

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ENGLISH MONTREAL SCHOOL BOARD

A Special Board Meeting of the English Montreal School Board has taken place on Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at 12:30 P.M. via Teams.

Commissioners Present

Mr. Joe Ortona, Chair
Ms. Chelsea Craig, Commissioner
Ms. Paula Kilian, Commissioner
Ms. Julie Kristoff, Parent Commissioner
Ms. Sharon Nelson, Commissioner
Ms. Susan Perera, Commissioner
Mr. Mario Pietrangelo, Commissioner
Ms. Merika Ramundo, Parent Commissioner
Ms. Jennifer Rutt, Parent Commissioner
Ms. Paola Samuel, Commissioner

Commissioners Not Present

Ms. Maria Corsi, Commissioner
Mr. James Kromida, Vice-Chair
Mr. Julien Feldman, Commissioner
Ms. Jessica Houde-Woytiuk, Parent Commissioner
Mr. Pietro Mercuri, Commissioner

Administrators Present

Mr. Nicholas Katalifos, Director General
Mr. Jack Chadirdjian, Assistant Director General, Administration

Ms. Darlene Kehyayan, Regional Director, East
Ms. Angela Spagnolo, Regional Director, AEVS
Mr. Mario Cardin, Director, Material Resources
Ms. Myrienne Lusignan, Assistant Director, Educational Services
Ms. Livia Nassivera, Director, Financial Services
Ms. Julie René de Cotret, Director, Student Services
Ms. Marilyn Ramlakhan, Assistant Director, Human Resources
Ms. Anna Sanalidro, Director, Educational Services
Mr. Charalambos Thomas, Director, Information Technology Services
Ms. Angela Vaudry, Assistant Director, Human Resources
Ms. Ann Watson, Director, Human Resources
Ms. Brigida Sellato, Consultant, Secretariat General

1.	<p><u>Land Acknowledgement</u></p> <p>We/I would like to acknowledge that the English Montreal School Board is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka*. We are grateful to live, learn, and work in Tiohtiá:ke*, which has long been a site of meeting and exchange for many First Nations, and is currently home to diverse groups of Indigenous and other peoples.</p> <p>As a School Board, it is important that we acknowledge the historic and ongoing role of educational institutions in perpetuating injustices against Indigenous communities. We are committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating staff and students about the true history and current realities of the Indigenous Peoples of what we now call Canada. • Celebrating the cultures, contributions, and knowledge of the many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. • Listening to and amplifying Indigenous voices. • And partnering with local Indigenous community members. <p>We offer this acknowledgement as a first step and public commitment to our ongoing process towards reconciliation and justice for Indigenous peoples and communities.</p>
2.	<p><u>Confirmation of Notice of the Meeting</u></p> <p>The Acting Secretary General, Me Jack Chadirdjian, confirmed that proper notice of this meeting was given.</p>
3.	<p><u>Approval of Agenda</u></p> <p>IT WAS MOVED BY MS. MERIKA RAMUNDO AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT the agenda be approved as presented.</p> <p>Vote: 10-0-0, Adopted</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Resolution # 25-07-09-3</u></p>
4.	<p><u>Question Period</u></p> <p>Questions from Mr. Chris Eustace were read and addressed by the Chair, Mr. Joe Ortona, regarding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Capacity of all schools ➤ CGTSIM investigation
	<p>On a motion by Ms. Paula Kilian, the meeting moved In Camera at 12:40 p.m.</p> <p>The meeting returned from the In Camera session at 12:55 p.m.</p>
5.	<p><u>Resolution to Mandate a Request for Deficit Budget</u></p> <p>WHEREAS the Government of Quebec has repeatedly affirmed that education is a top priority and promised to protect educational services, yet has imposed significant budget cuts on Québec's education network for the 2024–2025 school year, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$510 million in cuts to school boards and service centres; • Approximately \$400 million in reductions to building maintenance in July 2024; • A hiring freeze implemented in November 2024; • Approximately \$200 million in cuts announced in December 2024, on the eve of the holiday break; • Approximately \$70 million cut from the catch-up plan, announced on the eve of March break; • Suspension of renovation, expansion, and school construction projects by the CAQ government;

WHEREAS an additional \$510 million in cuts for the 2025–2026 school year, demanded in June 2025 after staffing assignments were finalized, will directly undermine essential services for students;

WHEREAS the draft budgetary rules and parameters, issued on June 12, 2025, require the English Montreal School Board (EMSB) to cut \$21,016,662 for the 2025–2026 school year;

WHEREAS these draft budgetary rules also prohibit the EMSB from accessing approximately \$8 million of its accumulated surplus, funds responsibly accrued through the Board’s initiatives for the benefit of its students;

WHEREAS these cuts will jeopardize critical services and programs, including:

- Maintaining academic excellence and graduation rates that surpass provincial averages for public and private schools;
- Sustaining diverse French-language programs (Core, Immersion, and Bilingual) in elementary schools;
- Supporting the integration of ethnocultural communities through professional development and student programs;
- Providing essential services such as guidance counselling, drug and violence prevention, occupational therapy, speech and language support, behavioural interventions, and programs for special needs and gifted students;
- Ensuring safe and adequate transportation across the EMSB’s vast territory;
- Offering the government-subsidized Before and After School Enriched (BASE) program;
- Delivering Adult Education and Vocational Services that meet community needs;

WHEREAS the government provided only one business day, from June 12 to June 13, 2025, for consultation on these budgetary rules, with plans to submit the final version to the Treasury Board by the end of June for approval in July;

WHEREAS implementing cuts of this magnitude is neither feasible nor responsible without significantly harming direct student services;

WHEREAS the timing of these cuts, announced after critical staffing decisions were made pursuant to collective agreement deadlines, severely limits the EMSB’s ability to mitigate their impact;

WHEREAS the EMSB Council of Commissioners is steadfastly committed to safeguarding equitable access to high-quality educational services, ensuring no student is left behind;

WHEREAS the EMSB Council of Commissioners upholds its responsibility under section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to manage and control the allocation of funding for minority-language education in its territory, for the benefit of its students and community;

WHEREAS the EMSB is dedicated to preserving services tailored to the unique needs of its students, including support for a growing population of students with special needs, quality immersion and bilingual programs, and vibrant cultural and community initiatives;

WHEREAS the proposed budgetary rules, developed without meaningful consultation as required by section 472 of the *Education Act*, are unreasonable and unjustifiably restrict the EMSB’s management and control of funding, in violation of section 23 of the Charter;

WHEREAS, under section 281 of the *Education Act*, a school board that does not adopt a budget by July 1st is limited to using 1/12 of the previous year’s budget monthly until a budget is adopted;

	<p>WHEREAS section 279 of the <i>Education Act</i> prohibits a school board from submitting a deficit budget without ministerial authorization;</p> <p>WHEREAS the EMSB has thoroughly assessed its financial situation and determined that fully implementing the proposed cuts and restrictions on accumulated surplus funds for 2025–2026 would be detrimental to student services and inconsistent with its obligations;</p> <p>IT WAS MOVED BY MS. PAULA KILIAN AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT the English Montreal School Board urgently calls on the Government of Quebec to revise the draft budgetary rules to rescind the proposed cuts and restore the ability of school boards to access their accumulated surplus funds;</p> <p>IT WAS FURTHER UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT, to ensure timely access to the board’s financial resources for the benefit of its students, should the government maintain these unjustified budgetary constraints, the English Montreal School Board mandates the administration to seek authorization from the Minister to submit a deficit budget, in accordance with the budget to be presented to Council.</p> <p>Vote: 10-0-0, Adopted</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Resolution # 25-07-09-5</u></p>
6.	<p><u>Adjournment</u></p> <p>IT WAS MOVED BY MS. PAOLA SAMUEL AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 1:02 p.m.</p> <p>Vote: 10-0-0, Adopted</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Resolution # 25-07-09-6</u></p>
	<p>Signed in Montreal, _____</p> <p>_____ Mr. Joe Ortona, Chair</p> <p>_____ Me Jack Chadirdjian, Acting Secretary General</p>