

IDENTIFICATION CODE

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TITLE: POLICY REGARDING FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF PARENTS AND USERS

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The mission of the Littoral School board is to ensure that the youth and adults on its territory receive the educational services to which they are entitled as defined by the Education Act and the Basic School Regulations. The Littoral School Board fulfills this mission by supporting its schools whose mission is **to impart knowledge to students, foster their development and give them qualifications.**

The Littoral School Board assures everyone concerned that the right to free educational services is respected. It will outline the different financial contributions that may be required while respecting the responsibilities of the schools and conforming to the exceptions stated in the Education Act.

The Littoral School Board assures that the application of the policy regarding financial contributions of parents and users will be in conformity with the existing laws and regulations, in a non-limiting way being:

- the Education Act;
- the Basic Regulations for Preschool, Primary and Secondary;
- the basic Regulations for the General Training of Adults;
- the Basic Regulations for Vocational Training;
- the regulation on school child care services;
- the annual budget regulations of the MELS.

It also refers to the Littoral School Board's policy concerning:

- school transportation;
- school day care services.

Principles

The Littoral School Board declares that in a public school system where the principle of free educational services applies, it is important that the requested financial contributions be kept to a minimum so as to assure access to quality and diversified educational services by all students.

The Littoral School Board is committed to a management model where transparency occupies an important place.

It is within the framework of its policy relating to the financial contributions from parents and users, the board wishes to:

- **clearly established** what could be the subject of a financial contribution;
- **distinguishes** the compulsory fees from the optional fees;

- **assure** the collection, analysis, treatment and circulation of information for a well informed management and appropriate interventions at all levels;
- **encourage** cost comparison of teaching aids and other objects required by the cycles or schools and to circulate this information;
- **give an account** of the management of the required contributions either by the school or by the board.

The responsibilities regarding the supervision of financial contributions given by the Education Act to school boards and governing boards is done with respect to the sharing of responsibilities that has already been attributed to these organizations.

Knowing that schools may adopt different procedures for financial contributions, the Littoral School Board must assure that the fees requested are reasonable and does not impact negatively on the principle of access to education.

2. Objectives

To assure access to educational services

The Littoral School Board is responsible for assuring access to free educational services for all students on its territory. It is for this reason that the board adopts measures relating to the supervision of financial contributions.

To establish the roles and responsibilities of the different persons involved in the management of financial contributions that may be required from the parents or users.

3. Free use

3.1 The right to free use and its limits.

The right to free educational services and its limits are indicated in the Education Act and the Basic School Regulations.

This right covers all educational and teaching programs in general and vocational education as well as programs in complimentary and special services as indicated in The Basic School Regulations.

In the case of **text books and instructional material required for the teaching of programs of studies, the right to free use does not apply to the student registered in adult education services.**

The right to free use of textbooks and instructional material required for the teaching of programs of studies ends on the last day of the school calendar of the school year in which the student reaches 18 years of age (or 21 years of age in the case of handicapped persons within the meaning of the Act to secure the handicapped in the exercise of their rights (ref: Education Act, article 7.).

The Education Act and the Basic School Regulations foresees exceptions to the free use of educational services as well as legal measures allowing school boards and its schools to require a financial contribution from the users of some services.

We will find in this policy the perimeters that have been established for each of these exceptions as well as for the services that are in place within our schools.

3.2 Perimeters for free use

To clarify the meaning to be given to the right of free use, the following details are given to educational services:

- *within the limits already presented, free use applies to textbooks, novels, grammar books, dictionaries, bibles, basic materials required for the teaching of all programs of studies;*

The right to free use prohibits the charging of fees for:

- admission;
- inscription ;
- registration for a special project;
- opening of a file;
- communication with parents;
- changing of a timetable;
- the retaking of school or official examinations;
- the care of musical instruments;
- the buying of a flute;
- the buying of a graphics calculator;

- the rental or buying of a lock.

The right to free use prohibits the following practices:

- **the refusal to give timetables** to students who did not pay their school fees;
- **the holding back of school material** in the case of students who have not paid the fees that were due;
- **charge** a deposit for the textbooks on loan and pay it back at the end of the year.

The right to free use has limited applications in the following situations:

- only the first re-take exam is free for examinations in the general sector of adult education;
- tests for the Attestation of Equivalence of Secondary Studies (AESS) or the General Development Test (GDT) or other specific services must be done within a framework to recognize prior learning in order for it to be free.

4. Control of required contributions

4.1 Material in which the students write, draw or cut out (ref. Education Act, article 7, line 2)

It is the **governing board, of each school**, who establishes the principles for the control of the costs of these documents (ref: Education Act, article 77.1 line 1).

To exercise this power and to manage the required contributions, the school board deems it compulsory for schools to respect the following controls:

- **to maintain** non excessive, justified and reasonable costs for parents and users;
- **to proceed** to the approval of a maximum amount of contributions for each grade level during the budget preparation for the following year. (Resolution to approve the scales for the required contributions);
- **to send** the maximum amounts approved to the school board after the budget has been adopted;

- **to bill** the parents or users the real costs of the supplied materials with an obligation to present the breakdown of the costs without exceeding the maximum established;
- **to present** separately, requests for financial contributions for school material and voluntary contributions for other activities;
- **to send** to the school board, no later than October 31, the real costs required for school opening;
- **to present** to the governing board the compilation done by the school board of the real costs required for the school opening in each of the schools;
- the **parents' or user's contribution** to the material targeted by line 2 of article 7 of the Education Act is an **annual contribution and the parents of a student attending one of the schools of a school board at the opening of the school year should not have to pay a second time if the student changes school** within the school board territory during the course of the year. This control does not apply to students registering during the school year.

To exercise this power and to manage the required contributions, **the school board asks its establishments to respect, where possible, the following controls:**

- **to show flexibility** when collecting the money required;
- for users needing financial support, **set up or support a referral system to charitable organizations associated with schools;**

4.2 List of material not considered as instructional material and which the student must have at his/her disposal (pencils, paper and other objects of a like nature) (ref: Education Act, article 7, line 3).

It is the **governing board of each school who approves, on the principal's proposal**, the list of objects mentioned in the third paragraph of article 7 of the Education Act (ref: Education Act, article 77.1 line 2).

To exercise this power and to prepare this list, **the school board deems it compulsory for its schools to respect** the following controls:

- **maintain** non-excessive, justified and reasonable costs for parents and users;
- **assure** that all the requested materials are necessary and will be used;

- **assure** that the **quantities of items requested are kept at a minimum** for the school opening and when an annual estimation of quantities become available that it be clearly indicated;
- **assure** the identification of all items with a life span greater than one school year;
- **assure** that the requested items are described in such a way so as to facilitate the selection of equivalent products;
- **assure** that any piece of clothing requested is justified and is required according to the rules of conduct and safety measures as approved by the governing board (ref: Education Act , article 76) ;
- **send** the approved list of material for the opening of the school to the school board no later than June 1st of the preceding year;

4.3 School transport

4.3.1 Morning and evening transportation

The Littoral School Board, in conformity with article 291 of the Education Act, **organizes school transportation for a part of its student population.**

The morning and evening transportation is free for eligible students.

The Littoral School Board's transportation policy determines the controls and the eligibility requirements on this service.

4.3.2 Transportation at noon

According to article 292 of the Education Act, a school board that provides student transportation at noon to allow students to have their meal at home may claim the cost thereof from the students who elect to use that service.

Transportation at noon is free for eligible students within the Littoral School Board. This service is subjected to the controls and the eligibility requirements of the transportation policy.

The school board reserves the right to review its policy annually and to request a contribution for noon time transportation if it is deemed necessary. The board must consult the Management Advisory Committee, the Parents' Committee and the

Advisory Committee of Student Transportation (if it exists). The amount of the contribution, if any, will be fixed by regulation.

4.4 Lunchtime supervision

In accordance with article 292 of the *Education Act*, **the school board may organize lunchtime supervision for the students who stay at school and may determine the financial contribution required.**

The lunchtime supervision is free for those students who are not transported.

The school board will review this subject annually and will consult the Management Advisory Committee and the Parents' Committee if a financial contribution is deemed necessary. The amount of the contribution will be fixed by regulation.

4.5 School day care services

4.5.1 Services and rates

The school day care services, at the Littoral School Board, are under the supervision of the school principal.

The rate for students in day care services who are defined as regulars is fixed by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Leisure and appears in the annual budget rules.

An hourly rate applies to students who attend in a sporadic way. These rates are established by the school and approved during the adoption of the day care budget by the governing board.

The financial contribution required from parents who use the day care services during the spring break is determined by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Leisure and appears in the annual budget rules.

4.6 Services to promote access to educational services

4.6.1 Meals and lodging

The Littoral School Board, in conformity with article 257 of the Education Act arranges services to promote access to educational services, such as meals and lodging.

In accordance with article 258 of the Education Act, the board may require a financial contribution from users of the services it provides in section 257.

The rates for a financial contribution from users of the services, meals and lodging, are established on a base of 5 days or 7 days.

Each year, the Littoral School Board will determine a list of designated schools and fix the financial contribution for users of the services by regulation (ordinance).

4.7 Special educational projects

The school board encourages the setting up of special educational projects because such projects promote student development, contribute to increasing their interests, their motivation and constitutes an important factor for their perseverance and school success.

4.7.1 Special projects focused on the provision of educational services within the framework of teaching programs

It could be a project on program content and characterized by a special educational approach.

Admission to these projects may be subject to the respect of certain conditions and certain criterion determined by the school board and/or the school.

These criterion and conditions may impose a certain level of knowledge from the candidates or a financial contribution for relative fees or specialized material that are necessary to attaining the objectives of the special project.

When a school offers such projects and a financial contribution is required, the school board deems it compulsory for the school to respect the following controls:

- **to maintain reasonable, justified and non-excessive costs for the parents or users;**
- **consult the governing boards on the requested contributions.**

The school board also asks the schools to respect, where possible, the following controls:

- **set up** financial help measures so as not limit accessibility;
- **show** flexibility when collecting the money required.

However, the provision of educational services as noted in the Education Act and the Basic Regulation must respect the **principle of free use and fees for admission, selection, registration or for opening of files must not be required.**

4.7.2 Special projects focused on the development of personal abilities or extracurricular services

Generally these are projects that have no impact on the content of teaching programs as stated in the Education Act and the Basic Regulations. They generally promote the development of personal abilities of a student through the practice or learning of a sport, or artistic activity or others.

Since these projects do not touch upon the provision of educational services given within the framework of a teaching program, the **principle of free school use is not applicable.**

Also, **conditions and criterion determined by the school or by the responsible organization may foresee a financial contribution for services other than educational services. The school or the organization concerned may impose fees for students who participate in such projects.**

To encourage student access to such projects, the school board asks schools:

- **to establish costs** that are reasonable, non-excessive and justifiable for the users;
- **to set up** financial support measures.

4.8 Educational activities or educational outings

The governing board is responsible for approving the programming of educational activities, proposed by the principal, which entail changes in the students' regular time of arrival and departure or which require the students to leave school premises. (ref: Education Act, article 87).

To exercise this power, the school board deems it compulsory for its schools to respect the following controls:

- the compulsory educational activities which are essential to attaining the program objectives of the different educational services must be free;
- the non compulsory educational activities which are not essential to attaining the program objectives of the different educational services, must be optional and could be reasonably billed to promote participation.

The school must organize free, meaningful educational activities for students who do not participate in the above.

4.9 Financial campaigns

Article 94 of the Education Act gives the power to the governing board, in the name of the school board, to solicit and receive donations, gifts, legacies, grants and other voluntary contributions from any person, or public or private organization wishing to provide funding for school activities.

To exercise this power, *the school board would like to clarify that no governing board may replace a financial campaign where contributions must be voluntary by a fixed amount «due» from all parents or users.*