

General assemblies

The general assembly is at the base of the union's decisional process. It is, nonetheless, of primary importance. It is through the general assembly that members express their views and make recommendations to the Sector Council. It is the forum where members have the chance to discuss the problems they experience on a daily basis.

The relevant provisions are found in clauses 15.01 to 15.04 of our By-laws:

15.01 Composition. The General Assembly is composed of all the regular members of a school, establishment or a CPE.

15.02 Convocation. The Union Delegate may convene the regular members of his or her school, centre, establishment or a CPE by a notice posted on the union bulletin board or by telephone. At the request of at least 50% of the regular members of a school, establishment or a CPE, the Union Delegate must convene a General Assembly. Normally, a General Assembly must be convened at least 48 hours beforehand. However, exceptional circumstances may reduce the convocation time.

15.03 Quorum. The quorum of a General Assembly is constituted by the majority of its members.

15.04 Powers. It plans, organizes and supervises all the union activities of the school, centre, establishment or a Childcare Centre.

It's a good idea to convene a general assembly, however brief, once a month, to allow members to express their views and for the delegate to communicate any recent information concerning the union. While general assemblies tend to function on a more or less casual basis, it is a good idea to ensure a degree of formality by appointing a chair and a secretary of the assembly.

The chair is responsible for ensuring that the agenda and the right to speak are respected. The secretary records any important business and produces minutes for the assembly. Minutes do not have to go into great detail. Along with those present at the assembly, they should note any important interventions and, especially, any recommendations or resolutions that the assembly adopts.

There are times when a vote can create certain tensions. At such times, a secret ballot is useful, as a vote by show of hands could colour the result on an issue where members on the same staff have sharply differing views. For that reason, it is a good idea to have a number of slips of paper on hand that can be used as ballots, should the need arise.