

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

What you need to know!

October 2025



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Classroom assistants

What you need to know!

A classroom assistance service is now available in Québec schools. This document aims to allow you to learn more on the topic. The information it includes draws on the national negotiated agreements (teaching personnel and school support personnel) [“Ententes nationales négociées” (personnel enseignant et personnel de soutien scolaire)]. It also refers to work done by the Ministry of Education, with the contribution of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) and its school sector federations, as well as to the assessment report of the classroom assistant pilot project.



The provisions of the collective agreements prevail over this document for any matter related to working conditions.

¹ See appendix 71 of the 2023-2028 national agreement of the Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (FSE-CSQ) and annex 29 of the national agreement of the Fédération du personnel de soutien scolaire (FPSS-CSQ).

² FSE-CSQ and FPSS-CSQ.

Classroom assistance objectives

Classroom assistance allows to:

- Maximize the time that teachers dedicate to teaching;
- Promote the school support personnel and improve their integration into the school team;
- Create positions for support personnel (positions with as many hours as possible and with continuous schedules thanks to hours given in class and in the daycare service);
- Explore new avenues of collaboration;
- Enrich the support provided to students through the addition of a resource whose role is significant, which contributes to ensuring an environment that is conducive to learning;
- Leverage the diversity of competencies, expertise and knowledge brought by everyone to foster the students' educational success.³

The role of classroom assistants⁴

Accompany students, assist teachers, including specialists, in non-pedagogical tasks, and ensure the wellness and safety of students in their school life.

Classroom assistance must be an addition to support services and professional services present in the school. It does not aim to replace them nor to compensate a lack of services for students in difficulty or with special needs.

Assistance must be given to the class's group of students, and not to a particular student, nor to the whole school. Therefore, it should not be used to fill in for someone in another job category who is absent during the hours allocated to their classroom assistant's tasks. In the same vein, its role is not to make up for the lack of educational services resulting from budget cuts.

The classroom assistant is fully part of the school team and their role must be recognized and respected.

It's important that this person's role be clearly explained to the whole school team.



³ Even though research has not found a causal link between the presence of the classroom assistant and success in class, this presence can contribute to success in various ways (for example, more time for teaching, presence of a significant person for students in addition to the presence of the teacher).

⁴ It's important to note that "classroom assistant" is used in the Support Personnel Classification Plan as well as in appendix 29 of the school Support Personnel collective agreement to refer to classroom assistance.

The tasks of classroom assistants

The CSQ and its school network federations, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, developed a list of tasks that can be performed by the classroom assistant.⁵ This is not a complete task list, but is a good reference point since it respects everyone's task boundaries.

Tasks related to students' safety

- Accompany and supervise students during reception and travel periods, as needed;
- Ensure the management and safety of students, in compliance with the code of conduct and safety measures (for example, provide first aid).

Tasks related to the smooth running of the classroom

- Help with compliance (as needed, intervene with students to uphold class or life rules);
- Support students by ensuring that the climate and environment are conducive to learning and the execution of school work.

Tasks related to students' wellbeing

- Contribute to simple follow-ups with students returning to the classroom;
- Help to develop student autonomy (for example, assist with dressing and undressing, contribute to students' management of objects, clothes and school supplies, among other items).

Tasks related to students' school work

- Help students settle in the classroom and get ready to work;
- Answer simple questions in keeping with the instructions given by the teacher;
- Support some students for simple specific needs (for example, supervise and help a student in the execution of an evaluation).



Tasks related to classroom life

- Assist the teacher in their execution of some administrative tasks (for example, taking attendance);
- Contribute to maintaining classroom order and cleanliness, as well as supplies maintenance;
- Collaborate in the preparation and posting of various materials (for example, plasticizing);
- Collaborate in the organization of events, activities and educational outings (for example, back to school party, museum outing).

Tasks related to meetings

- Attend parents' information meetings, as needed.

It is essential that task boundaries be respected. The classroom assistant's job description must be clear, easily accessible and well explained to the whole school team.

⁵ This list was developed in the context of the classroom assistant pilot project.

Service implementation terms

The equivalent of 4,000 full-time classroom assistants has been deployed in all school service centres (CSS)⁶. The number of classroom assistants per CSS is determined in accordance with the parameters established by the Ministry of Education in the budgetary rules.

The job class of school educators must be considered in priority to act as classroom assistants.⁷

Elementary school teaching personnel, including specialist teachers and 5-year-old preschool teachers, can receive classroom assistance. In the case of 5-year-old preschool teachers, the CSS has to analyze needs and take into account the fact that a class benefits from a part-time additional resource, if that is the case. Classroom assistance is an added service, different from the additional part-time resource in full-time 4-year-old preschool and in 5-year-old kindergarten with a high number of students in class.

In allocating classroom assistants, the CSS pays particular attention to teachers in professional integration and to classes with special challenges. In the context of this allocation, the local teaching union must be consulted through the teachers' participation organization at the CSS level.

It is incumbent on the establishment's management, in collaboration with classroom assistants and teachers, to determine the allocation of classroom assistance and its functioning terms. It is not incumbent on the school's committee for students with disabilities, social maladjustments or learning disabilities.

Management is also in charge of creating the positions of individuals called upon to act as classroom assistants. It must do so by promoting the creation of positions with as many hours as possible and with continuous schedules. When the position of the classroom assistant includes a working period of three or more continuous hours, the classroom assistant is entitled to a paid 15-minute break.

Management must also take into account the guidelines included in the teaching personnel's collective agreement, which indicate that this working period must be between 10 and 15 hours per week per class, unless a specific exception exists.



⁶ The expression "school service centre" includes school boards.

⁷ The job classes of school educator, main class school educator, daycare service and school technician were modified in the Support Personnel Classification Plan to account for this new reality. Therefore, it must be noted that the job class of daycare service educator is modified for the title of school educator.

Winning conditions

The assessment of pilot projects carried out in the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years by the Centre de recherche et d'intervention sur la réussite scolaire (CRIRES) and consultations by the CSQ and its federations identified winning conditions for a successful implementation.

Allocate a significant number of hours

A larger number of weekly hours allocated to classroom assistance in a group seems positive, both for the persons occupying these positions and the teaching personnel. Collaboration between classroom assistants and teaching personnel, as well as the development of a relationship with students, are made easier. In other words, it is best to avoid the "sprinkling" of hours and instead offer a significant number of hours.

Clarify the classroom assistant's role

To avoid any confusion, it is important to inform classroom assistants, teachers and the entire school team members of the classroom assistants' role and responsibilities. Tasks fulfilled by classroom assistants must respect the other personnel's task boundaries and complement the other support services in special education.

It's important to highlight the fact that in environments where training on the classroom assistant's role was provided, the complementary roles of everyone were clearly defined.

Develop collaboration

The relationship between teachers and classroom assistants is based on collaboration. Supervision of the classroom assistant is the responsibility of school management. The teacher does not have the responsibility to supervise or manage the classroom assistant and the classroom assistant does not report to the teacher.

Develop good communication

This is a crucial factor in creating a successful relationship between teachers and classroom assistants, as are moments of dialogue.

Having consultation time is a need that both teachers and classroom assistants voiced on many occasions during the pilot project. Moreover, allocating dedicated planning time is one of the recommendations that emerged from the CRIRES' assessment.

Even if no particular provision exists to this end, nothing prevents from setting aside such moments. Management's support in this matter can be valuable.

Furthermore, the individuals who hold a class assistant's position should be provided dedicated time for planning, preparation and organization of services offered to students, outside of the periods where students are present. That time must also include dialogue meetings with the school team as well as follow-ups with specialists or parents. Ideally, part of this planning work should be done in collaboration with the teachers.

Get management's support

Management's support, from the first moments and all through the school year, is also a winning condition for the success of classroom assistance. When management takes on an active role, for example by giving clear guidelines, explaining the tasks that can be done by the classroom assistants and making regular follow-ups, classroom assistants seem to appreciate their experience more. Do not hesitate to call on your school's management.

Be well informed

To ensure a seamless implementation of the classroom assistance service, it is important for everyone to share the same understanding. We hope this document will be useful. Do not hesitate to refer to it if needed.

Contact your local union!

The implementation of the classroom assistance service does not seem in alignment with the information that you have received, or you have questions or are facing challenges? Contact your local union.

