



Gouvernement du Québec
**Conseil supérieur
de l'éducation**

Comité catholique

REGULATION RESPECTING THE QUALIFICATION OF TEACHERS
HAVING CHARGE OF CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
SCHOOLS NOT RECOGNIZED AS CATHOLIC

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INTRODUCTORY DOCUMENT



Québec

The creation of the ministère de l'Éducation in 1964 was the outcome of an historic compromise between the Québec government and the bishops of Québec. The result was a state-controlled school system which would respect the confessional objectives of both Catholics and Protestants.

The Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation and its two confessional committees (Catholic and Protestant) were also formed at this time. The Act respecting the Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation gives the Catholic committee the responsibility of formulating regulations concerning educational institutions recognized as Catholic. It also charges the Catholic committee with formulating regulations regarding the qualification of teachers dispensing Catholic religious instruction in schools not recognized as Catholic.

The Catholic committee has enacted three new regulations:

- ° the regulation respecting the recognition of elementary and secondary schools of the public school system as Catholic and their confessional character;
- ° the regulation respecting the recognition of private educational institutions at the elementary and secondary levels as Catholic and their confessional character;
- ° the regulation respecting the qualification of teachers having charge of Catholic religious instruction in public and private elementary and secondary schools not recognized as Catholic.

The present document is intended to serve as an introduction to the Catholic committee's Regulation respecting the qualification of teachers having charge of Catholic religious instruction in public and private elementary and secondary schools not recognized as Catholic. In this way the Catholic committee hopes to help educators meet the challenge of providing high quality Catholic moral and religious instruction.

The Quality of Catholic Education

In public and private schools other than Catholic or Protestant, pupils whose parents request a course of confessional religious instruction for their children are entitled to receive such a course in accordance with provisions of the régime pédagogique. In accordance with the Act respecting the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, the Catholic committee has enacted a regulation concerning the qualification of teachers dispensing Catholic religious instruction in these non-confessional schools. The provisions of this regulation are the same as those which apply to teachers dispensing Catholic moral and religious instruction in confessional schools. These provisions aim at improving the quality of Catholic education.

Teachers dispensing Catholic moral and religious instruction must be of the Catholic faith. They must have a given number of university credits in specific areas of study. This applies to teachers in all schools, regardless of whether the school is recognized as Catholic or not. These requirements are not found in the Catholic committee's 1974 regulation; the committee therefore believes it necessary to note that beginning in 1992:

- ° In elementary schools, teachers must have acquired at least nine university credits pertaining to the moral and religious dimension of the person and the essential content of the Catholic faith as well as the programs of Catholic moral and religious instruction. Nothing prevents more qualified people or specialists from working in this field in the elementary school. However, for the moment the Catholic committee continues to place emphasis, inasmuch as possible, on religious instruction carried out by the teacher giving the general classroom education. This has certain pedagogical advantages which teachers themselves have often pointed out during hearings with the Catholic committee. At the same time, this option demands that requirements be formulated accordingly with respect to teacher qualifications. The requirement of nine university credits will help

make future elementary school teachers more aware of the moral and religious dimension of the human person. This dimension is included in the conception of the person put forward in The Schools of Québec as one of the aims of education. By "essential content" the Catholic committee wishes to indicate that these credits must not relate to marginal elements of the faith, but rather to the fundamentals of the Catholic faith necessary to enable teachers to effectively dispense the programs of Catholic religious and moral instruction in elementary schools. A pedagogical preparation to teach these programs must be assured. Studies represented by these nine credits will constitute a minimum further enriched by the teacher's experience, by forms of pedagogical support, and by continuing education programs for teachers.

- ° In secondary schools, teachers must have acquired at least 60 university credits. This training, centred mainly on the Catholic faith and the pedagogy of teaching it, must also make the teacher more aware of the moral and religious dimension of the human person, and of the growing phenomenon of the diversity of beliefs.

It should come as no surprise that the Catholic committee's regulation sets specific educational requirements for teachers. In 1975, in its publication Religion for Today's School, the Catholic committee made recommendations with respect to the initial and continuing training of teachers. Teacher competency in religious education already appeared to the committee to be a major element determining the quality of religious instruction in the schools. In 1983, when consulted on policy formulation with regard to teacher training, the Catholic committee underlined the urgent necessity of taking concrete steps to preserve the high quality of religious instruction in elementary and secondary schools. The Catholic committee made its recommendations even more explicit in May 1985, in a document entitled Faith Education in the Schools.

The requirements described in sections 1 and 2 have to do with the academic qualifications of personnel dispensing Catholic moral and religious

instruction. As noted earlier, these new requirements only take effect on 1 July 1992. The objective is to ensure that teachers' acquired rights in this area be preserved, and to allow future teachers to acquire the training they need. As well, any person can be hired or assigned on the condition that he or she satisfies the requirements within the prescribed time.

Conclusion

Certainly, the new regulation alone cannot guarantee high quality religious education in non-confessional schools. Schools and teaching staff are invited to use all the creativity at their disposal in order to ensure that other criteria and conditions for attaining a high quality program of Catholic religious instruction are also taken into account and respected. Respect for the rights of children entitles them to an education which allows their full moral and religious development.

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