

Health protocol to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 during the school election of September 26, 2021, with respect to authorization, financing and expenses

Implementation table for measures contained in the health protocol and related to authorization, financing and expenses of candidates

Élections Québec and the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* have collaborated to develop a *Health protocol to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 during the school election of September 26, 2021, with respect to authorization, financing and expenses*. Applicable health guidelines and recommended measures for purposes of the September 26 school election¹ are grouped in the protocol intended for electors, candidates, returning officers, including assistants designated to process applications for authorization, and the director general of the school board.

The table presented on the following pages lists the measures contained in the protocol that relate to financing of candidates. It provides practical guidance on their implementation. These recommendations constitute adjustments to the administrative measures already in effect. The table may be modified to take into account new findings regarding COVID-19. Where applicable, any significant changes will be announced in the “[Elections in the time of COVID-19](#)” section of the Élections Québec website. As health guidelines change rapidly, those issued by the authorities will prevail in case of discrepancies. You can visit the [Québec.ca](#) website to check the health guidelines in effect.

If you have any questions regarding the financing of candidates, please contact a political financing coordinator by email at financement-scolaire@electionsquebec.gc.ca, or by telephone at 418-528-0422 or 1-888-ELECTION (1-888-353-2846, toll-free). For questions regarding authorization, please contact the team of the Register of authorized political entities of Québec (RAPEQ) by email at repaq@electionsquebec.gc.ca, or by telephone at 418-528-0422 or 1-888-ELECTION (1-888-353-2846).

The Chief Electoral Officer oversees the enforcement of Chapter XI of the *Act respecting school elections to elect certain members of the boards of directors of English-language school service centres* (Act)² with respect to the financing of candidates (section 206.2, paragraph 1). During an election period, where circumstances warrant, he or she may issue directives, make public any information he or she deems relevant, or issue special decisions (sections 30.2, 30.8 and 30.9). The director general of the English-language school board performs his or her duties under the authority of the Chief Electoral Officer (section 206.5). The Chief Electoral Officer may delegate, to the returning officer of the English-language school board, the exercise of any powers or the performance of any duties related to authorizing candidates. Furthermore, the returning officer may delegate such powers or duties to an employee he or she designates for that purpose (section 206.4).

¹ Order 2020-096 of November 25, 2020, provided for the suspension of all school election proceedings and a ban on publication of election notices. This order was repealed by Order 2021-057 of August 4, 2021. On the same date, the government issued Order 1076-2021, which sets September 26, 2021, as the date for the polls that could not be held due to Order 2020-096.

² On August 10, 2020, the Superior Court in *Quebec English School Boards Association v. Attorney General of Quebec*, 2020 QCCS 2444 (CanLII) suspended the application of *An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance* (SQ 2020, c. 1) (Bill 40) with respect to English-language school boards until judgment is rendered on the merits of the application for judicial review on the grounds of constitutional invalidity of certain provisions. On September 17, 2020, the Court of Appeals made this suspension absolute. The provisions of the Act applicable to the September 26, 2021, school election are those of the *Act respecting school elections* (CQLR, c. E-2.3), as it read on February 7, 2020.

Measure	Stakeholders	Comments
AUTHORIZATION Note: Supporting signatures in support of a candidate's nomination paper, which are used for the purposes of the application for authorization made on the nomination paper cannot be collected remotely. In this case, the rules applicable to the collection of supporting signatures for a nomination paper must be respected, in particular, this collection must be done in the presence of the elector.		
1. E-mailing of the form titled <i>Application for authorization of a candidate or an elector who undertakes to run as a candidate</i> (DGE-5801-VA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Candidate or elector who undertake to run as candidate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The form titled Application for authorization of a candidate or an elector who undertakes to run as a candidate (DGE-5801-VA) is available online, on the Élections Québec website. ▪ The form can also be found on the school extranet. Upon request, the returning officer can email it to the elector, along with the list of health guidelines to be followed if signatures are solicited in person. ▪ The returning officer must encourage the remote transmission of applications for authorization. An elector who undertakes to run as a candidate must complete and sign the form, and then email a copy to the returning officer. ▪ Elector who undertake to run as candidate is encouraged to retain the submitted form, as it may be requested if more information is required. ▪ Upon receiving the application, the returning officer must print and sign it in order to grant the authorization requested by the elector. The returning officer must then email a copy of the form to both Élections Québec and the authorized elector. <p>In the event that the application cannot be sent by email, the returning officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provides remote support in terms of answering questions from persons wishing to submit an application for authorization; ▪ requests that the elector seeking authorization makes an appointment so that he or she can submit his or her application before the deadline, in a safe manner that limits the potential for gatherings. At this appointment, the measures provided for in point 8 must be complied with.

Measure	Stakeholders	Comments
2. Collecting signatures in support of the application for authorization of an elector who undertakes to run as a candidate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elector who undertake to run as candidate or person designated to collect supporting signatures. ▪ Elector of the English-language school board who support the request for authorization. 	<p>Maximum number of supporting signatures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The required number of signatures from electors of the English-language school board is 10 for the seat of commissioner and 50 for the seat of chair. <p>Methods for collecting supporting signatures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The form <i>Schedule to the application for authorization of an elector who undertakes to run as a candidate</i> (DGE-5802) and the <i>Slip-Supporting signature of an elector of the English-language school board – Application for authorization of an elector who undertakes to run as a candidate</i> (DGE-5802.1) are available on the Élections Québec website. This slip makes it possible to collect each supporting signature from an elector on a separate document, while form 5802 allows for collecting the signatures in the form of a list. ▪ These documents can also be found on the school extranet. Upon request, the returning officer can email it to the elector. ▪ Here is how to proceed if the collection of supporting signatures is done remotely, using the slips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An elector who undertakes to run as a candidate must email this slip to the electors of the English-language school board when soliciting signatures in support of his or her application for authorization. ○ An elector wishing to support an application for authorization must print and sign the slip, and then email it back to the elector who undertakes to run as a candidate. ○ The elector who undertakes to run as a candidate must email the required number of duly completed and signed slips to the returning officer, along with his or her application for authorization. ○ Elector who undertake to run as candidate is encouraged to retain the submitted form and the corresponding slips, as these documents may be requested if more information is required. <p>Note: Remote signatures collection cannot apply to supporting signatures for a nomination paper; such signatures must be obtained in the presence of the elector.</p>

Measure	Stakeholders	Comments
CONTRIBUTIONS		
3. Soliciting contributions remotely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributor; Elector who undertake to run as candidate. Authorized candidate or his canvassers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To limit interactions with electors, the director general of the English-language school board must remind authorized candidates that they should use the provisional receipt whenever possible. When designating a person to solicit or collect contributions, a candidate or an elector who undertakes to run as a candidate must make it clear to the designated person that contributions should be collected remotely whenever possible. He or she must carefully explain the health measures relevant to in-person solicitation and provide the designated person with the list of health guidelines to be followed (see point 6 in this table). Contributions may only be made to persons who have received authorization to solicit them on behalf of the candidate or the elector who undertakes to run as a candidate.
4. Using the <i>Provisional contribution receipt</i> (DGE-5804-VA) and transmitting it by email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributor; Elector who undertake to run as candidates. Authorized candidate or his canvassers. Returning officer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whenever possible, provisional receipts should be used and such receipts should be transmitted by email to the candidate. The provisional receipt is available online. The contributor can complete the fillable version of the document. He or she must then print it out and sign it. The candidate can then issue an official receipt without the contributor's signature. Copies of both the official receipt and the provisional receipt must be mailed to the director general of the English-language school board. If this is not possible, they must be submitted to the director general in person, while following all relevant health guidelines. The director general of the English-language school board is responsible for forwarding the DGEQ's copies of the official receipts, as well as the provisional receipts, to Élections Québec.

Measure	Stakeholders	Comments
EXPENSES		
5. Paying expenses incurred by authorized entities, including election expenses, by transfer of funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elector who undertake to run as candidate. ▪ Authorized candidate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Authorized candidates or electors who undertake to run as candidates will be able to pay their expenses by transfer of funds. ▪ All supporting documents related to payments made by transfer of funds must be retained and attached to the required returns. ▪ Depending on the service used, the relevant supporting documents are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internet payment (standardized payment services): the confirmation of payment issued by the financial institution or payment log history including the supplier reference number. ○ Internet payment (customized payment services): the confirmation of payment issued by the financial institution or payment log history including the bank account number (or folio) of the payee. ○ Payment by electronic transfer (e.g., Interac transfer): the confirmation of payment issued by the financial institution or payment log history including the phone number or email address of the payee.
HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS		
6. Soliciting supporting signatures or contributions from electors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elector who undertake to run as candidate. ▪ Authorized candidate. 	<p>In cases where contributions or signatures in support of an application for authorization are solicited or collected in person, the returning officer (or the director general of the English-language school board, as the case may be) provides a list of health guidelines. In particular, this list makes provisions for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Before meeting any signatories or contributors, the canvasser has confirmed that none of the following circumstances apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ He or she has been in quarantine or isolation due to travel abroad; ○ He or she has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is still considered a carrier of the disease; ○ He or she is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19; ○ He or she has been in contact with a suspected, probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 14 days;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ He or she is waiting for a COVID-19 test result; ▪ The canvasser has acknowledged the heightened risk of contracting a more severe form of the disease among people aged 70 and over, as well as among those affected by a chronic disease or a weakened immune system; ▪ The rules governing physical distancing in force were respected at all times between the canvasser and the signatory or contributor and direct contacts (e.g., handshakes) have been avoided when greeting a person; ▪ The canvasser wore a face covering, in accordance with the health guidelines in force. <p>As of August 1, 2021, the following items also appear on the list of health guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The meeting with the signatory or the contributor took place either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ on the exterior grounds of a private residence, while complying with the rules in effect regarding the maximum number of persons permitted; ○ in a predetermined location that allows for limiting gatherings to the number of persons currently permitted (e.g., outdoors, preferably by appointment); ▪ Disinfectant was provided to allow the contributor or signatory to disinfect his or her hands both before and after handling any forms; ▪ The signatory or contributor was encouraged to wear a face covering, in accordance with the health guidelines in force. ▪ The signatory or the contributor was encouraged to use his or her own pen. ▪ Applicable hand hygiene rules were respected when handling any forms completed by a signatory or a contributor. <p>Once completed, the list of health guidelines must be submitted to the returning officer of the English-language school board, along with the application for authorization of an elector who undertakes to run as an candidate, or to the director general of the English-language school board, along with the contribution receipts.</p>

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		When a person is designated to solicit or collect contributions, he or she must be made aware that such activities should take place remotely whenever possible. The health measures applicable to in-person solicitation must be presented to this person who should also be provided with the list of health guidelines.
7. Holding an election-related activity or event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorized candidate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When holding election-related activities and events, both organizers and participants must comply with the health guidelines issued by public health authorities for indoor and outdoor gatherings. The Quebec.ca website contains information on this topic. Note that remote activities are preferred. As of August 1, 2021, the measures to be respected, varying by type of activity, are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private activities of an event or social nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a public outdoor location: maximum of 50 people. A distance of 1 m must be respected, otherwise wearing a mask is recommended; In a rented hall or indoor public place: maximum of 25 people. The distance of 1 m and the wearing of a mask or face covering are mandatory. Meetings and conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People remain seated; In a rented or community hall: maximum of 250 people; In a public outdoor location: maximum of 500 people; Distancing and wearing of a mask or face covering must be respected according to the health guidelines in effect. Where the entrance fee is considered a contribution, please refer to the health guidelines applicable as part of in-person solicitation as listed in point 6.
8. Meetings with the returning officer or the director general of the English-language school board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Returning officer; Director general of an English-language school board; 	<p>The returning officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offers remote support to answer questions from persons intending to apply for authorization. <p>The director general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides remote support in terms of answering financing-related questions of the candidate;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elector who undertake to run as candidate; ▪ Authorized candidate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ asks candidates wishing to obtain contribution receipts to make an appointment in order to ensure that the documents are handed over in a safe manner that limits the potential for gatherings. <p>In-person meetings are still possible. In particular, a meeting between a candidate and the director general of the English-language school board will be required for the delivery of contribution receipts. A line of communication should therefore be opened between the returning officer granting authorization and the director general of the English-language school board.</p> <p>At an appointment, the director general of the English-language school board or the returning officer must comply with the health guidelines in force, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ post applicable health guidelines at the entrance to the meeting location; ▪ if possible, install a physical barrier (solid transparent partition) where distancing cannot be maintained, along with any appropriate floor signage (direction of movement, compliance with the physical distancing rule); ▪ remind the person they interact with of the obligation to wear a face covering; ▪ provide the person in question with hand sanitizer; ▪ avoid handshakes; ▪ wear personal protective equipment (e.g., a procedure mask and, if a physical barrier has not been installed, eye protection), in accordance with the health guidelines in effect; ▪ disinfect any equipment used (e.g., a chair), both before and after the meeting, in accordance with the health guidelines in effect; ▪ avoid sharing any objects with the person concerned (e.g., a pencil); ▪ disinfect hands before and after handling any documents; ▪ regularly disinfect touched surfaces, such as tables, counters and door handles, in accordance with the health guidelines in effect.