



FÉDÉRATION DU PERSONNEL
PROFESSIONNEL DE L'ÉDUCATION
DU QUÉBEC (CSQ)

CHANGER LE MONDE UN ÉLÈVE À LA FOIS



Administrative Services Professionals: Protecting Expertise in the School System

SURVEY REPORT

FPPE—CSQ, 2026

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Table of Contents

About the FPPE	3
Executive Summary and Recommendations.....	3
Introduction.....	4
1. The Role of Administrative Services Professionals in the School System	5
A Broad Range of Expertise	5
Working in the School System: A Major Challenge	7
Strategic Roles	8
Three Core Areas of Expertise	9
Material Resources: Ensuring Safe, High-Quality School Buildings.....	9
Demanding Work Under Unattractive Working Conditions	11
2. The Impact of the Hiring Freeze	13
Disruptions and Service Reductions.....	13
Increased Workload	15
Unassigned Tasks.....	15
Additional Tasks	17
3. Psychosocial Risks (PSRs) and Recruitment and Retention Challenges	20
The Mental Health of Professional Staff	20
Employment Precarity and Job Insecurity	22
Failure to Replace Staff During Absences	23
Recruitment and Retention of Professional Staff.....	23
Conclusion	27
Appendix 1. Profile of Respondents to the 2025 FPPE—CSQ Survey	28
Profile of Survey Respondents.....	28

About the FPPE

The Fédération du personnel professionnel de l'éducation du Québec (FPPE) represents more than 12,500 members working in 69 of Québec's 72 French-language school service centres, English-language school boards, and special-status school boards. The FPPE is affiliated with the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ).

The FPPE-CSQ represents professionals in 37 occupational groups who provide direct student services, educational services, and administrative services.

Its mission is to advance the professional, social, and economic interests of education professionals in Québec. It advocates for the fundamental rights enshrined in the Canadian and Québec Charters, including freedom of association, the right to free collective bargaining, and the freedom to engage in union activities. The FPPE-CSQ also works to protect and promote public education services in order to support student success, foster student engagement, and enhance children's well-being at school.

Executive Summary and Recommendations

The school system benefits from the expertise of more than 2,000 administrative services professionals, who work primarily in finance, communications and information technology, and material resources.

These professionals possess highly sought-after expertise and play strategic roles within their school organizations.

Because the public school system does not offer sufficiently competitive salaries, it has struggled for years to attract and retain these highly skilled and indispensable professionals. In addition, they receive too little recognition for their essential contribution to the quality of the school system and to student success.

Against this backdrop, the hiring freeze imposed since the fall of 2024 has further weakened the school system. This is clearly demonstrated by the findings of a survey conducted by the CSQ and its federations.

The FPPE-CSQ recommends:

1

-Ending the hiring freeze affecting administrative staff in the school system, particularly administrative services professionals.

2

-Publicly recognizing the contribution of administrative services professionals to student success.

Introduction

Since November 2024, the heads of all public sector organizations have been required to comply with a government directive imposing a hiring freeze. Within the school system, however, only administrative services have been affected. The government's objective is to eliminate 2,000 positions as part of its effort to reduce the size of government, on the basis that the targeted administrative positions do not "provide services to the public" ([Le Devoir, 2025](#)).¹

The CSQ and its federations maintain that the hiring freeze contravenes the Labour Code and renders certain provisions of the collective agreements ineffective. As a result, the CSQ filed an interference complaint with the Administrative Labour Tribunal (ALT). Although the Tribunal dismissed the complaint as time-barred, the FPPE-CSQ is currently seeking judicial review of that decision.

To better understand the full impact of **the hiring freeze, the FPPE and the CSQ surveyed their members. The findings show that, in the view of administrative services professionals, the hiring freeze is disrupting the school system, undermining safety and the efficiency of management and operations, and affecting services provided to students.**

The hiring freeze has also been accompanied by tighter controls on overtime, placing additional pressure on staff and making it even more difficult to achieve their objectives and deliver high-quality education services.

The survey findings further demonstrate that **administrative services professionals play a strategic role within the school system and possess expertise that is difficult to replace.** At a time when workloads are increasing, many professionals are concerned about their health and are considering leaving the school system. It is therefore more important than ever to recognize the critical role they play and the expertise they bring.

In short, the FPPE-CSQ is calling for an end to the hiring freeze affecting education professionals in administrative services, as it does not constitute an effective public policy measure. Given the very small number of professionals employed by school organizations, the freeze generates only limited savings while depriving the school system of valuable expertise. Contrary to the government's expectations, students are the first to pay the price.

¹ **Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations have been translated from the original French.

1. The Role of Administrative Services Professionals in the School System

There are 15 professional occupational groups associated with administrative services in Québec’s public school system: Development Officer, Financial Management Officer, Analyst, Specialized IT Analyst, Architect, Administrative Officer, Lawyer, Food Services Consultant, Communications Consultant, Material Resources Consultant, Dietician/Nutritionist, Engineer, Notary, Translator, and Certified Translator.

Administrative services professionals are relatively few in number within the school system. According to ministry data, in 2023–2024 there were 2,436 employees, representing only 1,496.42 full-time equivalents (FTEs), spread across 15 occupational groups in Québec’s 72 school organizations ([MEQ, 2025](#)).

These positions require, at a minimum, a completed university degree. Although their areas of expertise vary considerably, all professionals are responsible for carrying out the objectives, policies, and programs established by school organizations, as set out in the [Classification Plans](#) of the employer bargaining committees.

A Broad Range of Expertise

The following table provides a brief description of the various professional occupational groups and the number of employees in each group in 2023–24, based on data from Québec’s Ministry of Education ([MEQ](#)). It shows that while the school system benefits from a broad range of expertise, it relies on a very limited number of professionals.

Tableau 1 : Présentation des corps d’emplois professionnels

Table 1. Overview of Professional Occupational Groups

Occupational Group	Main Responsibilities	2023–24 Resources
Development Officer	Conducts research, analysis, and development activities related to specific areas of practice, such as identifying businesses’ training needs or supporting organizational development. Note: Development officers may also work in student services (e.g., violence prevention and substance use prevention).	• 788 employees • 442.39 FTEs
Financial Management Officer	Participates in and carries out financial management activities, provides support to management staff, and supervises and	• 75 employees • 45.25 FTEs

	coordinates teams in the area of financial management.	
Analyst	Analyzes, develops, coordinates, and monitors systems, methods, processes, and programs related, among other things, to administrative organization and operations.	• 852 employees • 580.25 FTEs
Specialized IT Analyst	Coordinates projects and oversees activities related to the analysis, implementation, enhancement, deployment, and operational support of information resources.	Data considered unreliable ² • 17 employees • 1.12 FTEs
Architect	Plans, analyzes, evaluates, designs, provides professional advice on, researches, and oversees architectural work related to school buildings, grounds, and facilities. Requirement: Member of the <i>Ordre des architectes du Québec</i> .	• 58 employees • 43.11 FTEs
Administrative Officer	Participates in the development, implementation, and updating of administrative policies, procedures, and processes, and supervises and coordinates the work of support staff within the assigned area of responsibility.	• 175 employees • 101.21 FTEs
Lawyer	Performs duties in accordance with those prescribed by <i>the Act respecting the Barreau du Québec</i> . Requirement: Member of the <i>Barreau du Québec</i> .	• 31 employees • 18.99 FTEs
Food Services Consultant	Plans, develops, and delivers initiatives related to the school organization's food policy, and provides expert advice on food and nutrition in the school setting.	• 1 employee • 0.38 FTE
Communications Consultant	Participates in the development and implementation of communication policies, strategies, and plans.	• 155 employees • 98.76 FTEs
Material Resources Consultant	Manages projects related to construction, building preservation, and space planning. Conducts analysis, planning, design, evaluation, development, implementation, monitoring, advisory, and research activities	Data considered unreliable ³ • 56 employees • 3.76 FTEs

² The Specialized IT Analyst occupational group was added to the February 8, 2024, edition of the Professional Staff Classification Plan after the 2023-28 National Agreement came into effect on April 1, 2023.

³ The Material Resources Consultant occupational group was added to the February 8, 2024, edition of the Professional Staff Classification Plan after the 2023-28 National Agreement came into effect on April 1, 2023.

	related to the organization's real property and movable assets.	
Dietician/Nutritionist	Plans, develops, and delivers initiatives related to food policy, school nutrition programs, and nutrition education. Requirement: Member of the <i>Ordre professionnel des diététistes du Québec</i> .	• 11 employees • 7.20 FTEs
Engineer	Analyzes, plans, designs, advises on, develops, implements, and oversees engineering work related to school grounds, buildings, and facilities. Requirement: Member of the <i>Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec</i> .	• 206 employees • 147.17 FTEs
Notary	Performs duties in accordance with those prescribed by the <i>Notaries Act</i> . Requirement: Member of the <i>Chambre des notaires du Québec</i> .	• 3 employees • 1.11 FTEs
Translator and Certified Translator	Translates and edits texts and other documents, and develops and updates documentation related to translation activities. Requirement (Certified Translator): Must be a member of the <i>Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec</i> .	• 8 employees • 5.72 FTEs
TOTAL		• 2,436 employees • 1,496.42 FTEs

Working in the School System: A Major Challenge

The public school system is driven by a strong social mission: to educate, qualify, and socialize tomorrow's citizens. Unlike the private sector, public school organizations have a responsibility to serve the entire population, meaning that their services must be accessible to all Quebec residents, from preschool to vocational training and adult general education.

The challenges are considerable. The school system must improve graduation rates while supporting students with special needs, integrating students from immigrant backgrounds, preventing violence and bullying, ensuring that school facilities are safe and functional, adapting to digital transformation, and responding to economic and labour market uncertainty, among many other priorities.

To fulfill their mission, school organizations do not receive funding that evolves in line with students' needs or the services they are required to provide under the Education Act ([Protecteur du citoyen, 2022](#)). Instead, they must carry out their responsibilities within limited funding allocations determined by government policy. They must also allocate those funds to individual schools, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity⁴.

In addition to being insufficient, funding envelopes lack predictability and stability, a situation that has been denounced by the key stakeholders in the public school system ([La Presse, 2026](#)).

Finally, school service centres and school boards have evolved into modern, complex organizations. They operate under governance structures that include boards of directors, multiple organizational levels, hundreds of employees, distinct areas of activity, and an expanding range of services. Their work is also guided by numerous action plans (such as commitment-to-success plans, educational projects, anti-bullying and anti-violence plans, intervention plans, and digital plans) as well as a wide range of accountability requirements.

In short, the effective operation of the public school system depends on a broad range of expertise. All school staff, including administrative services professionals, contribute directly to student success.

Strategic Roles

Professionals in administrative services possess professional qualifications and expertise that are in high demand in today's labour market, and many belong to professional orders. They are qualified to hold strategic positions, conduct complex analyses, and work with sensitive information.

Meeting the standards governing building safety, information security, and accounting requires specialized expertise, sound professional judgment, and the ability to respond quickly, strategically, and effectively. **To manage these responsibilities according to professional standards, maintaining in-house professional expertise is essential.**

The strategic nature of the work performed by administrative services professionals is also recognized by their employers, including the Association québécoise des cadres scolaires (AQCS):



"The knowledge and expertise of professionals are essential. They help prevent costly mistakes while accelerating projects and ensuring their quality. (...)" ([AQCS, 2023, p. 8](#))

⁴Principle under which powers and responsibilities are delegated to the appropriate level of authority, ensuring that decision-making is distributed appropriately and brought as close as possible to the citizens and communities concerned ([OQLF, 2008](#)).

"Across all school service centres and school boards, the loss of expertise resulting from growing labour shortages, combined with an increasing number of departures, is weakening these organizations." ([AQCS, 2023, p. 3](#))



Administrative services professionals also play a key advisory and support role for school administrators, including principals and vice-principals.

Positions responsible for managing the school system are also facing significant recruitment and retention challenges ([FODE, 2025](#), [AQCS, 2023](#)). Against this backdrop of intense competition for talent ([Journal de Montréal, 2025](#)), access to the guidance and established expertise of experienced professionals is indispensable.

For example, although principals hold a teaching licence and have completed—or are completing—training in school administration, they are not equipped to manage a cyberattack or oversee a major school renovation project on their own. By drawing on the expertise and specialized knowledge of education professionals, school organizations strengthen the quality, integrity, and compliance of their operations.

Three Core Areas of Expertise

Administrative services professionals are indispensable in three key strategic areas of expertise within the school system: material resources; communications and information technology; and administration and financial management.

The increasingly complex environment in which today's schools operate requires strong and valued in-house professional expertise.

Material Resources: Ensuring Safe, High-Quality School Buildings

- More than 50% of public schools are in poor condition ([La Presse, 2026](#));
- Managing lead in drinking water and indoor air quality are among the Fédération des centres de services scolaires du Québec's ([FCSSQ](#)) strategic issues;
- Most school buildings in Québec are nearing the end of their architectural life cycle. Renovation and construction projects must take into account the needs of today's students to provide functional, high-quality learning environments that support student success ([Schola—School Architecture Expertise Platform](#)).

Communications and Information Technology: Ensuring Public Trust, Transparency, and Communication

- The [Government of Québec](#) has embraced the open data movement to promote transparency, public accountability, and the use of technology and innovation. School organizations are expected to do the same by developing the expertise needed to support these initiatives;
- The communications and technology needs of school organizations are evolving rapidly. According to the Association québécoise des cadres scolaires (AQCS), organizations now require software developers, architects, project managers, and cybersecurity specialists in the field of information technology (IT). A similar trend can be observed in communications, where there is a growing demand for digital strategy analysts, public affairs and citizen relations specialists, community managers, and graphic and multimedia communications consultants, among other roles. ([AQCS, 2023](#), p. 9)

Administration and Financial Management: Ensuring the Efficient Stewardship of Public Resources

- The size of education budgets, the complexity of regulatory and accountability requirements, and rapidly rising costs in areas such as material resources and procurement all require a high level of professional expertise to ensure sound financial oversight and exemplary stewardship of public funds.
 - The 2026–27 education budget totals \$164.7 million to support student success, meet urgent and temporary school space needs, and strengthen workforce attraction across the education sector.
 - The 2026–36 Québec Infrastructure Plan provides for \$23.5 billion in investments in the education sector ([Ministry of Finance, 2026](#)).
- To prevent budgetary mismanagement, as well as the risks of collusion and corruption in public projects, developing and maintaining in-house professional expertise remains one of the key recommendations put forward by experts, as highlighted in the Charbonneau Commission ([2015](#)) and Gallant Commission ([2026](#)) reports.

Figure 1. Strategic Role of Administrative Services Professionals in the School System



Demanding Work Under Unattractive Working Conditions

The expertise of administrative services professionals is highly sought after across a wide range of sectors, including the private, public, and parapublic sectors. For example, Québec's 2025 list of occupations in highest demand—and for which [international recruitment is still underway](#)—includes information technology professionals and engineers, among others ([Québec, emplois d'avenir](#)).

The public school system, however, offers salaries that are not competitive. In 2025-26, salaries ranged from \$52,707 to \$102,894, depending on the occupational group and salary step (FPPE, 2023).

School administrators themselves recognize this challenge:

“The shortage of professionals in the education sector is attributable to both limited financial resources and to the scarcity of available professionals, who have no shortage of employment opportunities.” (...)



“More generally, we recognize that recruitment is difficult, particularly because more competitive salary scales are offered by the private sector, universities, and municipalities. We have also observed that, for certain occupations, salary scales for education professionals lag behind those in the public service. The expansion of remote work, particularly in the IT sector, has further intensified recruitment challenges by broadening employment opportunities.” (AQCS, 2023, p. 8)

Among its proposed solutions, the AQCS recommended:

“Reviewing the salary scales for education professionals (architects, engineers, financial management officers, and lawyers) to align them with those of the public service and the average salaries offered in the private sector” (AQCS, 2023, p. 10)



In short, administrative services professionals play a strategic role within the public school system. **They work in strategic areas—particularly construction and digital transformation—where cost overruns can have significant consequences.** To successfully deliver major initiatives, the public school system must maintain strong in-house expertise and remain the lead authority for its large-scale projects.

With diverse, highly sought-after expertise, administrative services professionals are indispensable in supporting and advising school leaders and administrators. They play a key role in ensuring student safety, the efficient stewardship of public resources, and strong relationships built on trust and communication with families.

The work of administrative services professionals is essential to the effective operation of the school system: **administrative services are, ultimately, student services.**

2. The Impact of the Hiring Freeze

The impact of the hiring freeze is examined in light of the findings of a survey conducted by the CSQ and the FPPE. A total of 306 professionals from 12 of the 15 administrative services occupational groups and 43 school organizations (60%) participated in the survey (see Appendix 1 for respondents' profile).

Disruptions and Service Reductions

Administrative services professionals were asked about the impact of the hiring freeze on the school system. **71.9% of respondents reported that the hiring freeze has reduced the availability of administrative support**, making it by far the most significant impact identified in the survey.

According to 35.5% of respondents, the level of information technology support available to school organizations has also declined. In addition, 35.1% reported that the hiring freeze has affected maintenance and renovation work in schools, while 19.4% observed a decline in the cleanliness of school buildings.

Although the hiring freeze was presented as an efficiency measure that would have no impact on students, a significant proportion of respondents reported a decline in the quality of services provided to students (43.4%) and to students with special needs (31.0%).



"The government often portrays administrative services as unnecessary expenses. In a school service centre, however, everything is interconnected. Schools are at the heart of the system, but they depend on strong teams around them to provide the support they need. When administrative services are weakened, the needs of frontline staff go unmet, and that imbalance inevitably affects students."

"The hiring freeze affecting administrative staff creates a real risk of resource shortages, forcing the school system to operate in reactive mode rather than focusing on prevention. This has a significant impact on the quality of services provided to students and, it bears repeating, has costly and irreversible consequences for the support available to the employees who deliver these essential services."



Survey respondents also reported that the hiring freeze has had negative effects across a wide range of activities and priorities, including procurement, the replacement of equipment and software, sustainable development initiatives, communications support, project delays, prevention efforts, employee support, professional development, and processing times for administrative files.

Some respondents also pointed to the hiring freeze's impact on cybersecurity:



"I believe an IT analyst should be an internal employee because we work with confidential information, including personnel files, banking information, and students' addresses. Granting access to external contractors creates serious cybersecurity and data protection risks."

"The migration of our servers to the cloud and the security standards required by the Ministère de la Cybersécurité et du Numérique (MCN) have all been postponed because of resource shortages."



"To support my colleagues in schools, I had to slow down the rollout of our SharePoint portals despite the December 31, 2025, implementation deadline established by the MEQ."

Professional staff also reported that the hiring freeze is having both immediate and long-term consequences for the condition of school facilities:



"Within the Material Resources Department, all construction, expansion, and renovation projects have been put on hold."

"As a small material resources team, every employee is essential. (...) At the moment, we can only respond to emergencies, and even that is becoming difficult. The administrative hiring freeze has reduced our team from six positions to three."



"We are also facing challenges accessing school buildings. In the past, we could carry out site visits before students arrived because custodians were available. Since they can no longer work overtime, we are now required to conduct those visits while students are in the building."

"The quality and timeliness of professional assessments related to preventive building maintenance have been affected. We can no longer rely on external professionals to conduct lead-in-water analyses and certain inspections of asbestos-containing materials. As a result, we have to find internal resources to carry out this work, which slows down our normal pace and forces us to put other projects on hold."



Finally, professionals working in Business Services also raised concerns:



"In Business Services, our students also include workers enrolled in continuing education and AEP programs. The hiring freeze is directly affecting our ability to meet our clients' needs and is jeopardizing workforce skills development and business productivity at a time when the economic climate is already challenging."

"The development of short-term training programs, such as vocational training certificates and workplace continuing education programs, has been affected. As a result, the school service centre is losing a significant source of self-generated revenue."



Increased Workload

Most respondents (66.1%) reported an increase in their workload since the hiring freeze and the introduction of new overtime control measures.

The impacts are significant:

- 62.0% are performing work that would normally be carried out by other colleagues;
- 56.6% have had to extend response times;
- 54.1% are providing additional support to colleagues with their workload;
- 36.8% are shortening or skipping their breaks;
- 36.8% are working overtime, outside their regular working hours, to compensate for vacancies or staffing shortages;
- 23.1% have had to cancel, suspend, or reduce the services they provide.



“The workload is overwhelming. I regularly have more than 100 unread emails at a time. I sometimes work unpaid overtime simply to keep my head above water.”

“Our school support team normally consists of three people: two financial management officers and one administrative technician. Since March 2025, the administrative technician has left the school service centre and has never been replaced. In addition, since June 2025, the other financial management officer has been on a one-year maternity leave and has not been replaced. I am now the only person supporting our schools. I provide guidance to school secretaries, childcare technicians, and principals on financial matters, budgeting, and related support. I have also been assigned additional schools.”



When the required staffing levels are not maintained, either essential activities are left undone or the remaining employees must absorb the additional workload. Both situations create numerous challenges.

Unassigned Tasks

When asked whether certain tasks were no longer being carried out because of the current service disruptions and reductions, 57.4% of the professionals surveyed answered “yes.” A further 27.7% indicated that they did not know or preferred not to answer, while fewer than 15% answered “no.”

The following table lists a number of tasks that have gone unassigned since the hiring freeze, as reported by survey respondents.

Table 2. Examples of Tasks No Longer Assigned Since the Hiring Freeze (2025 FPPE-CSQ Survey)

Sector or Type of Task	Examples of Tasks Identified (Non-Exhaustive)
Communications	Website updates, social media management, newsletters, communications with schools, administrative communications with suppliers, media relations support, document layout, document editing and proofreading, etc.
Support for Teaching Staff and School Teams	Registration and reimbursement for training, needs forecasting, IT support, ongoing guidance and follow-up, etc.
Human Resources Management and Administration	Processing delays and operational issues related to disability management, maternity leaves, retirements, voluntary staff movements, position management for the MEQ, priority and recall lists, internal controls, occupational health and safety (OHS) training, OHS prevention measures, delays in accounts receivable and collections follow-up, as well as analysis, reconciliation, and financial statement preparation, etc.
Material Resources Department	Suspension of construction, expansion, and renovation projects, challenges accessing school buildings, longer project timelines, etc.

Across all sectors and departments, survey respondents reported having less—or no—time for collaboration and consultation with colleagues across the school system.



"It is difficult to move projects forward when they require collaboration with other departments."

Finally, in the context of the hiring freeze and the failure to replace departing employees, the professionals surveyed reported that knowledge transfer is no longer taking place and that valuable professional expertise is being lost.

"There has been little, if any, transfer of files, and employees who left did not necessarily have the opportunity to prepare for their departure. As a result, we are left with incomplete files and no historical record. This creates considerable frustration and results in a significant loss of time."



"Expertise is being lost, knowledge transfer has broken down, and everything has become fragmented. We are constantly trying to determine who is responsible for what."

Additional Tasks



"No tasks have been eliminated. We have more work, fewer tools, less time, fewer solutions, and more constraints."

Many tasks that would normally be performed by support staff—whose positions have been eliminated or left vacant during absences—are now being carried out by professional staff. As a result, strategic initiatives and development projects are often put on hold.

For example, in the communications field, the absence of colleagues has required professionals to take on document editing and proofreading, social media monitoring, media monitoring, records management, invoice processing, and a variety of website and intranet updates. These technical-level tasks are time-consuming and reduce the time available for higher-value work.



"Additional administrative tasks, such as scanning documents, processing various requests, and handling related follow-up activities, now take up a significant portion of our time. As a result, we have less time to devote to more complex and strategic work, such as developing procedures, designing development tools, and implementing preventive measures."

For professional staff, this situation also generates a host of unforeseen responsibilities: more complaints, more errors, more questions, and more troubleshooting.

Many respondents reported that delays in processing files create additional work, requiring tasks to be repeated, redefined, or handled in a more complex manner. Clerical work continues to accumulate because there are not enough support staff to carry it out.

Professional staff must also respond to a constant stream of questions from both the administrative offices and schools. They are increasingly called upon to support or train colleagues who have been assigned responsibilities for which they have neither the training nor the qualifications.

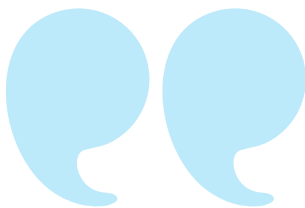
"We spend a great deal of time supporting colleagues with little or no experience, repeatedly explaining procedures, and reviewing everyone else's work to reduce the many errors in our files. All of this increases the workload of experienced and qualified employees, reduces productivity, creates stress in the workplace, and undermines employees' sense of effectiveness."





"I had to compile statistics for school administrators, even though an analyst used to handle that work. I also had to take on files related to admissions and certification that were previously handled by an education administration technician (TOS). I am neither qualified nor sufficiently familiar with those areas to respond to requests appropriately and promptly. We have lost a great deal of expertise because of the staffing cuts. I am now being asked to perform duties that belong to another occupational group (CP) because those employees are also overwhelmed and can no longer keep up with their own workload. I even had to take out the garbage throughout the entire building because there were not enough custodians and fruit flies were beginning to appear."

Respondents also reported that their usual processes and communication practices are no longer functioning effectively because too many employees are absent.



"Since the hiring freeze was introduced, our team has had to adapt both its role and its pace of operations. (...) The effects are felt every day. The teams we support are short-staffed, which limits their ability to collaborate on improvement and transformation projects. At the same time, several members of my team have had to step away from their primary responsibilities to provide operational support to other teams within our department because Human Resources is operating with approximately 12 fewer employees as a result of departures that have not been replaced (resignations, illness, and maternity leave)."

Many professionals feel caught in the middle. They are expected to compensate not only for shortages among support staff, but also for the limited availability—or, in some cases, the absence—of managers and school leaders.

"As the only analyst, I no longer have a manager and am expected to perform managerial duties without any increase in pay."



"An office clerk left last summer and has not been replaced. She handled specialized tasks and left behind incomplete procedures. We now have to understand her work, develop the missing procedures, and train another office clerk who has taken on those additional responsibilities, even though we are not experts ourselves."

Education professionals are expected to optimize processes, innovate, and continually find solutions. Survey respondents emphasized the intense pressure they face.



"We feel less effective because we have to do everything quickly, sometimes without the opportunity to review our work. We also have to correct mistakes that end up affecting our own work. We are forced to set some tasks aside while continuing to support schools, and balancing those competing demands is extremely difficult."

At the same time, new responsibilities continue to be imposed on the school system. New legislation, regulations and requirements are increasing the demands placed on professionals, leaving many feeling stretched to their limits.



"Our organization is constantly evolving. Additional responsibilities—such as change management, the transition to digital administration, accountability requirements, and others—must all be absorbed by our existing staff because we are unable to increase the number of employees in our department."

For example, respondents referred to the new accountability requirements introduced in 2025 in connection with the implementation of staffing caps. These measures require close monitoring of full-time equivalents (FTEs) and the establishment of new reporting and tracking procedures.

Ironically, professionals reported that these optimization measures have themselves generated additional administrative tasks.



"The hiring freeze is not the solution—it is driving away high-quality employees. There are ways to make administrative work more efficient and to strategically reorganize administrative operations while retaining skilled employees."

3. Psychosocial Risks (PSRs) and Recruitment and Retention Challenges

In 2025, the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ) published alarming findings on the mental health of school staff. Drawing on responses from more than 21,800 teachers, professionals, support staff, and school leaders, this large-scale study highlights the extent of the problem: **more than half of all school staff experience high or very high levels of psychological distress, regardless of their occupational group** ([INSPQ](#), 2025).

The findings for professional staff indicate exposure to several psychosocial risks (PSRs) :

- 72.99% report an excessive workload;
- 47.21% report low levels of recognition at work;
- 32.46% experience difficulty balancing work and personal life;
- 31.96% report a low sense of meaning in their work;
- 29.15% report low levels of support from their immediate supervisor; and
- 24.62% report limited decision-making authority ([INSPQ](#), 2025).

According to research conducted by Carol-Anne Gauthier, the key psychosocial risks affecting professional staff include excessive workload, a lack of recognition (stemming from limited understanding of their roles and expertise, insufficient collaboration, and inadequate financial recognition), as well as limited support from colleagues and supervisors ([Gauthier et al.](#), 2026).

The Mental Health of Professional Staff

The findings of the survey on the impact of the hiring freeze on administrative services professionals are consistent with those reported by the INSPQ.



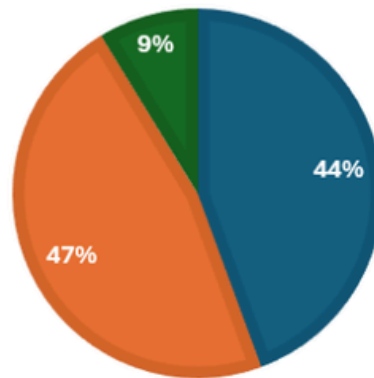
"The CNESST encourages employers to promote the prevention of psychosocial risks, and rightly so. However, in a context of budget cuts and a hiring freeze, how can we effectively address the concerns of employees who report excessive workloads?"

The hiring freeze has affected the mental health of nearly half of all respondents (44%).

Figure 1. Impact of the Hiring Freeze on Staff Mental Health

**HAS THE HIRING FREEZE AFFECTING
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES PROFESSIONALS HAD
AN IMPACT ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?**

■ Yes ■ No ■ I prefer not to answer



Respondents who answered "yes" were asked to specify how the hiring freeze has affected their mental health:

- 90.2% reported increased stress;
- 65.2% reported lower motivation;
- 54.5% reported a deterioration in the workplace climate; and
- 41.7% reported a decline in recognition for their work.

Respondents also identified a wide range of other impacts, including feelings of insecurity, depression, mental overload, constant pressure, difficulty disconnecting at the end of the workday, the feeling of being in a constant state of adaptation, fatigue, exhaustion, dissatisfaction, tension among colleagues, frustration, and fear—of losing their job, of having to take on the work of colleagues who lose theirs, or of not being able to meet expectations.



"Collective fatigue, workplace tensions, employees comparing their workloads with those of their colleagues, and concern about upcoming absences."

"More work, less time. We have to cut corners, prioritize tasks, and extend response times. It creates stress and a constant weight on my shoulders. I sometimes work later than I should, skip my breaks, and think about work in the evenings and at night. I get migraines, and it affects my personal quality of life."



Nearly 23% of respondents also indicated that they feared having to take leave from work because of exhaustion caused by the hiring freeze.

More than half (52.7%) of the administrative services professionals who responded to the survey also reported feeling unable to perform their work to the best of their ability.

This is a significant issue for professional staff because of the importance they place on their work. Professional identity and work occupy a central place in their lives: nearly 80% of professionals consider work to be one of the two most important spheres of their lives (Mercure et al. [2012](#), [2020](#)).



"Personally, I would rather skip my breaks and respond to emails outside my working hours than compromise the quality of my work."

"I constantly feel like I'm not doing my job properly because it's impossible to do it the way it should be done. I don't take time off because I know the workload waiting for me when I return will be even worse."



"I'm torn between wanting to support my manager, my colleagues, and my organization, and not wanting to keep taking on more and more work."

Employment Precarity and Job Insecurity

Although the survey did not include any questions specifically about employment precarity or fear of job loss, many respondents indicated that the hiring freeze has increased their stress and anxiety about their job security.

Employees in precarious positions know that their jobs are vulnerable. Regardless of their expertise, performance, or their employer's level of satisfaction with their work, budget constraints may ultimately bring their careers in the school system to an end.



"Because my position is supernumerary, I have serious concerns about my job security over the coming months and years. It has also affected my career prospects within the school system, even though I have developed valuable expertise in my role."

"Although some managers recognize the essential role of an organizational development team in a context like ours, others view our team as non-essential. This creates significant job insecurity and adds even more stress to our work."





"Knowing that I may not be able to continue in my position is forcing me to look for work elsewhere. It has significantly affected my motivation at work and created financial insecurity."

"A decision needs to be made. Either positions are eliminated or they're maintained. Living with this constant uncertainty is unbearable, and you can feel how stressed people are about losing their jobs."



Failure to Replace Staff During Absences

A large majority of survey respondents (73.4%) are concerned that it would be difficult—or even impossible—to be replaced during an absence because of the hiring freeze. Many reported that employees taking maternity leave, sick leave, or retirement are simply not being replaced. These situations can also create tension among colleagues.



"The atmosphere is tense. For example, someone who is waiting for surgery is anxious because they fear returning to a month's worth of accumulated work. At the same time, their colleagues are stressed about having to take on additional responsibilities during that absence, often without adequate training."

"Employees are exhausted and eventually have no choice but to take sick leave. Their FTEs are still counted, which places additional pressure on the remaining staff and affects the workplace climate for both employees and students."



The hiring freeze can also place additional pressure on employees' personal life plans because parental leaves and retirements are not being replaced.



"I am currently pregnant, and my colleagues and I are planning for my departure. I'm very concerned that my responsibilities will simply be added to my colleagues' workloads because it will be impossible to replace me. If our administrative technician is still on sick leave by then, it will place an even greater burden on those who remain. We risk losing even more employees as a result."

Recruitment and Retention of Professional Staff

One of the survey questions examined whether the hiring freeze had influenced administrative services professionals' intentions to leave their jobs. Although nearly half of respondents (46.1%) answered "no," many indicated that the hiring freeze is nevertheless affecting employee retention.

Figure 2. Impact of the Hiring Freeze on Staff Retention



This question prompted more than 50 comments from administrative services professionals who responded to the survey.



"The hiring freeze will lead to a loss of expertise within organizations and, ultimately, to greater reliance on external contractors who have little understanding of the issues that must be considered in our school buildings. The result will be poorly planned and poorly executed projects that cost more while delivering less satisfactory outcomes for users. The problems created by increased outsourcing will also discourage the employees who remain, increasing the likelihood that they, too, will leave. It is a vicious cycle that only continues to make the situation worse."

Many respondents expressed frustration with the government's decision to impose a hiring freeze not only in the school system, but across all ministries and public bodies.

This difficult environment is gradually eroding employees' sense of belonging to the public school system.



"The government has no idea of the toll this is taking on people across the school system. Employees are burning out because their colleagues are dropping like flies, and those who remain have to hold everything together... until they burn out too."

"The ministry needs to get out of the way and let the school board do what's needed. Tensions are high and everyone can feel it."



"We're trying to be creative in our efforts to retain staff, especially highly qualified employees, but government decisions keep creating obstacles."

The CSSDM Situation

In 2018, the FPPE published a [report on material resources](#) that highlighted recruitment and retention challenges specific to the Commission scolaire de Montréal (now the Centre de services scolaire de Montréal [CSSDM]). Between 2013 and 2018, 21 professionals left the Material Resources Department. At the time, 66% of the organization's engineers held supernumerary positions. Maintaining employees in precarious employment had a significant negative impact on staff retention ([FPPE, 2018](#)).

In November 2025, 42 CSSDM professionals responded to the survey, including analysts, material resources consultants, engineers, development officers, specialized IT analysts, and communications consultants.

Nearly half of the respondents had five years of experience or less, suggesting that retaining administrative services professionals continues to be a significant challenge at the CSSDM.

In addition, 54.5% of CSSDM professionals reported that the hiring freeze has affected their mental health—a concerning result that is higher than the average across all school organizations.

Nearly all respondents (94%) also indicated that they were concerned about the hiring freeze's impact on recruitment and retention at the CSSDM.

Given the scale of the financial, human, and material resources involved, the situation at the CSSDM warrants particular attention.

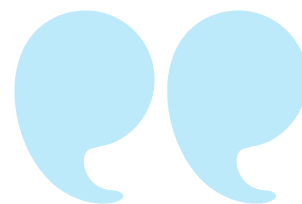
More broadly, it is worth noting that 69% of all survey respondents had fewer than five years of experience (Appendix 1). This finding once again underscores the magnitude of the challenge of retaining professionals whose expertise is highly sought after, while also highlighting the responsibilities and pressure placed on those who remain.



"The work of employees whose positions were eliminated has been redistributed among those of us who remain. We are no longer allowed to work overtime, so being expected to do more with less simply isn't realistic. Yet that's exactly what's being asked of us. In practice, it doesn't feel like we have the option of saying no. As for me, I'm in a temporary replacement position that cannot be extended once the employee returns, even though my responsibilities clearly justify keeping me on."

Because there are relatively few administrative services professionals in the public school system, the hiring freeze, the failure to replace departing employees, and the refusal to authorize paid overtime generate only limited savings. In the long term, however, the hiring freeze will come at a significant long-term cost as a result of the loss of expertise, increased reliance on outsourcing, and employee departures—whether due to disability leave or to accepting positions elsewhere.

"Administrative services are already centralized and therefore already benefit from economies of scale. In addition, these salaries represent only a very small proportion of the school service centre's overall payroll. From my perspective, it is absurd to try to generate savings by targeting the estimated 2% to 3% of payroll represented by administrative staff. It undermines employee motivation and retention. Ultimately, we all contribute to student services, and we all have an impact on student success."



Conclusion

The FPPE—CSQ recommends ending the hiring freeze affecting administrative services staff in the school system, particularly administrative services professionals.

This recommendation is based on the recruitment and, above all, retention challenges facing administrative services professionals in the school system.

In the short term and at first glance, the hiring freeze may appear to be an appropriate public policy measure for reducing government spending. In reality, however, it will have negative long-term consequences. In addition to generating only limited savings, the hiring freeze is resulting in a significant loss of expertise across the school system, particularly in critical areas such as material resources, information technology, and financial management.

The hiring freeze is disrupting the school system and undermining the safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of its management, operations, and service delivery. It is also exacerbating an already challenging work environment. According to the INSPQ, more than half of all school staff experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress in 2022 ([INSPQ, 2025](#)). Numerous survey responses from professionals show that the hiring freeze is harming employees' mental health by increasing stress, anxiety, fatigue, workload, and workplace tensions. Their message deserves to be heard.

The FPPE—CSQ also recommends promoting the work of administrative services professionals by publicly recognizing their contribution to student success.

To suggest that the work of administrative services professionals has no impact on student success is to diminish the value of their role, their expertise, and their indispensable contribution.

As the implementation of the MEQ's [Strategy to Promote the Value of School Staff: Talented Teams Supporting Our Students](#) (2022-26) draws to a close, it is clear that retaining professional staff has never been more challenging.

The objectives of this ministerial strategy remain critically important: to improve job satisfaction among school staff, strengthen their professional engagement, and recognize their contribution to student success (MEQ, 2022). The FPPE—CSQ's goal is to work in partnership with the Ministry to help achieve these objectives.

Appendix 1. Profile of Respondents to the 2025 FPPE—CSQ Survey

The FPPE—CSQ survey received a total of 306 responses from administrative services professionals.

The survey was available online through the LimeSurvey platform from October 20 to November 24, 2025. The FPPE—CSQ distributed the survey link to its 18 affiliated unions (representing 69 of Québec's 72 school organizations), which then invited their members to complete the survey voluntarily. The results were reviewed to remove incomplete and inconsistent responses. A probability sample of the same size would have a margin of error of ± 5.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Profile of Survey Respondents

Administrative services professionals from 43 school organizations (60%) participated in the survey.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by School Organization			
	School Organization	(n)	(%)
1	English-Montréal School Board	1	0.3%
2	Kativik School Board	6	2.0%
3	New Frontiers School Board	4	1.3%
4	Riverside School Board	12	3.9%
5	Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board	10	3.3%
6	Western Québec School Board	1	0.3%
7	Centre de services scolaire au Coeur-des-Vallées	6	2.0%
8	Centre de services scolaire de Kamouraska–Rivière-du-Loup	3	1.0%
9	Centre de services scolaire de la Baie-James	1	0.3%
10	Centre de services scolaire de la Beauce-Etchemin	4	1.3%
11	Centre de services scolaire de la Capitale	7	2.3%
12	Centre de services scolaire de la Côte-du-Sud	3	1.0%
13	Centre de services scolaire De La Jonquière	2	0.7%
14	Centre de services scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île	2	0.7%
15	Centre de services scolaire de la Région-de-Sherbrooke	14	4.6%
16	Centre de services scolaire de la Rivéraine	3	1.0%
17	Centre de services scolaire de la Rivière-du-Nord	49	16.0%
18	Centre de services scolaire de l'Énergie	8	2.6%
19	Centre de services scolaire de l'Or-et-des-Bois	2	0.7%
20	Centre de services scolaire de Montréal	42	13.7%
21	Centre de services scolaire de Portneuf	2	0.7%
22	Centre de services scolaire de Saint-Hyacinthe	7	2.3%
23	Centre de services scolaire des Appalaches	3	1.0%

24	Centre de services scolaire des Bois-Francis	2	0.7%
25	Centre de services scolaire des Chênes	5	1.6%
26	Centre de services scolaire des Chic-Chocs	5	1.6%
27	Centre de services scolaire des Draveurs	3	1.0%
28	Centre de services scolaire des Hautes-Laurentides	6	2.0%
29	Centre de services scolaire des Hauts-Bois-de-l'Outaouais	2	0.7%
30	Centre de services scolaire des Hauts-Cantons	9	2.9%
31	Centre de services scolaire des Îles	1	0.3%
32	Centre de services scolaire des Laurentides	3	1.0%
33	Centre de services scolaire des Navigateurs	8	2.6%
34	Centre de services scolaire des Portages-de-l'Outaouais	5	1.6%
35	Centre de services scolaire des Rives-du-Saguenay	7	2.3%
36	Centre de services scolaire des Samares	16	5.2%
37	Centre de services scolaire des Sommets	2	0.7%
38	Centre de services scolaire du Chemin-du-Roy	18	5.9%
39	Centre de services scolaire du Fleuve-et-des-Lacs	1	0.3%
40	Centre de services scolaire du Lac-Saint-Jean	6	2.0%
41	Centre de services scolaire du Pays-des-Bleuets	6	2.0%
42	Centre de services scolaire du Val-des-Cerfs	3	1.0%
43	Centre de services scolaire René-Lévesque	6	2.0%
	Total	306	100.0%

This report presents only the responses provided by professionals in occupational groups associated with administrative services.

Twelve of the 15 professional occupational groups in administrative services are represented in the survey. Analysts and development officers account for the largest share of respondents.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by Occupational Group			
	Occupational Group	(n)	(%)
1	Development Officer	72	23.5%
2	Financial Management Officer	11	3.6%
3	Analyst	100	32.7%
4	Specialized IT Analyst	26	8.5%
5	Architect	2	0.7%
6	Administrative Officer	41	13.4%
7	Lawyer	1	0.3%
8	Communications Consultant	33	10.8%
9	Material Resources Consultant	14	4.6%
10	Engineer	4	1.3%
11	Translator	1	0.3%
12	Certified Translator	1	0.3%
	Total	306	100.0%

Most respondents had five years or less of seniority: 10% had less than one year of service, while 59% had between one and five years of service (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Respondents' Years of Service

