

TRANSLATION

BY EMAIL

January 27, 2021

To Directors General of school boards and school service centres:

As you know, on January 27, 2021, the Minister of Education announced the launch of the Stratégie d'entraide éducative et de bien-être à l'école [Strategy to provide academic assistance and support students' well-being], which allows new support and guidance services to be implemented for students who are experiencing academic or psychosocial difficulties. This letter provides various details about the measures included in the strategy.

Implementation of tutoring services in the school network

In order to allow educational institutions to hire new tutors to support students who need to catch up, the funding associated with Mesure 15021 – Soutien additionnel à la consolidation des apprentissages et à l'engagement scolaire des élèves en contexte COVID [Additional support for consolidation of learning and student academic engagement in the context of COVID-19] in the budget rules is increased by \$10 million for the current school year. This increase will allow for sustained implementation of tutoring programs for students who require additional educational support outside of class hours.

Teachers and staff members can give school administrators the names of any students who might benefit from these services. These tutoring services complement the support already provided by teachers, and the goal is not to make their task more difficult, but to allow students the opportunity to benefit from additional adult assistance on a regular basis. In order to support the implementation of these new services, the ministerial team has developed various tools to facilitate the work of school staff. Attached as appendices are:

- Sample letter for appealing to regular, part-time and substitute employees to offer their services (Appendix 1)
- Referral form for students who could benefit from tutoring services (Appendix 2)
- Memory aid for new tutors (Appendix 3)

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a) Recruitment of tutors

As mentioned by the Minister in communications with the network, potential tutors can belong to two separate groups: current and former employees of the education network as well as post-secondary students.

Educational institutions must tell their regular, part-time and substitute staff that it is possible for them to lend a hand as tutors. No staff members will be obliged to offer tutoring services, which are provided outside of the class hours planned in the school calendar and as per the conditions set out in their work contracts. Retired school staff will be hired under the same conditions as retired teachers who are currently returning to teaching, meaning as occasional substitutes, teachers-by-the-lesson or another role, based on the situation that applies.

The Ministère de l'Éducation is also facilitating large-scale recruitment of post-secondary students and retired school staff who would like to provide tutoring services, using the "Answer the Call!" online platform. As in previous recruitment campaigns using this platform, interested candidates can specify the region and educational institution where they want to apply. The platform will be available once the announcement has been made. Educational institutions will have access to the bank of candidates by the end of this week on the CollecteInfo portal. A guide explaining how to use this tool has also been posted. The rest of the hiring process is the responsibility of the educational institution. A new employment category will be created for student tutors, who will be remunerated at a rate of \$20 per hour for college students and \$23 per hour for university students. In collaboration with the Société Grics, a process has been started to manage remuneration associated with tutoring.

b) Organization of tutoring services

The form provided in Appendix 2 can be used to identify a student's needs so that a tutor can intervene in an effective and targeted manner. Note that it is possible to plan tutoring sessions for small groups of up to four or five students with similar needs. Ensuring that children have a sense of stability within their tutoring sessions allows for the creation of a significant and personal relationship between the child and the tutor they are paired with.

Tutoring sessions must be offered remotely, unless the tutor is already present at the student's school or the student's situation requires the tutor to be physically present. In that case, the tutoring sessions should take place in the school and the relevant health measures must be respected. Please note that the holder of parental authority must consent to tutoring sessions before they can be provided to the child.

This way, the school administration, in collaboration with the school team, can manage the tutoring program and ensure that students with referrals are assigned to tutors. We hope that the document provided in Appendix 3 and intended to support new tutors in their task can facilitate the management of this program.

Implementation of educational support and guidance from Alloprof

As part of the recently announced strategy, new pedagogical support and guidance services for students who are experiencing academic difficulties and who are at risk of academic failure will be offered by the Alloprof organization. The regular schedule will be expanded to include Sundays and various new services will be made available in order to better support students and their parents and meet student needs that may arise on short notice. These services complement those offered at school, and school staff or parents may recommend that students access these services, if necessary. College and university students who have expressed their interest using the “Answer the Call!” platform may have their applications considered by Alloprof.

Implementation of Psychosocial support from Tel-jeunes

The Tel-jeunes organization is also offering new services for students who are experiencing difficulties or psychological distress in the current context of the pandemic. These new services include increased telephone support and online access, as well as personalized contact with students who have been referred by their schools. Various resources, personal accounts and videos will be produced, and a wide variety of psychological support services will be made available to students. Tel-jeunes services complement those that are already available to students who require psychosocial support. College and university students whose field of studies corresponds to the psychosocial field that Tel-jeunes is seeking can offer their services using the “Answer the Call!” platform.

Well-being at school

Students’ well-being affects how open they are to learning, just as their belief in their own learning abilities affects their well-being. Because of this, a new budget measure, Mesure budgétaire protégée 15022 – Bien-être à l’école [Well-being at school] has been added to the budget rules for the 2020-2021 school year. This measure, representing \$13.9 million, will support the school network in implementing various initiatives to promote the well-being of students and school staff.

The goals of this measure include providing training, support and coaching to school staff to foster a sense of personal effectiveness during their interventions with students, especially those who are experiencing psychosocial difficulties. It will also allow schools to implement projects that affect student well-being by focusing on social and emotional skills development, school climate, students' feelings of personal effectiveness, healthy lifestyle habits and positive mental health.

The texts of the new and modified budget rules, in French only, are provided in Appendix 4. We will also take this opportunity to confirm that the proposal to reduce the budget envelope for Mesure 15028 – Activités parascolaires au secondaire in order to finance these new measures was presented on January 11, 2021, and was not accepted.

We hope that this Strategy will allow you provide support and guidance to the largest possible number of students who are experiencing difficulties due to the pandemic.

Yours truly,

Anne-Marie Lepage
Assistant Deputy Minister
Soutien aux élèves, à la pédagogie et aux services à l'enseignement

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