



MTA • AEEM

A GUIDE TO COUNCIL

Nadia Greco | Updated – Fall 2025



WHY DO WE NEED A COUNCIL?

- Opportunity to be involved in the formation, modification and implementation of educational policies
- Teacher-led discussion with the school/center administration
- Teachers' views are presented and shared in an official manner



COUNCIL MEETINGS VS. STAFF MEETINGS

Council Meetings:

- Run by a teacher (Chairperson)
- Have powers to make recommendations and some decisions
- Pass motions
- Get direct answers and explanations

Staff Meetings:

- Run by the administration
- For information purposes only
- No major decisions should be made



COMPOSITION

- Teachers: no more than 8, no fewer than 3
- The MTA rep is automatically part of the 8
- Election must be held when more than 8 teachers want to join
- Elect people who understand that their role is to represent the views of the staff and not necessarily their own
- Any teacher can serve on Council (does not have to be by cycle or department)
- Principal is a member and is replaced by the VP when absent
- VP can be a non-voting member of Council when principal is present.



ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON

- To prepare and post the agenda
- To run pre-council meetings
- To call the meeting to order
- To announce the business of the meeting, according to the agenda
- To recognize members entitled to speak
- To handle the motions
- To ensure at the beginning of each year that the Council establishes its rules of internal procedures

ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

- Is a member of Council like any other
- Has the right to vote on any motion proposed at a meeting
- Votes on a motion must take place even if the principal speaks against it, and it must be representative of the vote taken at pre-council
- Responsible for adding certain items to the agenda
- Must receive the recommendations of the Council each time a vote is taken

OPERATION OF THE COUNCIL

- Chairperson and Secretary are elected at the first meeting
- Adopts its own rules of internal procedure
- A majority of the members must be in attendance, and voting is necessary to reach a decision
- Guests may be invited to speak to an item under consideration when necessary. The chairperson must inform the principal ahead of time. The principal must follow the same procedure if they wish to invite someone.
- Within five (5) workdays of each Council meeting, the chairperson must inform the staff of the Council's resolutions (i.e., distribute the unofficial minutes)

Please note that no member, including the principal, should approve / vet the minutes before the chairperson and secretary distribute them.

AGENDA

- Teaching staff should be provided with opportunity to add items to the agenda
- Post agenda in obvious area and be consistent with the location
- Circulate agenda among teaching staff
- Person adding an item to the agenda should sign their name so that chairperson may have prior information about the item
- Unless it is an emergency, administration items (which must go to Council) need to go to the Chairperson 5 working days prior to the meeting
- Agenda be shown to the administration after the staff has had a chance to add their items
- The council is more likely to get answers and not have to wait until the following meeting if done this way



AGENDA (CONT'D)..

- Items left from previous meeting should be dealt with on a priority basis at the next meeting
- Chairperson may decide some items are for information only and can be dealt with via memo and/ or at a staff meeting
- When appropriate, chairperson may ask cycles or departments to pre-discuss items

FOLLOW-UP ON MOTIONS

- If the principal does not carry out the Council's recommendation before the next meeting, the subject is placed on the agenda under matters arising from the minutes and they must explain, either orally or in writing, why it hasn't been done
- If Council is not satisfied with the reasons given by the principal, they can contact the MTA and ask for an intervention, if appropriate
- Copies of all correspondence written by the Council, including the unofficial minutes distributed to teachers, should be sent to the MTA office to enable us to support Council requests and to help detect common problems and concerns in our schools

ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION

- In-school application of decisions of a pedagogical or disciplinary nature coming from the Comité de Gestion de la Taxe Scolaire, MEQ, etc.
- Any decisions made by the administrator that would establish or modify the pedagogical or disciplinary nature of the school
- The council shall act as the school-level body of teachers in the application of Value-Added

ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION

- The overall approach for the enrichment or adaptation of the objectives and the program of studies
- The time allocation for each compulsory and elective subject which is not a simple majority vote, and which must include consultation with MTA (if teaching staff's vote at pre-Council does not align with what administration wants, it does not go to Council or GB)
- The textbooks and instructional material required for teaching the program of studies

CONSULTATION CONT'D...

- the determination of the educational objectives of the school in relation to the community which it serves and this on at least an annual basis
- the school organization plan for the following school year
- the type of teachers needed to meet the educational objectives of the school
- the general organization of student activities
- the integration of teaching members new to the staff and particularly those who have not taught before
- the acceptance and orientation of student teachers and the criteria for their distribution
- the intent and application of school regulations
- the application in the school of teaching methods, the criteria for evaluating students in their studies, and the policy on report cards
- the organization and the evaluation for internal purposes of all professional days as well as calendar placement of those which are moveable

CONSULTATION CONT'D...

- parent/teacher relations and liaison with the governing board
- the distribution of the duties and responsibilities of the teachers in the school
- the establishment of budgetary priorities in the school
- the determination of the rotation schedule for emergency substitution
- the scheduling of possible secretarial and other human resource help in the school
- the system of monitoring (student) lates and absences
- the purchase, use, and allocation of computers in the school
- the system for reporting absences of teachers, arranging for their substitution, and reporting their return to work

FINALLY...

- The School Council must **approve** any proposal made that would change the school organization plan
- The School Council must **approve** professional development activities for the teachers that are organized by the principal
- The School Board and the Union agree that the collection, sale, or distribution of materials for a school fundraising activity or to benefit outside, non-profit, or service organizations, shall be unacceptable unless such collection, sale, or distribution has received the prior **approval** of the School Council.

TIMELINE

August

- Council should be elected and hold its first meeting during the pedagogical days that begin the school year (cannot be elected after September 30)
- Members elected should choose a chairperson and a secretary for the year
- Establish internal rules of order

September

- Status of workload distribution
- Review of parent/teacher meetings and interviews/compensatory days
- Review of reporting schedule and procedures
- Procedures re teacher absence and substitution
- Value-added and ECA activities
- Orientation of teachers new to the school, including substitutes
- Supervision schedule (interim schedule)
- Use of professional days



TIMELINE (CONT'D)...

October

- Review of final workload distribution
- Budget status
- Approve additional ECA activities
- Discuss school system for monitoring/recording value-added credits, as well as value-added provisions

November

- Council should be requesting that they be given their school's budget. The school administration shall continue to provide budgetary information and updates on money expended throughout the school year, as well as any changes to the budget that may occur. This entitles teachers to be given a copy of the operating budget of your school/center
- Review school calendar of special events (including exam schedule & supervision)
- Consider special planning for the days preceding the holidays

TIMELINE (CONT'D)...

December

- Begin study of objectives, curriculum offerings and school organization for the following year including possible changes in subject-time allocation as well as language of instruction (MTA must be consulted if there are any changes)

January

- Continue study of objectives, curriculum offerings and organization for the following year

February

- Plan major renovation / equipment requests for summer scheduling
- Examine student enrolment forecasts for the next school year
- Formulate program and organizational recommendations based on work done in December and January.
- Examine results of budget distribution for current year and begin planning for next year

TIMELINE (CONT'D)...

March

- Begin to establish budget distribution for following year
- Address staffing organization plans
- Begin provisional staffing needs

April

- Staff Assistant job description, qualifications and criteria for selection
- School calendar for the following year including:
 - local pedagogical days including work from location of your choice and teachers' choice of content days
 - evening parent meetings
 - scheduling of compulsory evenings without compensation
- Discuss value-added provisions, and make sure Council or sub-committee of Council is ready to review and determine credits

TIMELINE (CONT'D)...

May

- Redistribution of workload due to invigilation of June exams
- Planning for new programs
- Review rules of conduct & safety and policies
- Review emergency preparedness plans
- Review Value-Added assigned credits with administration (early May)

June

- Review status of staffing plan
- Review the per capita allocations and the global amounts available to the school for the following school year (budget)

FINAL THOUGHTS/SUGGESTIONS

- Invite guests to Council if an “expert” opinion is needed
- The Chair must hold a pre-council meeting with teachers only in order to have the teaching staff vote on items
- Distribute or post Council minutes for all to see
- Ask for a caucus during a meeting if there is confusion on a motion/topic
- Communicate with your administration in an open and honest manner
- Adequate time may be needed for some questions to be answered



Montreal Teachers Association
4260 Girouard Avenue
Suite 200, Montreal, QC H4A 3C9

 **514 487-4580**

 **mta@mta-aeem.com**

 **mta-aeem.com**

 **MTA - AEEM**