
The Accent: April 2, 2026

From TALQ <info+talq.ca@em.yapla.org>

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talq Talking.
Advocating.
Living in
Quebec.

THE ACCENT



STRETEGIC VISION

BY EVA LUDVIG

Promoting the vitality of the English-speaking community in a proudly French Quebec can sometimes feel like a Sisyphean task. And then there are moments when that effort is met with recognition—when our community is not only seen but heard. A recent Senate report on language barriers in health care, alongside the Supreme Court hearings on Bill 21, mark two such moments.

The Senate's report, [Breaking Down Language Barriers in Health Care](#), highlights a stark reality: accessing care in English in Quebec can be difficult—even when lives are at stake. From patients travelling hundreds of kilometres to receive services, to missed or misunderstood care, language barriers are more than an inconvenience—they pose real risks. The report concludes that access remains “tenuous,” particularly outside major centres, and calls for stronger federal measures to ensure equitable, safe, and quality care. On behalf of our community, TALQ thanked the Senate Committee's work for taking a meaningful step toward more accessible health care.

Last week, the Supreme Court heard the challenge to Bill 21, questioning the legality of Bill 21, Quebec's 2019 religious symbols ban for public sector employees in positions of authority. Our community has long held that the government's use of the notwithstanding clause in the text of the bill is discriminatory, and TALQ was proud to be an intervenor. Regardless of the Court's decision, our community's involvement ensures that our concerns and rights are being heard at the highest level—an important milestone in our ongoing efforts.

We have never asked for more than our rightful place in Quebec society. These moments remind us that our voices are being heard.

Finally, I would like to close this month's report by sharing that, on March 30, Sylvia and I had the opportunity to meet briefly with Kelly Burke, the new Commissioner of Official Languages. On her very first day in the role, the Commissioner joined us for a 20-minute introductory meeting. We were pleased to learn that she is eager to better understand our concerns and has instructed her staff to schedule an

in-person meeting in the very near future. We also discussed an inaugural meeting in the Spring, where she would be able to set out her vision and priorities for our English-speaking minority community.

OPERATIONAL INSIGHTS

BY SYLVIA MARTIN-LAFORGE

Our fiscal year may have wrapped on March 31, but our 30th anniversary celebrations are far from over.

We kicked off this milestone year with a major shift: QCGN became TALQ. More than a new name, it's a renewed invitation—broadening the conversation, expanding our reach, and deepening our impact.

That spirit came to life at our 30for30 recognition event, celebrating leaders who are shaping English-speaking communities across Quebec. We also took a fresh look at our communication tools, aligning how we go to market with what needs to be said. The feedback from our two most recent surveys in The Accent has been excellent—thank you, and please keep it coming. We are listening!

The broader response has been encouraging as well. Members, partners, media, and policymakers from across the language divide have embraced our new brand, opening doors for meaningful discussion. Building on that momentum, we'll host a Signature Series event in May exploring how historical experience shapes cultural perspectives in English and French communities.

In June, we'll combine business with celebration by hosting a morning of 30th anniversary activities on June 12, the day after our Annual General Meeting. The program will begin with a keynote speaker, followed by our second Advancing Community Vitality Signature Series event. We'll conclude the morning by unveiling TALQ's Time Capsule, highlighting the remarkable contributions of our community over the past 30 years.

TALQ may be marking 30 years, but we stand proud that we're only 30 years young, with our best years ahead of us.

TALQ SIGNATURE SERIES

TALQ's Signature Series provides a platform for exchanging expert perspectives on issues that matter to our community, and everyone is invited to participate. Over the coming months, we will host two Signature Series events and hope you will join us. [Click here to register to the first event.](#)

Different Lenses on a Shared Reality – Thursday, May 14, 2026

As anyone familiar with Canadian history will know, people shaped by different cultural backgrounds can interpret the same facts in very different ways. TALQ, in collaboration with the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, will host a panel exploring these perspectives, highlighting the importance of considering multiple viewpoints and deepening our understanding of what shapes Quebec today. Moderated by the CBC's Ainslie MacLellan, featured panelists will include Stéphane Dion, former Liberal Party leader, diplomat, and academic, and Frédéric Lapointe, President of the Mouvement National des Québécoises et Québécois and professor of history at l'Université de Montréal and Lorraine O'Donnell a Senior Research Manager at Concordia University's QUESCEN and holds a PhD in History from McGill. *Light refreshments will be served.*

Date: May 14 at 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Location: McGill Faculty Club, 3450 McTavish Street Montreal, Quebec H3A 0E5

Stay tuned for more details about our exciting second **Advancing Community Vitality Signature Series event on June 12**, as we bring TALQ's 30th Anniversary celebrations to a close.

OUR PRESIDENT OUT IN THE COMMUNITY:

On Thursday, March 19, TALQ President Eva Ludvig met with seniors at Place Kensington to share updates on the organization's work and its ongoing collaboration with community groups, individuals across the province, and all levels of government in support of Quebec's English-speaking community. With an election year underway, Eva reminded the group of "the importance of ensuring their voices are heard and reflected in public policy." The discussion was engaging and insightful, and TALQ greatly appreciated the perspectives shared by residents on representation, inclusion, and community engagement.





WE'RE EXCITED ABOUT THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AGM: We're very excited to announce that our AGM, as it has been in years gone by, will be a two-day affair this year.

Thursday, June 11 – Our members-only business meeting will take place in the late afternoon, followed by a simple cocktail for those attending. It's a chance to reconnect with familiar faces or meet new people.

Friday, June 12 – We will welcome everyone to the final day of TALQ's 30th Anniversary celebrations. The morning will feature a very special keynote speaker, whose presentation will spark ideas and conversation that flow seamlessly into our Advancing Community Vitality Signature Series (details to come). We'll conclude the morning by unveiling TALQ's Time Capsule, highlighting the remarkable contributions of our community over the past 30 years.

We hope you will join us for this exciting morning of celebration, dialogue, and community connection. Details on location and precise timing as well as how to register will be included in an upcoming newsletter.

TIME CAPSULE CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF ADVOCACY

TALQ is concluding its 30th anniversary in a fun and unique way, and we want you to help us celebrate!

We're creating a Time Capsule filled with memories, stories, and other meaningful items from 2025–2026—our 30th year—highlighting the year that was as well as our hopes for the future. Our focus is on you, our community, so forget the headlines for a moment and celebrate yourselves.

We invite you to take some time to reflect on your experiences that best capture the spirit of this milestone year. Think outside the box! Be creative! Be fun! Share with us the story you'd like people to discover twenty years from now. Consider objects that symbolize something unique—items that could spark dialogue and interest in 2046.

While 2026 may have brought its challenges, it has also connected us in ways we hadn't imagined. Let's consider how our memories can inspire our future selves and our community two decades from now.

Our Outreach Team will be in touch in the coming weeks with all the details and specifications you'll need to contribute. Let's make this Time Capsule a celebration to remember!

CELEBRATING OUR COLLECTIVE WORK: REFLECTIONS ON THE CELI FORUM

A few weeks have passed since the Community Vitality in Action Forum, and we remain inspired by the exchanges with our partners and stakeholders. The day was a powerful reminder of what we can achieve as a community when we work together toward shared goals.

On March 10, we brought together community groups from across Quebec to share their experiences and successes. The forum highlighted a key outcome of this work: when people have access to the skills and the support they need, they gain confidence, autonomy, and the ability to participate fully in society. Contributions from partners on the Project Advisory Committee—**Nick Salter** (PERT), **John Buck** (CEDEC), **Cathy Brown** (RDN), **Joy Fyckes** (Literacy Quebec) and **Brigid Hayes**—along with keynote speaker **Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer** and M.C. **Mélanie Valcin** (United for Literacy), as well as collaborators from ABC Life Literacy and the Social Research and Development Council, demonstrated the strength of this collective effort. Funding recipients CASA and DESTA also played a key role.



Since 2021, TALQ and Literacy Quebec have worked together to support the Community Empowerment Literacy Initiative (CELI), which, on behalf of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), funds programs, research, and professional training to strengthen literacy and essential skills in Quebec's English-speaking communities. According to the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, 53% Quebec's adult population is literate at Level 2 or lower; meaning that more than half of Quebecers do not have the tools they need to participate in society. From the outset, both organizations recognized the importance of a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response.

The path to CELI has not been straightforward. For more than a decade, our network has navigated a shifting landscape, beginning with the dismantling of the pan-Canadian adult literacy and essential skills program in 2014. Since then, we have advocated for an approach tailored to the needs of Quebec's English-speaking community. Even after CELI was launched in 2021, providing \$2.8 million over five years, structural barriers remained—particularly those related to Quebec's M-30 legislation, which limits how federal funds can be used within provincial organizations. Throughout this process, we have adapted and learned the value of collaboration, perseverance, and trust in achieving shared goals.

Literacy is a fundamental right. Improving it requires a broad commitment from governments, community organizations, educators, and families. As a linguistic minority, many English speakers in Quebec already face challenges in accessing services and employment opportunities, which are further compounded by low literacy levels. Despite these challenges, CELI has achieved important

results: more than \$1.5 million has been distributed to community programs led by local and regional partners; professional development opportunities for service providers have expanded; research has been conducted; and spaces for meaningful dialogue have been created.

As co-leaders of CELI, we thank all those who contributed to the success of the forum, and we invite everyone to remain engaged in this work so all community members can access the literacy and skills needed to build the future they deserve.

Thank you for being part of this important journey.

Sylvia from TALQ & **Wendy** from LQ

**For more information about CELI, please visit our website: <https://celi-quebec.org/>*



CASPER BLOOM: A LIFE DEVOTED TO COMMUNITY, RIGHTS, AND JUSTICE

For decades, **Casper M. Bloom** was a familiar figure in Montreal's legal and civic circles, a lawyer whose expertise in labour, public, and administrative law was matched only by his dedication to the English-speaking communities of Quebec. But beyond the titles and awards, it was his unwavering commitment to people and community that defined him.

Casper began his legal career in the late 1960s at Ogilvy Renault, quickly establishing himself as a principled and capable lawyer. Over the years, he took on leadership roles as Bâtonnier of the Barreau de Montréal, President of the Lord Reading Law Society, and Chairperson of Canada's Public Service Labour Relations Board, earning the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Bar of Montreal in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the profession. Casper Bloom has been a leader to the administrative and labour laws community, a tireless advocate for linguistic and equality rights, access to justice in both official languages, bilingualism in Quebec legislation, minority rights and Canadian unity before the courts.

Casper's professional achievements were inseparable from his belief in civic responsibility. He was a founding member of Alliance Quebec, advocating tirelessly for linguistic and equality rights, and worked to ensure English-speaking Quebecers could access justice, participate fully in public life, and feel welcome in a predominantly French-speaking province. Casper understood that law was not just about cases, but about people – and he consistently used his influence to protect and uplift communities.

In recognition of his decades of community service, TALQ (previously the Quebec Community Groups Network) awarded him one of the very first Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Awards in 2009. Colleagues remember him not only as a legal luminary but as a mentor, a collaborator, and a voice for fairness and inclusion.

Casper Bloom passed away peacefully on March 16, 2026. Sylvia Martin-Laforge wrote “Casper was so supportive of the organization getting funding recognition from Justice Canada for English Quebecers. His credibility made the difference and continues to this day.” Eva Ludvig left this note on the Paperman’s obituary page: “My condolences to the family. Casper was a warm and giving person devoted to the community. He will be greatly missed.” Casper Bloom will indeed be deeply missed by family, friends, colleagues, and the many community members whose lives he touched, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to inspire advocacy, leadership, and a commitment to the common good.



TALQ’S RESPONSE TO CAQ BUDGET: CALLS FOR CONSULTATION, TRANSPARENCY, AND STABILITY FOR THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY OF QUEBEC

In the days following the tabling of Quebec’s 2026–2027 budget, we have taken time to reflect on what it signals for the English-speaking community. While we recognize the challenging fiscal environment facing the government, we are acutely aware of the ensuing clarity, collaboration, and stability required to make proper decisions.

This year’s budget includes a reduction in provincial funding for the English-speaking community. At a time when Quebecers are facing economic uncertainty and federal support is increasingly constrained, this raises important questions about how programs and services will be maintained. Ensuring that English-speaking Quebecers continue to have access to the support they need remains essential.

Equally concerning is the absence of consultation ahead of the budget—marking a departure from longstanding practice. The lack of engagement at such a critical juncture causes deepening concern, undermines trust, and limits the effectiveness of decisions that directly impact our community.

We are also reminded of the importance of stability within government structures. The continued movement of the Secretariat for relations with the English-speaking community across portfolios—rather than being permanently anchored within the Ministère du Conseil exécutif—limits the Secretariat’s ability to provide consistent and coordinated support.

TALQ remains committed to working constructively with government partners. We believe that renewed consultation, greater transparency in funding decisions, and a stable, permanent framework for the Secretariat are essential to ensuring that the needs of Quebec’s English-speaking community continue to be met.



MEANWHILE, ON THE FEDERAL SIDE...

While we were not included in the consultative process on the provincial level, TALQ has been working hard on a plan to present to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance (FINA) which is launching its annual pre-budget earlier than usual (to accommodate a Fall budget).

The 2026 federal budget comes at a critical moment for official languages policy, as the government renews the Action Plan and implements the modernized Official Languages Act.

Decisions will determine whether commitments to minority communities are realized in practice. The vitality of the English-speaking community depends not just on funding, but on how it is structured and delivered—making Budget 2026 a key opportunity to align spending with these commitments.

To date we have developed a comprehensive plan which includes six recommendations and brings to light issues of great importance to our community. We anticipate various constraints from FINA. These include broader fiscal pressures and early signs of constraint at Canadian Heritage, which could lead to program integrity; Part VII regulations, which will strengthen process requirements but will not ensure meaningful outcomes for minority language communities, particularly for Quebec's English-speaking community; structural barriers in Quebec which could limit how—and whether—English-speaking community organizations can access support; given that federal funding in Quebec is often mediated through provincial mechanisms, limiting; and the gap between the consultation expectations placed on organizations serving the English-speaking Community of Quebec and the resources available to meet those expectations, a recurring theme in TALQ's work.

As our proposal concludes, the question is not whether the federal government is committed to official languages. It is whether that commitment will be expressed in ways that produce measurable, durable outcomes for the communities it is meant to serve.

QUEBEC'S PROVINCIAL ELECTION IS THIS FALL, WE'RE READY TO CHALLENGE THE CANDIDATES

As we look ahead to Quebec's provincial election on October 5, 2026, TALQ is taking thoughtful steps to ensure that the priorities of the English-speaking community are reflected in the conversations impacting the province's future.

This work begins with collaboration. Over the coming months, we will work closely with partners across sectors to align on shared priorities, amplify our collective voice, and engage constructively with political leaders from all parties. By fostering dialogue and advancing clear, community-informed perspectives, we aim to make a meaningful contribution to the pre-election landscape.

Over the summer, this effort will shift towards readiness, equipping our network with the tools, messaging, and support needed to engage effectively as the campaign approaches. This preparation will allow us to respond with clarity and consistency, while continuing to build relationships and visibility.

Throughout the election period, TALQ will remain actively engaged, following developments, contributing to public discussions, and encouraging commitments that reflect the needs and realities of Quebec's English-speaking community.

We will continue to keep our network informed and engaged every step of the way, sharing updates, insights, and opportunities to participate. This work is grounded in a shared commitment: to ensure that our community's voice is heard, its contributions are recognized, and its future is supported.



NEW REPORTS ON DATA FROM STATISTICS CANADA

SOLMP Recent results:

Statistics Canada has released two new data tables from the [Survey on the Official Language Minority Population](#) (SOLMP), that examine the public and private use of English in Quebec (Statistics Canada Tables 15-10-0043-01 and 15-10-0044). An accompanying analysis of the data, *Use of minority official*

languages in the public sphere: new data tables, 2022, demonstrates that most English-speaking adults regularly use English in public (80%) and overwhelmingly value access to services in English (90%), yet only about half consistently receive those services—especially at the provincial and municipal levels.

At the same time, perceptions of decline are growing, with more people saying the presence of English in their communities has decreased over the past decade. The data also points to ongoing challenges around linguistic insecurity and discrimination, reported by nearly one-third of English-speaking Quebecers.

Together, the newly released data provides a behavioural snapshot of community vitality demonstrating how English is being used, maintained, and transmitted in both public and private life—and where it may be under pressure.

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Poverty and languages; new infographics released:

Two new infographics have been released by StatsCan: [How poverty rates differed by language in Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario in 2021](#) and [Poverty rate of the bilingual population in Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario in 2021](#). In and of themselves, these graphics are informative, and the data reinforces a long-standing observation in community research: the English-speaking population of Quebec is not socio-economically homogeneous. While some segments remain relatively affluent, others—particularly seniors, rural populations, and individuals with limited French proficiency—face measurable economic vulnerability. This challenges the assumptions that anglophones in Quebec are an advantaged group as is often the narrative in the French media.

The analysis by Statistics Canada using the 2021 Census shows that English mother-tongue Quebecers experience higher poverty rates than francophones in the province, especially among individuals who speak only English: from five per cent overall to almost seven per cent among English-mother-tongue individuals and close to ten percent among unilingual English speakers.

Under Part VII of the Official Languages Act, federal institutions are required to take “positive measures” to enhance the vitality of official language minority communities and support their development. This data reinforces that benefit: individuals who speak both official languages exhibit significantly lower poverty rates than those who are unilingual.

For TALQ, the significance of this data lies in its ability to reframe the policy conversation. Rather than presenting the English-speaking community solely through a linguistic rights lens, the evidence allows us to situate the ESCQ within broader discussions of economic inclusion, regional development, and social equity. In this sense, the Statistics Canada analysis reinforces a key policy message: the vitality of official language minority communities depends not only on the protection of language rights but also on the economic and social conditions that allow those communities to thrive.

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BILL 21 AT THE SUPREME COURT: A DEFINING MOMENT FOR MINORITY RIGHTS

TALQ appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada this week as an intervener in the appeal of Quebec's Bill 21. Hearings took place over four days, with arguments presented by Me Julius Grey on March 25.

Our intervention focused on section 23 of the Canadian Charter, arguing that Bill 21 infringes minority-language education rights by undermining the cultural and institutional foundations of official-language minority communities. We emphasized that restrictions on school personnel limit the ability of English-language institutions to reflect, sustain, and transmit the identity of the communities they serve. TALQ asked the Court to find these provisions unconstitutional, at minimum, as they apply to English-language school boards.

A press release issued by the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) reiterated similar concerns, noting that through collaboration and dialogue, they have "managed to find constructive ways to strike a positive balance between religious diversity and shared values." This reinforces TALQ's position that minority communities are best placed to manage diversity within their own institutions.

Several interveners also addressed the potential limits of the notwithstanding clause, with Justices raising questions about its broader implications, including concerns about its impact on democratic processes. TALQ maintains that the use of the notwithstanding clause in this context raises serious questions about the protection of fundamental rights.

At the heart of the case is whether minority-language rights include the authority to define and sustain a community's cultural identity. Quebec argued for a narrower interpretation, while many interveners from across the country supported a broader view—one that recognizes the autonomy of minority communities to make decisions about diversity, hiring, and institutional life.

We were encouraged to see this alignment. These perspectives affirm a principle that TALQ has consistently advanced: that minority communities must have the authority to manage and maintain their own institutions, and that courts should defer to them in matters that shape their identity and vitality.

It will take several months before a decision is rendered. TALQ will continue to follow this case closely and report back to our community on both the outcome and its implications across Quebec and Canada.



ARTS & CULTURE DIALOGUE DAY – COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

UNDERFUNDED AND OVERLOOKED: INCREASING INCOME GAP THREATENS THE VIABILITY OF CAREERS IN THE ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR ACROSS THE PROVINCE.

The struggles of artists are often seen as timeless—but are they simply anecdotal, or the result of systems that continue to undervalue their work, even as society increasingly relies on creative content to support both personal and professional pursuits? The numbers are clear: even as society increasingly relies on creative content to connect and thrive, English-speaking artists in Quebec earn 33% less than professionals in other sectors.¹

This month, the English Language Arts Network (ELAN) hosted Dialogue Day with Federal Institutions and Quebec's English-speaking Arts & Culture sector. At this milestone event, artists and leaders who advocate for the vitality of the sector spoke about the realities of funding, education, and employment barriers that systematically undermine the value of Arts & Culture in Quebec.

Arts and Culture professionals have shown resilience and creativity, coming together to develop innovative initiatives that support careers and resources in the sector. However, without equitable recognition of the Arts & Culture sector as a key driver—and without investments that reflect this reality—the future of English-language Arts & Culture in Quebec will remain at risk.

Despite these longstanding challenges, there is hope for English-speaking artists in Quebec as targeted support grows. Organizations like ELAN are stepping up, with government-backed initiatives providing grants and resources to strengthen the sector. This is the third year of ELAN's four-year initiative—part of its Trellis Micro-grants program in conjunction with Heritage Canada—which will distribute a total of \$1,212,000 to arts projects across the province. These grants help artists overcome barriers in employment, education, and recognition. As Deborah Forde, ELAN's Director of Operations emphasises, "The point to the project is to let people in the province know that we're here. We're doing wonderful work that makes a difference in the community, with work that says something about who we are as Québécois."²

As a partner and collaborator in vitality and advocacy for the Arts & Culture sector, TALQ remains engaged and committed to sharing these critical conversations with our community, our network, and the government representatives responsible for acting on behalf of community vitality.

¹ Hill, K. (2023, November 28). Statistical profile of English-speaking artists in Quebec. *Statistical Insights on the Arts*. <https://statsinsights.hillstrategies.com/p/english-language-artists-in-quebec>

2 Brownstein, Bill. "Grants give anglo arts creators a chance to build cultural bridges with francos." *Montreal Gazette*, 25 Mar.

2026. <https://montrealgazette.com/opinion/columnists/brownstein-grants-give-anglo-arts-creators-a-chance-to-build-cultural-bridges-with-francos>





BLUE METROPOLIS LINE UP ANNOUNCED

The 28th edition of Blue Metropolis International Literacy Festival – Words for Understanding One Another – will take place throughout the month of April with over 150 authors and cultural mediators, and 110 events offered in nine different languages; this year's edition is sure to have something for everyone. [Click here](#) to learn more about the festival lineup and to order your tickets.

QEPC SPRING MIXER

The Quebec English-language Production Council is having a spring mixer where all members are invited to bring a guest and share more about how their organization can strengthen ties within Quebec's film and television industry. The event takes place on Thursday, April 9th, from 6:00–8:00 p.m. at CineGround, 4637 rue Franchère in Montreal (H2H 2K6). Food and drink will be available. More details and registration can be found at <https://www.qepc.org/join>



SAQ INTERACTIVE MAP

Seniors Action Quebec has updated the [interactive map on their website](#). This useful tool allows everyone to explore all sorts of services from legal aid and housing to healthcare and food assistance. They've now

added geriatric psychology and psychiatry, as well as technology support that's easy to navigate and available in English and French.



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