

# MINUTES

Honoré Mercier Elementary School Governing Board

*Monday, March 23, 2026 @ 6:40PM | Meeting called to order by Verena Garofalo*

## In Attendance

Cynthia Canale - Principal	X	Verena Garofalo - Chair	X
Marco De Crescentis	X	Sally Behjoudi	R
Angela DiLella	X	Lino Faratro	X
Laurie Giangaspero	X	Giuseppe Fazzari	X
Veronica Graniero	X	Merika Ramundo	X
Elisa Infusini	X	Sonia Ranellucci	X
Andrew Martinez	X	Saffiran Ali (Alternate)	R
Nancy Omobono	X	Adriana Giannini (Alternate)	X
Mario Pietrangelo	R	Felicia Spadafino (H&S)	R
		Romina Mancini (H&S)	R

X = Present / R = Regrets / XP = Present Public

**Assign minute-taking duties:** Lino Faratro

**Assign time-keeper duties:** Andrew Martinez

## 1. Additions to Agenda

No additions to the agenda.

## 2. Approval of the Agenda

2.1 Motion to Approve: Veronica Graniero, seconded by Lino Fraratro

**Motion Passed – Unanimously**

## 3. Adoption of Minutes

3.1 Governing Board members to approve minutes from February 19, 2026, meeting. Motion to approve: Nancy Omobono, seconded by Veronica Graniero

**Motion Passed – Unanimously**

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#### 4. Business Arising

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- 4.1: Social media opportunity with Man Made (total \$7500 donation): Lino Faratro reported that Manmade is busy opening a store in Laval. A time will be scheduled after May for Mrs. Canale to discuss next steps for their donation.
- 4.2: Update on family that is donating to 4 schools: **No update on this item.**
- 4.3: Ongoing rumors that HM is closing – can an official communication be sent? There is a real concern in the community. Mrs. Canale will consult the regional director to see if a message can be sent to all HM parents. GB members motioned to write a letter to senior administration expressing concern and asking for communication support around making sure the public knows that HM is open. Merika Ramundo to draft the letter. Motion to approve: Sonia Ranalucci, seconded by Veronica Graniero.

**Motion Passed – Unanimously**

- Letter from HM GB was sent on April 7<sup>th</sup> to Mr. Katalifos and Ms. Nickoletopoulos regarding concerns about recent rumours circulating within our community.
- 4.4: Equipment during recess: possibility of a rotation system? Mrs. Canale and Mr. De Crescentis reported that more equipment would be acquired when we move into spring and they would work on a plan for the distribution and use of equipment during recess. They will report back at the next meeting.
- 4.5: Results of Lunch Provider Survey (Mini-Bistro) and discussion about next year's lunch provider – see Mrs. Canale's report. Motion to forego using Mini Bistro next year. Mr. De Crescentis to approach Le Doral. Motion to approve: Lino Fraratro, seconded by Andrew Martinez.

**Motion Passed – Unanimously**

- Received 23 responses from the survey. Results were not favorable in keeping Mini-Bistro as our lunch provider.
- 4.6: Budget Building Process – due April 10, 2026 – see Mrs. Canale's report. 5 priorities were discussed. Motion to approve: Lino Fraratro, seconded by Sonia Ranalucci.
  - Resource allocation
  - Fixing newly installed heater (very loud when on)
  - Fixing & refitting classroom windows
  - Student lockers need repair (painting, etc....)
  - Installing synthetic turf to replace wood chips in playground

**Motion Passed – Unanimously**

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## 5. Principals' Report

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### 5.1. Tell Them From Me Survey (Elementary School Survey 2025–2026)

Students in Grades 4, 5, and 6 participated in the Tell Them From Me survey.

As requested at our previous meeting, the results were presented visually during the session to allow Governing Board members to review and discuss the data collaboratively.

### 5.2. Lunch Provider Results Survey

The lunch provider survey was distributed to families on **Monday, March 9, 2026**.

As committed to at our last meeting, Survey results were shared.

### 5.3. Lockers Follow-Up

Still awaiting confirmation, as the project manager is currently on leave. Multiple GRDS requests have been submitted through our administrative system, and I have also sent several follow-up emails regarding this matter.

Updates will be provided as soon as further information becomes available.

### 5.4. Play-Based Learning Presentation (Pre-K to Grade 2)

At our previous meeting, I indicated that Flavie Dupont would be presenting to our Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2 classes. However, we have since learned that she is no longer offering school presentations.

Following discussion at our council meeting, **Sharon Scimeca**, Founder and Play-Based Learning Facilitator, was recommended. She has extensive experience working with schools, and additional information about her background will be shared.

Ms. Scimeca will support our younger students through a variety of play-based learning activities, including:

- Loose parts play
- Sensory play
- Construction play
- Dramatic play
- Numeracy and literacy games

These activities are designed to foster students' social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and language development through meaningful play experiences.

**Play equipment at recess and lunch:** GB members discussed concerns about the availability, condition, and management of recess / lunch play equipment. The school purchased new play equipment for different seasons, including sleds and snow toys, but faced challenges with breakage and limited quantities, leading to student dissatisfaction. Mrs. Canale and Mr. Marco noted the importance of respect, order, and care for equipment, noting that improper use and lack of discipline contributed to equipment damage and safety concerns.

Suggestions were made to implement rotation systems to ensure equitable access to equipment. The team clarified the roles of lunch monitors and behavioural technicians during recess / lunch and discussed the need for improved communication among supervising staff. Plans were made to reassess equipment needs for spring, considering budget limitations and the importance of maintaining a positive and safe recess environment. Principal Canale to discuss with Mr. Marco the possibility of implementing a rotation system for play equipment during recess to ensure fair access among students and report back to the governing board.

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## 8. Central Parents Committee Report

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- **Parent governance events and signups:** A parent governance primer session is scheduled. Description: Join members of the English Montreal School Board Parents' Committee and learn how your voice can make a difference. This practical workshop will help families understand how they can take part in important school decisions that affect students every day. Learn how parent involvement works at the school, school board, and provincial levels, and how these groups influence areas such as school fees, learning support programs, safety, and school culture. Workshop - Parent Governance 101: Making Your Voice Count at School Wednesday, April 15 from 7 to 8:30pm (virtual). RSVP: [Parent Governance 101 \(Wednesday, April 15 - ONLINE ONLY\) – Fill out form](#)
- **EMSB budget cuts – follow up regarding letter sent to chair of the Council of Commissioners:** The chair of EMSB Council of Commissioners responded to inquiry sent by the EMSB PC regarding budget cuts. The letter outlined provincial fiscal measures, specific monetary reductions and constraints on surplus access, and reiterated the board's opposition. Letter will be sent to all PC members. (see letter attached)
- **Council of Commissioners public question-period response:** Statement "EMSB PARENTS' COMMITTEE CONDEMNS MOVE TO RESTRICT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION" released in January (<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1519877310146476&set=a.239115361556017>). The EMSB PC chair sent a follow up letter to the chair of Council of Commissioners expressing concern regarding the exclusion of email question submissions to Council of Commissioners question periods. A response was received from the chair of the Council of Commissioners. The letter emphasized in-person question-period attendance while offering alternatives for input such as written comments and webcasts. The chair of the Council of Commissioners outlined that the public question-period change was an administrative procedural decision, not a bylaw change and they will monitor the impact of the in-person requirement and consider adjustments if exclusion patterns emerge. The letter will be sent to all PC members. EMSB PC executives will meet to discuss next steps. (see letter attached)

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**9. Treasurer's Report**

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- Nothing to report.

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**10. Commissioner's Report**

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- Nothing to report.

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**11. Home and School Report**

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- Approval required to send out ad space solicitations for the grade 6 yearbook. Card size: \$75 / quarter size \$100 / ½ page \$150. Motion to approve: Lino Fraratro, seconded by Sonia Ranalucci, **Motion Passed Unanimously.**

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**12. Email approvals**

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NA

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**13. New Business Overview**

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N/A

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**14. Varia**

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- Tuesday April 14, 2026, meeting will be chaired by Merika in Verena's absence
- Note regarding 2026-2027 calendar: First day of school for students is Sept 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

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**15. Next Governing Board Meeting Dates**

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- Tuesday, April 14, 2026
- Monday, May 25, 2026
- Wednesday, June 10, 2026
- All meetings at 6:30 pm unless otherwise noted.

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**16. Questions**

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- No questions to report.

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**17. Adjournment**

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Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35pm

Motion to Approve: Merika Ramundo and Veronica Graniero. **Motion Passed - Unanimously**

*Gyathia Canale*  
Principal

\* *V. Ramundo*  
\* *GB. Chair*



**Commission scolaire English-Montréal**

**English Montreal School Board**

Bureau du Président  
Office of the Chairman

Montreal, March 12, 2026

Ms. Stephanie Passucci  
Treasurer  
English Montreal School Board Parents' Committee

Dear Ms. Passucci,

Thank you for your letter dated January 14, 2026. The EMSB remains fully committed to transparency and to ensuring that all stakeholders, including parents, have the information needed to understand the severe constraints imposed on our operations by the provincial government's budgetary measures.

As outlined in our public statements and Council resolutions, the 2025-2026 fiscal framework has been profoundly disrupted by directives from the *Ministère de l'Éducation*. Key elements include:

- A mandated reduction of approximately \$10.6 million under measure 16032.
- A potential additional \$10.4 million financial penalty under measure 16034 if unrealistic staffing reduction targets are not met (a target the EMSB has consistently stated is unachievable without violating collective agreements and operational necessities).
- Prohibition on accessing accumulated surplus funds (approximately \$7.8 million for the EMSB), which had previously supported essential services such as special needs support, mental health resources, and extracurricular activities.
- Conditional offset funding of \$9.6 million under measure 16036, tied to conditions that the Board could not realistically satisfy, leaving us exposed to the full impact of the above reductions.

These measures, part of the province's broader education funding restrictions (initially in the range of \$510–570 million province-wide, with partial and conditional adjustments), have forced unavoidable operational adjustments across the Board. Reductions have focused on administrative efficiencies, non-salary expenditures, and support areas to limit direct impacts on classrooms as much as possible. However, effects at the school level have included reduced support staffing in some locations, constraints on extracurricular programming, and limitations on resource allocation.

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Detailed budgets for each individual school have been provided to Governing Boards for their deliberations and approvals.

The reduction to the EMSBPC operational budget was necessary due to the overall fiscal pressures from the province. The Board had to carefully examine its options within the available constraints to address the impact on board operations as a whole and minimize disruption to essential student services. As such, difficult decisions needed to be made and the EMSBPC's budget was reduced but remains proportionally consistent with what the PCs of other school boards receive. If there are specific operational needs or areas where Board-level support could assist in maintaining essential activities, please provide details so we can assess feasibility.

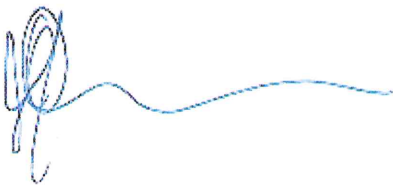
The Governing Board budget process remains a priority, and we expect continued engagement from all parties to navigate these imposed limitations responsibly. The EMSB's position has been and continues to be one of firm opposition to these provincial measures, as evidenced by our public statements, requests for surplus access, and participation in the legal action of QESBA and its member boards.

We value the role of parent representatives in this process and look forward to constructive dialogue focused on protecting student interests under these difficult circumstances.

At this stage I cannot provide you with any precise details of what further budget reductions, if any, are in store for the system. Our management team has been in deliberations for several months and the Council of Commissioners are being briefed.

I can assure you that we will fulfil our duty of consulting with the EMSB Parents Committee when we proceed with our Budget Building Process.

Sincerely,



Joe Ortona  
Chairman  
EMSB



**Commission scolaire English-Montréal**  
**English Montreal School Board**

Bureau du Président  
Office of the Chairman

Montreal, March 12, 2026

Ms. Katherine Korakakis  
Chair  
English Montreal School Board Parents' Committee

Dear Ms. Korakakis,

Thank you for your letter regarding the public question period at meetings of the Council of Commissioners. The Board appreciates EMSBPC's role in representing parent perspectives and welcomes input on matters affecting community participation.

It is important to note that no change was made to our by-laws or internal rules regarding question period. The rule has always been to limit public questions to those present in person during the designated period and was implemented to ensure orderly, efficient, and focused proceedings at Council meetings. This aligns with the Board's authority under the *Education Act* to establish rules of procedure for its meetings, including the conduct of public consultations.

To address your specific questions:

1. The adjustment was handled as an administrative procedural matter within the Chair's oversight of meeting conduct, in accordance with the Board's rules of procedure and relevant provisions of the *Education Act*. It did not require a formal policy amendment or full Council vote, as it pertains to the operational management of the question period. No prior public notice or consultation was mandated for this as we are conforming to the by-laws and rules of procedure that are in place.
2. The Board is mindful of accessibility considerations for all members of our community. The primary intent of the change is to promote direct, real-time interaction and accountability during live meetings, which are open to the public and webcast for viewing. To support broader participation, accommodations continue to include the ability for individuals to submit written comments or concerns outside of the question period (e.g., via email to the Board or individual commissioners), which are reviewed and addressed appropriately. The Council will monitor the impacts of this change and remains open to evaluating additional measures if patterns of exclusion emerge. I do note, however, that in the last 4 years, parents seldom sent in questions in writing, and when they did, rarely was it related to education or school matters.

3. Questions during the public question period are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to relevance to EMSB matters, time limits, and decorum requirements as outlined in our by-laws. Criteria include avoiding repetition of previously addressed items, ensuring questions are directed appropriately (not personal attacks or matters under litigation), and maintaining order. These guidelines are applied consistently by the Chair and are clearly outlined in our by-laws and rules of procedure.
4. At this time, the Board does not plan to reinstate mail-in or remote question submission for the public question period, as the in-person format supports more immediate dialogue and clarification. However, parents and community members may continue to raise issues through other established channels, including direct correspondence with commissioners, Governing Board participation at the school level, EMSBPC advocacy. The Board will review the effectiveness of the current approach after several meetings and consider adjustments if warranted.
5. While the EMSB territory is geographically expansive, Council meetings are livestreamed to enable remote viewing by families in our territory and beyond. The in-person requirement for speaking during the question period is balanced by these access tools and alternative avenues for input noted above. The Board encourages participation through these multiple pathways to ensure geographic barriers do not unduly limit engagement.

The EMSB remains committed to inclusive governance and values the contributions of parents in shaping our educational system. I am confident that the accessibility of commissioners will remain unchanged and remind parents that the appropriate communication channels for the handling of complaints, through the school principal and the regional office, is unaffected. We are open to ongoing dialogue on this matter.

Should you wish to discuss this in more detail or arrange a meeting, please contact my office.

Thank you for bringing these concerns forward.

Sincerely,



Joe Ortona  
Chairman  
EMSB