharing effective learning and teaching strategies across subjects
- Etc.

29 2020-2023 PCA; 8-9.01; 8-11.04

30 MEQ 2021 Differentiated Instruction: Helping all students achieve educational success

31 2020-2023 PCA; 8-9.01; 8-11.04

32 2020-2023 PCA; 8-9.06; 8-9.07

33 2020-2023 PCA; 8-11.04

34 2020-2023 PCA Appendix XXIX

35 MEQ Reference Framework for Professional Competencies for Teachers

36 2020-2023 PCA; 8-11.04

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Collaborating with Teachers to Ensure Academic Support

Supporting teachers may collaborate with the school team to discuss student needs and progress through:³⁷

- Parent teacher interviews
- Transition meetings*
- Ad hoc committee* meetings
- Department meetings
- Resource plan meetings*
- School-Level Special Needs Committee
- IEP meetings



The supporting teacher is not responsible for overseeing the ad hoc and IEP process. The supporting teacher, along with the principal, the teacher(s) concerned and non-teaching professionals, can collaborate in the development of the IEP.³⁸

After consulting the confidential file and/or a non-teaching professional, the school team, working with students who require an IEP, must work together with parents and students (when possible) to make the necessary recommendations to ensure the plan is clear and that interventions are effective.³⁹

In the ad hoc and IEP process, the supporting teacher may play a collaborative role. They may participate in the assessment of student abilities and needs, suggest early intervention measures, learning objectives and strategies, and teaching strategies.⁴⁰

³⁷ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-2.01

³⁸ Québec Education Act; 2020-2023 PCA; 8-9.06; 8-9.07; 8-9.08

³⁹ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-9.08; QPAT Referential: Special Needs Guide for Teachers in the English Sector

⁴⁰ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-9.08; MEQ (2021) Suggestions for the Individualized Education Plan Process. Complementary Tool 3

Glossary

Supporting Teacher:

Unlike the role of the elementary remedial teacher, high school supporting teachers do not belong to a special category of teachers. They are regular teachers who are released from a portion of their teaching function, for a period of one school year ending on June 30, to carry out the role of supporting teacher.⁴¹

Support (Encadrement):

Intervention by a teacher with a student or a group of students to promote the student's personal and social development and to encourage him or her to assume his or her responsibilities as regards his or her own education.⁴²

School Team:

This refers to teachers (including supporting teachers and specialists), school principals, non-teaching professionals (e.g. occupational therapists, psychologists)⁴³ school board consultants, aides/attendants, special education technicians.

Regular groups:

A group of students that follow a General Education Path of learning rather than a diversified education path.⁴⁴

Transition meeting:

The period of time during which student transition, from elementary to secondary school, for example, is planned and support measures are implemented.⁴⁵

Ad hoc committee:

The ad hoc committee is made up of a representative of the school administration, the teacher or teachers concerned and, when needed, a non-teaching professional. The ad hoc committee's mandate pertains to the IEP process as outlined in the Provincial Collective Agreement.⁴⁶

Resource Plan Meeting:

The orientation of resource support services may be a topic of discussion at Teacher Council.⁴⁷

⁴¹ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-11.05; 8-11.06

⁴² 2020-2023 PCA; 8-7.01a)

⁴³ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-9.08

⁴⁴ MEQ: Work-Oriented Training Path

⁴⁵ MEQ: Ensuring a Smooth Transition from Elementary to Secondary School: Elementary School Secondary School;

⁴⁶ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-9.08

⁴⁷ 2020-2023 PCA; 8-12.00

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7.2

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- Advancing Learning in Differentiation and Inclusion (ALDI)
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- QPAT Professional Matters Team
- QPAT Executive Committee
- QPAT Board of Directors
- QPAT Special Needs Committee