

Education Consultant: A Profession to Be Valued

Summary

The Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels de l'éducation du Québec (FPPE-CSQ) represents more than 1,675 education consultants (ECs), almost all the ECs in the school network. Following a tour during which we met with close to 150 active education consultants from various sectors and several regions in Quebec, here are the FPPE's findings and recommendations. The objective of this process is to improve recognition and appreciation for this profession.

Discussions with the ECs regarding role, practices and organizational factors showed three main requirements: the need to better define their role, to develop a distinctive identity for the profession and to improve relationships with the teaching staff. While the EC's work has become increasingly complex in view of changes within the school environment, even official documents, such as the Classification Plan, contain a list of tasks rather than a description of the EC's role. The education consultant's role is poorly defined, and therefore misunderstood. This situation prevents the education consultants from developing a distinct professional identity. ECs are disappointed by the fact that their work is not fully valued in terms of collaboration, networking and time dedicated to research. Also, the lack of clear benchmarks and mentoring makes it difficult for a teacher to become an EC. Despite the fact that ECs and teachers have the same basic training, there are visible tensions between the two groups. Moreover, this conflict situation was the basis for this work. Two main tense situations were identified in the discussions: the issue of voluntary training and evaluation requests by school administration.

In the face of these issues and problems, the FPPE's report proposes several possible solutions. First of all, the ECs' Classification Plan must be reviewed. The importance of the EC's advisory role and the relationship of trust with teachers must be recognized in the definition of their role. To improve the profession's credibility, to facilitate the transition from teacher to education consultant and to develop the EC's professional identity, the FPPE is asking for conditions that will facilitate specific training for education consultants. With regard to relationships between ECs and teachers, the FPPE would like to see a clearer division between education and administration. The process for analyzing training requirements for teachers also needs improvement. Because personnel evaluation falls under the responsibility of the administration, it must be clearly understood that EC interventions should never be used to evaluate teachers.

All of the evaluations are presented at the end of the report.