



QUEBEC ENGLISH SCHOOL  
BOARDS ASSOCIATION

QESBA  
Annual General Meeting  
2024-2025 Fiscal Year

# Annual Report



**Annual General Meeting - October 25, 2025**

QESBA is the voice of English public education in Québec and represents 100,000 students in over 300 elementary, high schools, and adult and vocational centres across Québec.



## 2024–2025 Year in Review

### Overview

The 2024–2025 year was a pivotal one for the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA). Marked by important victories in court, ongoing legal challenges, significant legislative developments, and the renewal of our leadership and strategic vision, QESBA continued to advocate for the vitality of English public education across Québec.

### Leadership and Governance

#### School Board Elections 2024

School Board Elections were held on November 4, 2024. QESBA President Joe Ortona, along with his entire team, was re-elected in a landslide victory.

A by-election was held in February 2025 to replace the outgoing Vice-President. Christopher Craig, Chair of the Riverside School Board, was elected to complete the term vacated by Paolo Galati.

While voter turnout was lower than anticipated, QESBA now represents 96 commissioners and nine board chairs who remain steadfast in their commitment to defending our governance model, supporting our network, and pursuing our three major court cases.

## Advocacy

### Bill 40

In April 2024, the Québec Court of Appeal rendered a landmark decision on the government's appeal of *Bill 40*.

The Court confirmed that several provisions of the legislation are unconstitutional, including:

- Restrictions that prevent members of the English-speaking minority from choosing their representatives, effectively neutralizing their democratic rights.
- The requirement that funding responsibilities be removed from minority-language representatives.
- The government's argument that only parents of children currently in English schools qualify as rights-holders under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Despite this decisive ruling, the Government of Québec has sought leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, which will determine whether to hear the case.

### Bill 94

QESBA presented to the Commission on Culture and Education in April. Bill 94: An Act to, in particular, reinforce laicity in the education network and to amend various legislative provisions. This Bill extends the application of many "laicity" provisions of Bill 21 deeper into the education system. Bernard Drainville, Minister of Education is very attached to implementing 94 and is not prepared to negotiate any amendments or hear our section 23 arguments. QESBA and its member boards are discussing next steps as Bill 21 will be heard by the Supreme Court of Canada.

### Bill 100

*Bill 100: An Act respecting the negotiation and determination of conditions of employment requiring national coordination*, in the public and para-public sector. The Bill aimed to centralize the coordination of negotiations concerning working conditions in the public and para-public sectors.

Strengthening and centralizing, under the authority of the President of the Treasury Board, the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy aimed at establishing working conditions requiring national coordination. We are pleased that

we were able to come to an agreement with the government on amendments to this bill. The CPNCA will not be as impacted as originally thought.

## **Finance and Budget**

### **Budget Cuts**

As you are all very aware, The Quebec government has imposed record breaking budget cuts to the education sector over the last five months. They imposed a \$200 million cut across the board in February and just asked all 69 School Boards and Service Centres to cut another \$570 million without applying any surpluses or being allowed to deposit a deficit budget. We are currently lobbying to find a compromise. QESBA estimates that these cuts if maintained will impact an entire generation of students.

Added to the budget cuts, the government imposed a hiring freeze in November 2024. This government initiative places additional strain on a network already facing budget constraints. We are, once again, discussing our options moving forward.

At the time of this writing, are currently awaiting a judgement on a possible injunction.

QESBA continues to lobby for the respect of its constitutional rights.

### **Professional Development**

QESBA organized two successful online professional development sessions:

- March 2025: *Governance* with Noel Burke, former Assistant Deputy Minister and former Chair of the Lester B. Pearson School Board.
- April 26, 2025: *Communications Workshop* for the Board of Directors led by Tarah Schwartz, former CTV Montreal News Anchor.

A second, hands-on communications session with Ms. Schwartz is scheduled for 2026.

### **Governance Program**

QESBA is launching a two-year comprehensive Governance Program in partnership with Discitus Academy.



Centre pour l'excellence en  
gouvernance organisationnelle

Centre for Excellence in  
Organizational Governance

The first of 20 sessions began on August 22, 2025, providing in-depth training for commissioners and education leaders across the English network.

## Collaboration and Community Engagement

### CARE Conference

QESBA led the planning for the CARE Conference (*Community + Advocacy + Resolve = Education*) held in September 2024 in Montreal. The event produced a detailed report outlining five major themes and a series of concrete recommendations for the future of English public education.

The full report is available at [QESBA.QC.CA](https://www.qesba.qc.ca)



### Fundraising and Recognition

In October 2024, QESBA hosted a fundraising event in support of the Bill 40 legal case. The event also marked the launch of the Kathleen Weil and Mike Novak Community Engagement Award, presented annually to a student who demonstrates exceptional community service.

The evening featured former Quebec Premier Jean Charest as keynote speaker and celebrated the first award recipient—a student from the Lester B. Pearson School Board.

### Negotiations and Labour Relations

The 2024-2025 school year marked the first year of implementation of the new collective agreements (teachers, support staff, professionals). The agreements cover a five-year period from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2028, and includes changes in areas such as increased wages, introduction of Educator in a school setting, and fixed deadline for completing staffing priority pool.

Senior staff and executive's agreements were signed in May/June 2025. Our directors general remain under the category of senior executives while director generals in centre de services (CSS) are now governed by the Ministry (impact of Bill 23 for CSS only).

School boards made substantial adjustments to apply new terms for teachers with special statuses and for classroom support personnel.

QESBA and CPNCA provided continuous guidance to boards throughout this transition.

A government-imposed hiring freeze in November 2024 further strained the network. As of June 6, 266 exemption requests had been filed across Quebec, including 34 from the English network. Following QESBA advocacy, the Ministry implemented a streamlined process on June 9 to expedite approvals.

Negotiations for senior staff and executives followed those for unionized personnel, with QESBA present at every stage. This process is expected to conclude by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

### **Legal Defense Fund**

QESBA and its member boards remain engaged in three active legal challenges:

- *Bill 40* (governance rights)
- *Bill 21* (laicity)
- *Bill 96* (French language)

*We also embarked on the legal challenge of Budgetary rules in June 2025*

These cases are advancing through the courts.

After five years of targeted fundraising for *Bill 40*, QESBA will now broaden this initiative into a permanent Legal Defense Fund to safeguard constitutional rights and ensure long-term legal preparedness.

### **Government Relations and Partnerships**

#### **Entente Canada-Quebec**

In March 2025, a new four-year Entente Canada-Quebec was signed, reaffirming federal and provincial commitments to:

- Support minority-language education;
- Promote second-language instruction; and
- Sustain English-language services across Québec.

## **School Food Program**

QESBA welcomed an agreement between the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada, allocating an additional \$65 million over three years to enhance the Quebec School Food Program.

This funding forms part of the federal government's \$1-billion National School Food Program and will improve nutrition and food access for students across the country.

## **International Recruitment**

There are two distinct immigration recruitments: Personnel and students

School/board personnel: At the beginning of the school year, MIFI introduced a temporary restriction on any recruitment of teachers from outside Canada, limiting school boards' ability to hire international candidates. We were forced to cancel our participation to many virtual and in-person International fair and focus on domestic, cross-Canada, recruitment to seek qualified teachers and professionals.

Student recruitment: Quebec implements temporary student immigration targets to balance regional needs and "integration" capacity.

QESBA is optimistic that school boards will once again have the ability to recruit international students and qualified staff, thereby restoring a vital source of both cultural enrichment and financial sustainability for the English education system.

## **Strategic Plan Renewal**

We undertook a comprehensive review and renewal of the Strategic Plan over the last months of the fiscal-year that we are proud to be presenting to you today for adoption. It will guide us over the next five years.

Commissioners, senior administrators, and community partners have been invited to contribute through a membership-wide survey to help shape the Association's future direction and priorities.

## **QESBA Annual Awards**

### **Chapeau les Filles**

QESBA is an annual sponsor of this important program, which honours and encourages women to pursue their studies and careers in vocational fields traditionally dominated by men.

### **QESBA Excellence in Education**

The annual QESBA Excellence in Education Awards graciously sponsored by Global Excel Management.

The Board of Directors of QESBA created these awards with a view to celebrating the excellence, the dedication and the innovation demonstrated by teachers, administrators, professionals within our school boards across Quebec.

### **Kathleen Weil and Mike Novak Community Engagement Award**

QESBA has introduced for the 2024-2025 school year the Kathleen Weil and Michael Novak Community Engagement Award.

This prestigious award will be offered annually to a deserving graduating high student across the English public school board network in Quebec.

The award underlines the importance and value to student excellence outside the classroom and for community service.

### **Board of Directors**

*Thank you to the QESBA Executive Committee and Board of Directors and staff for their time and commitment to English Public Education in Quebec. 2025-2026 promises to be another important year for your Association.*

**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires  
anglophones du Québec**  
**Financial Statements**  
For the year ended June 30, 2025

**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires  
anglophones du Québec**  
**Financial Statements**  
For the year ended June 30, 2025

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## Independent Auditor's Report

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### **To the Members of Quebec English School Boards Association / Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**

#### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Quebec English School Boards Association / Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec (the "Association"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at June 30, 2025, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association as at June 30, 2025, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

#### **Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### **Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for private enterprises, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

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## Independent Auditor's Report

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### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.



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## Independent Auditor's Report

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We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

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*BDO Canada s.r.l./S.E.N.C.R.L./LLP*

Montréal, Québec  
November 10, 2025

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<sup>1</sup> CPA auditor, public accountancy permit No. A118902

**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Statement of Financial Position**


June 30	2025	2024
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cash	\$ 222,438	\$ 274,619
Short-term investment (Note 3)	505,707	413,561
Accounts receivable (Note 4)	616,380	340,192
Prepaid expenses	58,434	33,201
	1,402,959	1,061,573
<b>Investment, at cost</b> (Note 5)	4,000	5,000
<b>Capital assets</b> (Note 6)	3,120	3,900
	\$ 1,410,079	\$ 1,070,473

**Liabilities and Net Assets**

<b>Current</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 483,785	\$ 208,838
Deferred revenue (Note 7)	54,469	209,565
	538,254	418,403
<b>K.D. Sheldrick Bursary</b>	-	200
	538,254	418,603
<b>Net assets</b>		
Invested in capital assets (Note 6)	3,120	3,900
Unrestricted	868,705	647,970
	871,825	651,870
	\$ 1,410,079	\$ 1,070,473

**Commitment** (Note 10)

On behalf of the Board:



Joe Ortona, President



Christopher Craig, Vice-President

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Statement of Operations**

<b>For the year ended June 30</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Revenues</b>		
Membership fees (Note 9)	\$ 1,128,200	\$ 1,090,088
Reimbursement of salaries	106,130	114,590
Interest	15,789	25,994
Other revenues	92,500	24,892
Ministry grants	53,488	-
School Board legal defense	290,291	95,000
	<b>1,686,398</b>	<b>1,350,564</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Accounting and audit fees	48,959	21,319
Amortization of capital assets	780	8,049
Association conference and general meetings	64,424	32,542
Commissioner development	10,687	3,931
Communications and promotions	15,279	13,583
Fringe benefits	106,101	94,558
Honorariums - officers (Note 8)	29,325	31,100
Insurance	9,292	9,659
Legal fees - regular	30,348	13,733
Memberships, subscriptions and registrations fees	48,362	32,666
Office expenses	15,878	11,728
Postage, telephone and telecommunication	11,086	9,984
Professional fees	30,839	44,220
Promotion - election campaign	85,545	-
Promotion - eligibility campaign	54,386	500
Rent	63,986	59,548
Salaries	655,449	526,711
Service agreement - FCSSQ	9,228	9,105
Travel	31,194	34,401
	<b>1,321,148</b>	<b>957,337</b>
<b>Excess of revenues over expenditures before other expenditures</b>	<b>365,250</b>	<b>393,227</b>
<b>Other expenditures</b>		
School Board legal defense	71,563	217,451
Sales tax adjustment	73,732	17,733
	<b>145,295</b>	<b>235,184</b>
<b>Excess of revenues over expenditures for the year</b>	<b>\$ 219,955</b>	<b>\$ 158,043</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

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**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Statement of Changes in Net Assets**

**For the year ended June 30**

	Invested in capital assets	Unrestricted	2025 Total	2024 Total
<b>Balance, beginning of year</b>	\$ 3,900	\$ 647,970	\$ 651,870	\$ 493,827
<b>Excess of revenues over expenditures for the year</b>	(780)	220,735	219,955	158,043
<b>Balance, end of year</b>	\$ 3,120	\$ 868,705	\$ 871,825	\$ 651,870

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Statement of Cash Flows**

<b>For the year ended June 30</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Excess of revenues over expenditures for the year	\$ 219,955	\$ 158,043
Adjustments for items not involving cash:		
Amortization of capital assets	780	8,049
Changes in non-cash working capital balances		
Accounts receivable	(276,188)	(134,151)
Prepaid expenses	(25,233)	3,837
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	274,947	28,499
Investment reimbursement	1,000	1,000
Deferred revenue	(155,096)	(46,803)
K.D. Sheldrick Bursary	(200)	-
	<u>39,965</u>	<u>18,474</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Purchase of capital assets	-	(7,074)
Purchase of investment (net)	(1,015,609)	(525,891)
Disposal of investment (net)	923,463	573,278
	<u>(92,146)</u>	<u>40,313</u>
<b>Net (decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>(52,181)</b>	<b>58,787</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year</b>	<b>274,619</b>	<b>215,832</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents, end of year</b>	<b>\$ 222,438</b>	<b>\$ 274,619</b>

Cash and cash equivalents consist of cash.

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**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**

**June 30, 2025**

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**1. Statutes of incorporation and nature of operations**

The Association is incorporated under Part III of the *Quebec Companies Act* and provides representation and technical support in educational matters to various school boards.

The Association qualifies as a non-for-profit organization and is exempt of income taxes under Section 149 of the *Income Tax Act*.

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**2. Significant accounting policies**

**Basis of accounting**

The Association has prepared its financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

**Revenue recognition**

The Association follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Restricted contributions for future periods are deferred and are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenditures are incurred.

The Association receives membership fees from the member school boards and these fees originate from government funding sources. Membership fees revenue are recognized over the terms of the membership of the member school boards for the school year to which they apply and collection is reasonably assured.

Interest revenue from short-term investment is recognized as revenue on a time basis in the period in which it is earned.

Professional services fees revenue is recognized once services have been rendered and collection is reasonably assured.

Other revenues consist of conference revenues and are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

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**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**

**June 30, 2025**

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**2. Significant accounting policies (continued)**

**Government assistance**

Government assistance in the form of government grants are accrued when earned and when there is also reasonable assurance that they will be realized.

Government grants relating to qualifying expenditures are presented as an increase in revenues.

**Cash and cash equivalents**

The Association's policy is to disclose bank balances under cash and cash equivalents.

**Capital assets**

Capital assets are accounted for at cost. Amortization is calculated using the straight-line method over the following periods:

Furniture and fixtures	5 years
Computer equipment	1 year

**Impairment of long-lived assets**

Long-lived assets subject to amortization are tested for recoverability whenever events or changes in circumstances indicated that their carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognized when the carrying amount of the assets exceeds the sum of the undiscounted cash flows resulting from its use and eventual disposition. The impairment loss is measured as the amount by which the carrying amount of the long-lived asset exceeds its fair value.

**Contributed services**

Volunteers contribute their time to assist the Association in carrying out its activities. Because of the difficulty of determining their fair value, contributed services are not recognized in the financial statements.

**Use of estimates**

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian ASNPO requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenditures during the reporting period. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The critical estimates relate to the impairment of the financial assets and the useful lives of the capital assets.

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**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**

**June 30, 2025**

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**2. Significant accounting policies (continued)**

**Financial instruments**

Arm's length financial instruments are recorded at fair value at initial recognition.

Related party financial instruments quoted in an active market or those with observable inputs significant to the determination of fair value or derivative contracts are recorded at fair value at initial recognition. All other related party financial instruments are recorded at cost at initial recognition.

In subsequent periods, equities traded in an active market and derivatives are reported at fair value, with any change in fair value reported in income. All other financial instruments are reported at cost or amortized cost less impairment. Transaction costs on the acquisition, sale or issue of financial instruments are expensed for those items measured at fair value and charged to the financial instrument for those measured at amortized cost.

Financial assets are tested for impairment when indicators of impairment exist. When a significant change in the expected timing or amount of the future cash flows of the financial asset is identified, the carrying amount of the financial asset is reduced and the amount of the write-down is recognized in the statement of operations. A previously recognized impairment loss may be reversed to the extent of the improvement, provided it is not greater than the amount that would have been reported at the date of the reversal had the impairment not been recognized previously, and the amount of the reversal is recognized in the statement of operations.

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**3. Short-term investment**

The investment held is a Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GIC) in the amount of \$500,000 (2024 - \$400,000) bearing interest at 2.95% (2024 - 4.95%), maturing on February 11, 2026.

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**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**

**June 30, 2025**

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**4. Accounts receivable**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Grievances receivable	\$ 22,016	\$ 10,458
Salary reimbursement receivable	10,000	-
Trade receivable	297,259	38,734
Sales taxes receivable	287,105	291,000
	<b>\$ 616,380</b>	<b>\$ 340,192</b>

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**5. Investment, at cost**

The Association owns 1,000 units of Education Internationale, which represents 3.5% of all units.

It was determined that the cost of the investment will be reduced by \$1,000 by a yearly reduction in membership fees for the following 4 years.

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**6. Capital assets**

	<b>2025</b>		<b>2024</b>	
	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Accumulated Amortization</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Accumulated Amortization</b>
Furniture and fixtures	\$ 18,085	\$ 14,965	\$ 18,085	\$ 14,185
Computer equipment	14,123	14,123	14,123	14,123
	<b>32,208</b>	<b>29,088</b>	<b>32,208</b>	<b>28,308</b>
Net book value		<b>\$ 3,120</b>		<b>\$ 3,900</b>

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**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**

**June 30, 2025**

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**7. Deferred revenue**

The deferred revenue represents amounts received from different sources that relate to projects and membership fees that will occur in future years. The variations that happened during the year are as follows:

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Deferred revenue beginning of year	\$ 209,565	\$ 256,368
Deferred during the year	44,178	194,774
Recognized as revenue during the year	<u>(199,274)</u>	<u>(241,577)</u>
	<u>\$ 54,469</u>	<u>\$ 209,565</u>

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**8. Related party balances**

The following summarizes the Association's related party transactions for the year.

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Honorariums paid to officers	\$ 29,325	\$ 31,100
Salary reimbursement received	<u>106,130</u>	<u>114,590</u>
	<u>\$ 135,455</u>	<u>\$ 145,690</u>

These transactions were carried out in the normal course of operations and are measured at the exchange amount, which is the amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties.

Payables are measured at cost, determined using their undiscounted cash flows. No difference resulted from these transactions.

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**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**

**June 30, 2025**

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**9. Membership fees**

The Association received membership fees from the member school boards and these fees originate from government funding sources.

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**10. Commitment**

The commitment of the Association under rental leases matures on May 31, 2028. Future minimum payments for the next three years are as follows:

2026	\$	76,510
2027		78,422
2028		73,531
		<hr/>
	\$	228,463
		<hr/>

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**11. Financial instrument risks**

**Financial risks**

The significant risks arising from financial instruments to which the Association is exposed as at June 30, 2025 are detailed below. There have been no substantive changes in the Association's exposure to financial instrument risks, its objectives, policies and processes for managing those risks or the methods used to measure them from previous periods unless otherwise stated in this note.

**Market risk**

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk comprises three types of risk: currency risk, interest rate risk and other price risk. The Association is mainly exposed to interest rate risk.

**Interest rate risk**

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Association is exposed to interest rate on its fixed interest rate financial instruments. The Association's exposure to market interest rates relates primarily to the return it earns on its short-term investment. They currently earn interest based on a fixed rate of 2.95% and are consequently exposed to interest rate risk should the market rate increase.

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**Quebec English School Boards Association /  
Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**

**June 30, 2025**

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**11. Financial instrument risks (continued)**

**Liquidity risk**

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Association encounters difficulty in meeting its obligations associated with financial liabilities. The Association is exposed to this risk mainly in respect of its accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

**Credit risk**

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation. The Association is exposed to credit risk resulting from the possibility that a customer or counterparty to a financial instrument defaults on their financial obligations; if there is a concentration of transactions carried out with the same counterparty; or of financial obligations which have similar economic characteristics such that they could be similarly affected by changes in economic conditions. The Association's financial instruments that are exposed to concentrations of credit risk relate primarily to its accounts receivable and grievances receivable from companies that operate in the same industry.

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**12. Comparative information**

Some comparative information has been reclassified to conform with the current year presentation.

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# CARE CONFERENCE

September 25 & 26, 2024

Community + Action + Resolve = Education

## THE CARE REPORT/ LE RAPPORT CARE

February 2025/  
février 2025



## Executive Summary

The Community + Action + Resolve = Education (CARE) Conference, held in Montreal on September 25-26, 2024, brought together stakeholders from Quebec's English-language education community. Led by the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA), the conference focused on strengthening the public English education system in Quebec and supporting the broader English-speaking minority community. The Conference's Steering Committee included representatives from the Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Québec (ADGESBQ), Québec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT), English Parents' Committee Association of Québec (EPCA), Association of Administrators of English Schools of Québec (AAESQ), Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA) and the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN). QESBA, QCGN, and the Senior Research Manager at the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN) made up the Programming sub-committee.

The Conference was made possible through the generous support of the Governments of Quebec and Canada.

### The conference addressed five major themes:

1. **Sustainability:** The ongoing teacher shortage, exacerbated by systemic recruitment challenges, was a primary focus. Discussions emphasized improving teacher retention, addressing mental health and burnout, and creating a more supportive environment for educators. Recruitment strategies explored included targeting international professionals, improving onboarding for new hires, and addressing geographic and language challenges.
2. **Programs and Expertise:** Discussions highlighted the need to improve French language proficiency among English-speaking students, especially for workforce integration. Experiential learning programs were proposed as a solution to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world application. Additionally, vocational education was underscored as a critical component of the Quebec economy, with calls for increased access and program availability.
3. **Strengthening Community Links:** The conference emphasized the vital role English-language schools play in preserving community identity and fostering belonging for minority students. These schools serve as both educational institutions and social hubs, making them essential to encouraging youth to remain in Quebec.
4. **Government Relations:** Stakeholders examined the impact of recent legislative changes, including Bill 40 and Bill 96, on English-language education in Quebec. These laws, which affect school governance and enrolment, pose significant challenges to English-speaking community institutions. Conference participants stressed the need for proactive engagement with government bodies to ensure the preservation of English-language rights.

5. Best Practices and Advocacy: Advocacy strategies were discussed, focusing on fostering collaboration between different government departments and the English-speaking community. Building relationships with political leaders, data-driven policymaking, and grassroots advocacy were highlighted as effective ways to protect the interests of the English education system.

The CARE Conference underscored the need for continued collaboration among educators, researchers, government, and community stakeholders to address the complex challenges facing the English-language education system in Quebec.

## Elements to consider moving forward from the CARE Conference

### **1. Staff Recruitment and Retention**

- Elevate the Image of Education: Re-emphasize the societal importance of education and improve public perceptions of the teaching profession.
- Address Systemic Shortages: Increase flexibility in funding and staffing policies to attract and retain qualified teachers and support staff.
- Support Mental Health: Provide targeted wellness programs and reduce administrative workloads to prevent burnout.
- Implement Long-Term Strategies: Develop robust onboarding and mentoring programs for new teachers while enhancing teacher preparation pathways through policy changes.
- Improve Data Collection: Invest in comprehensive research to support data-driven policy decisions regarding recruitment and retention.

### **2. Student and Family Engagement**

- Empower Parents: Offer training programs to strengthen parental advocacy and bridge communication gaps between schools and families.
- Increase Student Involvement: Promote student engagement in school governance and decision-making processes.
- Enhance Representation: Foster inclusive history education and share positive stories about Quebec's English-speaking community to strengthen cultural identity.

### **3. Language and Vocational Education**

- Expand French Language Learning: Support experiential language programs that connect students to real-world experiences.
- Strengthen Vocational Training: Increase access to English-language vocational programs and combat societal biases against vocational careers by raising awareness among parents and students.

### **4. Access to English-Language Services**

- Expand Specialized Services: Address shortages in professionals like psychologists and speech therapists through recruitment incentives.
- Improve Transportation: Ensure reliable transportation to English-language schools, especially in rural areas.
- Enhance School-Community Partnerships: Strengthen collaborations with healthcare and social service providers to expand in-school support programs.

## 5. Policy and Legislative Advocacy

- Advocate for Equitable Funding: Ensure that federal investments in minority language education are aligned with provincial priorities and transparent reporting mechanisms.
- Promote Policy Clarity: Advocate for clear and well-communicated policy changes to reduce confusion among students and institutions.
- Strengthen Inter-Ministerial Collaboration: Coordinate efforts between education, health, transportation, and other ministries for comprehensive policy support.

## 6. Grassroots and Government Engagement

- Develop Advocacy Campaigns: Conduct fact-based advocacy using accurate data and community-driven research.
- Foster Cross-Community Partnerships: Build alliances across political and linguistic communities, avoiding divisive narratives.
- Engage with Policymakers: Maintain proactive relationships with elected officials and involve them in consultations to shape policies that reflect community needs.

## 7. Community and Language Rights

- Raise Awareness of Rights: Inform parents about their educational rights under the Official Languages Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- Promote Lifelong Learning: Support lifelong learning opportunities in English and French through formal and informal educational initiatives.

These elements to consider moving forward aim to strengthen Quebec's English-language education system by addressing key challenges, enhancing community engagement, and fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.



## Sponsors:

We were able to provide this conference free of charge with special thanks to important funding from the Ministry of Education, the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise, the Association of Directors General of English Schools of Quebec and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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## Steering Committee:

ADGESBQ: Rob Buttars  
AAESQ: Peggy McCourt  
EPCA: Katherine Korakakis  
QCGN: Stephen Thompson  
QESBA: Kim Hamilton  
QFHSA: Rosemary Murphy  
QPAT: Sebastien Joly

Special Contributions:  
QUESCREN/Ilet: Lorraine O'Donnell  
QESBA: Suzanne Keough



# Report on Proceedings

## Summary of Discussions Day 1

In Quebec, English-language schools are crucial in preserving the culture and identity of the minority community. Beyond providing education, these schools function as community hubs, fostering a sense of belonging while offering essential social services. They play a vital role in encouraging young English speakers to remain in Quebec and stay connected to their roots. Promoting representation and diversity within these schools is key to fostering inclusion and ensuring minority students, many of whom face barriers to English-language social services, feel supported.

Families are the cornerstone of the school system. Parental involvement in school governance strengthens education by fostering collaboration and advocacy. Equipping parents with training programs and enhancing communication between schools and families can enhance school governance, especially in meeting the needs of all students. Addressing geographic challenges through improved student transportation in rural areas and establishing satellite services in schools can further support families. Student engagement and activism are equally important. Encouraging youth to participate in shaping their communities helps build a stronger future. This can be supported by sharing positive stories about English speakers in Quebec and integrating inclusive history education into the curriculum.

Addressing these needs requires a solutions-oriented approach. Enhancing access to English-language services, implementing strategies to retain young people in Quebec, and boosting voter turnout in school board elections are essential steps. Equally important is fostering greater community involvement in schools, improving coordination among government departments, and strengthening communication among all stakeholders. By adopting comprehensive strategies and prioritizing the well-being of students and their families, Quebec's English-speaking community can overcome challenges and build a stronger, more inclusive educational environment.

## Summary of Sustainability Theme

Staff recruitment and retention were pressing issues that drew the attention of not only school leaders and educators but also governments and elected officials who actively sought solutions to an identified problem: an ongoing teacher shortage. The shortage was widely recognized as real, significant, and worsening with each passing school year. Factors identified, such as teacher quality, compensation, training, and professional development, indicated that the situation was even more severe than what reports and research had previously suggested. The goal of these discussions was to identify effective strategies that the Ministry of Education (MEQ), universities, and school boards could implement to strengthen recruitment efforts and develop retention plans that would encourage teaching as a long-term career. These sessions analysed school staff perceptions of existing recruitment and retention strategies, while also exploring actionable solutions to address the growing teacher shortage.

Discussants highlighted the urgent need to address several interconnected issues to sustain the education system through 2035 and beyond. They stressed the importance of societal recognition of education's value, improving working conditions, and prioritizing mental health and well-being for both educators and staff.

Quebec's education system faces critical challenges that require comprehensive and strategic action. A key issue is the perceived decline in societal respect for the teaching profession and other educational roles, including administrators and support staff. This erosion of value affects recruitment and retention efforts, highlighting the need to re-emphasize the vital role of education in society.

Systemic shortages across all education roles are another pressing concern, with a severe teacher retirement wave expected by 2027-2028. Administrative and support staff shortages compound the problem as schools increasingly become multi-service hubs. Flexibility in resource allocation and adaptable funding models are essential to addressing these staffing gaps.

Mental health and well-being also emerged as critical priorities, with rising stress and burnout threatening staff retention. Immediate support systems, wellness programs, and streamlined administrative processes are needed to reduce workplace strain.

Long-term recruitment and retention strategies should focus on fostering a sense of belonging, robust onboarding, and continuous professional validation and incentives on retirement. Addressing systemic issues like classroom composition and administrative burnout can create a more stable and supportive environment.

Finally, data-driven policymaking is vital. Accurate data collection and comprehensive research can reveal the true scope of staff shortages, informing better resource allocation and policy development. By taking these integrated steps, Quebec can strengthen its education system and build a more sustainable and supportive environment for educators and students alike.

In conclusion, addressing the English system's staff recruitment and retention challenges requires a multifaceted approach grounded in long-term, sustainable strategies. Elevating the societal value of education, improving working conditions, prioritizing mental health, and ensuring flexibility in resource allocation are critical steps. Collaboration among the Ministry of Education, universities, school boards, and community stakeholders is essential to develop tailored policies that reflect the realities of the English education sector. By investing in data-driven solutions and fostering a supportive environment for educators and school staff, Quebec can build a resilient minority language education system capable of meeting the needs of future generations.



# Workshop A: Staff Recruitment and Retention

## *Theme: Sustainability*

Speakers: Lisa Cleary, ESSB  
Valerie Roux, CSS du Littoral  
Ann Watson, EMSB  
Cuthbert McIntyre, NFSB  
Cindy Finn, LBPSB  
Mélanie Lazure, RSB  
Caroline Dufresne, ETSB  
George Singfield, WQSB  
Steven McCoubrey, CQSB  
Christine Denommée and Bonnie Sullivan (Moderators)

Quebec's education system faces significant recruitment and retention challenges, prompting school boards and government agencies to implement targeted strategies. A project funded by Canadian Heritage and nine school boards focuses on recruiting qualified teachers, professionals, and support staff by leveraging career fairs, LinkedIn, and international onboarding support. However, persistent barriers such as French proficiency requirements, rural isolation, limited housing, and resource constraints complicate these efforts.

To address these challenges, school boards collaborate by tailoring strategies to local needs, supporting international hires, and fostering community engagement. Proposed solutions include investing in mentorship programs, professional development, mental health support, and improving HR operations. Additionally, addressing gaps in teacher education pipelines through policy revisions and enhanced internships could strengthen long-term recruitment efforts. These comprehensive measures aim to create a sustainable and supportive environment for educators across Quebec.

### ● Recruitment and Retention Strategies:

- The speakers presented a project funded by Canadian Heritage and nine school boards, it focuses on recruiting qualified teachers (French second language, Math and Science), professionals (e.g., psychologists), and support staff across Quebec. Strategies include attending national and international career fairs, utilizing LinkedIn, and providing onboarding support for international recruits, such as helping them with visas and housing.

### ● Key Challenges Faced:

- Recruitment efforts are hindered by French proficiency requirements, rural isolation, competitive job markets, part-time positions, and resource constraints. Additionally, a lack of housing, transportation, and daycare facilities further complicates recruitment and retention, especially in rural areas.

### ● Collaboration and Tailored Solutions:

- School boards work together to address regional challenges by adapting strategies to local needs. They leverage mentors, social media, and technology to improve recruitment systems and onboarding. There is also a focus on building community support for international teachers and professionals. There are efforts to recruit teachers outside of Quebec. Supporting international and "rest of Canada" hires; this requires situating the new hires' families in Quebec to build a positive life.

All English school boards in Quebec are benefiting from external recruitment support programs. It is important that these programs receive greater funding.

### *Theme: Sustainability*

- Potential Solutions:
  - Staff retention strategies like mentorship, professional development, mental health support, compensation, class size, effective onboarding experiences, and culture.
  - Addressing the systemic issues within the education talent pipeline – looking at university programming, internships and apprenticeships, hiring requirements, and reskilling talent. For example, reversing the following practicum policy: Students in French universities are not allowed to do their teaching practicums at English schools.
  - Greater investment in HR operations, planning and technology. This may, in many cases, also require additional knowledge and skills. In addition, adopting emergency exception policies to ensure that school services are delivered.

## **Workshop B: Census 2021 and s23 Eligibility**

### *Theme: Government support for the English school system in Quebec*

Speakers: Étienne Lemyre, Senior Analyst – Statistics Canada  
Thérèse Nguyen – Statistics Canada

The 2021 Canadian census introduced questions to identify children eligible for minority language education under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, marking a significant development for language policy, particularly in Quebec. While eligibility criteria differ across provinces due to legal frameworks like Quebec's Charter of the French Language, the census data offers valuable insights into enrolment trends and access disparities.

Findings reveal that proximity to minority language schools strongly influences attendance rates, with rural areas facing notable declines due to distance. Quebec stands out with the highest number and percentage of eligible children for minority language instruction in Canada. Efforts are underway to enhance the data ecosystem by integrating census data with surveys to better inform policy and service planning. Key challenges include under-classification of eligible children, regional enrolment disparities, and the need for improved understanding of parental decision-making. These insights can guide school boards and policymakers in strengthening minority language education across the country.

- Census and Language Education Rights:
  - The Canadian 2021 census introduced new questions to identify children eligible for minority language education under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This was a significant advance, especially in Quebec, where eligibility criteria for English-language education differ from those outside the province.
  - The English-speaking community should familiarize itself with the data available to inform its needs. It is the role of the school boards to engage with the Minister of Education on the implications of the data for the needs of English-language schools.

- **Challenges in Defining Eligibility:**

Eligibility varies across provinces. Outside Quebec, it depends on factors like parents' French education or mother tongue, while in Quebec, it focuses on previous English-language education of parents or siblings. This distinction reflects how provincial laws, such as Quebec's Charter of the French Language, shape access to education.

- **Data Findings and Disparities:**

- Attendance rates at minority language schools are higher when schools are nearby. The further a child lives from a minority language school, the less likely the student is to attend that school.

- There are regional differences in participation, and rural areas show drop-offs in enrolment due to distance.

- Quebec has a much higher absolute number and percentage of children eligible for instruction in the minority official language than other provinces and territories.

- **Future Analysis and Data Issues:**

- StatsCan aims to enhance its data ecosystem by combining census data with other surveys to better understand enrolment trends and forecast future needs. Upcoming efforts will explore school proximity, transportation, and parental decision-making factors, helping communities and ministries plan educational services effectively.

- Under-classification of eligible children in the census: About 10% of children were not classified as eligible in the census for reasons such as parents not living together, but were under the revised study that attempted to recreate families.

- Language of instruction at the local level: There are significantly varied attendance rates in various municipalities. Low attendance rates could reflect children who attended an English-language school before moving to a certain municipality. They could also reflect a lack of schools in a municipality.

- Language of instruction and bilingualism: In Quebec and Canada outside of Quebec, the rate of bilingualism is higher among people who were schooled in the minority official language.

## **Workshop C: Parent Choice and Engagement Marketing**

### ***Theme: Sustainability***

Speakers: Michael J. Cohen, Manager, Marketing and Communications - EMSB  
Daniel Smajovits, Media Relations Officer, Digital Marketing and  
Media Relations – EMSB

English school boards in Quebec are adopting targeted marketing strategies to promote eligibility for English public schools. Traditional media campaigns are being replaced by cost-effective digital promotions through websites, newsletters, and social media. Partnerships with public figures and community events further amplify outreach efforts, while raising awareness about bilingual education and eligibility rights remains a priority.

However, digital engagement poses challenges, including managing online interactions and responding to inquiries. Smaller school boards face additional difficulties due to limited staff and financial constraints, often relying on volunteers or alumni for marketing support. Maintaining eligibility through proper documentation is also critical, as enrolment processes can become complicated when students do not meet formal criteria. Despite these efforts, lingering effects from the COVID-19 pandemic and complex eligibility rules continue to impact enrolment rates.

- Targeted Marketing Strategies
  - School boards are focusing on promoting eligibility, especially highlighting that francophone students can attend English public schools. They are shifting from traditional media like TV ads to more cost-effective channels, such as radio (weather and traffic segments) and digital platforms, including websites and newsletters. Organic promotions through events and partnerships with public figures are also emphasized. Awareness of eligibility rights is critical for rightsholders, as there are serious consequences for those who do not maintain eligibility. There is also a need to promote bilingual education.
  
- Challenges with Digital Engagement:
  - Social media, particularly Instagram, is prioritized to engage students. Managing online interactions requires dedicated resources, as even simple inquiries demand timely responses. Negative reviews on platforms like Google present additional challenges.
  
- Resource and Capacity Limitations:
  - Smaller school boards struggle with marketing due to limited staff and volunteers. Some rely on governing board members or alumni to assist with marketing efforts. There is also concern about maintaining consistent content, as inactive social media pages can harm engagement. There is a lack of financial resources to procure marketing and communication specialists. There is also no single formal resource or composite regarding efficient marketing strategies (successful and affordable) for different school boards.
  
- Eligibility and Enrolment Issues:
  - Clear communication about maintaining English school board eligibility is critical for parents, as formal paperwork is required to secure access for future generations. Despite high conversion rates from marketing efforts, many students enrolled may not meet eligibility criteria, complicating enrolment management. Enrolment has suffered due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Issues in enrolment seem to stem from eligibility criteria and not a lack of marketing.



# Workshop D: French Language or FSL

## **Theme:** *Programs and Expertise*

**Speaker:** Maria Popica, Teacher, Department of French, John Abbott College

French language proficiency is a critical factor for workforce integration in Quebec, yet many students struggle with functional French, particularly in writing and communication. This challenge limits job opportunities in essential sectors such as healthcare and emergency services, especially outside Montreal, where bilingual skills are crucial.

To address this, the Apprentissage du français langue seconde par l'engagement communautaire program developed by Maria Popica emphasizes experiential learning through internships in hospitals, senior care centers, and schools. By participating in real-world tasks like preparing CVs, conducting interviews, and engaging with the community, students gain practical language skills while boosting their confidence and sense of belonging. Institutional partnerships with schools, healthcare centers, and hospitals strengthen the program's reach and impact.

The program's hybrid model, combining in-person and online learning with financial support for participants, has yielded positive results. Students report improved communication skills, professional readiness, and increased employability, with some securing part-time or summer jobs. This immersive approach not only enhances language proficiency but also inspires students to consider careers in teaching and community service.

- **Challenges in French Language Proficiency for Workforce Integration:**
  - Many students entering higher education struggle with functional French, especially in writing and communication, impacting their ability to succeed in the Quebec workforce. Around 50% of high school graduates reach only A2 or B1 levels, limiting opportunities in fields like healthcare and emergency services, particularly outside Montreal.
- **Experiential Learning in French as a Second Language (FSL):**
  - The program emphasizes real-world experiences, bridging academic learning with practical application through internships in hospitals, senior care centres, and schools. Activities included preparing CVs, interviews, community engagement (i.e., visits to patients/seniors), and running workshops, fostering confidence and communication skills in French.
  - Institutional partners: elementary schools from LBPSB, CIUSS de L'Ouest de L'Île, one CHSLD and five hospitals
- **Positive Impact on Motivation and Skill Development:**
  - Program participants reported improved French communication, professional confidence, and a stronger sense of belonging in their community. Collaboration with diverse individuals and active language use enhanced learning outcomes and helped some students secure part-time or summer employment. Students benefited from practical engagement and immersion, increasing both their language proficiency and employability.
- **Program Design and Support:**
  - The hybrid model included both in-person and online components, with financial support for participants (bursaries and travel expenses). Despite some students opting out, the program's immersive approach encouraged personal growth and inspired some participants to consider teaching careers.

# Workshop E: Vocational Training

## *Theme: Programs and Expertise*

Speakers: Véronique Marin, Assistant Director General - LBPSB  
Maggie Soldano, Director of Continuing Education - LBPSB

Vocational education is a key pillar of Quebec's economy, providing hands-on training that leads directly to employment in high-demand sectors such as healthcare, construction, and electric vehicle production. These programs offer students practical skills with pathways to further education, playing a critical role in the English education system.

However, access to English-language vocational programs remains limited, with some courses only available through specific school boards or in French. This restricts opportunities for English-speaking students and complicates program expansion due to ministry approval and translation requirements.

A persistent societal bias views vocational education as a "second choice," emphasizing the need to reshape perceptions by encouraging parents and educators to support diverse career paths, including non-traditional roles for women.

Community collaboration and advocacy are essential for sustaining and expanding these programs. Partnerships with industries and government support can address labor shortages while engaging students early and informing parents about the value of vocational careers. This united approach is crucial for building a skilled and adaptable workforce in Quebec's evolving economy.

### ● Importance of Vocational Education

○ Vocational education plays an important role in the English education system and Quebec's economy, addressing workforce demands across sectors like healthcare, construction, and electric vehicle production. It offers flexible, hands-on training programs that lead directly to employment, with options to pursue further education.

### ● Challenges in Access and Program Availability

○ Limited access to certain vocational programs, particularly in English, is a significant challenge. Some programs are available only through specific school boards (rather than in all of them) or in French, creating barriers for English-speaking students. Approval for new programs also requires ministry validation and translation, adding complexity.

### ● Perception and Parental Influence

○ A societal bias still views vocational education as a "second choice." The need to change this mindset was highlighted; it can be through encouraging parents and educators to value students' interests and career paths in trades. Promoting non-traditional careers for women, such as mechanics, is also a priority.

### ● Community Collaboration and Advocacy

○ Uniting as an English-speaking community is important to protect vocational education programs. Partnerships with industries and government support are vital to maintaining program viability and addressing labour shortages. Engaging students early and educating parents about the value of vocational careers are essential steps forward.

# Plenary Panel: What the school means to my community

*Theme: Strengthening the Link Between the English Public Education Sector and the Broader Community Served by Our School System*

Speakers: Noel Burke, former Assistant Deputy Minister - Ministry of Education  
Tya Collins, Ph.D., Assistant Professor - University of Ottawa  
Alix Adrien, President - Quebec Board of Black Educators (QBBE)

Moderator: Royal Orr

Fostering a sense of belonging among youth is essential for encouraging them to stay in Quebec and thrive within both English and French communities. Schools play a crucial role as cultural hubs where collaboration between families, educators, and community services creates inclusive and supportive environments.

A key priority is enhancing representation and engagement of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) communities. Positive role models, mentorship programs, and culturally sensitive communication can strengthen relationships with marginalized students and their families. Addressing systemic barriers such as profiling and underrepresentation is central to these efforts.

Strengthening school-community partnerships through intergenerational learning and activism also emerged as a focus, though concerns remain about policies that discourage advocacy. Encouraging students and the broader English-speaking community to engage in activism is critical for driving meaningful change.

Community-based research that includes a BIPOC perspective can provide actionable strategies to support these goals. Addressing systemic issues, promoting teacher autonomy, and acknowledging the impact of political dynamics will further support inclusive educational and social environments.

- Promoting Youth Belonging and Retention in Quebec:

- There is a need to encourage young people to stay in Quebec by fostering pride in both English and French communities. The panel highlighted the importance of schools as spaces for cultural transmission, belonging, and collaboration between schools, families, and community services to create an inclusive environment.

- Representation, Inclusion, and Engagement of “BIPOC” (Black, Indigenous, and people of colour) Communities:

- Panellists stressed the need for representation in education and the importance of positive relationships, guidance, and role models for marginalized students, particularly from the Black community. Engaging BIPOC families in school activities requires understanding cultural differences, ensuring clear communication about expectations, and addressing systemic barriers like profiling.

- Challenges in School-Community Partnerships and Activism:

- There is a push for collaboration between teachers, schools, and external partners to foster intergenerational learning and community engagement. However, frustration was expressed over the lack of activism and student involvement, with concerns about policies that discourage efforts to advocate for change.

- Students, the education and English-speaking community at large can and should engage in more activism.

- Research:
  - Community-based research should include a BIPOC focus to provide practical strategies to better meet the needs of the community. Research should be built into schools to achieve real-world solutions.
- Concerns Around Systemic Issues and Teacher Autonomy:
  - The session exposed concerns around systemic racism, with discussions about the need for schools to acknowledge and address these challenges. Concerns were expressed about political dynamics and underrepresentation.

## Plenary Panel: Parent Issues and Minority Language Educational Rights

*Theme: Government support for the English school system in Quebec*

Speakers: Katherine Korakakis, President - EPCA  
Rosemary Murphy, President - QFHSA

Moderator: Rob Buttars, Retired Director General - NFSB  
and Past-President of ADGESBQ

Access to English-language services in Quebec remains a pressing issue, particularly for students with special needs. A shortage of English-speaking professionals such as psychologists and speech therapists delays essential diagnoses and interventions, putting additional pressure on teachers and leaving families stressed and underserved. Support from government agencies, local community service centers (CLSCs), and specialized professionals is urgently needed.

Transportation challenges further complicate access to education. Long travel times, unreliable bus services, and harsh weather conditions discourage student attendance and participation, especially in remote areas. In some cases, families face difficult choices between long commutes to English schools or nearby French schools.

Small school boards struggle to sustain programs and attract specialists due to limited student populations and overlapping responsibilities across government ministries. Clarifying the roles of school boards and fostering inter-ministerial collaboration are essential to overcoming these systemic barriers.

Parent engagement and community collaboration are central to creating lasting change. Training programs can empower parents to advocate effectively, while partnerships between school boards, teachers, staff, and commissioners strengthen community ties. A holistic approach involving multiple government ministries is crucial to ensuring that all students receive the services and education they need.

- Limited Access to English-Language Services:
  - A shortage of English-speaking professionals (psychologists, speech therapists, etc.) delays diagnoses and services, especially for children with special needs. Families struggle to communicate with professionals, resulting in stress and unmet needs, delays when early intervention is critical, and pressure on teachers who are having to meet those needs.
  - There is an overall need for support from: the government, Centre local de services communautaires (CLSC), professionals, etc.

- **Transportation and School Accessibility Challenges:**

- Long travel times and unreliable bus services discourage attendance, participation in activities, and student motivation. Geographic factors and harsh weather further complicate transportation, especially in remote areas.

- There is sometimes a choice: students can spend hours on a bus to go to an English school or walk to a nearby French school.

- **Systemic Issues in Small Schools and Social Services:**

- Small school boards face difficulties in attracting specialists and sustaining programs due to limited student numbers. The lack of clarity in the roles of school boards and overlapping responsibilities among ministries (health, education, transportation) hinder progress.

- There are regional differences and other complexities within English-speaking Quebec.

- **Need for Collaboration and Parent Engagement:**

- Engaging parents, clarifying their roles, and improving collaboration between school boards and communities are crucial. Advocacy and proactive communication with government bodies can lead to meaningful changes, but sustained involvement by all stakeholders is necessary.

- There is a need for parent training and empowering parents so they know that they have a voice, that schools are there to serve a community, and that we all have to work together. The school board community is the parents, governing board, teachers, staff and the commissioner. Everyone in Quebec has a role to play.

- There is a need to take a holistic approach to government engagement to address the needs of the community (i.e., Minister of Education for schools, Minister of Transportation for bussing, Minister of Health, Minister of Municipal Affairs, etc.).

## Summary of Discussions Day 2

Quebec's English-language education sector faces critical challenges stemming from legislative reforms, resource constraints, and demographic shifts. Discussions highlighted the need to strengthen staff/teacher recruitment, ensure equitable access to education, and enhance government collaboration. Bills 40 and 96 have reshaped governance and language requirements, causing enrolment declines and financial losses, particularly at Concordia University. Addressing these impacts requires transparent policy development, better consultation processes, and data-driven decision-making.

Participants emphasized the importance of grassroots advocacy and strategic government engagement. Building alliances across political, linguistic, and community lines was deemed crucial. Advocacy efforts must be fact-based, legally informed, and centred on shared goals. The revised Official Languages Act underscores lifelong learning and community support, while also promoting bilingualism among English-speaking Quebecers to strengthen provincial unity.

Innovative partnerships, such as the Heart and Hands Clinic at Verdun Elementary, showcased how intersectoral collaboration can support vulnerable students. However, sustainability depends on addressing systemic issues like funding inequities, healthcare access, and teacher shortages. By fostering meaningful partnerships, increasing policy transparency, and developing long-term recruitment strategies, Quebec's English-speaking communities can better navigate these challenges and ensure the future vitality of their education system.

## Opening Remarks

*Theme: Developing Strategies to Work Cooperatively with Government*

Speaker: Sebastien Joly, Executive Director - QPAT

Quebec's English-language education system faces a pressing need to attract more people to the teaching profession. A history of successful collaboration among school boards, organizations, and community stakeholders demonstrates the potential for positive change through collective efforts. To sustain and strengthen English education, open communication, mutual respect, and trust are essential. Moreover, fostering a strong relationship between Quebec's English- and French-speaking communities is crucial, as both languages play a vital role in the province's cultural and social fabric. Through continued collaboration and shared responsibility, Quebec can build a more resilient and inclusive education system.

- There is a need to attract more people to the teaching profession. There is a history of successful collaboration between different school boards, organizations and stakeholders to improve English education in Quebec. To achieve success and positive change, there is a need for open communication and collaboration, building trust and maintaining respect. Both the French and English communities should continue to foster a strong relationship as both languages are critical to the province and country.

## Plenary Panel: Impact of Recent Legislation and Policy Decisions on English Education in Quebec

*Theme: Developing Strategies to Work Cooperatively with the Government and Positively Contribute to the Development of Legislation*

Speakers: Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor - Concordia University  
Terry Kharyati - Director General – CEGEP Heritage

Moderator: Marion Sandilands, Partner - Conway Litigation

Recent legislative measures, including Bills 40, and 96 have significantly reshaped Quebec's English education landscape, affecting governance, enrolment, and language requirements. Bill 40 aimed to abolish school boards and centralize governance but has been stalled due to a constitutional stay. Bill 96 introduced enrolment caps at English-language CEGEPs while imposing stricter French language instruction and equivalency exams, complicating access for local and international students. Tuition hikes for out-of-province university students have further limited opportunities for higher education in Quebec.

These legislative changes have triggered a decline in enrolment, notably at Concordia University, which reported a 28% drop in new registrations, forecasting a \$15 million financial loss over the next three years. This decline undermines Montreal's standing as a global education hub and reduces access for Indigenous, international, and special needs students, despite certain exemptions from language exams.

The rushed implementation and lack of clear communication have led to confusion among students and institutions, prompting many to pursue studies outside Quebec. The resulting economic and cultural impacts underscore the need for greater consultation, transparent policy development, and data-driven decision-making in Quebec's education sector.

- **Legislative Impact on English Education**

- Recent laws (Bills 40, 96) have imposed governance changes, enrolment caps, and increased French language requirements, significantly affecting English institutions at primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. Bill 40 sought to abolish school boards and restrict governance to the province; it was brought to trial and has not come into effect due to a constitutional stay. Bill 96 sets a limit to the number of students an English-language Cegep can enrol. This is significant as it is the first time English-language CEGEPs are recognized as English-language institutions; this brought on new requirements for French instruction and equivalency exams. The tuition hikes for out-of-province university students and mandatory French equivalence exams have further complicated access to university for both local and international students.

- **Decline in Enrolment and Economic Impact:**

- Concordia reports a decline in enrolment (new registration dropped by 28%), leading to financial losses ( approx. 15 million dollars over the next three years) and a diminution of Montreal's reputation as a global education hub. The policies discourage students from pursuing higher education in Quebec, especially Indigenous, international, and special needs students.

- Special needs students, though exempt from certain French exams, still face challenges due to mandatory French instruction. Indigenous students face reduced enrolment opportunities, raising concerns about access and inclusivity in higher education.

- **Lack of Clarity and Consultation:**

- Implementation of the laws was rushed, and they were poorly communicated. This exacerbated the challenges for both students and institutions.

- Confusion around eligibility and policy changes has led to uncertainty, leading many students (both in-province and out-of-province) to opt to study outside Quebec instead. This is having a large negative impact on Quebec's economy and culture.

- There is a need for more consultation and data-driven policy development for higher education.

## **Plenary Panel: Making Things Better: How to Effectively Engage with Government**

*Theme: Best practices in working cooperatively with government and positively contributing to the development of legislation, regulations, policies, and programs*

Keynote: Tom Mulcair

Advocating for policy change requires a strategic approach grounded in data-driven analysis, legal knowledge, and relationship-building. Mastery of facts is essential, as even minor inaccuracies can undermine credibility.

Understanding the legal and political landscape, including relevant court rulings, policies, and legislative structures, strengthens advocacy efforts.

Grassroots advocacy begins at the community level, engaging regional and municipal governments closest to the issue. Successful campaigns often involve building alliances across political, linguistic, and community divides. This includes collaborating with Francophone communities, local officials, and even opposition parties to foster trust and ensure diverse voices are heard in policy consultations.

Sustainable change depends on forming lasting relationships, avoiding political silos, and resisting divisive narratives. Advocacy efforts should focus on shared goals, promoting unity, and working collectively toward common interests. The four essential steps for driving meaningful change include identifying allies, working collaboratively, taking issues seriously, and developing a clear and informed analysis.

- Preparation and Mastery of Facts:

- Use data to make considerations and inform decision making.

- Be meticulous with facts when advocating for change, as one incorrect detail can undermine credibility.

- Understand the legal and political landscape, including relevant policies, court rulings, and the structure of legislation (e.g., directives, and regulations).

- Grassroots Advocacy Rules of Engagement:

- Stakeholders must understand the rules and systems of engagement:

- Effective campaigns often begin at the community level, such as with local efforts addressing mining company regulations.

- Engage with governance at levels closest to the issue, such as regional and municipal governments.

- Public service and candidates to make it more inclusive

- Never assume that we shouldn't lobby a certain type of people

- Building Relationships, Finding Allies, Engaging with Opposition, and Avoiding Political Silos:

- Identify and connect with allies across political and community lines, including Francophone communities and local officials. Engage proactively with political leaders and institutions before emergencies arise to build trust and ensure future collaboration.

- Get to know your elected officials, build trust and relationships to ensure important stories/voices are heard in governmental consultations.

- Relying solely on traditional allies like the Liberal Party is risky; instead, build connections with opposition parties and diverse stakeholders. Address divisive rhetoric by fostering unity and focusing on shared goals, resisting efforts to exploit cultural or linguistic differences for political gain.

- Collective liberation occurs when working together, with mutual recognition of each other's humanity.

- Key Steps in Making Change:

1. Identify Allies

2. Work Together

3. Be on time

4. The mastery of facts

5. Take Issues Seriously

6. Develop an Analysis

# Remarks from Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages

## Themes:

- (a) Best practices in working cooperatively with government and positively contributing to the development of legislation, regulations, policies, and programs*
- (b) Government support for the English school system in Quebec*

Speaker: Raymond Th  berge - Commissioner of Official Languages

The revised Official Languages Act underscores the importance of supporting Quebec's English-speaking population as an official language minority. This includes addressing economic challenges, improving public perceptions, and ensuring parents are aware of their rights, as only 25% of eligible children currently attend English-language schools.

Education plays a central role in sustaining minority language communities by fostering bilingualism and preparing students to thrive in both English and French environments. English schools in Quebec serve as pillars of community growth, much like how French-speaking communities have flourished in other provinces. Promoting English-speaking Quebecers as bilingual allies strengthens the cultural and linguistic fabric of the province.

Lifelong learning is also enshrined in the Official Languages Act, ensuring access to educational opportunities beyond formal schooling. Despite ongoing political debates and language tensions, community leaders continue advocating for equitable treatment and stronger ties between English and French communities. Using updated data and shifting the narrative can help present a more accurate and constructive picture of Quebec's English-speaking population and its educational institutions.

- **Community and Language Rights:**

- The new Official Languages Act emphasizes the importance of supporting communities, with a focus on Quebec's English-speaking population and its rights as an official language minority, including economic challenges and public perceptions. On average 25% of the children who have English eligibility attend minority schools; parents need to be aware of their rights.

- **Role of Education in Community Growth:**

- English schools in Quebec are tasked with both growing their communities and fostering bilingualism by preparing students to speak French. Education is essential for sustaining minority language communities, as shown by examples of French communities thriving in other provinces. English-speaking Quebecers need to be positioned as bilingual allies of the French language and culture.

- **Commitment to Lifelong Learning:**

- Part VII of the Official Languages Act promotes lifelong learning in one's language as a fundamental right. The policy supports formal and informal education opportunities beyond elementary and higher education, ensuring continuous development.

- Challenges and Advocacy:

- Ongoing political debates and tensions highlight disparities between English- and French-speaking communities. Despite challenges, community leaders remain committed to advocating for their rights and building bridges between communities to strengthen unity. The English-speaking community should use new data to change the narrative and paint a more accurate picture of the community and English language institutions.

## Workshop A: Understanding Government Investments in the English School System

Theme: Understanding Government Investments in the English School System

Speakers: Timothée Labelle, Director of Intergovernmental Policy and Programs,  
Canadian Heritage  
Georges Lemieux, Director General - Ministry of Education

Moderator: Steven Colpitts

Minority language education in Quebec operates within a complex framework shaped by federal and provincial roles. The federal government supports education through the Official Languages Act (OLA) and funding agreements, while respecting provincial jurisdiction over education as outlined in the Financial Administration Act (FAA). The province sets strategic priorities through the Quebec Action Plan, supported by federal investments aligned with principles of need, equity, and data-driven decision-making.

Recent federal investments include \$147M for minority language education, \$120M for post-secondary education, and \$15M for staff/teacher recruitment. Despite the higher cost of operating English-language schools, the provincial government commits to equitable resource allocation for both English- and French-speaking students.

However, challenges persist. Differences in federal accountability requirements and provincial autonomy can create friction. Labour shortages and the evolving needs of Quebec's English-speaking communities add complexity to program implementation. To improve outcomes, stakeholders emphasize the importance of transparent processes, stronger community consultations, and streamlined reporting to ensure federal funding directly benefits educational institutions.

- Federal and Provincial Roles and Frameworks:

- The federal government supports minority language education through the Official Languages Act (OLA) and provincial agreements. Funding allocations align with principles of need, equity, and data-driven decision-making while balancing respect for provincial jurisdiction over education as per the Financial Administration Act (FAA). The priorities are set by the province, which the federal government supports. The modern OLA will undertake consultations to ensure government measures better reflect the needs of the community.

- Education is a provincial jurisdiction. Interactions with the federal government need to reflect that. The provincial government produces collaborative strategic plans in consultation to the Quebec Action Plan.

- Funding and Strategic Priorities:

- Recent investments include \$147M for minority language education, \$120M for post-secondary education, and \$15M for staff/teacher recruitment. Quebec integrates federal funds into its strategic plan for education, prioritizing equal access for both English- and French-speaking students even though educating students in the English-language system costs more. The provincial government will ensure that students, regardless of language, will have the same resources and support. Budgetary requirements and the strategic plan apply to both French and English schools.

- Challenges in Implementation:

- The federal government is concerned with the conditions attached to federal investments (accountability for reporting) and whether needs are being met (community groups):

- Differences between federal reporting requirements and provincial autonomy can cause friction.

- Labour shortages and adapting to the growing diversity within English-speaking communities remain significant challenges.

- Improving Collaboration and Transparency:

- Effective consultations with English-speaking communities are crucial for policy success.

- Stakeholders expressed concerns about limited provincial funding reaching education directly and called for clearer processes to streamline federal support.

## **Workshop B: Maximizing the Potential of Partnerships to Benefit Students, Families and the Community**

*Theme: The importance of government support to minority language education*

Speakers: Dr. David D'Arienzo, Pediatrician, Montreal Children's Hospital  
David Meloche, Executive Director QESBA

The Heart and Hands Clinic at Verdun Elementary School represents Canada's first in-house paediatric clinic within a school, offering a unique partnership between the education, health, and community sectors.

This innovative model provides essential medical services, including speech therapy, occupational therapy, and nutritional counselling, directly to students, enhancing access to healthcare for vulnerable populations. By integrating healthcare professionals into the school environment, the clinic creates a hands-on learning space for paediatric residents while supporting holistic student wellness.

However, several challenges persist, including limited clinic hours, resource constraints, and language requirements for healthcare providers. Gaps in paediatric medical training and reduced funding in gentrifying neighbourhoods further complicate service delivery.

The clinic also emphasizes trauma-informed practices, such as restorative discipline and mindfulness, though addressing students' complex emotional needs remains a challenge.

For long-term success, establishing meaningful partnerships, securing committed healthcare professionals, and aligning goals are essential. A five-year partnership framework aims to address these issues while exploring scalable solutions for school-based healthcare programs. Using strategies such as impact and solution mapping can strengthen similar initiatives across educational settings.

- **The Role of School-Based Clinics:** The Heart and Hands Clinic is a paediatric resident-led clinic housed within Verdun Elementary School

- This is Canada's first in-house clinic and represents a partnership between the education and health sectors and community organizations. It provides medical services in school to children within the community; this includes para-services from other health professionals such as speech and occupational therapists, and dietitians/nutritionists. The clinic is open once a week for half of the day. This creates a time restraint that challenges the healthcare professionals to meet the needs of the community.

- This partnership provides an innovative healthcare model. The clinic increases accessibility to healthcare for vulnerable populations, while also providing a rich learning environment for medical residents. Paediatric residents can interact with school staff and other professionals to provide holistic healthcare to the community.

- **Challenges in Partnerships and Resource Allocation:**

- Resource constraints, access/availability of professionals, and language requirements (i.e., the requirement to speak French) limit the interaction between education and health services. In addition, insufficient access to in-school services and funding cuts hinders aid/support for students and communities in need. There is a gap in paediatric medical training; there is a focus on inpatient paediatrics and less on in-school services. This is a case study for complex and layered issues within education.

- **Importance of Trauma-Informed Practices:**

- In-school clinics support student wellness, through a medical, emotional, and spiritual approach to health. Through collaboration with school staff, bottom-up trauma-informed strategies (i.e., restorative discipline, mindfulness, and classroom meetings) address students' emotional needs. Despite this approach, it is still challenging to meet students' needs.

- **Keys to Effective Implementation and Growth:**

- This is a five-year partnership to assess issues that arise within gentrifying neighbourhoods; government funding decreases as neighbourhood income increases, creating a gap for individuals who struggle within the community.

Building meaningful partnerships, aligning goals, and finding key personnel (i.e., supervising physicians) are essential for the development and growth of this model. Using strategies like challenge, impact, and solution mapping can guide the development of sustainable programs across schools or develop solutions for various problems.

# Partners in CARE



# CARE Conference Survey

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Survey Results	4
Recommendations	5
Conclusion	6
APPENDIX A: Survey Results By Question	7

**Please be mindful that we promised confidentiality.**

Please note that only those who were authorized to have access to the survey responses spreadsheet do. If others require access please notify Roxanne Desforges.

“Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of evaluating and improving the conference. All data will be anonymized, and individual responses will not be shared with third parties. Participation is voluntary, and you may choose to skip any questions or withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty.”

## Executive Summary

The CARE (Community + Action + Resolve = Education) Conference brought together educators, policymakers, and community members to address critical themes such as sustainability, government relations, and strengthening community links within Quebec's English public education system. This post-conference survey aimed to assess attendees' knowledge and gather feedback to improve future events. The survey was open from September 27th, 2024 to October 9th, 2024 and received 51 responses.

### Key Findings:

- Attendees demonstrated a strong understanding of conference themes, with the majority rating their knowledge as "High" or "Very High" across all topics.
- Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the conference, with over 80% marking "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied."
- Open-ended responses highlighted the conference's effectiveness in fostering dialogue and collaboration while identifying logistical challenges, such as crowded spaces and limited time for discussions.

### Notable Insights:

1. **Programs and Expertise Knowledge:** 82% of participants rated their knowledge as 4 or 5 ("High" or "Very High").
2. **Government Support Understanding:** While 68% rated their knowledge as 4 or 5, some respondents highlighted the need for clearer explanations of intergovernmental partnerships.
3. **Positive Feedback:** Attendees appreciated the diversity of speakers and the opportunity to network.
4. **Constructive Criticism:** Suggestions included improving venue logistics and providing more interactive sessions.

### Data collection and storage links

<p><b>Survey respondents link</b></p>	<p><a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd8zBIKAclEZ3iG7_z7tjGxtsMhPTKhDhUg5hz6XKij27FimA/viewform?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd8zBIKAclEZ3iG7_z7tjGxtsMhPTKhDhUg5hz6XKij27FimA/viewform?usp=sharing</a></p>
<p><b>Survey editing link</b> This link contains personally identifying information.</p>	<p><a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ffa2ldDmt3-OLSRbOlhBQrfwE73_vfBOwhxuXbKVJbA/edit">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ffa2ldDmt3-OLSRbOlhBQrfwE73_vfBOwhxuXbKVJbA/edit</a></p>
<p><b>Survey spreadsheet link</b> This link contains personally identifying information.</p>	<p><a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1jozlf30vNBH13-1cOvrEbJTVuhSYgyQvUjWwl-50HV8/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1jozlf30vNBH13-1cOvrEbJTVuhSYgyQvUjWwl-50HV8/edit?usp=sharing</a></p>

### Survey Results

Questions 1 through 5 asked the respondent to rate their level of knowledge on a program theme.

Image of the rating scale as respondents saw it:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Low - I have little to no knowledge of this topic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very High - I have comprehensive and detailed knowledge of this topic.

**Overview of respondent ratings by question:**

#	Question	Mean Rating (1-5)	% Rated 4 or 5
1	Sustainability	4.2	78%
2	Programs and Expertise	4.4	82%
3	Strengthening Links	4.3	80%
4	Best Practices with Government	4.0	75%
5	Government Support	3.8	68%

**Question 1: Sustainability** Respondents rated their knowledge of sustainability challenges and opportunities in Quebec’s English public school system as high, with 45% selecting 5 ("Very High") and 33% selecting 4.

**Question 2: Programs and Expertise** The highest-rated area, with 82% rating their knowledge as 4 or 5, showcasing strong familiarity with vocational education and bilingual programs.

**Question 3: Strengthening Links** 80% rated their knowledge as "High" or "Very High," reflecting attendees’ recognition of the importance of community-education collaboration.

**Question 4: Best Practices with Government** Although 75% rated their knowledge as 4 or 5, qualitative feedback revealed a desire for deeper exploration of cooperative strategies with the government.

**Question 5: Government Support** This area received the lowest ratings, with 68% rating their knowledge as 4 or 5, indicating room for further emphasis on the role of government support.

## Qualitative Feedback

### Positive Feedback:

- *“The diversity of speakers and topics made this one of the most engaging conferences I’ve attended.”*
- *“Great to have all key stakeholders in one space to share insights and collaborate.”*

### Constructive Criticism:

- *“The plenary space was too crowded; larger venues are needed.”*
- *“More time for interactive Q&A sessions would enhance participant engagement.”*

## Recommendations

1. **Venue and Logistics:** Opt for larger venues with breakout rooms to accommodate participants more comfortably.
2. **Interactive Sessions:** Incorporate more time for Q&A and discussions to deepen participant engagement.

3. **Knowledge Development:** Develop post-conference materials (e.g., summaries, guides) to reinforce key themes and address gaps in knowledge.
4. **Government Relations Focus:** Enhance sessions on government support by providing practical tools and examples of successful intergovernmental partnerships.

## Conclusion

The CARE Conference successfully raised awareness and deepened attendees' knowledge of critical issues affecting Quebec's English education system. By addressing logistical challenges and incorporating participant feedback, future events can further enhance their impact and value.

## APPENDIX A: Survey Results By Question

This section contains images from the survey results webpage.

### Question 1: Sustainability \*

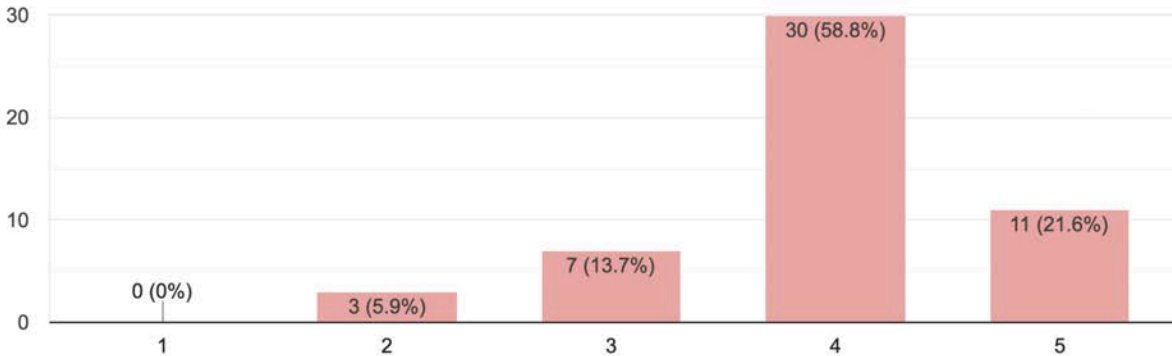
On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your current knowledge of the **sustainability** challenges and opportunities in Quebec’s English public school system?

**Sustainability:** This theme addresses the system’s needs towards 2035 and explores strategies for recruitment and retention within Quebec’s English public school board system, focusing on overcoming challenges such as staff shortages.

1      2      3      4      5

Very Low - I have little to no knowledge of this topic.                        Very High - I have comprehensive and detailed knowledge of this topic.

51 responses



**Question 2: Programs/Expertise**

\*

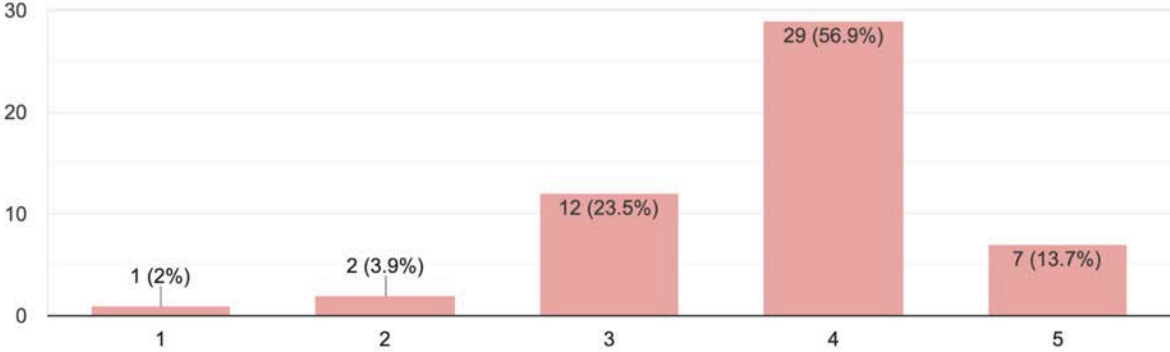
How familiar are you with the various programs and areas of expertise offered by Quebec’s English public school system, such as French second language training and vocational education?

**Programs/Expertise:** This theme covers French second language training and vocational education, emphasising the importance of marketing these programs to parents and the role of bilingualism in cultural identity.

1      2      3      4      5

Very Low - I have little to no knowledge of this topic.                            Very High - I have comprehensive and detailed knowledge of this topic.

51 responses



**Question 3: Strengthening Links**

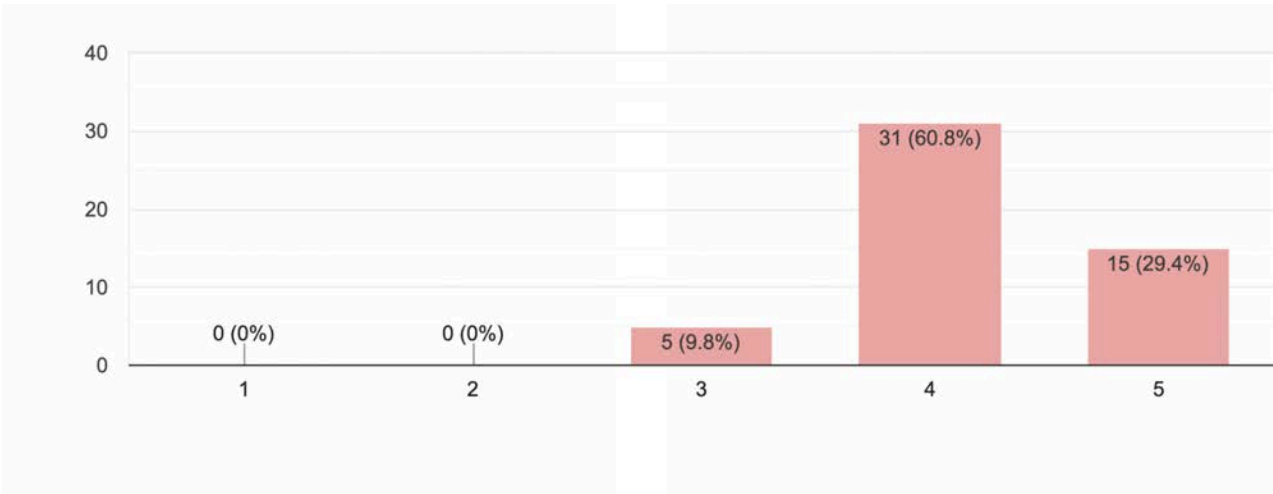
How would you assess your understanding of the importance of strengthening links between the education community and the broader English-speaking community in Quebec?

**Strengthening Links:** This theme highlights the crucial role schools play in the vitality of minority communities, acting as hubs for cultural transmission, social cohesion, and economic opportunities.

1      2      3      4      5

Very Low - I have little to no knowledge of this topic.                        Very High - I have comprehensive and detailed knowledge of this topic.

51 responses



**Question 4: Best practices with Government**

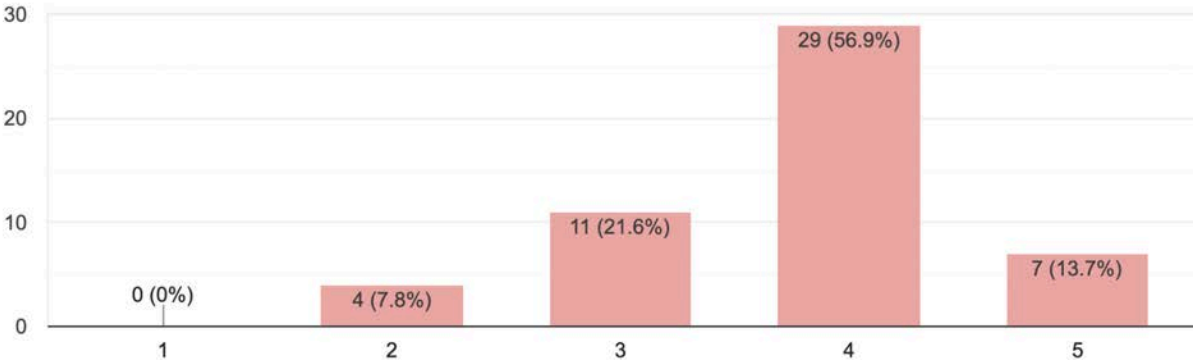
How knowledgeable are you about best practices in working cooperatively with government and contributing to the development of legislation, regulations, policies, and programs affecting the English school system in Quebec?

**Best Practices with Government:** This theme discusses the challenges of intergovernmental relations, particularly the impact of provincial and federal policies on minority language education rights and the importance of cooperative strategies.

1      2      3      4      5

Very Low - I have little to no knowledge of this topic.      ○      ○      ○      ○      ○      Very High - I have comprehensive and detailed knowledge of this topic.

51 responses



### Question 5: Government Support

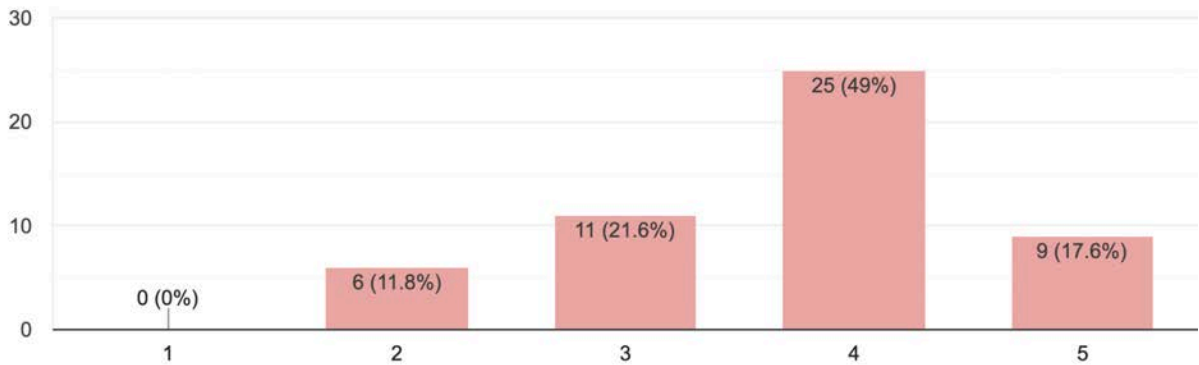
How familiar are you with the level of government support provided to the English school system in Quebec and its impact on educational quality and resources?

**Government Support:** This theme explores the role of federal and provincial government support in ensuring educational quality for the English school system in Quebec, including mechanisms of intergovernmental partnerships.

1    2    3    4    5

Very Low - I have little to no knowledge of this topic.                        Very High - I have comprehensive and detailed knowledge of this topic.

51 reponses



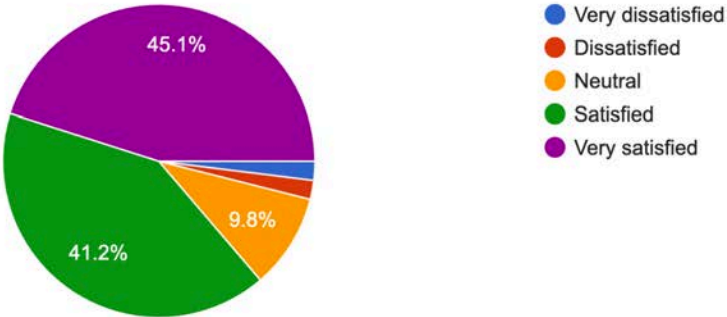
\*

**Question 6: Satisfaction**

How satisfied are you with the overall experience of the CARE Conference?

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied

Question 6: Satisfaction How satisfied are you with the overall experience of the CARE Conference?  
51 responses



### Question 7: Additional feedback

We would love to hear your thoughts on the conference. Do you have any comments or suggestions for us regarding the program, the administration of the conference, and the logistics of the conference? Is there anything we can do to make future conferences better?

Long answer text

---

## Additional Feedback Themes

### 1. Positive Feedback

- **Engagement and Organization:** Many attendees appreciated the conference's organization, thematic approach, and the opportunity to connect with diverse stakeholders. Comments such as *"well-administered and well-organized"* and *"great to have all key stakeholders in one spot"* highlight this sentiment.
- **Speakers and Content:** Specific speakers, such as Thomas Mulcair, received praise, as did the overall quality of the panels and discussions. Several respondents mentioned finding the topics insightful and engaging.

### 2. Logistical Challenges

- **Venue and Space Issues:** The most frequent criticism was the crowded venue, especially in the ballroom and breakout rooms. Multiple comments noted the lack of physical space, limited mobility, and discomfort, such as *"the ballroom was too small"* and *"logistically, we were sitting on top of one another."*
- **Timing and Scheduling:** Respondents felt that sessions were rushed, with insufficient time for Q&A or transition between sessions. Comments such as *"sessions were too short for the themes to be covered"* and *"no time really in between sessions"* reflect this concern.
- **Catering and Amenities:** Suggestions included more varied menus, more coffee, and amenities like charging stations and Wi-Fi.

### 3. Content and Structure

- **Interactivity:** A recurring theme was the lack of interactive opportunities. Respondents called for more small group discussions, collaborative activities, and Q&A time. Feedback such as *"there should be more opportunity to discuss in small work groups"* and *"more Q&A time would have been appreciated"* underscores this.

- **Focus on Solutions:** Attendees expressed a desire for sessions to end with actionable takeaways or solutions, as noted in comments like *“it would be interesting to finish up some of the segments with possible solutions”* and *“more focus on solutions, steps to make changes.”*
- **Representation of Voices:** Several respondents felt that certain voices, especially teachers and regional perspectives, were underrepresented. Comments included *“more info for teachers and their voices”* and *“half of the presenters should come from the regions to reflect all realities.”*

#### 4. Specific Areas for Improvement

- **Technical and IT Support:** Issues with AV equipment, PowerPoint setup, and microphones were noted, with a call for better IT support during sessions.
- **Accessibility:** Suggestions included wider spacing between chairs and ensuring accessibility for all participants, including those with mobility challenges.
- **Guest and Panel Behavior:** A few attendees criticized certain panelists for being evasive or unprofessional, which detracted from the experience.

#### 5. Future Recommendations

- **Make It Recurring:** Many attendees emphasized the importance of making this conference an annual event, with some suggesting cost-sharing mechanisms with other organizations.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Calls were made for more opportunities to collaborate with community partners, including health and social services, as well as sharing knowledge and experiences among schools and organizations.

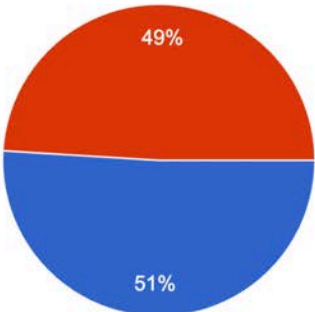
[See column H](#) of the survey results spreadsheet for all responses.

\*

**Question 8: Knowledge Product Development**

Would you be willing to be contacted for your input in the development of knowledge products following this conference? Your insights would be greatly valued in our ongoing efforts to enhance the public English education system in Quebec.

- Yes, I am willing to be contacted.
- No, I do not wish to be contacted.



● Yes, I am willing to be contacted.  
● No, I do not wish to be contacted.

\*

**Question 9: Contact information**

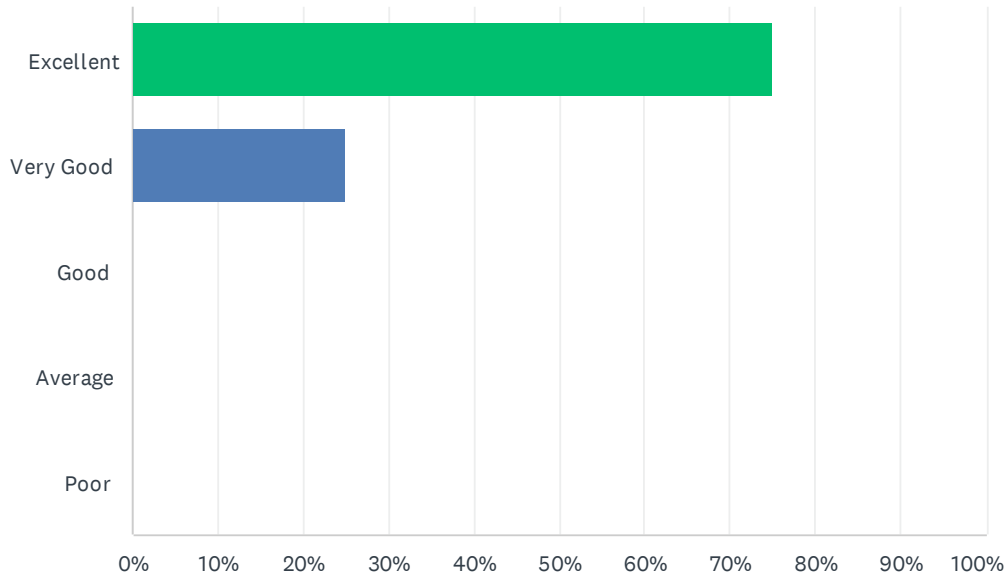
If you answered 'Yes', in the previous question please provide us with your name and email address.

Short answer text  
.....

[See column J](#) for a list of the 30 respondents who wish to participate.

# Q1 What was your overall impression of the session by Noel Burke - Who's on First?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	75.00%	6
Very Good	25.00%	2
Good	0.00%	0
Average	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>8</b>

# #1

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 2:05:47 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 2:14:46 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:08:59  
**IP Address:** 74.59.239.126

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Page 1

## Q1

What was your overall impression of the session by Noel Burke - Who's on First?

### Very Good ,

General comments (please specify):

I thoroughly enjoyed the presentation and although I was familiar with it, I learned from it, once again. There were a few points that could be tweaked for more general clarity. If I were to be completely honest, and I think I should be, I feel that a few of the video clips are dated. But, that could just be me.

---

## Q2

Do you have any suggestions for future PD Sessions?

For commissioners - how do we promote the work we do? While we may have a good idea about what municipal councilors do, even if we are not in that role, does our community really understand our role? Do we understand how to promote our roles in our Boards? If I were to "guess", I would bet that most school board employees have little idea or interest in what we do apart from being "the board".

---

# #3

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 2:24:34 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 2:39:14 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:14:40  
**IP Address:** 174.88.66.137

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Page 1

## Q1

What was your overall impression of the session by Noel Burke - Who's on First?

### Very Good ,

General comments (please specify):

Some of the visuals need to be updated as they were not very clear on line. Include the Educational Act link. Who in each SB speaks to the media? We have the President speak on political matters and the DG will address the pedagogical questions. How to respond if called unexpectedly.

---

## Q2

Do you have any suggestions for future PD Sessions?

Intro to new Commissioners on topics such as:

Delegation of Powers, various bills, and how they imply to SBs, feeling like your voice matters during discussions at Council of Commissioner's meetings, when speaking with the media or lobbying government officials how to get your important message across with precision.

---

# #4

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 5:12:01 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 5:15:17 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:03:16  
**IP Address:** 69.156.140.200

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Page 1

## Q1

What was your overall impression of the session by Noel Burke - Who's on First?

### **Excellent,**

General comments (please specify):  
very well presented. as a new commissioner i welcome the training .

---

## Q2

Do you have any suggestions for future PD Sessions?

Ownership and accountability seems to have been lost. Training on how to assign ownership . I especially noted the policy review every 5-10 years ... this is key now as people and organizations have become complacent ...

---

# #6

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 7:38:13 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 7:41:55 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:03:42  
**IP Address:** 205.236.31.239

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Page 1

## Q1

What was your overall impression of the session by Noel Burke - Who's on First?

### **Excellent,**

General comments (please specify):

He explained all points very clearly and efficiently. It would have been helpful to me had he used more examples.

---

## Q2

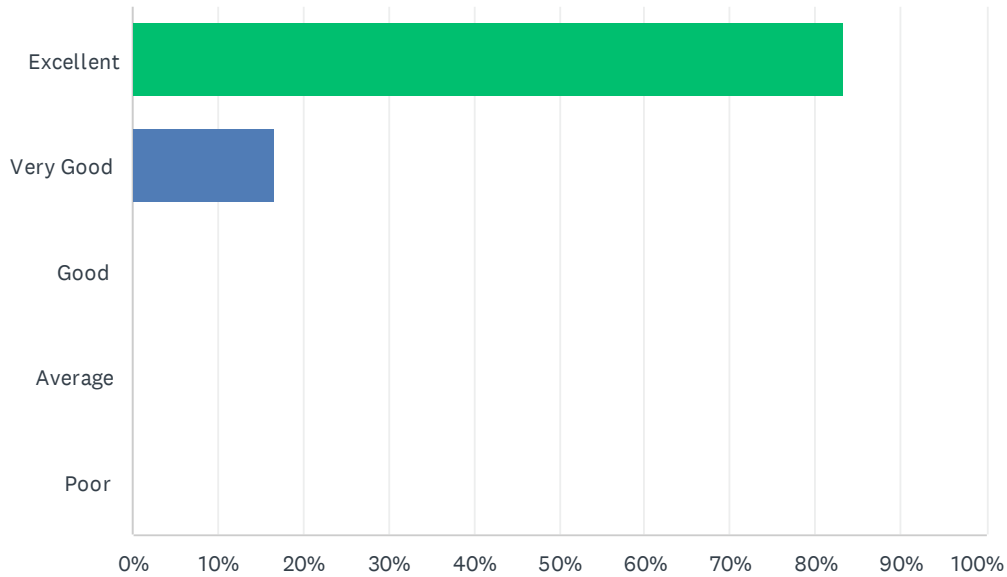
Do you have any suggestions for future PD Sessions?

I would like a Governance part 2, how to write motions and different documents, what has to be taken into consideration in each

---

# Q1 What was your overall impression of the session by Tarah Schwartz - What kind of communicator am I?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	83.33%	5
Very Good	16.67%	1
Good	0.00%	0
Average	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

# #1

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, April 29, 2025 9:35:40 AM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, April 29, 2025 9:54:16 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:18:35  
**IP Address:** 207.253.47.236

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Page 1

## Q1

What was your overall impression of the session by Tarah Schwartz - What kind of communicator am I?

**Excellent,**

General comments (please specify):

The session really made me reflect — the examples helped bridge the gap between theory and practice. I loved the activity; Tarah's style is direct, effective, and truly elevates you.

---

## Q2

Do you have any suggestions for future PD Sessions?

Strategic Communication Planning

---

# #2

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, April 29, 2025 9:55:40 AM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, April 29, 2025 9:56:07 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:26  
**IP Address:** 172.226.16.27

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Page 1

**Q1** **Excellent**

What was your overall impression of the session by Tarah Schwartz - What kind of communicator am I?

---

**Q2**  
Do you have any suggestions for future PD Sessions?

**Leadership in Governance**

---

# #3

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, April 29, 2025 11:47:49 AM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, April 29, 2025 11:54:06 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:06:16  
**IP Address:** 172.226.162.83

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Page 1

## Q1

What was your overall impression of the session by Tarah Schwartz - What kind of communicator am I?

**Excellent,**

General comments (please specify):

Very dynamic and interesting. Insightful in the art of communications Thoroughly enjoyed the PD session.

---

## Q2

Do you have any suggestions for future PD Sessions?

**Respondent skipped this question**

---

# #5

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Wednesday, April 30, 2025 10:07:29 AM  
**Last Modified:** Wednesday, April 30, 2025 10:10:18 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:02:48  
**IP Address:** 142.169.18.160

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Page 1

## Q1

What was your overall impression of the session by Tarah Schwartz - What kind of communicator am I?

**Excellent,**

General comments (please specify):

Got to know other participants better as well as understand the course content

---

## Q2

Do you have any suggestions for future PD Sessions?

**Respondent skipped this question**

---

# #6

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Thursday, May 01, 2025 9:25:10 AM  
**Last Modified:** Thursday, May 01, 2025 9:25:34 AM  
**Time Spent:** 00:00:23  
**IP Address:** 206.167.188.2

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Page 1

**Q1** Very Good

What was your overall impression of the session by Tarah Schwartz - What kind of communicator am I?

---

**Q2** Respondent skipped this question

Do you have any suggestions for future PD Sessions?

---

NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

**Kathleen Weil and Mike Novak to be honored by  
the Quebec English School Boards Association**

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Former Quebec Premier Jean Charest to speak  
Emcee for the event Terry DiMonte

**MONTREAL, OCTOBER 18, 2024** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) will hold a cocktail to honor former Liberal MNA and cabinet minister Kathleen Weil and her husband, former Chambre de Commerce de Montréal President Michael Novak, on Thursday, October 24 (5 pm to 7 pm) at Entrepôts Dominion (3970 Saint-Ambroise) in Saint-Henri.

Former Quebec Premier Jean Charest will be the keynote at the event, which will support the necessary legal costs to challenge Bill 40, the provincial legislation aimed at abolishing Quebec English public school boards. Funds are being raised by the Notre Home Foundation, who contributes to initiatives by groups and organizations that empower the English-speaking community of Quebec.

Bill 40 was adopted in the National Assembly in 2020 and turned school boards into school service centres. Less than six months later, parts of the bill that applied to English boards were suspended by the Quebec Superior Court with a stay of legislation while a legal challenge made its way through the court. On August 2, 2023, the nine English boards won the first round in Superior Court, where the legislation was deemed unconstitutional. In his ruling, Justice Sylvain Lussier said English school boards in Quebec have the right to manage their own schools and that the bill went too far to try to abolish them. The government appealed the judgement and the appeal will be heard in January in the Quebec Court of Appeal.

In order to attend the October 24 cocktail, donations of \$200 to the Foundation are being requested. A tax receipt will be issued. Go to: <https://www.notrehome-qc.ca/donationsandgrants/>

-30-

**Contact:**

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**Director of Communications and Special Projects**

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**or**

**Michael J. Cohen**

**Manager, Marketing and Communications**

**English Montreal School Board**

**[mcohen@emsb.qc.ca](mailto:mcohen@emsb.qc.ca)**

NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

## **QESBA Blasts CAQ Government's \$200 Million Education Cuts and Premier Legault's Misleading Claims**

**Montreal, January 28, 2025** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) is outraged by the CAQ government's recent decision to slash \$200 million from school boards and school service centres, a move that will directly harm students and public education, despite Premier François Legault's false claim that this does not amount to cutting in education.

"Premier Legault's assertion is insulting and dismissive of the damage his government is causing to public education," said QESBA President Joe Ortona. School boards and service centres typically adopt their budgets in June to forecast expenditures for the fiscal year including government commitments to special projects and programs. "Budgets already promised and allocated are being clawed back, and the government expects us to believe this won't harm students? It's absurd and offensive."

School boards and school service centres received directives, a week prior to the holidays, to cancel all construction projects and to cut in designated funding envelopes to recoup the amounts set by the government.

"This government's pattern of mismanagement will directly impact the services and resources available to students," continued Ortona. "Envelopes already promised and even spent must be cancelled or found elsewhere to cover the government's shortfall and they expect that this will not impact students. School boards are the most decentralized governance institutions. The bulk of our budgets are designed for direct services to students, as it should be," said QESBA President Joe Ortona.

"The Premier may claim otherwise, but these are cuts to education—plain and simple. Quebecers deserve leadership that values truth, integrity, and the future of its students," added the President. "Quebec must stop dismissing education to a side-line issue. Education funding is not a cost—it's a long-term investment with immeasurable returns for our communities," concluded the President.

QESBA is the voice of English public education in Québec and represents 100,000 students in over 300 elementary, high schools, and adult and vocational centres across Québec.

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NEWS RELEASE  
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### **QESBA very pleased about the Quebec-Federal Agreement to Enhance the Quebec School Food Program**

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**Montreal, March 11, 2025** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) is very pleased about the agreement between the Government of Quebec and the Federal Government, which will provide an additional \$65 million over the next three years to enhance the Quebec School Food Program.

This momentous agreement, announced by Minister of Public Services and Procurement of Canada, Jean-Yves Duclos, and Minister of Education, Bernard Drainville was made possible by the federal government's \$1-billion National School Food Program.

"The QESBA along with our nine member boards, are clearly strong advocates in providing the means for school boards to respond to student well-being and success. Along with our partners at the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA), we have actively supported the expansion of the school food programs," said QESBA President Joe Ortona.

"This very important investment is a step in ensuring that more students across Quebec, including those in the English public school system, have access to healthy meals, which are essential not only, for their academic success, but their overall well-being.

"QESBA recognizes the important collaboration between both levels of government in identifying the importance of this initiative. We also wish to recognize the work done by the Quebec chapter of the *Coalition for healthy school food* in its preparation to support school boards expansion to the benefit of our students and the communities we serve," concluded the President.

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-30-

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NEWS RELEASE  
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### **QESBA reacts to the Quebec Budget 2025-2026**

**Montreal, March 26, 2025** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) acknowledges the Quebec government’s 2025-2026 budget, which includes a 2.2% overall increase in education funding.

While this investment is a small step forward, QESBA remains concerned about rising system costs and our ability to maintain existing programs, essential services, and initiatives. Additionally, the unforeseen budget restrictions and adjustments imposed during the 2024-2025 school year significantly disrupted school board stability, student services, and infrastructure projects—including the construction of three approved new schools in our network.

“We are concerned that the allocated infrastructure funding does not adequately address the urgent need for building maintenance and new school construction, particularly in overpopulated areas,” said QESBA President Joe Ortona.

“Furthermore, the continuation of the hiring freeze announced in November 2024, into 2025-2026 and beyond remains a major concern. Treasury Board President Sonia LeBel confirmed that the freeze will continue, which will have serious implications for school boards,” Ortona added.

However, QESBA welcomes the government’s financial commitment to addressing the labor shortage in education, particularly in teacher qualification and the recruitment of all categories of school personnel. These measures are essential to meeting the needs of our students and ensuring their academic success.

QESBA urges the government to increase investments in school infrastructure, educational initiatives, and long-term stability measures to safeguard the quality of education and provide adequate resources for students and educators across the province.

QESBA is the voice of English public education in Québec and represents 100,000 students in over 300 elementary, high schools, and adult and vocational centres across Québec.

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NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

### **QESBA thrilled with the Court of Appeal decision on Bill 40**

**Montreal, April 3, 2025** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) is thrilled with the sweeping decision rendered today by the Québec Court of Appeal on the government’s appeal of *Bill 40, An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance*.

QESBA originally challenged the legislation and was awarded a stay in 2020, which was confirmed by three judges of the Québec Court of Appeal later that year. The Québec Superior Court heard the case on its merits in 2021 and delivered a sweeping judgment, concluding that many provisions of Bill 40 are unconstitutional because they breach section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Today’s decision reinforces the English-speaking community’s rights to manage and control our institutions.

“We are thrilled that our rights have been recognized once again with this decision. We truly hope that the Government will decide not to take this crystal-clear decision of the Quebec Court of Appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada in Ottawa,” said President Joe Ortona.

On first reading, the QESBA was successful in obtaining a declaration that several requirements are unconstitutional. In particular, the Court of Appeal concluded:

- Bill 40 severely limits the ability of members of the linguistic minority to choose the individuals who will act as its representatives. In a way, it neutralizes their right to choose their representatives.
- Funding must be the responsibility of minority language representatives and can no longer be micromanaged by the government.
- What is more, the Court firmly rejects, once again, the Government’s argument that only parents with children presently in English schools are rightsholders pursuant to section 23 of the *Canadian Charter*.

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“Needless to say, we are thrilled with the decision rendered this morning, and we are hopeful that the government will take this opportunity to sit down with the QESBA to implement the decision,” concluded the President.

QESBA is the voice of English public education in Québec and represents 100,000 students in over 300 elementary, high schools, and adult and vocational centres across Québec.

-30-

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Director of Communications and Special Projects

NEWS RELEASE  
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**QESBA deploras how the government is treating  
Bill 84 in commission**

**Montreal, April 9, 2025** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) is appalled that the CAQ government is dropping in unconstitutional amendments during the parliamentary commission studying Bill 84 - An Act respecting national integration.

The commission on *Relations avec les citoyens* is reviewing Bill 84 and Minister, Jean-Francois Roberge has introduced last minute amendments that do not respect the rights of the English-Speaking Community in Quebec and s. 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

“We are appalled at these amendments dropped in today by the government, which contradict their own adopted Bill 96,” said President Joe Ortona.

“These amendments must be removed from Bill 84 to respect our rights as a minority community in Quebec. This government has a habit of proposing last minute amendments like these that are detrimental to our community” concluded the President.

QESBA is the voice of English public education in Québec and represents 100,000 students in over 300 elementary, high schools, and adult and vocational centres across Québec.

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NEWS RELEASE  
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## **QESBA Vows to Defend Constitutional Rights of English School Boards at Canada's Highest Court**

**Montreal, May 30, 2025** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) is deeply disappointed by the Quebec government's decision to appeal the Quebec Court of Appeal's ruling on Bill 40 to the Supreme Court of Canada, QESBA reaffirms its commitment to upholding the constitutional rights of English school boards at Canada's highest court.

In April, the Court of Appeal issued a thorough and decisive judgment in favour of QESBA and its nine-member school boards, affirming our constitutional right to manage and control our school boards under section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A very detailed ruling and another big win in a long line of court decisions on Bill 40.

"We were hopeful that the government would accept the unanimous ruling of the Court of Appeal and finally respect the rights of the English-speaking community," said QESBA President Joe Ortona. "At a time when Quebec faces serious financial pressures, it is disappointing to see public funds used to continue a legal battle that so clearly infringes on the rights of minority communities."

Despite this latest move by the government, QESBA remains committed to defending the rights of English-speaking Quebecers to manage and control our education system.

"We will continue to stand up for our students, our parents, our staff, and the communities we serve, and we will continue our fundraising efforts to help offset the legal costs of this ongoing fight," concluded Ortona.

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-30-

Source: Kim Hamilton  
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Director of Communications and Special Projects

Statement from QESBA

**Celebrating 30 years of advocacy**

**Montreal, June 10, 2025** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) wishes to congratulate TALQ (formerly QCGN) on celebrating 30 years of advocacy on behalf of the English-speaking minority community in Quebec.

TALQ has always been a valuable partner to QESBA and our member school boards we look forward to continued collaboration in the years to come.

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-30-

NEWS RELEASE

**QESBA a proud annual sponsor of 'Chapeau, les filles!'**

**English school boards salute talented and successful young women  
studying and excelling in non-traditional fields**

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**Montreal, June 11, 2025** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) is proud to salute all of the talented, courageous and determined winners announced of 'Chapeau, les filles!' 2024-2025. QESBA is an annual sponsor of this important program, which honours and encourages women to pursue their studies and careers in vocational fields traditionally dominated by men.

"Chapeau, les filles! is a vitally important partnership of school boards, government and industry partners that encourages Quebec women of all ages to pursue their professional dreams," noted President Joe Ortona. "Success in school can come in many different ways and at different stages in life. QESBA and its fellow stakeholders in education are proud to accompany and support our students as they pursue their individual path towards academic and professional success."

QESBA is pleased to congratulate the laureate of the Prix de l'Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec: Danielle Brideau Cabinetmaking (DVS), Rosemount Technology Centre, English Montreal School Board.

"Like so many of the contestants, Ms. Brideau has demonstrated skill, determination and perseverance in her studies," noted the President. "We wish her and all of the other contest participants every success in their professional lives."

QESBA is the voice of English public education in Québec and represents 100,000 students in 300 elementary, high schools, and adult and vocational centres across Québec.

-30-

Source: Kimberley Hamilton  
Director of Communications and Special Projects  
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NEWS RELEASE  
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## **QESBA thrilled to release CARE report with education and community partners**

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**Montreal, June 12, 2025** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) is thrilled to officially release the CARE Conference (Community + Action + Resolve = Education) report.

CARE Conference, held in Montreal last September, brought together stakeholders from Quebec's English-language education community and organized jointly by QESBA, Association of Administrators of English Schools of Quebec (AAESQ), Association of Directors General of English Schools Boards of Quebec (ADGESBQ), English Parents Committees' Association (EPCA), TALQ (formerly QCGN), Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA) and the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT).

Over two-days, we focused on five major themes that impact our schools, school boards and the community-at-large. We discussed staff retention and recruitment, programs and expertise, strengthening community links, government relations and best practices and advocacy.

“Sharing with our education and community partners in the same room for these important discussions was invaluable in helping us shape how we move forward. We have firm considerations in this report built on these tangible exchanges that will help all our Associations plan for the future,” said QESBA president Joe Ortona.

“QESBA thanks all partners involved in making this such an important event and a positive and useful report that we were able to table with the Minister of Education for his consideration,” concluded the president.

QESBA is the voice of English public education in Québec and represents 100,000 students in over 300 elementary, high schools, and adult and vocational centres across Québec.

NEWS RELEASE  
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***QESBA Condemns Reckless \$510 Million Budget Cuts to Education:  
An Attack on Our Students, Our Schools, and Our Future***

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**Montreal, June 13, 2025** – The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) is astounded, outraged and deeply alarmed by the Government of Quebec’s latest announcement of devastating budget cuts to public education.

School boards and service centres across the province were informed, yesterday that a staggering \$510 million in additional cuts would be expected throughout the Quebec education system. This, on top of the \$200 million already slashed earlier this school year. These new cuts are expected to take effect in July allowing only one day of consultation for school boards and service centres to react. Approximately 10% of this new burden will fall on English-language school boards. Worse yet, school boards are prohibited from using any existing accumulated surplus to mitigate the damage.

“This government is expecting us to make these astronomical cuts on the backs of our students, which is completely unacceptable,” said QESBA President Joe Ortona. “These reckless decisions will have devastating and long-term consequences for an entire generation of students. We are denouncing both the substance and the manner of this announcement. The government has given school boards just 24 hours to respond to what can only be described as a direct assault on the viability of our public education system,” said QESBA President Joe Ortona.

“Our answer is a clear and resounding NO, full stop,” continued Ortona. “We are always prepared to discuss and work towards constructive solutions that serve our students, parents, and the communities we serve. This financial crisis was not created by school boards, and we will not allow our school system’s integrity to be sacrificed to solve this government’s deficit,” concluded the President.

QESBA is calling on all partners in education, parents, and community members to stand united against these cuts. The future of our children and the strength of our democratic institutions depend on a robust, equitable, and properly funded public education system.

QESBA is the voice of English public education in Québec and represents 100,000 students in 306 elementary, high schools, adult education and vocational centres across Québec.

-30-

Source: Kimberley Hamilton  
Director of Communications and Special Projects  
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**Brief presented by**

**Quebec English School Boards Association  
and  
Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Quebec**

**To the Committee on Citizen Relations  
of the National Assembly**

**on Bill 74**

***An Act mainly to improve the regulatory scheme  
governing international students***

**November 2024**

## **Introduction**

*This brief is submitted jointly by the QESBA and the ADGESBQ, that provide a unique education network approach and expertise that can help the government make the best and most informed decisions possible under Bill 74. This Bill will greatly impact our programs.*

Since 1929, the **Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA)** and its predecessors have served as a vehicle through which school boards, elected commissioners, and parents have shared ideas and worked together to achieve our community's common goal of ensuring quality educational services. The member school boards of QESBA serve some 100,000 students in over 300 elementary and high schools, as well as adult and vocational centres across Québec and employ some 20,000 people. Each Board has its unique demographics, orientations and history. All of them share a “made-in-English-Québec” sensibility to delivering public education services, with equal regard for the needs and wants of all students, staff, and communities.

- *Parent and community involvement:* as our school boards answer to the taxpayers, our schools have always been accessible to and transparent towards parents and community;
- *A recognition of our particular status as English-speaking institutions:* Québec's English-speaking community, in all its diversity, continues to contribute to the rich tapestry of Québec life. English public school boards, representing the sole level of elected government answerable to that community, assumes as part of their mission the job of teaching about and strengthening that fundamental contribution.

All of the points listed above have elected commissioners on the front lines of all decisions that will affect and ultimately benefit students. Our sector has much to be proud of, including attaining an 86% success rate.

### **History of the QESBA**

QESBA has been advocating for English (protestant boards before 1998) public education in Québec since the association was founded in 1929. QESBA and its predecessors have gone from 129 member boards to 9 since the creation of the Ministry of Education in 1964.

Our enrolment in 1975 was over 250,000 students across the province and has declined to approximately 100,000 in 2015. There were as many as 172-elected Commissioners in 1975 and as of November 2014 there are 95 Commissioners and 9 elected Chairpersons. We consistently register a high above average success rate and our administrative overhead costs are among the lowest of any publicly funded institutions at a 4% average.

The **Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Québec (ADGESBQ)** represents directors general and assistant directors general of the nine English school boards. Its mission is to influence the development of educational policies in Québec and to promote the professional interests of its members. The ADGESBQ promotes collaboration between the various school boards to advance education in Québec. It makes available to its members all useful information concerning the improvement of the education system.

## **Bill 74**

English School boards have greatly contributed to the Quebec work force and economy through their offers in vocational training. The programs have reflected the needs of the various sectors and provided skilled workers to meet the industrial growth of the province. Our vocational training programs are designed to target gaps in the labor market and respond to provincial priorities. International students play a role in ensuring that many programs remain viable and can be offered throughout the English school board network. Furthermore, English boards have contributed to help provide francisation courses to their students, where admissible and possible, to prepare them for a productive future in the Quebec job market.

We believe that the vitality of our vocational offer of service in the English network needs to be considered and special consideration be given to ensure the continuum of educational offer to the English-language minority.

The federal measures already announced and for which many details are still missing will undoubtedly have a profound impact on our centres by imposing enrollment caps, eligibility to the post graduate work permit, just to name a few. The provincial government needs to understand these impacts before implementing further restrictions, which will compound the impact on our sector:

- Some programs are dependent on foreign student registration to open a group. Any restrictions to these programs may result in the cut or scale back of programs, leading to fewer offerings for Quebec residents who wish to be qualified in a trade or skill.

- Many programs have resulted in important government financial investments to design and run. The closure of groups will result in net losses on those investments.
- There will be a significant reduction in staffing needs therefore creating excesses and lay-offs. Many of our teachers and staff are permanent and contractual obligations would have to be maintained. Most vocational education teachers would not have required qualification to teach in any other educational sectors and therefore boards will be saddled with additional financial burdens. This will also create a drain on the network in the future that has invested in qualifying vocational education teachers.
- Our vocational programs are designed to address specific workforce needs. International students often enroll in these programs to gain specialized skills and fill labor shortages in critical industries (e.g., healthcare, construction, and technology).
- Graduates of vocational programs often return to their home countries with skills that establish important international workforce connections. Limiting international student participation could reduce the global workforce pipeline and weaken ties with industries abroad.
- Many vocational programs rely on partnerships with local industries and businesses for internships, apprenticeships, and job placements. The impact of having fewer foreign students and programs could mean reduced demand for such partnerships, impacting local businesses or even generate an employment void.
- Most students avail themselves of the opportunity to work part-time as allowed by their study permit. Their addition to the workforce benefits local businesses to fill vacancies.
- Restrictive measures greatly impact the reputation of our country and our province as an attractive study abroad destination. It has taken years to gain a competitive

advantage over other countries namely the US, Australia and the United Kingdom.  
Even temporary measures will have a lasting effect on the system.

Bill 74 seeks to implement additional measures and controls to restrict the number of foreign student enrollment by region, type of educational institution, and program. Although we understand the need to better control the influx of international students into our province so that our infrastructure, social services and economy can support these new arrivals, we urge the government to exercise a high degree of caution in deciding on the controls it decides to implement. A one size fits all approach has never been viable for our system.

With that in mind, we hope that the government will consider the following before applying restrictions to our system:

- That there are no linguistic criteria introduced that would compromise our ability to provide an English vocational training offer, to thrive as a community and continue to contribute to the Quebec job market and economy. As mentioned above, we are committed to ensuring that international students learn French to integrate into the Quebec labour force.
- Given the small proportion of international students in the public English vocational centres, that no caps be imposed on our programs. This is true in both the urban and non-urban boards.
- Given that the federal government has restricted the number of vocational programs eligible for a post-graduate program, that the provincial government consider and analyze the impact before imposing new ones. The desired outcome of reducing the number of international students may already have been achieved by the federal measures.

## **Conclusion**

It is our recommendation that the Government of Quebec postpone the adoption of Bill 74 until further detail is released by the Government of Canada and an in-depth analysis of the impacts to our institutions and programs.

Should the Government and the National Assembly decide to proceed with Bill 74 in its current form, it will impose limitations on the English education network to manage and control our institutions. Furthermore, as mentioned, many of our teachers and staff are permanent and contractual obligations would have to be maintained, directly impacting school board budgets. We therefore request an exemption from Bill 74 due to the small scale of our network and the impacts that this will have on the sustainability of our institutions.



ASSOCIATION DES COMMISSIONS  
SCOLAIRES ANGLOPHONES DU QUÉBEC

**Mémoire présenté par**

**l'Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec**

**à la Commission des relations avec les citoyens  
de l'Assemblée nationale**

**au sujet du**

**Projet de loi 84**

***Loi sur l'intégration nationale***

**Février 2025**

## **Introduction**

L'Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec (ACSAQ) représente les neuf commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec, les seules institutions publiques gérées pour et par la communauté anglo-québécoise par l'entremise de leurs conseils de commissaires démocratiquement élus. L'ACSAQ est guidée par l'impératif de veiller à ce que les lois québécoises contribuent à la réussite scolaire de nos élèves, et ce, dans le respect des valeurs et des droits de la communauté anglo-québécoise. Pour l'ACSAQ, la réussite scolaire passe nécessairement par la maîtrise de la langue française afin que nos élèves puissent demeurer et travailler au Québec, ainsi que la transmission des valeurs démocratiques qui nous sont chères, dont le respect de la diversité et l'égalité des genres. Notamment, les commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec sont fières d'offrir des programmes éducatifs qui promeuvent l'apprentissage et la maîtrise du français pour tous.

Le projet de loi 84, *Loi sur l'intégration nationale*, se présente comme une loi-cadre affirmant certaines valeurs et autorisant le gouvernement à adopter des règlements, politiques et décisions visant l'intégration à la société québécoise des immigrants et de communautés culturelles.

L'ACSAQ soutient qu'il est primordial que tout cadre relatif aux valeurs québécoises reconnaisse la communauté anglo-québécoise en tant que composante intégrale de la nation québécoise et établit des conditions gagnantes pour favoriser un partenariat entre la communauté anglo-québécoise et la communauté francophone. Pour l'ACSAQ, la réussite de ce partenariat passe par deux composantes : (1) le respect des valeurs, de la culture et des droits de la communauté anglo-québécoise, et (2) la reconnaissance de la communauté anglo-québécoise, incluant les commissions scolaires anglophones, à titre de partenaires dans la promotion des valeurs québécoises et de la langue française.

Premièrement, la loi doit assurer le respect des valeurs, de la culture et des droits de la communauté anglo-québécoise, dont le droit à la gestion et contrôle de ses écoles en matière de langue et culture. L'expérience récente a malheureusement démontré que notre communauté et le gouvernement n'ont pas toujours la même perception de la portée de nos droits ou de nos besoins en tant que communauté. Afin de favoriser une approche constructive, l'ACSAQ propose d'ajouter au projet de loi un mécanisme de consultation à l'égard de toute politique ou décision qui risque d'affecter le réseau éducatif anglophone.

Deuxièmement, l'ACSAQ recommande le retrait de l'article 19 du projet de loi, qui permettrait au gouvernement de justifier une atteinte à un droit protégé par la *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne*, en dépit du fait que le respect de cette même Charte constitue un fondement du projet de loi.

Troisièmement, la loi doit favoriser une approche collaborative entre communautés linguistiques et reconnaître le rôle de la communauté anglo-québécoise dans la promotion de nos valeurs communes en tant que Québécois et Québécoises. Notamment, les commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec sont bien positionnées pour contribuer, et contribuent activement, à l'enseignement du français en tant que langue seconde. Ces contributions devraient être valorisées et reflétées dans les politiques de financement du gouvernement en vertu de cette loi.

### **Le réseau éducatif anglo-québécois**

La communauté anglophone du Québec est diversifiée et fait face à plusieurs défis, qui comprennent une certaine marginalisation économique<sup>1</sup>, un manque de représentation au niveau des institutions publiques<sup>2</sup> et une baisse continue des inscriptions dans les écoles de langue anglaise<sup>3</sup>. Le soutien institutionnel varie grandement d'une région à l'autre; les tribunaux ont d'ailleurs reconnu que la situation d'une communauté anglophone en région peut ressembler à celle de certaines communautés francophones hors Québec.<sup>4</sup> L'éducation joue un rôle essentiel pour assurer la vitalité des communautés anglophones à travers la province, incluant en formant des jeunes bilingues et engagés qui participent activement à la société québécoise.

L'ACSAQ joue un rôle clé en permettant aux commissions scolaires, aux commissaires élus et aux parents de partager leurs idées et de collaborer en vue d'un objectif commun: assurer des services éducatifs de qualité pour la communauté anglophone du Québec. Des écoles anglophones sont présentes dans toutes les régions administratives du Québec, à l'exception du Grand Nord. Les neuf commissions scolaires membres de l'ACSAQ accueillent environ 100 000 élèves dans 310 écoles primaires et secondaires ainsi que dans des centres de formation professionnelle et pour adultes à travers le Québec. Elles font face à des défis particuliers, notamment en ce qu'elles « s'étendent sur de vastes territoires (exception faite de l'île de

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<sup>1</sup> Le revenu médian des anglophones au Québec est inférieur au revenu médian des francophones et le taux de chômage des anglophones (même des anglophones bilingues) est plus élevé que celui des francophones, qu'ils soient unilingues ou bilingues: Table ronde provinciale sur l'emploi, Mise à jour du Recensement 2021 : Une brève revue des dernières données sur l'emploi des Québécois d'expression anglaise du Québec, 17 mai 2023, en ligne : <https://pertquebec.ca/fr/reports/mise-a-jour-du-recensement-2021-une-breve-revue-des-dernieres-donnees-sur-lemploi-des-quebecois-dexpression-anglaise-du-quebec/>.

<sup>2</sup> Selon des données du Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor du Québec, *Les membres de communautés culturelles, les anglophones, les Autochtones et les personnes handicapées*, p. 1, la proportion des « anglophones » dans la fonction publique provinciale est demeurée constante, à 1 %, de 2013 à 2017 : [https://www.tresor.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/PDF/effectif\\_fonction\\_publicque/groupe\\_cibles\\_1617.pdf](https://www.tresor.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/PDF/effectif_fonction_publicque/groupe_cibles_1617.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Le système scolaire anglophone au Québec ne compte plus que 95 000 élèves, le tiers des 260 000 qu'il regroupait en 1970. Depuis 1998, la CSEM a fermé le quart de ses 69 écoles, et dans l'ouest de l'île, la commission scolaire Lester-B.-Pearson en a fermé 7 sur 57. L'actualité, La fin de l'école anglophone (12 octobre 2018) <<https://lactualite.com/societe/2018/10/12/la-fin-de-lecole-anglaise/>>.

<sup>4</sup> *Quebec English School Boards Association c Procureur général du Québec*, [2023 QCCS 2965](#) aux para 167-168, 386.

Montréal), travaillent avec de plus petites populations d'élèves très dispersées et à la baisse, sont très différentes l'une de l'autre en termes de taille et de leur accès respectif aux ressources financières, ont de plus petites écoles qui disposent de moins de ressources professionnelles et d'enseignants pour répondre aux besoins variés des élèves et ont une obligation de produire des diplômés bilingues et bialphabètes en dépit de l'impact sur les ressources ». <sup>5</sup> En dépit de ces défis, le réseau éducatif anglophone est très fier d'afficher un taux de réussite scolaire de 85 %.

### **Le rôle des commissions scolaires anglophones dans la promotion du français**

La formation d'élèves bilingues ayant une maîtrise du français qui leur permet de participer pleinement à la société québécoise est une priorité absolue pour les membres de l'ACSAQ. Aujourd'hui, la plupart des jeunes anglophones sont inscrits dans des programmes bilingues ou d'immersion française, <sup>6</sup> et le taux de bilinguisme des anglophones est passé de 37 % en 1971 à 82.2 % parmi les jeunes en 2021. <sup>7</sup> Notamment, la Commission scolaire English-Montréal (CSEM) offre des programmes bilingues et d'immersion où les jeunes reçoivent au moins la moitié de leur instruction en français, et affiche des taux de réussite de plus de 90 % en français. <sup>8</sup> La CSEM offre également des cours de français langue seconde au grand public, mettant ses compétences particulières en valeur dans la francisation. Pour certains nouveaux arrivants, les organismes de la communauté anglo-québécoise offrent un point d'ancrage important dans leur parcours d'intégration. Les organismes de la communauté anglophone, incluant les commissions scolaires anglophones, ont une expertise particulière en enseignement du français langue seconde et sont bien outillés pour faciliter l'accès à l'apprentissage du français. <sup>9</sup>

### **Les droits de la communauté anglo-québécoise en matière d'éducation**

Toute loi affectant le milieu éducatif anglophone doit respecter les droits constitutionnels de la communauté anglo-québécoise protégés par l'article 23 de la *Charte canadienne des droits et libertés*. La Cour suprême a reconnu qu'il est essentiel pour la réalisation de l'objet de

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<sup>5</sup> Comité d'études des systèmes électoraux des commissions scolaires anglophones, Rapport 2015, présidé par Mme Marlene Jennings, p. 13-14

<sup>6</sup> Nadine Ciamarra et Patricia Lamarre, QUESCREN Résumé de recherche no. 6 : Enjeux de l'éducation bilingue dans les écoles anglophones du Québec, Septembre 2023, en ligne : [https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artsci/scpa/quescren/docs/Brief\\_6\\_2024\\_FRA\\_final.pdf](https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artsci/scpa/quescren/docs/Brief_6_2024_FRA_final.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Lorraine O'Donnell et Patrick Donovan, *Mémoire de QUESCREN : Vers une politique linguistique inclusive : Les Québécois d'expression anglaise et l'avenir de la langue française* (Avril 2023), en ligne : [https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artsci/scpa/quescren/docs/Memoire\\_QUESCREN\\_avenir\\_francais\\_2023.pdf](https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artsci/scpa/quescren/docs/Memoire_QUESCREN_avenir_francais_2023.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> En 2023, le taux de réussite des étudiants du secondaire de la CSEM était d'environ : (a) 90 % dans le programme de base en français, (b) 98 % dans le programme de français langue seconde, programme enrichi et (c) de 97 % en français, langue d'enseignement.

<sup>9</sup> Lorraine O'Donnell et Patrick Donovan, *Mémoire de QUESCREN : Vers une politique linguistique inclusive : Les Québécois d'expression anglaise et l'avenir de la langue française* (Avril 2023), en ligne : [https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artsci/scpa/quescren/docs/Memoire\\_QUESCREN\\_avenir\\_francais\\_2023.pdf](https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artsci/scpa/quescren/docs/Memoire_QUESCREN_avenir_francais_2023.pdf).

l'article 23, soit le maintien et l'épanouissement des communautés de langue officielle, que la communauté minoritaire « ait un contrôle sur les aspects de l'éducation qui concernent ou qui touchent sa langue et sa culture ».<sup>10</sup>

L'article 23 confère ainsi un droit de gestion et de contrôle, soit un pouvoir exclusif des représentants choisis par la communauté anglo-québécoise de prendre des décisions concernant l'éducation dans la langue de la minorité.<sup>11</sup> Dans l'exercice de ses pouvoirs, le gouvernement doit tenir compte du « caractère réparateur de l'art. 23, [d]es besoins particuliers de la communauté linguistique minoritaire et [du] droit exclusif des représentants de la minorité de gérer l'enseignement et les établissements d'enseignement de la minorité ».<sup>12</sup> La mise en œuvre de l'article 23 exige « une pleine compréhension des besoins de la minorité linguistique ».<sup>13</sup> La Cour suprême reconnaît également que « les minorités linguistiques ne peuvent pas être toujours certaines que la majorité tiendra compte de toutes leurs préoccupations linguistiques et culturelles. »<sup>14</sup> Selon l'ACSAQ, la consultation véritable a un rôle critique à jouer pour s'assurer que l'action gouvernementale tient compte des besoins de la communauté anglo-québécoise et soit conforme à l'article 23.

L'expérience récente nous apprend que trop souvent, le gouvernement mécomprend la portée de ce droit. En 2020, la Cour d'appel a confirmé un sursis de la loi 40, *Loi modifiant principalement la Loi sur l'instruction publique relativement à l'organisation et à la gouvernance scolaire*, et la Cour supérieure en 2023 a déclaré invalide plusieurs dispositions de cette loi en raison de leur incompatibilité avec l'article 23.<sup>15</sup> Des contestations de la loi 21 et de certaines dispositions de la loi 96 affectant la langue employée au sein des commissions scolaires anglophones, fondées sur l'article 23, cheminent également devant les tribunaux. L'ACSAQ invite ainsi à la prudence et à la collaboration avec la communauté anglophone sur toute question affectant le milieu éducatif anglophone afin d'éviter les conflits et favoriser des solutions gagnantes-gagnantes dans le respect des droits de la communauté anglo-québécoise.

### **Analyse du projet de loi 84, *Loi sur l'intégration nationale***

Le projet de loi a pour principal effet d'établir les fondements d'un « modèle québécois d'intégration nationale », en définissant les éléments clés de la culture québécoise ou culture commune auquel tous les Québécois et l'État québécois sont tenus d'adhérer.

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<sup>10</sup> *Mahé c Alberta*, [1990] 1 SCR 342 à la p 345.

<sup>11</sup> *Mahé c Alberta*, [1990] 1 SCR 342.

<sup>12</sup> *Arsenault-Cameron c Île-du-Prince-Édouard*, 2000 CSC 1 au para 44.

<sup>13</sup> *Renvoi relatif à la Loi sur les écoles publiques (Man)*, art 79(3), (4) et (7), [1993] 1 RCS 839 à la p 862.

<sup>14</sup> *Mahé c Alberta*, [1990] 1 SCR 342 à la p 372.

<sup>15</sup> *Quebec English School Boards Association c Procureur général du Québec*, 2020 QCCS 2444, conf 2020 QCCA 1171; *Quebec English School Boards Association c Procureur général du Québec*, 2023 QCCS 2965.

Cette culture commune est définie comme étant caractérisée « notamment par la langue française, la tradition civiliste, des institutions particulières, des valeurs sociales distinctes, un parcours historique spécifique et l'importance accordée à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes à la laïcité de l'État et à la protection de la seule langue officielle et commune du Québec » (art. 3). Le modèle d'intégration nationale reposerait également sur la reconnaissance du français comme principal véhicule de la culture québécoise, « l'adhésion aux valeurs démocratiques et aux valeurs québécoises exprimées notamment par la *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* », « la possibilité offerte à tous de participer à la société québécoise » (art. 5). La loi énonce que ce modèle québécois d'intégration nationale est « distinct du multiculturalisme canadien » (art. 4).

Ce modèle est conféré un statut quasi-constitutionnel (art. 26). D'autre part, le modèle est intégré à la *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne*; le gouvernement pourra dorénavant justifier une violation d'un droit prévu à la *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* en invoquant le modèle d'intégration nationale (art. 19).

Au-delà de la détermination de ces fondements, la loi délègue un vaste pouvoir au ministre de la Langue française d'établir une politique nationale sur l'intégration à la nation québécoise pouvant traiter d'un large éventail de sujets, certains aussi vastes que « les valeurs québécoises » (art. 9(2)). Le ministre peut déterminer la portée d'application de la politique à certains organismes et requérir des informations de tout organisme auquel la politique s'applique (arts. 10, 12), il propose au gouvernement des « grandes orientations en matière d'intégration nationale » (art. 14), et il détermine par règlement les formes d'aide financière que peuvent octroyer les organismes auxquels la politique s'applique (arts. 16-17).

#### *Les fondements du modèle d'intégration nationale et la communauté anglo-québécoise*

Les membres de l'ACSAQ, en tant que représentants de la communauté anglo-québécoise, participent et vivent les valeurs québécoises, que ce soit dans le cadre de la promotion de la langue française ou la promotion des valeurs démocratiques et des droits et libertés de la personne. Unique au Canada, la communauté anglo-québécoise a une culture distincte de leurs homologues hors Québec, façonnée elle aussi par l'histoire unique de cette province. Les membres de la communauté anglo-québécoise sont des Québécois et Québécoises. Pour l'ACSAQ, tout modèle d'intégration nationale devra refléter le rôle de la communauté anglo-québécoise à titre de participants à part entière à la société québécoise et à ses valeurs.

À l'heure actuelle, le projet de loi prévoit une seule référence à la communauté anglo-québécoise au préambule, laquelle se limite à indiquer de façon ambiguë que la loi « s'applique » dans le respect des « institutions de la communauté québécoise d'expression anglaise ».

L'ACSAQ propose d'intégrer directement aux dispositions qui définissent les fondements du modèle d'intégration nationale (art. 3, 4, 5) le principe que la culture commune du Québec inclut le respect de la culture, des droits et des institutions de la communauté d'expression anglaise du Québec. S'il est vrai que les communautés francophone et anglophone du Québec ont parfois des désaccords, même importants, sur la portée précise de ces droits, le principe fondamental que la minorité anglo-québécoise est une partie intégrante de la société québécoise et que nous devrions chercher à aménager la coexistence des communautés linguistiques basé sur un principe de respect mutuel ne peut que faire consensus. Cet énoncé de principe, au-delà de son symbolisme important, favorise l'établissement d'un esprit de collaboration avec la communauté anglo-québécoise dans ce projet de société important.

*L'exercice des pouvoirs délégués au ministre de la Langue française dans le respect de la culture, des droits et des institutions de la communauté anglo-québécoise*

Tel qu'expliqué ci-dessus, la communauté anglo-québécoise bénéficie de certains droits, dont le droit de gestion et de contrôle en matière d'éducation en vertu de l'article 23 de la *Charte canadienne des droits et libertés*. À l'heure actuelle, le projet de loi étend de vastes pouvoirs au ministre de la Langue française d'établir des politiques, règlements et décisions en vertu du modèle d'intégration nationale, qui serait applicables aux commissions scolaires anglophones soit indirectement (par exemple, par l'entremise de son application au ministère de l'Éducation et de son financement) ou directement (en tant que organismes potentiellement visés par l'annexe A de la *Charte de la langue française*, art. 9). Lorsqu'elles affectent le réseau éducatif anglophone, le ministre doit tenir compte des besoins spécifiques de la communauté anglo-québécoise et du droit de gestion et de contrôle des représentants de la minorité anglo-québécoise.<sup>16</sup> L'expérience nous apprend que le gouvernement et la communauté anglo-québécoise ont souvent une compréhension très différente de leurs besoins et de la portée de ce droit. Dans ce contexte, la consultation est le meilleur moyen de permettre une prise en compte des besoins et droits de la communauté anglo-québécoise en conformité avec la jurisprudence.<sup>17</sup>

Afin de permettre l'établissement d'un dialogue constructif avec la communauté et éviter que les décisions prises en vertu du modèle d'intégration nationale puissent créer des conflits avec la culture et les droits de la communauté anglo-québécoise, l'ACSAQ demande que le projet de loi soit modifié pour inclure une obligation du ministre d'effectuer une consultation véritable de la communauté anglo-québécoise avant d'adopter tout règlement, toute politique ou décision en vertu de cette loi susceptible d'affecter la communauté anglo-québécoise.

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<sup>16</sup> *Arsenault-Cameron c Île-du-Prince-Édouard*, [2000 CSC 1](#) au para 44.

<sup>17</sup> *Quebec English School Boards Association c Procureur général du Québec*, 2023 QCCS 2965 au para 326.

Une telle disposition pourrait être inspirée des modifications récentes à la *Loi sur les langues officielles*, laquelle prévoit notamment l'obligation du gouvernement de « prendre en considération les besoins propres à chacune des deux collectivités de langues officielles » (art. 41(6)(b)). Cette loi comporte également l'obligation de mener des activités de dialogue et de consultation pour « permettre la prise en compte des priorités des minorités francophones et anglophones » (art. 41 (9)), incluant l'obligation de :

- a) recueillir l'information pertinente;
- b) obtenir l'opinion des minorités francophones et anglophones et d'autres intervenants concernant les mesures positives faisant l'objet des consultations;
- c) fournir aux participants l'information pertinente sur laquelle reposent ces mesures positives;
- d) considérer leur opinion avec ouverture et sérieux;
- e) être disposées à modifier ces mesures positives.<sup>18</sup>

La mise en œuvre d'un mécanisme efficace de dialogue permettrait de favoriser une prise de décision éclairée et la participation de la communauté anglo-québécoise de façon constructive à l'intégration nationale en collaboration avec le gouvernement.

*La primauté du modèle d'intégration nationale sur la Charte des droits et libertés de la personne*

Selon l'ACSAQ, l'art. 19 du projet de loi, lequel permet au gouvernement de justifier une atteinte à un droit protégé par la *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* québécoise en se fondant sur le modèle d'intégration nationale, crée une incohérence interne et dévalorise les droits protégés par la *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* de façon contraire aux objectifs identifiés par le projet de loi lui-même.

En effet, l'article 5 al 1(3) du projet de loi identifie l'adhésion aux valeurs exprimées dans la *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* comme étant un fondement du modèle d'intégration nationale. Or, l'art. 19 – en modifiant l'article 9.1 de la *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* - permet au gouvernement de justifier une atteinte à un droit protégé par cette même Charte basé sur le modèle d'intégration nationale, créant un raisonnement circulaire et vidant de sens les valeurs fondamentales identifiées à l'article 5 al 1(3). Si la *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* constitue un fondement du modèle d'intégration nationale, c'est cette *Charte* qui devrait primer sur le modèle d'intégration nationale, comme toute autre loi.

L'ACSAQ recommande ainsi de retirer l'article 19 du projet de loi.

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<sup>18</sup> *Loi sur les langues officielles*, LRC 1985, c 31 (4e suppl.), art. 41(9.1).

### *Valoriser et soutenir les contributions de la communauté anglo-québécoise à l'intégration nationale*

Les membres de l'ACSAQ sont des partenaires dans l'intégration nationale dont les contributions devraient être reconnues, valorisées et adéquatement financées. Par exemple, certains immigrants temporaires admissibles à l'enseignement en anglais apprennent le français dans nos écoles, parfois dans le cadre de programmes bilingues ou d'immersion, parfois dans des programmes d'accueil spécifiquement conçus à cette fin. Les commissions scolaires anglophones, forte de leur expertise en enseignement du français langue seconde, offrent certains cours de français au grand public. La communauté anglo-québécoise peut agir à titre de pont pour faciliter la transition de nouveaux arrivants en mettant à contribution leur expertise.

Ainsi, l'ACSAQ est d'avis que le modèle d'intégration nationale ne devrait pas être interprété de manière à exclure la communauté anglo-québécoise et leurs institutions des initiatives d'intégration et du financement qui en découle. Les décisions au niveau du financement devraient être prise en tenant compte des capacités particulières de la communauté anglo-québécoise et de leurs droits, notamment le droit de gestion et de contrôle. À cette fin, l'ACSAQ propose de modifier le préambule pour reconnaître les contributions de la communauté anglo-québécoise, par exemple :

CONSIDÉRANT que l'Assemblée nationale reconnaît que l'intégration nationale doit être effectuée en partenariat avec la communauté d'expression anglaise du Québec, dans le respect de la culture, des droits et des institutions de cette communauté, et en reconnaissant les contributions et l'apport de cette communauté à la société québécoise.

### **Conclusion**

Comme nous l'avons mentionné à plusieurs reprises, nous faisons partie de cette belle province à part entière. Nous sommes fiers de nos communautés et fiers d'être Québécois et Québécoises bilingues. Nous devons être appelés à participer activement à la solution.

De plus, nous exhortons le gouvernement du Québec à respecter pleinement l'article 23 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés.



ASSOCIATION DES COMMISSIONS  
SCOLAIRES ANGLOPHONES DU QUÉBEC

**Brief presented by**

**Quebec English School Boards Association  
(QESBA)**

**To the Committee on Culture and Education  
of the National Assembly**

**Special consultations and public hearings**

**on Bill 94**

***An Act to, in particular, reinforce laicity in the education network  
and to amend various legislative provisions***

**April 2025**

The Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) is pleased to be one of the groups given the opportunity to appear before these Parliamentary Commission hearings on Bill 94, *An Act to, in particular, reinforce laicity in the education network and to amend various legislative provisions*.

The QESBA is profoundly disappointed and concerned about this Bill. This Bill extends the application of many “laicity” provisions of Bill 21 deeper into the education system. It is a sledgehammer: a disproportionate response to isolated cases. What happened at Bedford School is neither tolerable nor defensible. But the answer should not be found by adding a swath of new prohibitions and requirements in all schools province-wide and invoking the notwithstanding clause. This is a grossly excessive response to marginal cases that have been sensationalised as a widespread problem.

Some of the new provisions *might* better support principals in the exercise of their statutory responsibilities; however, there is a lack of concrete means put forward to support principals and teachers, and thus, the likelihood that any of these provisions will actually support principals and teachers, improve services to students, and improve student success outcomes is very low.

Fundamentally, this Bill fails to recognize that the English-language school boards have a distinct character and governance system. In addition to trampling upon religious freedoms and equality rights, it runs roughshod over the rights of community management and control guaranteed in s. 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

This brief describes the QESBA’s comments on the overall approach and rationale for Bill 94. Next, it presents key points in four areas: (1) the character and governance of English-language school boards; (2) the extension of the “laicity” provisions; (3) the teacher management provisions; and (4) the educational services quality committee.

### **QESBA and the Nine English Member Boards**

The nine member Boards of QESBA serve some 100,000 students in over 300 elementary and high schools, adult and vocational centres across Québec, and employ over 20,000 people. Each Board has its unique demographic character, orientation and history. All of them share a particular sensibility to delivering public education services, with equal regard for all creeds, religions and cultures.

QESBA would point to at least four elements to describe that sensibility:

- ***An educational approach based on “teaching the student, not the subject”***, that is, in the spirit of Québec’s reform, to focus on the acquisition of competencies as well as knowledge, to encourage critical judgment, citizenship, enquiry and teamwork.
- ***Parent and community involvement***: as our school boards answer to the taxpayers, our schools must be accessible to and transparent towards their parents and community.
- ***A commitment to preparing our students for a future in Québec***: This commitment starts with the extensive concentration on French second-language. It is the mission of each of our school boards to provide every student with the opportunity to master French. The commitment contributes to the full participation of our students in the Québec of today and tomorrow and extends to a general approach to teaching the arts, literature and history and including extra-curricular activities that are cognizant and respectful of Québec’s rich and unique character.
- ***A recognition of our particular status as English-speaking institutions***: Québec’s English-speaking community, in all its diversity, continues to contribute to the rich tapestry of Québec life. English public school boards, representing the sole level of elected government answerable to that community, assume as part of their mission, the job of teaching about and strengthening that fundamental contribution.

Our 306 English public schools and centres are contributing to the future strength of the French language by offering state-of-the-art intensive French second-language programs that often go far beyond the requirements of the government-prescribed curriculum. A growing percentage of English public school students are completing the French mother-tongue exams at the end of their high school studies and succeeding in many cases better than their francophone *concitoyens*.

### **Bill 94 is a sledgehammer solution in search of a problem**

Bill 94 is based on two main reports: the *Rapport d'enquête sur l'administration, l'organisation et le fonctionnement du Centre de services scolaires de Montréal et de l'école Bedford* (June 2024), and the *Rapport de vérification des mesures prévues par la Loi sur laïcité de l'État* (January 2025), both of which relate to alleged non-compliance with the *Act respecting laicity of the state* (Bill 21). However, a rigorous reading of these documents reveals fragmentary findings, which are far from a solid evidentiary basis to justify new binding legislative measures across the entire school network. The conclusions of these

reports far from demonstrate a systemic problem that would require such a legislative response.

***Rapport d'enquête sur l'administration, l'organisation et le fonctionnement du Centre de services scolaires de Montréal et de l'école Bedford*** (June 2024): Bill 94 has its origins in an isolated incident at Bedford elementary school, where some teachers engaged in problematic behaviour, created an unhealthy work environment, displayed religious beliefs and failed in their professional obligations. Although this situation gave rise to public and political debate, it is not a widespread phenomenon, nor is it a systemic crisis requiring a major overhaul of the legislative framework governing teaching in Quebec.

***Rapport de vérification des mesures prévues par la Loi sur la laïcité de l'État*** (January 2025) : Firstly, the inspectors of the 17 establishments found no contraventions of the requirement for staff to have their faces uncovered. All members of staff complied with this provision, and there was no evidence or documents to suggest any infringement had taken place. Secondly, with regard to prohibition on the wearing of religious symbols by teachers and principals (excluding those subject to the grandfather clause), the inspectors found no school principals wearing any religious symbols, and that most of the teachers concerned were subject to the grandfather clause provided in Bill 21. The only contravention found concerned an employee who worked as a supply teacher for a school service centre. None of these schools are in the English-language network. Finally, during their visits to the schools, the auditors did observed no religious activities or courses.

### **The proposed solution is wall-to-wall: a “solution” to a false problem**

By choosing to introduce far-reaching legislation on the basis of an isolated case, the government is demonstrating a logic of abusive generalization. Targeted administrative intervention, such as a local investigation, a call to order or a clear framework of professional expectations, would have been sufficient to respond adequately to the situation at Bedford elementary. Instead, Bill 94 proposes a “wall-to-wall” approach, imposing new obligations on all Quebec teachers that go far beyond what the Bedford situation justified.

Under these conditions, the adoption of additional, centralizing, wall-to-wall measures is totally disproportionate. It does not correct a flaw in the existing law, but rather an issue of management and application in extremely marginal cases. In this sense, Bill 94 sets a worrying precedent: that of adding to the legislative framework on the basis of perceptions or isolated cases, without the support of systematic or generalizable evidence.

Over and above the pedagogical issue, this Bill instrumentalizes the concept of “laicity”, creating a false problem to justify excessive centralization of powers. It sets a dangerous

precedent for the balance between teachers' duties, individual rights and institutional responsibilities.

Finally, several elements of the Bill directly affect the working conditions of teaching and support staff, which have traditionally been negotiated between school boards and unions. In this sense, these changes have more to do with the reorganization of local collective agreements than with educational reform aimed at improving the quality of teaching.

This way of legislating is worrying. It reflects a desire for centralized control at the expense of the professional autonomy of teachers and the ability of schools to manage specific cases themselves. It amounts to undermining an entire system in order to solve a problem that could have been resolved by internal mechanisms already in place.

What's more, this overbroad and generalized approach creates a climate of mistrust towards teaching staff, as if an ideological or religious drift were threatening the entire network. There is nothing to suggest that such behaviour is frequent, or that school principals or school boards are unable to manage it when it does occur.

It is therefore essential to question the legitimacy of such a legislative response and to remember that effective public policies must be based on serious observations, evidence and a genuine desire to improve the system, rather than on the politicized management of anecdotal cases.

## **Key points on Bill 94**

### **1. Bill 94 overall approach: English school boards are distinct in character and governance**

Following the Quebec Court of Appeal's decision in the Bill 40 appeal, which found many provisions of Bill 40 unconstitutional,<sup>1</sup> English school boards remain in place.

Nonetheless, Bill 94 avoids using the term "school boards," and this omission is more than a simple change in wording. Bill 94 is based on the post Bill-40 "school service centre" model, and thereby assumes that school service centres serve a primarily administrative function: to apply strict Ministerial directives. This bureaucratic focus betrays a lack of understanding of the educational and democratic mission of English-language school boards, which are not subject to Bill 40. English-language school boards are not simply

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<sup>1</sup> *Procureur général du Québec v. Quebec English School Boards Association*, 2025 QCCA 383 [QCCA decision].

transmission conduits, but institutions rooted in their communities and carrying an educational vision adapted to local realities.

School boards are not merely channels for service delivery: in the case of English minority-language boards, they serve as a cornerstone institution of the minority-language community. Minority community management and control in matters of language and culture is essential to the function and character of English school boards. It is also a constitutional requirement. The Quebec Court of Appeal recently re-affirmed these constitutional rights:

[132] The management and control rights arising under s. 23(3)(b) of the *Charter* are those described in *Mahe*. Consequently, the measure of management and control may, depending on the number of students involved, warrant an independent school board for the linguistic minority. Those rights, include, at the very least, the exclusive authority of the minority language representatives to make decisions relating to the minority language instruction and facilities, particularly with regard to: (a) expenditures of funds provided for such instruction and facilities; (b) the appointment and direction of those responsible for the administration of such instruction and facilities; (c) the establishment of programs of instruction; (d) the recruitment and assignment of personnel, including teachers; and (e) the making of agreements for education and services for minority language pupils.<sup>2</sup>

The Quebec Court of Appeal also recognized that even a provision that is appropriate for the majority is not automatically a justifiable infringement of this right to minority community management: “a legislative measure that is appropriate for the linguistic majority is not necessary in and of itself a sufficient explanation to justify an infringement of a right guaranteed by s. 23 of the *Charter*.”<sup>3</sup>

English school board autonomy is essential to meet the specific needs of schools, promote educational innovation and support schools in their day-to-day challenges. Minority English-language school boards are in the best position to help minority English-language schools create a healthy and respectful school climate.

Bill 94 fails to take into account that the English network is not subject to the same governance regime as the French system. English school boards benefit from the protection of community management and control guaranteed by s. 23 of the *Charter*. Neither Bill 40

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<sup>2</sup> QCCA decision, para 132; footnote omitted, emphasis added.

<sup>3</sup> QCCA decision, para 220.

nor Bill 23 are in effect for English school boards. By reducing their decision-making power to the strict application of a rigid framework dictated by the Ministry, Bill 94 operates on the Bill 40 paradigm, which as been declared inoperative in the English system. Bill 94 fails to take into account that the top-down Ministry-driven approach (in which school service centres are simply conduits of Ministerial will) is not appropriate for the English education sector.

Following the decision of the Quebec Court of Appeal, the government must recognize English-language school boards as partners in their own right and not simply as agents of the Ministry. In failing to do this, Bill 94 is manifestly ill-suited to the English-language school boards.

**Recommendation:**

Bill 94 be amended to explicitly recognize the constitutional autonomy of anglophone school boards and preserve their full decision-making capacity in matters of educational governance.

## 2. Extension of « laicity » in school boards

The Bill purports to extend “laicity” deeper into the education system.

It is replete with mentions of “Québec values, including the equality of women and men” and “State laicity”. In addition to creating a new purpose clause for the entire *Education Act*<sup>4</sup> and modifying the purpose clause for schools<sup>5</sup> and school service centres,<sup>6</sup> the Bill paints this language into numerous other provisions of the *Education Act*. It extends the prohibitions on the wearing of religious symbols to all school staff, parent volunteers, and contract workers; requires students, staff and contractors to have their faces uncovered; prohibits the use of school facilities for any religious practices; severely restricts religious accommodation for both staff and students; requires that methods of instruction and evaluation be in conformity with “State laicity”, and prohibits individuals from conduct based on “religious considerations”. In so doing, it bluntly imposes a political project of

<sup>4</sup> Bill 94, s. 1, adding s. 0.1 to *Education Act*.

<sup>5</sup> Bill 94, s. 9, amending *Education Act*, s. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Bill 94, s 25, amending *Education Act*, s. 207.1.

coercive and exclusionary “laicity” deep into school. In addition to violating the Canadian and Quebec Charters of Rights, this legislation is wrong-headed in its approach.

While Bill 94 claims to defend “laicity”, it proposes a rigid and coercive interpretation, disconnected from the spirit that has historically guided secularism in Quebec. Secularism aims to guarantee the neutrality of the State while protecting the freedom of conscience and religion of all citizens. It was never intended to erase cultural diversity or restrict individual expression, so long as religious expression did not interfere with the proper functioning of institutions.

State religious neutrality (or the “separation of church and state”) ensures that the education system is secular and that it does not proselytize, nor does it favour one religion over another. However, “laicity” should not be used to restrain the religious freedoms of individuals. In 2019, the QESBA stated as follows, regarding Bill 21:

Our Association and the English school boards it represents are profoundly disappointed that the Bill before us frames otherwise legitimate and important issues of inclusion, identity, individual and collective rights in a negative perspective that we view as unnecessarily divisive. That unfortunate perspective is one that ultimately dismisses the generosity, openness and respect that we Quebecers have consistently demonstrated on these key questions. Our member boards are a case in point, having opened the doors of their schools and centres over the years to students, support staff, professionals, teachers and administrators of different ethnic and religious backgrounds while delivering a first rate public education to millions of young and adult Quebecers.

The QESBA further stated that “banning the wearing of religious symbols is contrary to the values that are taught in our schools.” The QESBA’s full brief on Bill 21 can be found at **Appendix A**.

By requiring school boards to prohibit any religious activity or material, even if it is used for educational purposes, the bill opens the door to a form of cultural erasure and censorship. It risks depriving pupils of opportunities to learn about the various religious and philosophical traditions that shape the world, which is essential to their development as open, critical and informed citizens.

Secularism should not be used as a tool for homogenization, but as a framework guaranteeing everyone the *right to exist in the public arena, whatever their beliefs*. School must remain a place for dialogue and questioning, not a sterile space where certain subjects become taboo.

Genuine education in secularism requires an understanding of its foundations, objectives and tensions. Educational policy must not be shaped by a fear of missteps or the deterrent of punitive measures. Instead, it should be grounded in a strong trust in the professional expertise of teachers and their ability to impart complex knowledge with both intellectual rigour and human sensitivity.

Like Bill 21, Bill 94 goes well beyond state religious neutrality, thereby restraining individual liberties, including religious freedom. This rigid conception of “laicity” transforms a principle of neutrality into a state ideology, where any reference to religion is perceived as suspect. This is the very antithesis of religious freedom. It runs counter to the educational mission of exposing pupils to the complexity of the world, developing their critical thinking and preparing them to engage thoughtfully and responsibly in a pluralist society.

*In this regard, it bears noting that the fundamental freedoms of all Quebecers are being infringed, as evidenced by the pre-emptive use of the notwithstanding clauses of both the Quebec and Canadian Charters (Bill 94, s. 40). This increasing and routine override of fundamental freedoms ought to be of concern to all Quebecers.*

As evidenced in the Bill 21 court challenge of the English Montreal School Board, the English-speaking community is strongly opposed to certain provisions on “laicity” (notably the prohibition on religious symbols and the restrictions on religious accommodation), on the grounds that these prohibitions violate the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as well as Quebec’s *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, amongst other things.

English school boards have challenged Bill 21 on the basis of s. 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. That challenge is now before the Supreme Court.<sup>7</sup> For the same reasons put forward in that constitutional challenge, the extension of Bill 21 further into the English school boards (as envisioned by Bill 94) also infringes s. 23 of the *Charter*.

Thus,

- a) The extension of the prohibition on the wearing of “religious symbols” to a wider group, including all school board personnel, and anyone providing services to students;<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *English Montreal School Board, et al. v. Attorney General of Quebec, et al*, SCC docket No. 41231 (Leave to appeal granted January 23, 2025).

<sup>8</sup> Bill 94, s, 32, adding *Education Act*, s. 258.0.4.

- b) the requirement for students, staff and contractors to have their faces uncovered;<sup>9</sup>
- c) the prohibitions the use of school facilities for any religious practices;<sup>10</sup>
- d) the severe restrictions on religious accommodations for students and staff;<sup>11</sup>
- e) the new requirements that methods of instruction and evaluation be in conformity with “Quebec values, including the equality of women and men, and with State laicity”;<sup>12</sup> and
- f) the requirements on governing board members, commissioners, personnel and others that their conduct not be motivated by “religious considerations”<sup>13</sup>

are all deep intrusions into the ability of English school boards to manage and control their affairs in the area of language and culture, including the management of staff and the cultural values of religious diversity. They are also in many cases vague and impracticable.

In addition to the violation of s. 23 of the *Charter*, these “laicity” provisions are problematic for other reasons (the following list follows the same order as the list above):

- a) Religious symbols:** For the same moral and legal reasons as the QESBA was opposed to the prohibition on religious symbols for teachers in Bill 21, the QESBA is strongly opposed to the extension of the prohibition on religious symbols.

The further restrictions on hiring support staff, professionals, caretakers, and school board personnel who regularly visit schools to work with staff and/or students is government overreach. In addition to deterring parent and community volunteers, it will amplify the severe labour shortage that exists in all categories of employment in education.

For example, Bill 94’s “laicity” also applies to parents who wish to volunteer in the school and guests who are brought in to share their expertise (ex: Holocaust survivor presentation). Our English-minority culture values the contribution of our parents and multicultural community members to enhance the school experience for students.

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<sup>9</sup> Bill 94, ss. 4, 13, 32-35, and others.

<sup>10</sup> Bill 94, ss. 10, 18, adding *Education Act*, ss. 40.1, 101.1.

<sup>11</sup> Bill 94, ss. 16, 40, adding *Education Act*, ss. 96.21.1, 706.

<sup>12</sup> Bill 94, ss. 5, 6; amending *Education Act*, ss. 19, 22.

<sup>13</sup> Bill 94, ss. 11, 23, 27, 28, 29, 32, 35, 39, amending *Education Act*, ss. 71, 177.1, 213, 215, 215.1, 258.0.3, 297, 479.21.

- b) Faces uncovered:** This requirement is both unnecessary and difficult to apply. While there has been no issue about religious face coverings in the English network, many students and staff wear medical masks from time to time for a variety of reasons. This provision creates confusion around when a medical mask is permitted: what constitutes an adequate “health” reason; will a medical note be required? While it creates new confusion, the rationale for this provision is not clear. What problem does it address? There is no issue or problem regarding religious face coverings in the English network. In any event, what is the policy rationale for requiring contractors who have no contact with students to have their face uncovered?
- c) Prohibition on any religious practices on school premises:** The Directive upon which this provision is based is currently being challenged before the Courts on the basis that it contravenes both the Canadian and Quebec *Charters*. It is plainly a violation of religious freedom, in addition to being a violation of English community management and control rights.
- d) Days off for religious accommodations for teachers:**<sup>14</sup> It is not clear what this provision would change, nor what problem it attempts to solve. Teacher days off for religious holidays are already dealt with under existing management practices and collective agreements. National collective agreements include provisions allowing teaching, professional and support staff to be absent for personal reasons with no justification needed—this can include absences for religious reasons. Some school boards even have provisions in their local agreements, covering all staff, allowing certain leaves to be granted for other reasons. In addition, some collective agreements permit requests for unpaid days off, which could also be requested for religious reasons. There is no problem that needs to be solved here, and no need for this provision in the *Education Act*.
- Religious accommodation for students:**<sup>15</sup> Again, there is no documented problem that needs to be solved, or that cannot already be dealt with under the current legal framework for accommodation. In addition to being unnecessary, the blanket prohibition on religious accommodation for things like meal service, is simply cruel.

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<sup>14</sup> Bill 94, s. 16, adding *Education Act*, s. 96.21.1.

<sup>15</sup> Bill 94, s. 40, adding *Education Act*, s. 706.

**e) Instruction requirements (“Québec values” and “laicity”):**<sup>16</sup> These provisions are unclear. For example, will these provisions prevent the teaching about the impact of religion on the world, or about religion in general? Further, the modification to s. 19 of the *Education Act* (a new requirement about methods of instruction and evaluation) does not seem to belong in a clause about the rights of teachers.

**f) Conduct not motivated by “religious considerations”:**<sup>17</sup> The requirement that governing board members, commissioners, personnel and others’ conduct be “free of religious considerations” is extremely vague and will be impossible to apply. How are “religious considerations” defined, and how is one to know whether conduct is motivated by religious considerations? For example, many religions preach kindness and generosity: if an adherent volunteers their time at school out of a religiously-inspired sense of kindness and generosity, is this conduct said to be motivated by “religious considerations”? While a prohibition on proselytizing, for example, would be both obvious and clear, a prohibition on acting for “religious considerations” is too vague to apply.

Similarly, the prohibition in s. 479.2 on attempting to influence the exercise of a power or function under the Act based on a “religious conviction or belief” is vague, overbroad, and difficult to apply. For example, does it prevent a Commissioner from attempting to have a Council meeting scheduled so as not to conflict with a religious holiday?

**Recommendation:**

The “laicity” provisions of Bill 94 should be suspended in the English system at least until the Bill 21 appeal is finally decided.

<sup>16</sup> Bill 94, ss. 5, 6, amending *Education Act*, ss. 19, 22.

<sup>17</sup> Bill 94, ss. 11, 23, 27, 28, 29, 32, 35, 39, amending *Education Act*, ss. 71, 177.1, 213, 215, 215.1, 258.0.3, 297, 479.21.

### 3. Teacher Management: Instructional Planning and Teacher Evaluation

The Bill adds new requirements to submit instructional planning<sup>18</sup> and annual teacher evaluation.<sup>19</sup> In so doing, the Bill adds more requirements attempting to micromanage the relationship between principals and teachers. These are more examples of a deep intrusion into English school board autonomy. The QESBA agrees that the submission of lesson plans and teacher evaluation are good practices. They ought to be adopted where required and appropriate. Teachers already submit their syllabus and evaluation methods annually to their principal and to parents. But the question of whether and how to implement these practices should be left to school boards to decide. In some cases, these legislative provisions also run contrary to negotiated collective agreements.

**Instructional planning:** Teachers are bound by the requirements set forth in the Quebec Education Plan (QEP), which serves as the foundational framework for educational practices across the province. This obligation ensures that all educators are aligned with the broad educational goals established by the Ministry of Education, including the development of students' critical thinking, intellectual autonomy, and capacity for active citizenship. The QEP outlines the competencies, objectives, and skills that students are expected to acquire, guiding teachers in their instructional decisions.

However, while teachers are mandated to respect the QEP, they also retain a degree of professional autonomy in interpreting and applying its principles in the classroom. This balance allows for pedagogical flexibility, enabling educators to adapt the prescribed curriculum to meet the unique needs of their students while still adhering to the overarching goals of the QEP. The obligation to submit annual plans will only identify what is to be taught, rather than how it will be taught. The manner in which it is taught lies at the core of students' access to the learning process. This responsibility places teachers in a position of considerable trust. It is essential that they are not only compliant with the framework but are also supported by a system that fosters professional development, intellectual freedom, and confidence in their ability to navigate the challenges of a diverse educational landscape.

While the requirement for annual lesson plans is already the practice in some schools, it may be too onerous in some contexts. It adds to an already heavy workload for school principals. The requirement to review lesson plans for pedagogical conformity is useful and

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<sup>18</sup> Bill 94, s. 7, 15, amending *Education Act*, ss. 22.0.0.1, 96.21.

<sup>19</sup> Bill 94, s. 15, amending *Education Act*, 96.21.

relevant, but the requirement to review them for conformity with “Quebec values” is problematic. This bureaucratic task, forcing principals to review each teacher's annual plan, will not produce the desired outcomes that the government intends with this provision. Furthermore, it removes their attention for the real issues and concerns that are meaningful to improve educational practices and student learning.

**Teacher evaluations:** Similarly, while the annual evaluation of new, contract or tenure track teachers is already a practice in schools, it is too onerous and not feasible to extend it to the entire teaching staff. Further, teacher evaluation is defined as an obligation in collective agreements. Like instructional planning, this operational decision to expand the number of evaluations should be left to the discretion of the school administrator, allowing for a more flexible and context-specific approach to assessment that aligns with the needs of both teachers and students.

These provisions are an excellent illustration of how this Bill does not take into account that the autonomy of English school boards is protected by s. 23 of the *Charter*. Teacher evaluation is manifestly part of the sphere of management and control protected under s. 23. Further, the requirement that instructional plans be coherent with “Québec values” and “State laicity”<sup>20</sup> may impinge on matters of language and culture in English school boards.

Teacher evaluation is a matter of labour relations, not a matter for the *Education Act*. For example, the criteria for inclusion of teachers on the priority employment list in the youth sector or on the recall list in the adult education or vocational training sector stipulate that teachers must have worked under contracts at the end of which their performance is evaluated by the school administration. The evaluation of any teacher is part of the management rights of school principals. Although there are generally no specific provisions negotiated in this regard, these management rights have been widely recognized in case law when they are not exercised in an arbitrary, abusive, discriminatory or unreasonable manner.

Legal considerations aside, these provisions are dubious in their approach.

Instead of adding more bureaucracy and micromanagement, QESBA suggests an approach based on fostering relationships of trust between management and teachers, empowering teachers and fostering their professional development. Principals are already able to identify, monitor, intervene and support teachers who may be experiencing difficulties at some point in their careers. A mandatory and systematic annual appraisal may not always

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<sup>20</sup> Bill 94, s. 15.

be the best way of recognizing, valuing and supporting teachers. Teachers need to feel supported and have the means and resources to carry out their duties and obligations and thus ensure educational success. Rather, professional development (which is already part of teachers' professional obligations)<sup>21</sup> is a lever of support and enhancement that should be strengthened for principals and school boards. Also, discussion amongst teachers and with their principal should be encouraged, to encourage and support professional development needs and align with the school's educational project.

**Guide on Good Practices on instructional planning and teachers:**<sup>22</sup> There is a lack of clarity on this guide, which is to be prepared by the Minister.

**Recommendation:**

The instructional planning and teacher evaluation provisions should not apply in the English system because they infringe s. 23 of the *Charter*.

#### 4. Educational Services quality committee

It is unclear whether these provisions<sup>23</sup> would apply to English school boards. They fall immediately after the provisions on the commitment-to-student-success committee, which have been declared inoperative as a contravention of s. 23 of the *Charter*.<sup>24</sup>

If these provisions do apply, just as with instructional planning and teacher evaluation provisions, an educational services quality committee will add more layers of bureaucracy and workload without much pedagogical value added. The link to either "laicity" or pedagogical value is not evident.

Like the "commitment-to-student-success committee", which has been declared inoperative in the English system, this staff committee purports to direct operations within the English school board without the required representation by minority community representatives.

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<sup>21</sup> Under the *Education Act* (s. 22.6), and recognized in the National collective agreement (article 8-1.03): "Considering the importance that the parties attach to continuing education, they recognize that it is the teacher's duty to take appropriate measures to enable him or her to attain and maintain a high level of professional competence, in accordance with the Education Act (R.S.Q., chapter I-13.3)."

<sup>22</sup> Bill 94, s. 37, adding *Education Act*, s. 459.5.0.1.

<sup>23</sup> Bill 94, s. 24, adding *Education Act*, ss. 193.10, 193.11.

<sup>24</sup> QCCA decision, paras 278-279.

Thus, for the same reasons that the commitment-to-student-success committee was found to violate s. 23, this committee also likely violates s. 23.

In any event, this committee is redundant for the English sector. Support to schools and vocational centres educational project and initiatives is provided through the Directors of Educational, Complimentary Services (who are named as members of this new committee). Furthermore, consultants from these departments are at the disposal of schools and vocational centres to assist them to implement best practices and support teachers and support staff working directly with students. Thus, this new committee provides no additional support to staff—it merely creates additional and unnecessary oversight (a “Big Brother effect”).

In addition, it is not clear who would serve in the non remunerated functions under subparagraphs (4) and (5) (experienced school principal and former teacher).

**Recommendation:**

The educational services quality committee provisions should not apply in the English system because they infringe s. 23 of the *Charter*.

## **Conclusion: A Better Approach**

Bill 94 conflates two separate issues: academic best practices and “laicity”. Best practices and academic improvement are not dependent on “laicity”. By linking them, the Bill not only creates confusion but also detracts from the core educational goal of improving teaching and learning practices.

As currently drafted, Bill 94 raises serious concerns about its impact on the education community. By seeking to impose a rigid vision of “laicity”, it risks undermining the spirit of openness and inclusion that should animate Quebec’s public schools. Under the guise of “laicity”, this Bill instead imposes a uniform and authoritarian interpretation of it, to the detriment of the diversity of school realities and respect for the fundamental rights of staff and students.

Far from strengthening social cohesion, this approach could provoke new tensions in educational spaces, by marginalizing certain teachers, limiting their professional freedom, and weakening the relationship of trust that is essential between schools and the communities they serve. Turning school boards into mere conduits of Ministerial will also

compromises the capacity for local adaptation and support that is so crucial to the application of such sensitive principles.

**It is therefore imperative to thoroughly review Bill 94** in order to correct its harmful effects and integrate a more nuanced, inclusive and educational understanding of secularism. Such a revision should focus on respect for teachers' rights, recognition of their expertise, and the autonomy of local authorities in implementing government orientations.

Bill 94, as drafted, sends an implicit but powerful message to school personnel that their professional judgment, pedagogical expertise and ethical commitment to students must be called into question. By targeting teachers as potential vectors of abuse, the Bill breaks the bond of trust between the state and its educational staff. This risks aggravating a climate of tension already present in the education sector, where professionals have long been demanding greater respect, autonomy and the means to carry out their mission.

Quebec teachers are trained to deal with sensitive subjects with nuance and discernment. They adapt their teaching methods to the needs of their groups, the age of their students and their socio-cultural context. Far from hindering effective teaching, this ability to adapt is one of the strengths of the Quebec education system. By contrast, the rigidity imposed by the Bill risks hampering this fine-tuning, to the detriment of students' educational experience.

Rather than punish, the government should focus on supporting, accompanying and valuing school staff. This requires :

- ongoing training focused on social issues, ethics and inclusive approaches in the classroom;
- diversified, culturally sensitive teaching resources;
- public recognition of the complex role played by teachers in a pluralistic society.

**Recommendation:**

To truly support student learning, enhance teaching quality, improve school climate, and foster an inclusive environment, efforts should focus on evidence-based pedagogical strategies, professional development for educators, and inclusive policies that respect diversity rather than restrict it.

Quebec's public schools deserve more than authoritarian supervision: they need support, guidance and encouragement to bring secularism to life in a way that brings people together, rather than a coercive "laicity" that divides.

The path of collaboration, dialogue and accompaniment is always more promising than that of surveillance and punishment. Valuing teachers also means valuing public schools.