



For Immediate Release

Community Unites to Fight for Democratically Elected School Boards

Montreal, April 25, 2019 – Community leaders and organizations representing English-speaking Quebecers have joined together to form a provincial alliance to support democratically elected school boards and convince the government to maintain them.

APPELE-Québec – the Alliance for the Promotion of Public English-language Education in Québec – is a broadly-based, Quebec-wide community coalition to promote the continued existence of English school boards, to ensure they are governed by commissioners who are democratically elected by the English-speaking community at large. Our Alliance, already with 16 supporting organizations and nine observer groups, is expanding rapidly.

“Our community is very alarmed by the Government of Quebec’s stated intention to abolish school boards and school board elections,” declared former MNA Geoffrey Kelley, who is chairing APPELE-Québec. “We understand that legislation to that effect is being prepared without any formal input from the English-speaking community.”

“The future of our children, and our ability to ensure they have a real future in this province, depends on our capacity to transmit our language and culture – including our attachment to Quebec – to future generations,” Kelley added.

The vice-chairs of the APPELE-Québec Alliance are former Senator and respected journalist Joan Fraser and Kevin Shaar, a lawyer with two children enrolled in the Western Quebec School Board.

“As one of Canada’s official minority-language communities, English-speaking Quebecers understand the critical role schools play in the vitality of our communities across Quebec,” said Sen. Fraser. She was a member of the Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages, which in 2011 reported on the realities of English-speaking communities in Quebec, focusing on issues affecting their development and vitality, including education.

“To maintain our vitality as a minority community, English-speaking Quebecers must preserve control and management of our institutions and have a real say in how they will be governed,” added Shaar. “We must nurture the connection between community and schools through enthusiastic and

knowledgeable school commissioners who really care about the future of our community and our youth.”

“If the government is planning a complete overhaul of our education system, it should embark on a formal consultation process and invite input from parents, educators, and community stakeholders,” Kelley said. He strongly urged the Quebec government to embark on a wide-ranging consultation, such as a white paper, that would allow the government to move forward with an evidence-based reform plan based on detailed knowledge of all facets of the issue.

“This would reposition the debate on school reform in a positive way.” This, he said, would avoid conflict and quite possibly achieve a broad consensus from education stakeholders, parents and the community: “We should work together to achieve the best possible results for our students.”

For more information about APPELE-Québec, go to www.appelequebec.org

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