**Establishing a Common Understanding
of the Ethical Dimensions of the Teaching Profession**

**March 12, 2004**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"In education, promises are made to be kept."

Philippe Meirieu

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**FOREWORD**

On June 19, 2002, the chairperson of the Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant (COFPE), Lorraine Lamoureux, notified then Minister of Education Sylvain Simard of COFPE's response[1] to the consultation document *La reconnaissance professionnelle des enseignantes et des enseignants,* prepared by the Office des professions du Québec (OPQ).

In her letter accompanying the COFPE brief to the OPQ, the chairperson committed COFPE to a more careful appraisal of the ethical issues affecting the teaching profession and education community, with a view to enhancing the profession's standing. COFPE felt that a thorough exploration of the ethical dimensions inherent to teaching was one of the keys to promoting quality instruction, increasing accountability among members of the education community and, by the same token, ensuring that Québec schools better fulfilled their mission.

COFPE has always recognized teachers' expertise, notably through the letters of appreciation it sends to cooperating teachers and to the educators who give of their time to mentor newcomers to the profession. These letters are circulated within the education community and are also posted on the COFPE Web site at the end of the school year.

However, COFPE felt that the issue of ethics deserved special attention in light of the restaffing of schools and the implementation of the education reform.

As part of its mission, COFPE advises the Minister "on any matter relating to the teacher training policy for the elementary and secondary levels."[2] After a number of working sessions on the ethical aspects of teaching, the Committee adopted the brief entitled *Establishing a Common Understanding of the Ethical Dimensions of the Teaching Profession* at its meeting of March 12, 2004.

COFPE believes that its recommendations can enhance the ethical component of initial training and professional development for teachers, as well as the quality of interprofessional relations in the education community. The Committee considers the recommendations to be realistic and is also conscious of the widespread desire within the education and academic communities to promote ethics.

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1.  Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant (COFPE), "*Réponse du Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant* au *document de consultation de l'Office des professions du Québec intitulé 'La reconnaissance professionnelle des enseignantes et des enseignants'* " (May 14, 2002).

2.  *Education Act*, Section 477.18.

## INTRODUCTION

### The mission of Québec schools

According to the *Education Act*, "in keeping with the principle of equality of opportunity, the mission of a school is to impart knowledge to students, foster their social development and give them qualifications, while enabling them to undertake and achieve success in a course of study. A school shall pursue its mission within the framework of an educational project implemented by means of a success plan."[3]

The Québec Education Program lays out this mission in detail and provides a frame of reference for teachers. Although school is not the only place where young people learn, it plays a crucial role in the their intellectual and social development. In a pluralist society, "schools must act as agents of social cohesion by helping students learn how to live together and by fostering a feeling of belonging to the community .… It is thus essential that schools show a concern for students' social and emotional development, promote the fundamental values of democracy and ensure that young people act like responsible citizens in a manner commensurate with their age."[4]

Underpinning the Québec Education Program is the goal of success for all: academic success as attested to by a secondary school diploma, educational success, success in achieving appropriate personal goals and institutional success.[5]

Teachers' responsibility for fulfilling the mission of our schools is tied to the collective effort of educators and other actors in the education community and does not depend solely on individual commitment, which is necessary of course, but insufficient in its own right.

### Ethics in the teaching profession

"It is customary to use the term 'morals' to designate a system of norms that governs community behaviour, and the term 'ethics' to describe the intentions underlying each of our actions."[6]

In teaching, everything that educators do falls within the context of their relationship with their students, each of whom is a free individual. This establishes a rapport between two freedoms. Implicit in this relationship is an ethical obligation, because every teacher-student relationship is also rooted in a power relationship that is the very source of teacher responsibility.

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3. *Education Act,* Section 36.

4. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Québec Education Program: Secondary School Education, Cycle One* (2003), 5.

5. *Ibid*, 8-9.

6. Philippe Meirieu, "Éduquer: un métier impossible? ou 'Éthique et pédagogie,' " *Pédagogie collégiale* 1:6 (September 1992), 32 (Free translation).

This ethical obligation consists in reconciling two seemingly contradictory principles: educability, which requires that teachers demand the best of their students, and non-reciprocity, which requires that they accept—without lowering their standards—what their students give them, even if it does not always meet those standards. This is the responsibility of every teacher and teaching team in fulfilling the school mission.

Achieving educational goals presupposes the sharing of such common values as respect for the individual, equality, freedom and independence, to name but the most familiar. In a school situation, however, consensus is fragile and values can be interpreted in a way that generates ambiguity, unease, even tension. For example, how far does freedom of expression extend and what are the limits of classroom authority? In the event of a moral conflict involving parents, colleagues, or school administrators, what are the principles that should guide action?

Demonstrating professionalism means being capable of clearly expressing—as a school team *and* as an individual—a commitment to quality teaching, and identifying the values one wishes to embody. It means being capable of expressing, through the educational project, the values that should find expression in the classroom and the school. In short, it means putting words into action and accepting accountability for the results.

In the schools, which are a reflection of our changing society, demonstrating professionalism also means having a choice of tools for doing one's job and the ability to answer for those choices in furtherance of the mission; it means being accountable to the community and being able to show that the means chosen are the best available given current knowledge, because the necessary competencies have been developed to access these means and tools. These are the main elements of the professional conscience that underpins teaching.

Lastly, although ethical decision-making often brings conflicting notions into play, the process is not necessarily rife with tension. At least, this should not be the focus. In many cases, the process is marked by discussion and debate over new ideas as participants work together to arrive at an informed decision. It is not always necessary to defend the arguments that led to a decision, but participants should be able to explain them.

Teachers must also play the role of "cultural brokers."[7] Clearly, we cannot speak of culture without referring to the values we share and the values inherent to education. Teachers have a collective responsibility for transmitting a cultural heritage and making their students part of dynamic, living culture. All of these questions, and many others, are linked to the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession.

**Purpose of this brief**

Our purpose is not to set morals against ethics.

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7. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Teacher Training: Orientations – Professional Competencies*, Code 69-2099A (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001), 33-41 and 61-67.
Further references to this document will be inserted into the body of the text as follows: (MEQ, 2001: p. ).

This brief deals with ethical behaviour in the varied contexts of teaching. In teaching, we do not transmit values, we embody them. The old saying still rings true: "Actions speak louder than words."

We cannot address the issue of ethics without also taking into consideration the public nature of the teaching profession and the obligations this entails. Teachers are still very much models, references for young people and adults alike. As such, they must be aware of the moral and intellectual sway they hold over their students, whoever those students may be.

However, this brief does not deal with personal ethics, but rather with the ethical dimensions of teaching as a profession. Those active in education—and especially teachers as a group—must fulfill their responsibilities, debate issues that concern students, colleagues and parents, and resolve conflicts involving individuals, all within the confines of the diverse and pluralistic societies that our educational institutions often constitute. And they must do so in terms of both values and actions.

COFPE believes that certain clarifications are needed to foster the ethical practice of teaching and is therefore making recommendations regarding ethics in teacher training and in the teaching profession as a whole, not just the components of the ethical competency defined as demonstrating "ethical and responsible professional behaviour in the performance of [one's] duties" (MEQ, 2001. 117-120, Competency No.12).

In its recommendations, COFPE suggests a variety of changes and adjustments to initial teacher training and professional development. Some of the recommendations also target other people active in the education community and the academic community.

This brief is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the ethical dimensions of teaching. Chapter 2 looks at the collective responsibility of stakeholders with regard to the school mission. Chapter 3 describes how the profession is supervised as well as the values, norms and guiding principles that should serve as a foundation for developing a framework for ethics in teaching. Chapter 4 presents ethics as a vital component of initial teacher training and professional development. Chapter 5 proposes a number of measures to foster the development of a culture of ethics in the education community.

**CHAPTER 1**

**ETHICS IN EVERYDAY TEACHING**

## 1.1   Education: a fundamentally ethical endeavour

Teaching is an interactive task that presupposes dialogue, support and guidance. Committing to teaching is impossible unless student well-being is the prime concern. Teachers have their own respective world-views and use different techniques in the classroom, but they all must work together to achieve the objectives of academic and educational success, in keeping with the educational values underpinning our education system. This is a source of potential tensions, because schools exist in a society where views on education are broad and diverse.

According to the ideological discourse[8] from which we take inspiration, albeit sometimes unconsciously, "students can be viewed as objects of teaching, as active subjects in their own learning or as both agents of their own lives and social agents, which … brings [the trainer] to distinguish between three distinct educational tasks whose respective goals are the transmission of normative knowledge, the stimulation of the desire to learn and develop as a person, and the fostering of critical judgment and engagement."[9]

These points of view are not without repercussions on classroom teaching, teacher-student relations and the working methods used with fellow teachers and other school colleagues. Teachers come from varied backgrounds. They face tensions in the schools where they teach, but also experience internal tensions as they deal with their own personal contradictions. This gives rise to questions at both the group and the individual level as they address the choices available to them, for example regarding the most appropriate practices in differentiated teaching, both in general education in the youth sector and in vocational training and adult education.

Although teachers are relatively free to run the classroom as they see fit, they have a responsibility to endorse a common vision of the school mission and to convey the values underlying the Québec Education Program through their involvement with their students and their relations with other stakeholders, parents and the community.

The education community is increasingly aware of the collective responsibilities of teachers. For many, reflection, discussion, debate and the search for the significance of educational action underpin their efforts, knowing as they do that action, always perfectible, must be based on this essential ethical foundation.

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8.   Guy Bourgeault identifies three: economic discourse, information and communication technology discourse—which portrays the Internet as providing "access to real life"—and critical ethical discourse, a multiform discourse that is a mix of denunciation and naivety, in *Jalons pour une éthique de l'accompagnement de formation* (2002), 2.

9.   *Ibid.,* 3 (Free translation).

## 1.2   Student support and guidance

Under the Québec Education Program, teachers act as guides, interpreters and coaches who help their students construct knowledge and develop competencies. In the process, they compete with the media and the Internet as sources not only of entertainment, but of information and knowledge as well.

Educational support and guidance puts teachers in a relationship with their students, as individuals and as a group. This type of relationship, with its inherent affective component, requires considerable discernment on the part of teachers, because it involves individuals who are equal under the law, but different in status: a teacher is not a parent, a sibling, a classmate, or a friend to his or her students. Teachers possess authority conferred upon them by legislators. This is no trivial matter; it is a responsibility that concerns teachers in their work.

Interpersonal relationships are built on distance, but also on proximity, both affective and physical. Teachers must be aware that their status gives them power over their students. Not coercive power, but rather a moral influence or intellectual authority that is all the greater when students are young, inexperienced and, consequently, more vulnerable. A teacher's behaviour may often have unsuspected and unpredictable effects that even an in-depth reflexive analysis cannot detect. Teachers can never be too well trained to vigilantly assess the ethics of their own teaching practices. One need only think of the effects of an inappropriate judgment—whether made in good faith or not—or an improper evaluation, even a careless remark that undermines an individual's self-esteem.

Respect—for children and adults alike—is at the core of teachers' daily routine because it is a fundamental aspect of teaching itself. While teachers of math, French, or history give classes in their subject, above all, they establish an affective rapport with their students as individuals. The relationships these individuals have with their teachers, the subject being taught, or with knowledge in general are not the same as those that their teachers maintain with their students as a group or as individuals, or with knowledge itself. This chain of interrelationships must be built on respect. Obviously, hitches will occur on occasion and the ideal balance between proximity and distance will not always be attained when providing support and guidance to students.

The decision to learn lies with each individual student and manifests itself in his or her degree of commitment to the educational process. It also requires detachment on the part of teachers: even if they want their students to reach their full potential, they have no control over the final outcome.

> Supporting and guiding, travelling down the same road together, yet remaining always one step behind, aware and attentive…
> Support and Guidance: travelling with someone down a road not one's own, but that of the other, conscious that in the end, destinations will diverge…. With the guide's departure dawns the understanding that it is time for students to continue the way alone, going not where others wish, but following the path they have chosen for themselves.[10]

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10. *Ibid.*, 8 (Free translation).

At this point, teachers can say, "Mission accomplished." They have contributed to a student's development at a specific moment in his or her life, generally over the course of a school year.

## 1.3    Taking action for educational success

There is constant action in the classroom, and teachers must make decisions on the spot. These decisions become part of the history of the relationships each teacher establishes with his or her students. The impact these choices have on classroom functioning and atmosphere will depend on the reflections they engender on the part of the teachers, a process crucial to determining their future actions.

Teachers are responsible for creating the conditions to keep students motivated. Teaching means drawing on one's professional competencies and making a personal commitment to establishing authentic educational relationships with one's students. Teachers cannot do their job properly if they do not fundamentally believe in their students' ability to learn.

This is more than mere theory: genuine faith in each individual student gives teachers the dedication they need to support students whose emotional, physical, family or intellectual situation requires sustained attention.

This principle, defined by Philippe Meirieu, is at the core of the ethical obligation: "…the ethical obligation is thus the effort required to link two apparently contradictory principles: the principle of educability, according to which we always expect the other to succeed and do everything we can to make it so; and the principle of non-reciprocity, which holds that even if we give everything we can, we cannot demand anything in exchange—not recognition, not submission, not even success…. demand the best… and accept the worst… while continuing—and this is the most difficult part—to demand the best."[11]

In class, teachers must take into consideration the characteristics and needs of all[12] their students, notably through differentiated teaching. But ethical dilemmas quickly arise. How to help a particular student while continuing to provide attention to the others? How to justify certain special activities when every student is entitled to the best possible teaching-learning situation?

The spirit of the Québec Education Program is unequivocal: students must develop their competencies in accordance with their personal abilities and their commitment to learning in a social context of classroom interaction with other students. The result of this is that teacher relationships with their students have changed significantly. Instead of dealing with students one at a time, or even a class, they interact with small and often heterogeneous teams whose members are also learning to be respectful and open toward each other and the teacher.

Teachers have an "obligation of competency," which should not be confused with an obligation of results. They are responsible for the tools, methods, and strategies they employ to help their

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11.  Philippe Meirieu, "Éduquer: Un métier impossible ? ou 'Éthique et pédagogie,' " (Lecture given in Montréal, May 27, 1992, and published in *Pédagogie collégiale*, 1:6, September 1992), 34 (Free translation).

12.  Educational differentiation is not just for at-risk students. It can also be applied in enrichment and student support, as well as in remedial work within the program.

students develop the competencies required under the Québec Education Program. They are responsible for the resources they will draw upon to achieve the goals of academic and educational success.

In the words of Philippe Perrenoud, it is because teachers are professionals that they must

> be capable of demonstrating that [they] have analyzed problem situations and taken steps that are not miracles, but are similar to what other qualified professionals would have done—or at least envisaged—with the same students or in the same circumstances. Educators have no more obligation to succeed than therapists do, but must be able to answer for their methodical and varied efforts to identify problems, reach diagnoses, develop strategies and overcome obstacles. Under this approach, the ability to answer for one's efforts is not that of the accountant lining up figures on a balance sheet, but of the expert able to describe and comment on his or her work to another professional who has sufficient knowledge to judge the professional competencies involved and provide instructive feedback.[13]

## 1.4    The teacher's role in educational success

A teacher's style, strategies, methods and beliefs can play a crucial role in a student's learning and even mark the difference between success and failure. According to an American study analyzing 50 years of research on the factors that foster learning, "classroom management, metacognitive processes; cognitive processes; home environment/parental support; and student-teacher social interactions have the biggest influence on student learning."[14] It found that measures taken by schools, policies adopted by education bodies and other bodies responsible for education, and decentralized management strategies had a much smaller influence.

Different teaching strategies had almost as many beneficial effects on student learning as their individual intellectual abilities did. "Effective classroom management increases student engagement, decreases disruptive behaviours, and makes good use of instructional time. We also found that constructive student and teacher social interactions also have an effect on school learning."[15] Other factors also come into play, but are less significant.

These results give us a better sense of the utility of examining results of research on student learning. This is particularly true when assessing the appropriateness of various methods, techniques and strategies for particular categories of students in view of adopting a differentiated teaching approach, even though caution is necessary in interpreting results and assessing methodology.

The link between teaching methods and academic and educational success is a reminder to teachers as well as to schools and other educational bodies about their responsibility for continuing education and training. Ethically, they have a duty to take every possible step to ensure academic and educational success. As for new teachers, their professional conscience

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13.  Philippe Perrenoud, *Dix nouvelles compétences pour enseigner* (1999), 155 (Free translation).

14.  Margaret Wang, Geneva Haertel and Herbert Walberg. "What Helps Students Learn?" in *Educational Leadership* (December 1993). Translated into French by Julie Adam, "Qu'est-ce qui aide l'élève à apprendre?," *Vie pédagogique* 90 (Oct. 1994), 46. See also the feature entitled "L'effet-enseignant" in *Vie pédagogique* 107 (April-May 1998).

15.  *Ibid.,* 47.

dictates that they should engage in professional development activities from the very time they begin teaching.

Also, it should not be forgotten that it is students who are ultimately responsible for their own learning and that even though teachers and schools have an educational mission to fulfill, families and the government also have responsibilities in their respective spheres of influence and action. The conditions for student success extend well beyond the classroom, and this should be taken into consideration in the highly publicized debates on school success.

## 1.5   Parent-teacher relations

According to a study of the first graduates of the bachelor program in secondary education (BSE) that was set up in the wake of the 1992 teacher training reform, "only 35% of graduates said that their BSE training had taught them suitable methods for dealing with parents."[16]

Yet everyone in the education community believes that maintaining good relations with students' parents—especially those whose children are having difficulty in their studies—plays a role in keeping students in school, ensuring student success and, by the same token, fulfilling the school mission.

Furthermore, the fact that large numbers of underage students study in the adult general education sector and that the vocational sector serves a clientele of all ages obliges teachers in these sectors to develop relationships with the parents of certain students in difficulty.

Until recently, this was not common practice, but it has become necessary, especially in cases where young people acquire, develop or maintain troublesome behaviour or are indifferent about their studies or academic success.

Establishing relationships with parents is an important part of a teacher's work and requires special communication skills given the underlying affective aspect. Monitoring students in difficulty is a challenging task for many teachers, especially newcomers to the profession. However, it is the teacher's responsibility to manage communication in a situation where adults—whether the teacher or the parents—may have different views about a student's abilities, schoolwork, behaviour or motivation.

Moreover, in a pluralist and multicultural environment, there is an increased likelihood that differences in teachers' and parents' values will spark tensions, value conflicts and even prejudice. These examples show that teachers' ethical concerns go beyond classwork with their students.

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16. Table MEQ-Universités, *Enquête auprès des premiers diplômés et diplômées du baccalauréat en enseignement secondaire* (May 2000), 29 (Free translation).

**CHAPTER 2**

**ETHICS AND THE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF
TEACHERS AND OTHER PARTNERS IN EDUCATION**

## 2.1   The practice of teaching in context

The public is not familiar with all aspects of a teacher's work. Society entrusts teachers and other stakeholders with responsibility for the teaching, social development and success of students. But their duties do not end there. Many are also actively involved with governing boards, parity committees, school and school board consultations, MEQ committees, the supervision of student teachers and mentoring of new teachers, to name but a few examples.

With the goal of democratizing access to education now achieved after several decades of effort, a new objective that requires the participation of all stakeholders has been set for schools: ensure the academic and educational success of all students. To do so, teachers must draw on recognized teaching practices to optimize their creativity. Responsibility for success is not new: it has always been central to the profession. But today's performance-driven socioeconomic and political context make it more constraining.

It is also worth reiterating that despite their specific professional duties, teachers are not the only ones responsible for academic and educational success. Educational staff have a role to play, as do parents and, to some extent, society at large. This must be repeated on a regular basis. Therefore,

**COFPE recommends that the Minister of Education clearly state, repeating as necessary, that education is part of the government's social mission, that academic and educational success are a responsibility shared by all stakeholders, who must be supported by parents and the school's local community.**

However, the involvement of teachers extends beyond the classroom and the school to encompass a vision of society and the transmission of our common cultural heritage. The preconditions for quality teaching must be present, notably through a new approach to professional development that can't be just about upgrading knowledge and competencies under the Québec school reform.

The theme of success for the aforementioned means educators must reassess their practices, take a step back, and think about their daily actions in light of their personal and professional values. It is impossible to raise issues like the integration of special-needs or disabled students into regular classrooms or, in some communities, intercultural integration without sparking impassioned debate in schools.

There is an ethical responsibility involved in evaluating the means put in place to promote student success. Using the best pedagogical strategies is one variable that affects academic success, but it is not the only one. A teacher cannot be held solely responsible for academic outcomes.

There is also a collective dimension to our obligation to produce results. Each school, through its governing board, must inform the local community of how it intends to achieve the realistic goals it has set for student academic and educational success, and which must go beyond a mere success rate target in a school success plan.

Moreover, teachers cannot escape the obligation to approach their profession in new ways. For some, this means significantly reorienting the way they exercise their profession and act and deal with colleagues. For example, to conduct an end-of-cycle evaluation as a cycle team, teachers must have first worked together at each preceding stage: planning a teaching program for an entire cycle requires consultation to map out students' long-term learning.

There are ethical requirements associated with a teacher's various duties. Teachers have educational responsibilities that go beyond the classroom. The ethical considerations at the core of educational initiatives were reiterated in the MEQ orientations published in 2001,[17] and more recently in the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning*.[18] The education community must take every step to ensure that the ethical considerations underpinning all aspects of school life serve as inspiration for pedagogical decisions, which must not take a back seat to administrative constraints.

## 2.2   A shared sense of professionalism

The legislative environment and the emphasis on culture in teacher training should foster an openness to discussion and new ideas, the development of which is important to the establishment of learning communities.

The orientations guiding the teacher training reform require the sharing of opinions and exchange of ideas, careful explanation of the viewpoints advanced and decisions made, and thoroughness in reasoning. This is especially true with regard to the new emphasis on cooperative work, be it in collaborations between the members of cycle teams, subject teams and school teams, consultations with parents and governing board members, or discussions on the choice of professional development activities. In this regard, professional solidarity and support for decisions will be firmer if teachers and other stakeholders feel their perspectives have been heard and understood, even if their views are not adopted. A respectful debate may not guarantee that everyone agrees, but decisions and consensuses are more successfully implemented if they are preceded by reflection and discussion.

We cannot stress enough the importance of dialogue and of the transmission and learning of these competencies. It is not simply a matter of disseminating information, however useful that may be. It is a matter of stimulating a productive debate that steers clear of personal confrontation and oversimplification.

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17. The orientations described are the same for general education as for vocational training. See *Teacher Training: Orientations – Professional Competencies*, Code 69-2099A (2001). *Teacher Training in Vocational Education: Orientations – Professional Competencies*, Code 69-2118A (2001).
18. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning,* Code 13-4602A (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2003).

In this regard, giving all actors a voice in decisions concerning a school's educational mission can only serve the school community better. Development and implementation of the educational project should contribute significantly to this goal.

But this requires that there be both time and the opportunity to examine the ethical dimensions underlying pedagogical decisions, and especially to identify the values guiding those decisions. In many communities, it is not so much time that is lacking, but an awareness of ethical issues on the part of educational authorities, including school officials.

The questions at issue here are not merely theoretical. They concern specific issues. Decisions about sponsorships and implementation of reward schedules as well as local programs, program enrichment and the budgetary choices these involve—to name but a few well-known examples—presuppose a shared commitment to certain not-always-explicit values that could have been debated at various levels. Such debates could clarify how decisions will affect school budgets and subsequent choices down the road.

Stakeholders must first learn to recognize the values and ethical considerations that underpin their decisions and actions, then develop a collective awareness and an ability to discuss issues with a view to making well-argued decisions they can assume as a group. They also have an obligation to endorse the values set out in the Québec Education Program and behave in consequence. However, teachers can also be active in regional and MEQ bodies and thus influence orientations and policies.

Although teaching is a fundamentally ethical profession due to the close relationships teachers develop with their students, there is another ethical aspect that must not be forgotten—the interpersonal relationships teachers maintain with their colleagues. These relationships are crucial for achieving collegiality and building a shared framework of values. Nurturing them requires an atmosphere of mutual respect in which teachers express their pedagogical beliefs, teach reflexively, put their actions into words, participate in team feedback, present ideas and participate in a constructive debate that allows opinions to evolve. Sharing values does not mean endorsing one sole way of being or of doing things. And lastly, to stimulate the kind of creative debate that spurs the development of learning communities, we cannot underestimate the importance of proper training.[19]

## 2.3  The governing board

The establishment of governing boards (GBs) under the *Education Act*[20] has changed school dynamics. Decisions affecting schools are no longer taken in a vacuum, as once may have been the case in certain communities. The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders have been modified.[21].The governing board deals with proposals put forward by school management or by GB members.

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19. This issue is dealt with in Section 4.5.
20. *Education Act*. See section 42 for the composition of governing boards in primary and secondary schools and Section 102 for the GB composition in vocational training and adult education.
21. For a table of governing board functions and powers, see *Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Effective Teachers in Québec: Report by the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (Canada) to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)* (2003), 123-127.

The governing board is a forum for discussion where the values, attitudes and approaches of the various participants in the school system come face to face. Doubts as to the timeliness or appropriateness of certain decisions spark questions about the motivations of certain GB members and the training they have received. Yet "every decision of the governing board must be made in the best interests of the students."[22]

Promoting awareness of ethical issues and reflecting on the values that motivate GB members are beneficial, both for conducting meetings and ensuring the appropriateness of decisions, which must be implementable if GB credibility is to be maintained.

A survey of voting members of primary and high school governing boards by the Groupe d'analyse politique de l'éducation (GAPE) stressed the importance of training governing board members about the GB's mandate, but also about other aspects such as "the connection between the creation of the governing boards and the basic orientations of the education reform, the use of hypothetical situations to learn to resolve various organizational problems, the resolution of differences or conflicts among partners and the development of a culture of political participation."[23]

The Ministère de l'Éducation, school boards, the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) and the Québec Federation of Parents Committees (QFPC) offer training sessions for governing board members.

Yet even though training for GB members is viewed as highly desirable, it is not compulsory in all schools. COFPE believes that it is the responsibility of the educational body to provide basic training to GB members at all of its schools. As for the various groups represented on the governing boards, they should continue to suggest their own complementary training activities to their representatives.

Therefore,

**COFPE recommends that the Minister of Education take steps, through educational bodies, to ensure that all governing board members have access to shared basic training, including an awareness component on the ethics of communication, discussion and decision-making.**

### 2.4 Responsible schools

As has been noted already, teachers must be able to justify their choices by showing how they help students succeed and develop to their full potential. Educational institutions must also show how their educational projects dovetail with the mission entrusted to schools by lawmakers. Professional development needs will thus vary, as do the particular duties and teaching conditions of each teacher, which makes professional development an ethical responsibility of the teaching team as well.

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22. *Education Act*, section 64.
23. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Summary of the Survey of Voting Members of Governing Boards of Québec Schools*, (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002), 40.

Schools are a reflection of a society whose values often contrast or clash with school values. Educational actors themselves may not share the same social reference points, which means that teaching teams may experience value-based tensions, too.

Nonetheless, the values set out in the framework[24] provided by official documents must be made explicit as anchorage points and reaffirmed as needed. Teaching teams must develop the tools necessary for a common reflexive approach to values and value contextualization in order to convey them in a credible fashion. They must answer for the choices made in situations not always free of social and ideological turbulence.

Moreover, the school mission is not always well understood by the public, which often asks, and would like to demand, that schools solve problems normally within the purview of the family or society at large. School are always under the microscope of parents, society, the media,[25] sociologists and politicians, who scrutinize, monitor and judge the quality of its efforts and the extent of its success. COFPE believes that the role school staff—especially teachers—play in fulfilling the school mission must be acknowledged and the education community's contributions to society recognized.

Despite the limits or constraints imposed by the education system or the immediate environment,[26] the basic responsibility of teachers remains finding and using the best tools and means to ensure their students' educational success. The choice of tools and means must be based on the state of the knowledge available in the specialized media of the teaching profession, not on passing fads. We cannot overstate the importance of professional development. Ongoing training is an individual, group and organizational responsibility that requires commitment and a certain level of supervision by school management.

Despite the obligation for teachers and schools to deliver results, part of the responsibility for final outcomes is beyond their control—i.e. students' involvement[27] in their own learning. Teachers have a responsibility to do everything they can to encourage student involvement, notably by providing stimulating learning opportunities and the appropriate tools. Once again, professional development has an important role to play in creating communities of practice.[28]

Teaching is complex and society must learn to distinguish between evaluating the means chosen to achieve the best possible results in a given situation and evaluating academic success per se. Educational institutions cannot be evaluated solely on the results achieved by their students.

Academic success may be measured to some extent by high school graduation rates and test results, but this is not the case for educational success, which concerns the achievements of students as human beings and their development as free and independent individuals. Those who

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24. See Chapter 3.
25. The publication of school ratings and regular surveys on levels of public confidence in teachers and the school system are highly revealing.
26. Insufficient budgets or inadequate materials (space, teaching and documentary resources) or organizational resources (schedule, class makeup).
27. See Jean-Bernard Mauduit, *Le territoire de l'enseignant: Esquisse d'une critique de la raison enseignante* (Paris : Klincksieck, 2003).
28. See Chapter 4.

swear solely by performance evaluation need to be reminded of this. And as professionals, teachers have a role to play in public debates on education.

We welcome the publication by the Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement of *Déclaration de la profession enseignante.*[29] COFPE's purpose here is neither to evaluate nor endorse the declaration's content, but rather to acknowledge an undertaking that in certain respects, reaffirms the commitment to values already set out in the *Déclaration de principes sur l'éducation.*[30]

For COFPE, endorsement of the values and principles underpinning educational practices must be a voluntary act. Teachers have to take control of their professional heritage. They cannot successfully adopt values imposed upon them by an outside authority.

Moreover, such an endorsement requires a commitment from all members: it is a collective pledge, a responsibility incumbent on all teachers.

**COFPE recommends that union organizations encourage their members to reflect upon their professional commitment and occasionally remind them of their personal and collective responsibility for fulfilling the school mission.**

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29. Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (FSE-CSQ), *Déclaration de la profession enseignante*(2004).
30. Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ), *Déclaration de principes sur l'éducation* (revised edition, 2000).

## CHAPTER 3

### ETHICS, VALUES, STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION

## 3.1    A frame of reference for the profession

Adult education, vocational training and general education in the youth sector are governed by an imposing array of laws[31] and regulations[32] and backed by policies, directives, instructions, and other departmental documents that set out guidelines, values and orientations for the teaching and teacher training communities and for educational governance.

Various orientation documents have been published since the release of the Commission for the Estates General on Education report that led to the Québec education reform.[33] The publication of *Québec Schools on Course: Educational Policy Statement*[34] was followed by orientations for each sector (special education,[35] school integration and intercultural education,[36] adult education and vocational training,[37] evaluation of learning,[38] etc.).

More specific to the teaching profession, the teacher training reform launched in 1992[39] was updated in 2001 with the release of *Teacher Training: Orientations – Professional Competencies*, which led to an overhaul of teacher training programs to better prepare future teachers for the challenges of the Québec education reform.[40]

COFPE believes that the time has come to elaborate a common understanding of the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession that takes into account the orientations, values and points of reference in core MEQ and government documents. Developing such a frame of reference requires the cooperation of all stakeholders: MEQ, unions and professional associations, educational bodies, and academic institutions involved in teacher training.

A broad partnership is essential to developing a common understanding that all stakeholders can embrace.

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31. *Charter of the French Language*; *Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*; *Civil Code of Québec*; *Education Act*; *Act respecting private education*; *Youth Protection Act*; *Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information*; *Act respecting the Ministre de l'Éducation*; *Act respecting the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation*; *Act respecting school elections*; *Act respecting the process of negotiation of the collective agreements in the public and parapublic sectors*.
32. *Regulation respecting teaching licences*; *Basic school regulation for preschool, primary and secondary education*; *Basic adult general education regulation*; *Basic vocational training regulation*.
33. *Reaffirming the Mission of Our Schools: Report of the Task Force on Curriculum Reform* (1997).
34. *Québec Schools on Course: Educational Policy Statement* (1997).
35. *Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students: Policy on Special Education* (1999).
36. *A School for the Future: Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education* (1998).
37. *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (2002).
38. *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning: General Education in the Youth Sector, General Education in the Adult Sector, Vocational Training* (2003).
39. *Faire l'école aujourd'hui et demain: Un défi de maître - Renouvellement et valorisation de la profession* (1992).
40. *Québec Education Program: Preschool Education, Elementary Education* (2001).
    *Québec Education Program: Secondary School Education, Cycle One* (2003).

**COFPE recommends that the Minister of Education and his partners work together with all stakeholders to develop a common understanding of the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession that takes into account the values, standards and guidelines set out in the *Education Act* and MEQ core documents.**

**It also recommends that the Minister of Education take steps to ensure that such a framework for ethics is widely disseminated within the education and teacher training communities.**

## 3.2    Elements of a framework for ethics

### 3.2.1    Values

It goes without saying that no ethical frame of reference for the teaching profession can be complete without taking into account the orientations and values set out in the above-mentioned documents. However, these values and benchmarks are not conveniently assembled and indexed, or in some cases even coherently defined, although some have been reiterated and contextualized in the recent policy on the evaluation of learning, which lists "three fundamental values—justice, equality and equity—as well as three instrumental values—coherence, rigour and openness."[41]

Other values that some consider more as personal qualities or even virtues—but that all teachers must also share—are equally essential to ethical conduct in teaching.

According to William Hare,[42] there are eight such values inherent to teaching: judgment, the humility to acknowledge limits on one's knowledge, the courage to challenge conventional wisdom, impartiality, open-mindedness, empathy, enthusiasm and imagination. To these, Christiane Gohier adds authenticity, a crucial quality that enhances respect for teacher authority. "Authenticity should be understood here in its humanist sense, as the congruence between who people are, what they do, and what they say…. Indeed, authenticity is incompatible with seduction that uses entrapment and lures."[43]

The development of a school's educational project provides another excellent opportunity for stakeholders to debate the values and ethical issues underpinning the orientations they have selected and the objectives and targets they have adopted. The leeway that individual schools enjoy in designing their own programs, notably through differentiated teaching, provides another chance to discuss values and ethical issues, inasmuch as the various stakeholders are aware of the opportunity.

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41.  Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning: General Education in the Youth Sector, General Education in the Adult Sector, Vocational Training* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2003), 9.
42.  William Hare, *What makes a good teacher: reflection on some characteristics central to the educational enterprise* (London, Ontario, The Althouse Press, 1993). Cited by Christiane Gohier, "Mise en échec de la séduction," in Clermont Gauthier and Denis Jeffrey, *Enseigner et séduire* (Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 1999), 131-132.
43.  Christiane Gohier. *Ibid.*, 132 (Free translation).

However, debate and discussion of pedagogical concepts, methods and strategies and of methods for evaluating learning are all sources of potential tension, misgivings, resistance and conflict, not only between individuals, but within individuals themselves.

In terms of the ethics of argument, teachers are called upon to present their views to their colleagues and bring forth points that support their position. This provides an opportunity to ask questions, exchange views or confront differing or divergent opinions and arguments regarding values with the aim of achieving the kind of broad consensus required to build an education community.

However, debates provoked by value conflicts do not always result in consensus. In such cases, a framework for ethics would provide the guidelines needed to avert deadlock and allow those involved to avoid emotional arguments in favour of rational arguments more conducive to informed decision-making. Admittedly, this is not always easy to achieve in pluralist societies, as recent attempts to apply "reasonable accommodation" in pluralistic communities have shown.[44]

### 3.2.2   Obligations, responsibilities and standards

The *Education Act* sets out a number of obligations that teachers must fulfill:

> "A teacher shall
>
> 1) contribute to the intellectual and overall personal development of each student entrusted to his care;
> 2) take part in instilling into each student entrusted to his care a desire to learn;
> 3) take the appropriate means to foster respect for human rights in his students;
> 4) act in a just and impartial manner in his dealings with his students;
> 5) take the necessary measures to promote the quality of written and spoken language;
> 6) take the appropriate measures to attain and maintain a high level of professionalism;
> 6.1) collaborate in the training of future teachers and in the mentoring of newly qualified teachers;
> 7) comply with the educational project of the school."[45]

These obligations and duties are non-negotiable, an aspect that is not always well understood. It would be advisable to add an explanation to this effect in one of the regulatory texts, such as the regulation on teaching licences.

Along with these duties are those dictated by professional conscience. The obligation of competency may derive directly from Section 22.6 of the *Education Act*, and the obligation to respect personal information from the *Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information*, but there are other duties that do not flow directly from the law or the collective agreement. Denis Jeffrey and Clermont Gauthier[46] have identified five such duties that all teachers must fulfill: solidarity, professional distance, discretion, confidentiality and vigilance.

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44. Among the most high profile conflicts are those concerning the kirpan, the hijab and places of prayer.
45. *Education Act*, Section 22.
46. Denis Jeffrey and Clermont Gauthier, *Code de déontologie pour la profession enseignante: Pistes de réflexion soumises au Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant* (COFPE, December 8, 2002), 5.

The teachers' collective agreement[47] lists their functions, duties and responsibilities. Again, these obligations are non-negotiable.

These obligations and responsibilities do not necessarily translate into specific professional competencies. However, professional conscience dictates that they serve as benchmarks for teachers in the exercise of the profession. They must also be taken into account in drawing up the ethical frame of reference so that they help shed light on discussion and debate in the education community.

Lastly, in addition to these obligations are "standards." "Standards are essentially prescriptions for acceptable behaviour, practices, conduct, gestures, ways of speaking and dressing, etc."[48] Standards can be interpreted and debated, but must be respected once adopted.

### 3.2.3   Professional competencies

The professional competencies listed in *Teacher Training: Orientations – Professional Competencies* are the core competencies of the profession. As such, they must be disseminated throughout the education network and embraced by teachers, spurring awareness at both the individual and collective level of any shortfalls that may need to be addressed through professional development initiatives.

Along with these benchmark competencies, the above document also includes orientations regarding culture in teaching (MEQ, 2001: 28-41), the role of culturally aware teachers, and their training. Reflection on the cultural approach in teaching, initial teacher training and the education community holds promise for enhancing the standing of the teaching profession.

Given the importance of embracing the core competencies[49] in order to foster ethical awareness in the education and teacher training communities:

**COFPE recommends that educational bodies adopt and use the document entitled** *Teacher Training: Orientations – Professional Competencies***, particularly in orienting and selecting workplace integration and professional development activities linked to the ethical dimension of professional competencies.**

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47. *Entente intervenue entre le Comité patronal de négociation pour les commissions scolaires francophones (CPNCF) et la Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec (CEQ) pour le compte des syndicats d'enseignantes et d'enseignants qu'elle représente 2000-2002.*

48. Denis Jeffrey and Clermont Gauthier, *Le défi éthique des enseignants* (October 3, 2003), 39. Document prepared for COFPE.

49. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the ethical dimensions that should be taken into account in initial teacher training and professional development programs.

### 3.3    The professionalizing effect of a framework for ethics

A framework for ethics will have a professionalizing effect because it provides educators with an overview of what teaching is about—including outcomes and values—but for other reasons as well.

A framework for ethics will help bolster the profession's image and professional identity. The strength of a group lies in its awareness of its identity: the more a group shares common values, the more likely it is to undertake initiatives embodying those values. This can also reinforce self-esteem in teachers feeling vulnerable in the wake of high profile attacks on the education community.

A framework for ethics will spur teachers to contribute to discussions on ethical issues in teaching. It will encourage them to embrace a common mission and shared values and strengthen their sense of professional belonging, mobilizing their energies to take on new challenges. Far from undermining their professional autonomy, such a framework can actually reinforce it.

Lastly, because it draws upon the collective wisdom of teachers, it will encourage their commitment to the profession.

### 3.4    A framework rather than a code of conduct

Resolving tensions and ethical dilemmas requires teamwork. Teachers must be able to justify their acts. A clear frame of reference helps identify the values that can serve to support arguments in a debate

It is up to each school team to embrace the ethical frame of reference and adapt it to the needs of the school community. In some schools, this may mean developing a decisions archive with the goal of creating a reference bank, a tool that can be referred to for solving related ethical dilemmas in the future or following up on decisions already made. This exercise is useful for clarifying school community values and encouraging a productive exchange of ideas. We know that values resonate differently depending on the social and regional context. Tensions, conflicts and other situations involving the education community vary widely in their nature and intensity from one place to another.

It is not a matter of redefining the teaching environment, but of working together to create a culture of ethics, drawing upon the principles and values that underpin the profession to create opportunities for ethical discussion and debate in schools. Nor is it a matter of developing a regulatory or legal framework, but rather a frame of reference that makes it possible to reach decisions in situations that are either uncertain or not subject to regulatory constraints.

Societal demands on teachers and the teaching profession are high. It is not COFPE's role to express an opinion on the expectations expressed in opinion surveys or through the media, but the teaching profession cannot ignore these social judgments.

Teachers as a group have a responsibility to project a credible professional image to the public in order to preserve the respect of their students and other people they deal with.

It is worth repeating that a framework for ethics is in no way a substitute for the laws citizens are required to obey. Teachers are well aware that they must behave in an exemplary manner in public and refrain from any reprehensible act that could harm their reputation. Certain recent Supreme Court of Canada rulings provide further insight into appropriate behaviour for teachers.[50]

The *Education Act* also provides that subsequent to the filing of "a complaint with the Minister against a teacher for a serious fault committed in the exercise of his functions or for an act derogatory to the honour or dignity of the teaching profession,"[51] the minister may, after submitting the complaint for investigation to committee struck by ministerial appointment, "suspend, revoke or attach conditions to the teaching licence of the teacher."[52]

To further clarify the notion of an ethical framework of reference, some observations on its scope are in order:

– Ethics involves the ability to consent to values, guidelines and social and professional standards indispensable to fulfilling the school mission. It also appeals to teachers' individual and collective sense of responsibility.
– A framework for ethics is a collective tool for reflection intended to guide debate on issues and decision-making, not a handbook of questions and answers to walk teachers through their daily work.
– A framework for ethics should have the support of all teaching staff. It is a motivational aid for teachers who deal with ethical dilemmas in the classroom on a regular basis.
– "It must not be designed… as a tool imposing normative ethics that could be used to limit, discipline, or bind teachers in an initiative-dampening moral straightjacket, or to provide an ethical 'alibi' that could be used to justify any action or absence thereof.".[53]

Because ethical issues in the teaching profession concern teachers as a group, there must be consensus on the values, principles and standards that guide their actions. In addition, lawmakers and society as a whole expect teachers to embrace the fundamental values associated with their profession.

By providing guidelines for informed discussion and debate, a framework for ethics can help teachers tackle the challenges of dealing with dilemmas, controversies and value conflicts in the school setting. It can also serve as a decision-making tool for teachers in their everyday work.

COFPE looked at a number of codes of ethics and codes of conduct for teachers in Canada and the United States.[54] These documents are often a compendium of values, standards and

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50. See Linda Lavoie, "L'enseignant: un modèle pour la société," *Développements récents en droit de l'éducation* 151, 81-106.
51. *Education Act*, Section 26.
52. *Ibid.*, Section 34.
53. Denis Jeffrey and Clermont Gauthier, *Ibid.*, 40. The preceding comments were based on the same document (Free translation).
54. See the bibliography under Codes of Ethics and Conduct.

obligations. Few of those brought to COFPE's attention could be used as grounds for reflection on ethical action within the profession or as a foundation for developing a professional identity.

Some observers argue that moral duty must be imposed through a code of conduct in order to set proper behaviour and solve school problems that often are merely the echo of social realities and tensions—sometimes exacerbated—that prevail in the community at large.

COFPE does not share this approach. It views codes of conduct as incompatible with the school mission, the sharing of responsibility and the spirit of cooperation inherent to the Québec education reform. It subscribes instead to the analysis of the limits of the conduct-based approach as set out by the Réseau interuniversitaire québécois d'éthique et de pratique sociale:

> Like law and morals, the conduct-based approach defines general obligations, but is incapable of helping people actualize them as part of their complex individual behaviours…. The conduct-based approach centred on individual action does not correspond to the new collective approach to professionalism proposed to teachers…. [It] limits the scope of their professional judgment and their ability to evaluate situations and assess actions on the fly…. In the teaching field, no one seems able to imagine a code of conduct as anything other than a means to punish the most serious violations while completely ignoring the intricate everyday web of interpersonal relations and special cases teachers deal with. We have no choice but to look elsewhere to clarify the standards of professionalism that teachers should be held to.[55]

Observations of professional bodies legally obliged to adopt codes of conduct with sanctions reveal that codes not only do little to ensure compliance with the rules of the profession, but that these complex and inefficient mechanisms also fail to empower individuals to act. Initiative comes from reflecting on the code, not from the code itself, or even from complying with it. In fact, a code of conduct can sometimes even have a crippling effect, preventing individuals from acting in a free and responsible manner.

The notion of control by sanction or punishment also entails risk when ethical concerns are reduced to the adoption of a code of conduct. The ethical frame of reference is a non-legal approach. "Its role is more to clarify as well as to stimulate those already inclined to assume their responsibilities out of professional conscience."[56] It also requires a personal commitment on the part of each individual teacher. Adopting the frame-of-reference approach would thrust ethical issues into the heart of the debates inherent to the teaching profession, freeing teachers to go beyond the limits of imposed and established codes.

As Guy Bourgeault writes, "ethics is a never-ending process of questioning and debate."[57] There is little purpose in inscribing ethics in policies, directives and codes of conduct, imposing it by force or multiplying the number of ethics committees, whose impact is questionable. By institutionalizing ethics in this way, we run the risk of 'disempowering' teachers and stifling the collective ethical conscience emerging in certain educational circles. For as Bourgeault asks, can "instrumental ethics—ethics used as a tool to control and manage—still be considered ethics?"[58]

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55. France Jutras, Marie-Paule Desaulniers and Georges A. Legault, *La question des normes à l'heure de la professionnalisation de l'enseignement au Québec*, 25-26 (Free translation).
56. Denis Jeffrey and Clermont Gauthier, *Ibid.*, 43.
57. Guy Bourgeault, *Ibid.*, 5 (Free translation).
58. Guy Bourgeault, *Ibid.*, 5 (Free translation).

Following in the footsteps of its educational researchers, COFPE believes that the effort to promote ethical awareness is part of a collective determination to further empower teachers with a view to restoring the prestige of the teaching profession. This is a long-term process, but one that is under way in numerous communities. It is not unrelated to the search for meaning in teaching.

COFPE hails the recently released *Déclaration de la profession enseignante*[59] as an initiative well worth mentioning. The declaration should be seen as an invitation to discussion and debate on ethical issues in schools that leads teachers to speak out jointly and take action. It must not be shunted aside.

The declaration is a reminder to teachers that their mission toward students, colleagues, parents, the profession and society at large is a daily commitment.

"In education, promises are made to be kept,"[60] but keeping promises supposes a pre-existing commitment made in the name of clearly defined values.

The text of the Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement ends with a call for improved support and guidance and stronger backing from the community and society at large. After all, schools not only have an educational mission, but a social mission as well.

There is food for thought and debate here, as well as ample substance for ongoing engagement. And there can be no debate that does not bring values into question.

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59. Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement. *Bulletin de la FSE* (February 2004).
60. Philippe Meirieu, "L'éducation est un lieu de la parole tenue," Interview by Luce Brossard, *Vie pédagogique*, 74 (September-October 1991), 4.

**CHAPTER 4**

**MAKING ETHICS A CORNERSTONE OF INITIAL TRAINING
AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS**

## 4.1    Promoting a sense of ethics

Developing a framework for ethics in the teaching profession is vital, but it is not enough. Steps must also be taken to provide proper training to present and future teachers as well as to all other stakeholders in teacher training and education (university professors and lecturers, practicum supervisors, school principals, cooperating teachers and coaching teachers). This training should achieve at least three objectives:

–    Identify and name the values that underpin teaching and educational activities so as to ensure that individual teachers express their values and the goals of the teaching team through their actions. This is a very demanding exercise because it requires initiative and calls for responsibility—first individual, then collective—prior to, during, and after all educational activities.

–    Introduce school staff to a culture of ethics and to the ethics of argument. A culture of ethics requires a forum where issues related to educational practices can be debated. It also requires that staff be trained in the ethics of argument. In addition, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of teaching and debate and discuss the educational outcomes and values at the foundation of the school educational project. The more teachers share clear professional values, the stronger their professional identity.

–    "We need to promote ethical awareness among all partners in education by ensuring they realize that ethics is at the core of teaching."[61]

The elaboration of a framework for ethics in the teaching profession will reveal the values underpinning teachers' actions at school and in the classroom. Teacher trainers at university and in the school setting must be sensitive to ethical issues in teaching. Cooperating teachers obviously need to develop a sense of ethics they can explain and convey to students under their supervision. This is why the selection of cooperating teachers and practicum locations is so important for transmitting ethical attitudes, values, and behaviour.

## 4.2    Aspects of ethics-related core competencies

It should be noted that COFPE took part in the MEQ consultations that preceded the release of *Teacher Training: Orientations – Professional Competencies* and, in general, approved the orientations contained in the document.[62]

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61.  Denis Jeffrey and Clermont Gauthier, *Ibid*, 52. The two other objectives are inspired by the writings of the two authors (Free translation).

62.  COFPE, *Réponse du Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant à la consultation ministérielle sur le document "La formation à l'enseignement: Les orientations - Les compétences professionnelles"* (March 20, 2001).

Print copies of the document have been widely distributed at universities, where they will remain available to teacher trainers, professors and lecturers, university supervisors and cooperating teachers, and future cohorts of students. The document is much less well known in school communities. Yet it should be widely adopted as a source of ideas for professional development activities that correspond to the orientations chosen to guide initial teacher training.

The document lists 12 competencies,[63] including one ethical competency. Recent studies on the notion of competency have led to a clearer understanding of this issue, as presented in the document, the features of which are as follows:

"Competency exists in a real-life setting;
Competency follows a progression from simple to complex;
Competency is based on a set of resources;
Competency is based on the ability to mobilize resources in situations requiring professional action;
Competency is part of intentional practice;
Competency is demonstrated as a successful, effective, efficient, recurrent performance;
Competency is a project, an ongoing pursuit" (MEQ, Code 69-2099A, 2001: 48-50).

An examination of the concept reveals that the mastery of competencies remains an ideal for the profession. Teachers must actively participate in professional development activities to attain and sustain a high level of professional competency, as required under the *Education Act*. In the spirit of the Québec education reform, these efforts would be enhanced by greater personal involvement in a community of practice.

In the core competencies, the ethical dimension of teaching is expressed as a competency in its own right: "To demonstrate ethical and responsible professional behaviour in the performance of his or her duties." (MEQ, Code 69-2099A, 2001: 117, Competency No. 12). The main features of this competency are as follows:

"Understands the values underlying his or her teaching;
Manages his or her class in a democratic way;
Provides students with appropriate attention and support;
Justifies his or her decisions concerning the learning and education of students to the parties concerned;
Respects the confidential nature of certain aspects of his or her work;
Avoids any form of discrimination toward students, parents or colleagues;
Situates the moral conflicts arising in class with reference to the major schools of thought;
Demonstrates sound judgment in using the legal and regulatory framework governing
the teaching profession" (MEQ, Code 69-2099A, 2001: 118-120).

COFPE has found that this notion of "ethical competency" could be enriched by additional aspects at other levels and believes that it should be viewed differently from the others. More

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63. The same competencies were chosen for the vocational training orientation document: *Teacher Training in Vocational Education: Orientations – Professional Competencies*, Code 69-2118A (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001).

specifically, COFPE believes that each professional competency must include an ethical dimension that is not always easy to identify. Integrating ethics into teaching first requires the development of certain core competencies with an implicit ethical component that requires special attention.

The student teacher is being prepared to act as "a professional who is inheritor, critic and interpreter of knowledge or culture when teaching students" (MEQ, 2001: 57, Competency No. 1). To do so, he or she must be able to cast "a critical look at his or her own origins, cultural practices and social role" (MEQ, 2001: 62). This requires judgment, in-depth reflection, an environment conducive to discussion as well as appropriate guidance and support. But it also implies that future teachers familiarize themselves with certain aspects of culture and with the history of civilizations and religions, as the Comité des affaires religieuses called for in two recommendations to universities in its recent brief to the Minister of Education.[64] The critical reflection undertaken by students in their initial teacher training must be continued as they take their first steps in the profession, and extend throughout their teaching careers.

Since acting in an ethical manner often involves debate and the exchange of ideas, it is especially important that each student develop the ability to "to take up a position, support his or her ideas and argue his or her subject matter in a consistent, effective, constructive and respectful way during discussions" (MEQ, 2001: 65, Competency No. 2).

COFPE considers that the ethical dimension should be integrated into training activities that teach language and communication skills designed to help students debate issues using proper and respectful language appropriate to the circumstances. Cordial relations with colleagues are crucial to establishing and maintaining a climate of mutual trust, providing quality teaching, and achieving educational project objectives.

In light of the reform's emphasis on teamwork, acting ethically means stressing the values of respect and collaboration underpinning the competency of "cooperating with school staff, parents, partners in the community and students in pursuing the educational objectives of the school" (MEQ, 2001: 103, Competency No. 9).

By the same token, teachers need the personal and social skills necessary to achieve consensus in a wide variety of teaching and educational situations if they are to "cooperate with members of the teaching team in carrying out tasks involving the development and evaluation of the competencies targeted in the programs of study, taking into account the students concerned" (MEQ, 2001: 109, Competency No. 10).

To master these two competencies, stakeholders need to be conscious of the ethical issues that underlie their decisions and actions. They must also be able to discuss and debate issues in a respectful manner, achieve and abide by consensuses, and work together to implement decisions. Under the reform, teachers and school teams have much more latitude in their choice of methods. But they are also called upon to answer for their choices in the school and the classroom. They must be able to defend their choices to their students and colleagues, as well as to school

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64. Comité sur les affaires religieuses, *Religious Rites and Symbols in the Schools – The Educational Challenges to Diversity. Brief to the Minister of Education* (March 2003).

management, parents and other partners involved in school projects or the delivery of student services.

Lastly, COFPE believes that the professional development competency—"to engage in professional development individually and with others" (MEQ, 2001: 113, Competency No. 11)—is a necessary requirement of professional ethics. A career in teaching should not be an option for anyone unwilling to pursue his or her personal and professional development from the moment he or she enters the profession.

We could go on to demonstrate how important it is to examine the ethical aspects of the other competencies, but that is not our purpose here. In teacher training, however, such an examination is key to helping students understand the demands of professionalizing teaching and the ensuing responsibilities.

For COFPE, it is not a matter of adding new courses on the ethical aspects of the various competencies, but rather of educating teacher trainers (university professors and lecturers, university supervisors, cooperating teachers) about the importance of integrating the ethical dimensions of each competency in courses on psychopedagogy, teaching methods and other subjects as well as in practical training. In this respect, universities must ensure that all trainers receive ethical training commensurate with their responsibilities.

COFPE also favours extending the scope of the ethical competency to take into consideration the transversal nature of ethics. The committee believes that the aspects emphasized in the MEQ document are too limited and run the risk of shifting orientations too far toward a code-of-conduct approach. In COFPE's view, following this sole course of action is overly simplistic.

Instead, the committee sees the ethical dimension of teaching as a willingness to question the significance of one's actions, adopt an open-minded attitude to knowledge and to the people in the school community and understand the sources of one's actions, questioning them if necessary, while constantly keeping in mind the school mission: i.e. to impart knowledge, foster social development and provide students with qualifications, but more importantly, guide and support them as they develop into accomplished citizens.

Therefore,

**COFPE recommends that the Comité d'agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement (CAPFE) pay special attention to the transversal nature of ethics, be vigilant about integrating the various aspects of ethics into teacher training programs and carefully examine this dimension when assessing program implementation at universities.**

### 4.3   Developing a reflection on ethics in initial teacher training

Given that ethics are at the heart of teaching and given the difficulty of clearly identifying how they are expressed in a pluralist society, it is important to look at the way teacher training programs take ethical issues into account. All too often, ethics training focuses almost exclusively on confidentiality issues. But future teachers need to develop their sense of judgment. Special skills and aptitudes are required to succeed as an educator. This includes a sustained

commitment to training that testifies to a genuine interest in professional development, not only with regard to the latest developments in certain subject fields, but also to understanding the young people one has in one's charge.

At university, a variety of pedagogical situations can foster reflection on the ethical challenges of teaching. To train teachers with a strong sense of ethics, university programs must encourage students to cultivate dialogue and nurture their critical eye, their commitment, and their desire to know themselves and understand their own motivations. They must also foster their ability to make responsible choices, find fulfillment through action and live with uncertainty in a responsible manner.

It is crucial that future teachers "think about their values and the prejudices underlying their actions, and carefully observe their impacts on the students' individual and collective well-being. Reflexive analysis, supported by structured steps, appears to be appropriate for this purpose" (MEQ, 2001: 118).

Since universities award the diplomas that qualify graduates for their teaching licences, it is up to them—and especially the university officials responsible for teacher training programs—to ensure that the appropriate ethical dimensions are taken into account in all teaching and training activities, including practicums. In this respect, COFPE reiterates the importance of adopting a genuine program-based approach. This is crucial to ensuring coherency in university training as well as compliance with MEQ orientations.

**COFPE recommends that universities—and especially teacher training program coordinators—ensure that the ethical competency described in the MEQ orientations, the ethical dimension inherent to the other competencies and the ethical frame of reference (to be developed) are taken into account in a program-based approach; it further recommends that universities take steps to ensure that learning conditions and pedagogical approaches and strategies foster a sense of ethics among students and provide opportunities to debate pedagogical, teaching and subject-related issues.**

**COFPE also recommends that universities, after thoroughly assessing the core competencies described in _Teacher Training: Orientations – Professional Competencies_, ensure that professors, lecturers, university supervisors and coordinating teachers receive ethics training commensurate with their teaching, support or supervisory duties.**

In light of these recommendations, the ethical frame of reference will need to be distributed to universities and communities of practice and used in numerous training situations.

## 4.4   Ethics in practical training

Practicums take place in real-life settings and therefore provide an ideal opportunity for student teachers to reflect on ethics, especially in relation to school rules and teacher values at the institution where they are placed. Student teachers often have to deal with situations of conflict

and need opportunities to reassess these situations so that they can learn the ethics of argument.[65] This is why it is so important to establish strict criteria for selecting cooperating teachers and practicum sites.

We cannot stress enough the importance of the training received by cooperating teachers.[66] Ever since the 1992 teacher training reform, they have been responsible for guiding their student teacher charges in "the progressive acquisition of teaching skills and ethics.[67] Some universities already offer courses that address certain notions in ethics, for example, the relationship with power.[68]

As Christiane Gohier has justifiably emphasized, "practicums directly confront students with questions about values in education, respect for the individual, educational outcomes, duties and the limits of the teaching profession."[69] These questions raise ethical issues related to interpersonal relations, including relations with the parents of underage students in adult education programs, the challenges of selecting the appropriate pedagogical methods and the evaluation of learning—ethical issues that also implicate cooperating teachers and practicum supervisors. The practicum setting would be further enriched if student teachers and in-school trainers shared a common understanding of the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession.

Upon graduation, a student completing a bachelor's of education degree must be able to "take up a position, support his or her ideas and argue his or her subject matter in a consistent, effective, constructive and respectful way during discussions" (MEQ, 2001: 65, Competency No. 2). To attain this objective, students should be given numerous opportunities to debate and exchange ideas, both in the university setting and during practicums.

COFPE notes that universities have a responsibility to design practicums and related courses in a way that gives students an opportunity to put the ethical aspects of their nascent professional competencies into practice, notably with regard to communication (language, argumentation, respect for individuals). In this respect, deans, department heads and program coordinators must ensure that university officials provide them with the MEQ budget allocation they are entitled to for teacher training supervision.

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65. "The ethics of argument in a school context can be defined straight off as a critical deliberation and an arbitration between previously defined values that may be invoked to justify social ideals, pedagogical approaches, educational practices, school rules and regulations, concepts of education, ideological positions, or interactions with students, parents, and school staff." Denis Jeffry and Clermont Gauthier, *ibid*, 46 (Free translation).

66. COFPE has already looked at the issue of training for cooperating teachers in two briefs: *La mise en place des stages de formation pratique: Sa fragilité et l'importance de sa réussite* (1997) and *Consolidating, Adjusting and Improving Teacher Training* (1999). In addition, a brief on practical training with special emphasis on the training of cooperating teachers is under preparation.

67. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *La formation à l'enseignement: Les stages* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1994) 11 (Free translation).

68. Table MEQ-Universités, *Étude sur les programmes de formation à l'accompagnement des stagiaires* (document written by Francine Lacroix-Roy, Michel Lessard and Céline Garant) (2003) 7.

69. Christiane Gohier, "La formation des maîtres et l'orientation de la conduite humaine: un art entre éthique et déontologie," *Enseigner et former à l'éthique*. (Presses de l'Université Laval, forthcoming 2004, Free translation).

**COFPE recommends that universities establish the conditions necessary for students to learn about ethical issues in initial teacher training, notably by creating opportunities for debate, and ensure that they explore these issues thoroughly in their practicums, practicum seminars and other practical training activities.**

## 4.5   Ethics in professional development

The professional development provision in the *Education Act*[70] is an essential requirement that obliges teachers "to engage in professional development individually and with others" (MEQ, 2001: 113, Competency No. 11). COFPE believes that school teams, under the leadership of school management, should promote professional development activities that encourage the adoption and development of the ethical dimension in the education community.

The core competencies are meant to serve as a basis for setting professional development priorities and need to be more widely disseminated in the education community. Developed as part of the education reform, they are intended to encourage teachers in the primary, secondary, adult education and vocational sectors to assess shortcomings in their training, reflect on their behaviour, methods, and actions and think about ways of working more effectively in a team setting, not only with other teachers, but with their non-teaching colleagues. This is an ethical obligation for each and every teacher, as well as for the teaching profession as a whole.

Teamwork is a crucial component of professional competency: this obligation adds an additional layer to the individually focused definition of professionalism, which must be revisited and updated from a collaborative perspective. In some communities, this redefinition marks a fundamental change in teaching practices. Teachers ill prepared for or unaccustomed to a team-based approach must learn to work in cooperation with their colleagues.

COFPE has found that the competencies required to ensure that ethical issues receive proper consideration during discussion and debate on pedagogical and other issues affecting educational teams are not equally distributed. As a result, many debates are simply avoided out of fear that they degenerate into personal confrontations with little relation to the subject at hand. In light of this situation, COFPE reiterates that cooperation between stakeholders includes an essential ethical component that must be fostered and promoted.

This would make teachers more aware of the professional standards they share and allow them to measure the extent of their differences regarding certain values, better understand the importance of referring to recognized ethical benchmarks to make informed decisions, and fully grasp the need for an ethical framework to guide their teaching activities and professional behaviour.

Teachers also need to become more attuned to the mid- and long-term impact of their day-to-day decisions, take time to examine and question their teaching practices and become reflexive practitioners—i.e. adopt an approach of professional self-regulation. No matter what shape their reflection takes (practitioner's narrative, retrospective feedback, professional autobiography, professional development plan, portfolio, involvement in a research project, etc.), it should

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70. *Education Act*, Section 22.6: A teacher shall "take the appropriate measures to attain and maintain a high level of professionalism."

ideally be part of a joint professional development process inspired by the ethical frame of reference.

Even though the MEQ document on core competencies does not provide an exhaustive list of the components of the ethical dimension, and even though the level of mastery required of new teachers for each of the 12 core competencies must be evaluated and validated in light of quality standards in teaching, the document deserves an attentive reading. All stakeholders have a duty to stay informed, address shortcomings in their training, and be up-to-date. Obviously, teachers also need to stay abreast of the Québec education reform and its impact on their professional practices. This, too, is an ethical requirement.

In light of the above, professional development plans will need to emphasize the team dimension of training, especially the learning and mastery of the communication skills required for productive debate and the respectful exchange of ideas. Universities will have to work hand-in-hand with the education community in this area.

Lastly, extensive renewal of teaching staff has increased the professional development needs of cooperating teachers, coaching teachers as well as beginning teachers. As a result, COFPE believes that professional development programs need to put more emphasis on reflexive practices in teaching, especially through training and support activities for cooperating teachers who supervise student teachers and teachers who mentor newcomers to the profession.

Bearing these observations in mind:

**COFPE recommends that educational bodies and schools encourage school staff to embrace and understand the core competencies, including the ethical dimension, and provide, as required, appropriate professional development activities in cooperation with universities; in this regard, it recommends that universities undertake research on the ethical dimension in teaching;**

**COFPE also recommends that educational bodies and school management take into account core competency requirements as part of staffing and teacher supervision and evaluation.**

Given the impact of the Québec education reform on initial training and professional development for teachers, it is important to reflect further on the level of ethical competency required of beginning teachers, but especially on the development of the ethical dimension in the education community. This must be done in a way that takes into account the standards of quality teaching, which cannot be ignored in the context of internationalisation.

These are questions that involve ethics in teacher training and the teaching profession.

# CHAPTER 5

## ADVANCING ETHICS IN THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY

### 5.1    Creating the conditions for substantive debate

Pedagogical practice is based on values and "standards" unique to the teaching profession. Critical discussion and debate help define these shared values and standards, clarifying them so that they can be adapted to hands-on situations. This is why it is important to spend time discussing ethical questions that encourage the sharing of ideas, especially regarding the meaning and scope of the pedagogical values held by the school team.

Debate takes time and skill: justifying a decision means confronting one's arguments with those of others. It is an ability and an aspect of professional teamwork too often ignored in the teaching profession. No longer is it enough to make individual decisions. Increasingly, emphasis must be placed on working and making decisions together and on the schools' obligation to be accountable to their communities.

In the event of a controversy, dilemma, problem situation or question over conflicting values, or a need to reach an informed decision, a framework for ethics can provide guidelines and benchmarks that provide direction for discussion and debate.

In democratic institutions, discussion provides an opportunity to reconsider or back away from a position and analyze issues as a basis for everyday action. It also opens the door to considering other points of view, even questioning one's own opinions.

Discussion also fosters a respectful form of questioning and debate, clarifying the implicit convictions that often interfere with the exchange of ideas or impede certain staff members from having a say in important school decisions and, consequently, in helping reach a consensus or rational outcome. Critical discussion can often prevent unfounded remarks from being repeated or squelch the kind of comments that lead to misunderstanding, unwarranted opposition or exclusion.

Lastly, in addition to anchoring a sense of ethical awareness among the teaching staff, ethical discussion also fosters the development of a community of practice, strengthening the feeling of shared identify and belonging.

### 5.2    A culture of ethics for the education community

Stakeholders must not underestimate the ethical issues that underpin decision-making within governing boards, teaching teams and the various structures of educational bodies. Decisions cannot be made solely on the basis of budgetary or administrative objectives, or performance criteria. All decisions have a direct or indirect impact on the quality of teaching and, consequently, on academic success, even if this cannot always be evaluated or measured in the short term.

The everyday actions of teachers are inspired by professional conscience. But integrating ethical concerns into team decision-making is a long and difficult process. Questioning values and positions within the team, developing ethical awareness on the part of the school team, and making that awareness part of the team decision-making process constitute a major change in the culture of a school or educational body, especially in environments with a pragmatic vision of decision-making. Under this proposed change in culture, the emphasis is on developing a longer term vision and a community of practice. Taking the time necessary to examine varying points of view is crucial to developing rational decision-making, whether at the individual or group level.

How do teachers provide personalized assistance to special needs students without negatively impacting their other students? How much leeway do teachers have to design a differentiated teaching program that takes into account the specific needs of their students? What is "reasonable accommodation" and is there only one way to tackle the question? These are just some of the questions that schools and educational bodies have answered in a variety of different ways.

As part of decentralization and the transfer of new responsibilities to individual schools, and in light of the trend toward the professionalization of teaching, the establishment of a culture of discussion appears crucial to ensuring delivery of quality educational services.

It is also appropriate to take steps to establish, through various means, a culture of ethics in conventional decision-making at every level of the education system, including during workshops, professional development days and round table discussions.

**COFPE recommends that educational bodies pay due heed to the ethical dimension in teaching practices and in relationships between stakeholders (school management, teachers and non-teaching professionals, technicians and other partners in the education community) as well as ensuring that the necessary means and resources are deployed to develop ethical awareness among these same stakeholders.**

Educational bodies that have adopted codes of ethics or codes of conduct have realized that these instruments cannot anticipate all possible situations or necessarily provide the best solution in each case. Leaders in the education community have begun to look to ethical deliberation as a tool to help promote a healthy educational democracy.[71]

Decision-making must be based on reasonable, non-arbitrary motives, which is not self-evident when decision makers (principals, school officials, teachers, union representatives, etc.) find themselves alone with their conscience in a world of relativism that preaches tolerance between value systems. There is a growing awareness of the issue in certain circles: critical reflection must make its voice heard through the demands of unbridled performance

Staying faithful to the educational mission requires an ethical approach. The obligations of the Québec education reform make it even more urgent to incorporate an ethical dimension into the new methods of teamwork, especially when reflecting on the values and motivations underpinning school educational projects and success plans.

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71. Dany Rondeau,"La délibération éthique, un outil pour la démocratie scolaire, " *Le point en administration scolaire*, Fall 2003, p. 18-19.

From this angle, the leadership role that school principals and administrators have to play is very important. School management has the responsibility of ensuring that ethical attitudes and behaviour are always part of classroom activities and of relations between colleagues on staff as well as between staff and students. This means more than just repeating the standard: in many schools, it is a matter of bringing in a far-reaching change in organizational culture.

School principals have a key role to play here. Many new principals are being hired, some of whom have only limited teaching experience. They have not necessarily taught at the same level or in the same sector. In some cases, their new professional environment differs substantially from the one they taught in (multi-ethnic school, immersion classes, urban versus rural setting, etc.) In summary, many principals need further training as well as guidance and support in the form of mentoring to ensure they remain in their new positions and take ethical awareness into consideration.

COFPE believes that the responsibilities of running a school require that principals receive training that takes the core competencies into account, particularly in light of a commitment to a culture of ethics in the education community.

**CONCLUSION**

In adopting this brief, the Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant does not claim to have found the definitive answer to ethical issues in teaching.

However, the Committee does hope to suggest some possible answers to current needs for ethical benchmarks in the teaching profession, although it notes that ethics are as much a concern of society as of the education community, and that school is a reflection of changing social trends.

COFPE believes that it has demonstrated the scope of ethical issues and will consider that it has made a useful contribution if its brief spurs all stakeholders—both in teacher training and in schools—to pay closer attention to ethical behaviour.

For this reason, the recommendations it has drawn up apportion responsibilities among all stakeholders.

"In education, promises are made to be kept," declares Meirieu. The Québec education reform calls upon all members of the education community to seek ways of developing a professional ethics among teacher trainers, teachers, school officials and other stakeholders with a view to more effectively fulfilling the school mission.

It is in this respect that the challenge of developing a common understanding of the ethics of the teaching profession must be collectively acknowledged and assumed. Doing so may take courage—the courage to put our minds to the task and persevere.

**APPENDIX 1**


**RECOMMENDATIONS**

COFPE recommends that the Minister of Education clearly state, repeating as necessary, that education is part of the government's social mission, that academic and educational success are a responsibility shared by all stakeholders, and that these stakeholders must be supported by parents and the school's local community. (2.1)

COFPE recommends that the Minister of Education take steps, through educational bodies, to ensure that all governing board members have access to shared basic training, including an awareness component on the ethics of communication, discussion and decision-making. (2.3)

COFPE recommends that union organizations encourage their members to reflect upon their professional commitment and occasionally remind them of their personal and collective responsibility for fulfilling the school mission. (2.4)

COFPE recommends that the Minister of Education and his partners work together with all stakeholders to ensure the development of a framework for ethics that takes into account the values, standards and guidelines set out in the *Education Act* and MEQ core documents. (3.1)

It also recommends that the Minister of Education take steps to ensure that the ethical frame of reference is widely disseminated within the education and teacher training communities. (3.1)

COFPE recommends that educational bodies adopt and use the document entitled *Teacher Training: Orientations – Professional Competencies*, particularly in orienting and selecting activities for workplace integration and professional development relating to the ethical dimension of professional competencies. (3.2.3)

COFPE recommends that the Comité d'agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement (CAPFE) pay special attention to the transversal nature of ethics, be vigilant about integrating the various aspects of ethics into teacher training programs and carefully examine this dimension when assessing program implementation at universities. (4.2)

COFPE recommends that universities—and especially teacher training program coordinators—ensure that the ethical competency described in the MEQ orientations, the ethical dimension inherent to the other competencies and the ethical frame of reference (to be developed) are taken into account in a program-based approach; it further recommends that universities take steps to ensure that learning conditions and pedagogical approaches and strategies foster a sense of ethics among students and provide opportunities to debate pedagogical, teaching, and subject-related issues. (4.3)

COFPE also recommends that universities, after thoroughly assessing the core competencies described in *Teacher Training: Orientations – Professional Competencies*, ensure that professors, lecturers, university supervisors and coordinating teachers receive ethics training commensurate with their teaching, support or supervisory duties. (4.3)

COFPE recommends that universities establish the conditions necessary for students to learn about ethical issues in initial teacher training, notably by creating opportunities for debate, and ensure that they explore these issues thoroughly in their practicums, practicum seminars and other practical training activities. (4.4)

COFPE recommends that educational bodies and schools encourage school staff to embrace and understand the core competencies, including the ethical dimension, and provide, as required, appropriate professional development activities in cooperation with universities; in this regard, it recommends that universities undertake research on the ethical dimension in teaching. (4.5)

COFPE also recommends that educational bodies and school management take into account core competency requirements as part of staffing and teacher supervision and evaluation. (4.5)

COFPE recommends that educational bodies pay due heed to the ethical dimension in teaching practices and in relationships between stakeholders (school management, teachers and non-teaching professionals, technicians and other partners in the education community) as well as ensuring that the necessary means and resources are deployed to develop ethical awareness among these same stakeholders. (5.2)

## APPENDIX 2

### Members of the Comité d'orientation
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2004-03-12

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