

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last Sunday, the Quebec government announced the extension of the closure of all Quebec schools until May 1st inclusive, due to the risk of contagion linked to COVID-19.

Following the communications which have already reached you, I wanted to make a few clarifications for the period which will start on March 30th.

Obviously, I am aware that further details will be necessary in view of this unprecedented situation for the Quebec school system. In this sense, other updates will be sent to you so that we can all have the clearest and most suitable tags available.

Ministerial exams

First of all, I would like to remind you that, given the situation, all of the ministerial exams for the year 2019-2020 are canceled. I would also like to remind you that the 2019-2020 school year is not compromised, even if the health situation required the closure of schools beyond May 1st. In all cases, the professional judgment of the teachers, based on the assessments made before the closure of the establishments, will allow them to prepare the final reports. More precise methods regarding the preparation of these bulletins could be communicated to you later.

I remind you that the activities that will be made available will aim above all to consolidate student learning during the closing period, and that they remain optional. Although important, these contents are optional and cannot in any case be evaluated.

Educational content and academic continuity

As you know, as of March 30, optional educational activities will be gradually offered from online platforms and public television, with the aim of continuing to stimulate student learning. We invite you to make these services known to parents in your area.

Also, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education will send you a weekly packet of turnkey educational activities, starting on April 6, which we will ask you to send to the management of the establishments of your territory. The latter will then be able to transmit the whole to their school team. The kit will contain suggestions for educational activities for all levels of preschool, elementary and secondary. They can also be improved or adapted, if desired, before being sent to parents.

The directorates-general and school administrators are also called upon to mobilize all of their staff so that all can participate in the necessary psychological and pedagogical support for the pupils, by being flexible, flexible and taking into account personal situations of each.

Vulnerable pupils

The staff of the school teams, supported by school administrators, are also invited, as far as possible, to carry out a personalized weekly follow-up with their pupils, and this, by prioritizing those they consider to be the most vulnerable, either by telephone or various technological means allowing direct contact (video paging services, etc.). If it is not possible to use these options, an email could be sent to parents, encouraging them to contact the contact person.

In the same spirit, we invite the professionals and the technical support employees who accompanied students to maintain the link with the people under their responsibility before the closing of the establishments on March 13 and to coordinate their interventions with the students, and this, jointly with teachers and other members of the school team. These follow-ups may be carried out in the same manner as those applicable by the teaching staff.

Access to schools

Exceptionally until next May 1, only the principals will be able to access their school, for example to retrieve tools allowing them to support their team and coordinate each other's efforts from a distance. Otherwise, establishments will remain closed to staff and the public.

The heads of educational establishments (public and private) must prepare the operation for the recovery of absolutely necessary personal and educational effects, taking into account strict hygiene rules. This activity must take place over time and be coordinated so as to banish contact and proximity between people. In the invitation sent to parents, it will be necessary to recall the Public Health instructions related to travel in a context of social distancing. It is also necessary to ensure that the necessary sanitary measures, in particular the cleaning of visitors' hands, are observed systematically. This operation should be an opportunity to lend computer equipment to families by prioritizing students with special needs or living in disadvantaged socioeconomic environments. This operation should ideally be completed no later than Friday, April 17, 2020.

It is always desirable that educational materials from schools be made available to parents who request them. We also invite you now to make an inventory of the various resources available (laptops, tablets, textbooks, etc.).

Working conditions for the public sector

As mentioned above, we ask all staff not to go to the physical premises and to encourage remote working. I should also point out that the remuneration of all regular staff is maintained.

Remuneration is also maintained for temporary employees based on the hours already known and scheduled on the schedule until next May.

Vocational training and adult education

We are aware of the specific challenges with regard to general adult education and vocational training. In this context, we invite you to show flexibility and flexibility and to encourage, whenever possible, the recognition of prior learning to award diplomas, certificates and certifications, while taking advantage of distance learning initiatives.

Status of administrative centers

Administrative centers are considered to carry out essential activities. In this sense, they remain open until May 1, 2020. However, it is requested that staff work remotely, as far as possible.

As mentioned earlier, please be aware that additional details will need to be provided. If you have not already done so, I invite you to send us any questions. We will endeavor to respond as soon as possible.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank you for your extraordinary collaboration. Your mobilization is inspiring and should be highlighted. All together, we will overcome this crisis.

Receive, Ladies and Gentlemen, my best regards.

The Minister of Education and Higher Education,

Jean-François Roberge