

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ENGLISH MONTREAL SCHOOL BOARD

A Special Board Meeting of the English Montreal School Board has taken place on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, at 7:00 P.M. in the Laurence Patterson Room, 6000 Fielding Avenue, Montreal.

Commissioners Present

Mr. Joe Ortona, Chair
Mr. James Kromida, Vice-Chair – via TEAMS
Ms. Maria Corsi, Commissioner
Ms. Chelsea Craig, Commissioner – via TEAMS
Mr. Julien Feldman, Commissioner
Ms. Paula Kilian, Commissioner
Ms. Julie Kristof, Parent Commissioner
Mr. Pietro Mercuri, Commissioner
Ms. Susan Perera, Commissioner – via TEAMS
Mr. Mario Pietrangelo, Commissioner – via TEAMS
Ms. Merika Ramundo, Parent Commissioner – via TEAMS
Ms. Jennifer Rutt, Parent Commissioner

Commissioners Not Present

Ms. Jessica Houde-Woytiuk, Parent Commissioner
Ms. Sharon Nelson, Commissioner
Ms. Paola Samuel, Commissioner

Administrators Present

Mr. Nicholas Katalifos, Director General
Ms. Pela Nickoletopoulos, Assistant Director General, Education
Me Jack Chadirdjian, Assistant Director General, Administration
Me Nathalie Lauzière, Secretary General

Mr. Jimmy Giannacopoulos, Regional Director, West
Ms. Darlene Kehyayan, Regional Director, East
Ms. Angela Spagnolo, Regional Director, AEVS
Mr. Mario Cardin, Director, Material Resources
Ms. Livia Nassivera, Director, Financial Services
Ms. Julie René de Cotret, Director, Student Services
Ms. Anna Sanalidro, Director, Educational Services
Me Magdalena Sokol, Director, Legal Services
Mr. Charalambos Thomas, Director, Information Technology Services
Ms. Ann Watson, Director, Human Resources
Ms. Marilyn Ramlakhan, Assistant Director, Human Resources
Ms. Angela Vaudry, Assistant Director, Human Resources
Mr. Michael Cohen, Manager, Marketing and Communications
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 Secretary General, Me Nathalie Lauzière, confirmed that proper notice of this meeting was given.</p>
3.	<p><u>Approval of Agenda</u></p> <p>IT WAS MOVED BY MS. JULIE KRISTOF AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT the agenda be approved as presented.</p> <p>Vote: 11-0-0, Adopted.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Resolution # 25-10-29-3</u></p>
4.	<p><u>Question Period</u></p> <p>Questions from Ms. Christine Gravel were read and addressed by the Chair, Mr. Joe Ortona, regarding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Systemic inequity and recognition for Muslim students ➤ EMSB Secondary 5 Contemporary World Curriculum <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"> ➤ Minutes of the Special Board Meeting held on August 11, 2025 ➤ Cost of Court Challenge regarding Budget Cuts
	<p>Mr. Julien Feldman joined the meeting at 7:09 p.m.</p>
5.	<p><u>2025-2026 Operating, Debt Service and Capital Investment Budget</u></p> <p>WHEREAS Section 277 of the <i>Education Act</i> (Chapter I-13.3) stipulates that the English Montreal School Board (EMSB) shall adopt its Operating, Capital Investment, and Debt Service Budget for the 2025-2026 school year and transmit same to the Minister of Education;</p> <p>WHEREAS the Minister of Education may authorize a school board to adopt a budget whose expenses exceed revenues pursuant to section 279 of the <i>Education Act</i>;</p>

WHEREAS the draft budgetary rules and provisional parameters, providing for budgetary compressions and prohibiting the use of accumulated surplus funds, were communicated on June 12, 2025, after deadlines in collective agreements to abolish positions had passed for all categories of staff, other than daycare workers and attendants for students with special needs and special needs technicians;

WHEREAS on June 19, 2025, the Ministry indicated that no request for a deficit budget based on the new budgetary compressions would be accepted;

WHEREAS the final budgetary rules and initial parameters of July 16, 2025, still required substantial budgetary compressions and prohibited the use of accumulated surplus funds;

WHEREAS the EMSB, along with the QESBA and all other English school boards, brought a court application challenging the changes to the budgetary rules under s. 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (500-17-135152-257) and sought a stay;

WHEREAS the government has, since the court application was initiated, agreed to temporarily lift restrictions on the use of certain funds (dedicated and protected measures) until the Bill 40 case is resolved;

WHEREAS on October 22, 2025, in a letter of that date from Carole Arav, Deputy Minister, the Ministry withdrew measure 16034, made adjustments allowing greater flexibility in hiring staff, and indicated that school boards or school service centres should contact the Ministry if these adjustments still did not enable them to respect their budgets;

WHEREAS on the basis of these substantial adjustments and representations, the EMSB, along with the QESBA and all other English language school boards, withdrew the application for a stay on October 24, 2025, on the understanding that a request could be made if the adjustments were insufficient to enable the EMSB to balance its budget;

WHEREAS the EMSB has deployed substantial efforts to reduce expenses in compliance with collective agreements while minimizing as much as possible impacts on students, including by not filling vacancies at all levels of the school board, but the scale of budgetary compressions required and the timing of their communication makes impacts on students (including students with special needs) unavoidable;

WHEREAS the EMSB nonetheless expects to incur expenses exceeding revenues by \$7,818,268 in its Operating Budget for the 2025-2026;

WHEREAS this amount, \$7,818,268, is less than 15% of the accumulated surplus as of June 30, 2024, excluding the net value of land, that is, the limit on the appropriation of accumulated surplus funds applicable prior to the 2025-2026 budgetary rules;

WHEREAS the budget, as outlined in the documentation submitted at the meeting, is based on the Initial Parameters received on July 16, 2025, and the amendments received on October 22, 2025;

WHEREAS the deadline to submit budgets, initially set to September 26, 2025, was postponed by the Ministry to October 30, 2025;

WHEREAS on October 28, 2025, the EMSB requested authorization from the Ministry to adopt an Operating, Capital Investment and Debt Service Budget providing for expenses exceeding revenues by \$7,818,268, to be confirmed by resolution of the Council of Commissioners, by letters of October 28, 2025, addressed to the Minister and the *Direction générale des politiques budgétaires et du financement des réseaux* of the Ministry;

WHEREAS the Ministry replied on October 28, 2025, requesting a copy of the EMSB's budget in order to examine the request, and the EMSB provided a copy of its budget on the same day in the form available at the time;

	<p>IT WAS MOVED BY MR. PIETRO MERCURI AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT the EMSB request authorization from the Minister of Education to adopt an Operating, Capital Investment and Debt Service Budget providing for expenses exceeding revenues by \$7,818,268 and that this resolution be transmitted to the Ministry of Education;</p> <p>IT WAS FURTHER UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT, subject to the Minister's authorization, and as recommended by the CMAC/RAC Committee, the Operating, Capital Investment and Debt Service Budget providing for Revenues of \$459,458,409 and Expenditures of \$467,276,677 be adopted and transmitted to the Minister of Education, as outlined in the documentation submitted at the meeting.</p> <p>Vote: 12-0-0, Adopted.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Resolution # 25-10-29-5</u></p>
6.	<p><u>Adjournment</u></p> <p>IT WAS MOVED BY MS. MARIA CORSI AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 7:28 p.m.</p> <p>Vote: 12-0-0, Adopted.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Resolution # 25-10-29-6</u></p>
	<p>Signed in Montreal, _____</p> <p>_____ Mr. Joe Ortona, Chair</p> <p>_____ Me Nathalie Lauzière, Secretary General</p>