

Global Development Planning

*Strategy to revitalise the English Language
Minority Communities of Quebec*

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Final March 15, 2003

Prepared by the Education & Training Sector Task Force

***Global Development Planning for the English-Language
Minority Communities of Quebec***

Education & Training

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Members of the Education & Training Task Force
Members of the Global Development Plan Steering Committee

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1. Project Background: The Global Development Plan

The following Plan has been prepared by the Education & Training Task Force – one of eight sector task forces which bring together leading representatives from across the Province committed to the preparation of a Global Development Plan for the English-speaking minority communities of Quebec.

The members of the Education & Training Task Force will take the first draft of the Plan to their own communities and contacts for an informal check. In early 2003, all eight-sector task forces will come together for the Intersectoral Conference to share and exchange visions and priorities for the next five years. Following this conference, the sector plans will be taken to the community-at-large for further validation.

The Global Development Plan initiative originates from a request of the Federal Government to develop a funding framework. The GDP represents an opportunity for the English-speaking community to take charge of its current stage and identity within Quebec. This includes developing a clearer picture of the English-speaking population of Quebec, where it comes from and where it's going; helping maintain the population base by encouraging a sense of belonging; raising the profile and participation-level of English-speaking people at the municipal, institutional and government levels; promoting employment opportunities within the community for English-speaking youth and initiating community projects.

The Global Development Plan is an extraordinary opportunity to tap into the hidden resources of the English-speaking communities of Quebec; to mobilize and integrate best talents; to create long-term networks and communications within the community; to give experience and visibility to a new generation of leaders; and to develop improved institutional leadership. The goal is not only to reflect a social, cultural and linguistic identity, but also to create enhanced community capacity so as to project a sense of dynamism and exhilaration for the English-speaking communities as partners in Quebec's future.

The following plan presents an overview of the Education & Training sector in terms of current context, the vision of the sector, priority goals and actions for the next five years, and potential partners. The members of the Task Force and the GDP Steering Committee are presented in the appendices.

The eight sectors include: Arts & Culture; Business & Employment; Media; Education & Training; Health & Social Services; Heritage; Youth; and Visibility & Leadership.

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2. Overview of the Education & Training Sector: The Context

Definitions:

English-speaking communities includes all those who identify themselves as being part of those communities.

The Education and Training Sector is the network of public and private institutions and organizations that serve students involved in the life long learning process, from pre-K to university and beyond. In addition to the established school system, the Sector includes the job training, language, literacy, social and cultural training programs offered by provincial and federal government agencies, community organizations and the private sector. Community-based groups, which include parent volunteers, local organizations and advisory groups, provide essential support to the Sector.

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Issues:

The priority goals and actions to guide development in the Education & Training sector reflect the following discussion of issues and challenges.

Demographics. The Education & Training sector will continue to change and evolve. A downward trend in enrollment is anticipated, most significantly in the French sector, but in the English sector as well. These demographic shifts demand more creative approaches and models to offering education and training services.

Succession. In all regions there is a pressing need to train and recruit administrative and teaching personnel given the growing number of retiring staff associated with the aging of the baby boomer generation. Succession needs to be planned well. To not address succession within educational institutions and supporting organizations will lead to serious problems for the English speaking community.

Government recognition. The provincial government does not seem to recognize the dynamic reality of the English-speaking Education & Training sector. The Government definition of English clientele does not adequately reflect who is in the schools, nor does it contribute to increased enrollments in the public English schools.

Dialogue and communications. The Quebec English School Board Association (QESBA) is one of the few provincial English-speaking associations that are consulted by the provincial government/education ministry. Communication and consultation does occur, sometimes after a reminder is given, but often the consultation extends into other sectors since the government rarely consults other agencies for English minority input.

Awareness of resources. The community is not fully aware of available resources to enhance English language instruction. This places heavy demands on the public school sector and suggests a possible need for more effective information access and transfer.

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Lack of community capacity building and partnership development. The formal education system is not perceived to be as close to the community as it should be. There is certainly room for growth and improvement. Lack of resources for the school board, and in turn schools, prevent both from adequately fostering formal partnerships at the community level to address many issues such as community planning. In addition, school boards do not have all the resources they need to work with CLSCs, hospitals, economic development corporations, Regional Economic Development Centres that often determine vocational opportunities to be offered in Quebec's English high schools.

Lack of support and incentives for long-term planning. The Sector is not sufficiently forward thinking and continues to operate on a short-term planning basis. This reflects the near universal problem of agencies with restricted mandates e.g. MEQ mandate is one electoral mandate or about 4 years. Budgets, locally, have no longer-term predictability. Planning is also hampered by ad hoc "tied" grants. School boards and private institutions that provide support services to public school students who are in need of special provision such as the McKay Centre, rehabilitation centres, etc. need to know their level of financial resources for longer periods of time.

There is a need to support change at the high school level. The current structure is not responsive to student needs. It is rigid, fragmented and is not integrated with other levels of education and training. High schools need to be able to address student retention issues that begin long before the student arrives in high school, but manifest themselves especially in the early years of high school. The current Reform in Quebec education attempt to address some of these problems, but implementation has yet to reach the high schools and results are some years away.

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Youth retention. Youth migration is strongly influenced by economic opportunity and linguistic fluency. Youth continue to leave Quebec for job prospects elsewhere. There is a widely held perception that there are no good job opportunities for English-speaking youth.

Lack of proficiency in written French as a second language at the high school graduate level. While statistics tell us that the English community has made great strides in becoming more bilingual in recent years, it is still true that many young Anglophones fail to acquire sufficient skill in written French to face further studies or the workplace where French is the de facto language. This is an issue for the school system, but experience tells us that tangible progress also requires strong parental and community support to create the motivation and incentive to drive students to succeed. In some of the outlying regions in particular, sparse English-speaking populations mean that the only vocational options in the community are in French.

Limited access to English-language education services and language learning in smaller communities. In most of Quebec, the English-speaking population is insufficient to warrant full access to services including all high school options. In areas of low English population density there is limited access to non core areas of curriculum, such as advanced math & sciences at high school, vocational options and of course CEGEP and university access.

Underutilized vocational programs. Vocational programs across the Province are often not viable given minimum threshold enrollments. Greater access to these programs is required. Vocational skills need to be better promoted to youngsters and their parents starting at the elementary school level and in the early years of high school.

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3. Vision of the Education & Training Sector

The vision of the Education & Training Sector – the aspirations and future outlook - is reflected in the following statement.

Education is the cornerstone of the future of the English-speaking communities of Quebec. In serving life-long learners who would like to be educated in English, we are dedicated to graduating students who are fluent in oral and written English and French and are prepared to thrive in a global economy with changing realities.

We believe in a democratic education system that is universally accessible with equal opportunity for all students.

Education and training must be based on sound long-term pedagogical and vocational practices and research resulting in effective student-centred learning.

There is a strong consensus that English is an essential element of the fabric of Quebec and that the English school system is fundamental to the survival of the English-speaking minority community. The presence of English in Quebec is an important asset to the province in today's globalization.

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4. Priority Goals and Actions

The following Priority Goals support the vision of the Education & Training Sector and are intended to provide a framework for channeling energy and resources over the next five years. These Goals are closely interrelated and are presented in a random, non-sequenced order.

- Goal 1: Increase the French-language preparedness (written and oral, but particularly written) of graduates for the workforce in Quebec and further education.**
- Goal 2: Increase support for literacy training for youth and adults in English.**
- Goal 3: Give higher priority to vocational training.**
- Goal 4: Re-construct the high school organization and curriculum for the Reform.**
- Goal 5: Find ways to maintain and enhance English schools.**
- Goal 6: Ensure meaningful use of technology.**
- Goal 7: Provide more human resources for classroom support at all levels.**
- Goal 8: Ensure that teacher training and recruitment meet Quebec needs.**

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Each of the selected Goals is supported by a series of Priority Actions. Some of these actions appear repeatedly in support of achieving several goals.

Goal 1: Increase the French language preparedness (written and oral, but particularly written) of graduates for the workforce in Quebec and further education.

Priority Actions:

1. Create joint programs/degrees with French CEGEPs and universities.
2. Introduce required French at the university level.
3. Focus on early French second-language education with support to parents to enhance second language.
4. Continue government funded French second-language programs.
5. Build French language component into all vocational programs with appropriate MEQ funding.
6. Introduce French first-language program in English schools.
7. Make more French second-language materials available.
8. Establish language-training courses for prospective employees.

Potential Partners:

Governments, MEQ, Emploi Quebec, universities, community organizations, etc.

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Goal 2: Increase support for literacy training for Youth and Adults in English.

Priority Actions:

1. Develop CLSC infant programs/use of Born to Read programs in English.
2. Encourage library use beyond schools with improved selections, better funding and extended access.
3. Provide for later literacy programs for adults.
4. Promote use of Parent Effectiveness Training Programs.
5. Encourage mentoring programs using older students.
6. Encourage seniors to be volunteer readers.
7. Encourage use of group work with peer support for improved performance.
8. Provide for greater and more effective use of technology.
9. Encourage use of information text and not just narrative text.
10. Encourage English collections in public libraries.
11. Encourage intra library loans of English books.
12. Promote reading through the media (TV & radio).

Potential Partners:

CLSC, libraries, hospitals, daycares, schools, parents, grandparents, retirement homes, etc.

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Goal 3: Give higher priority to vocational training.

Priority Actions:

1. Provide for ongoing communications and marketing programs to present available services.
2. Provide more high-tech options/authorizations in the English sector.
3. Increased high-tech training opportunities for teachers – use of industry consultants.
4. Provide French second-language component in vocational training with MEQ funding.
5. Provide better access to Super Centres for English students (i.e. Aerospace).
6. Allow for greater flexibility in rules for group size in vocational education particularly for outlying areas.
7. Offer more and better support for low achieving students particularly in early high school.

Potential Partners:

MEQ, vocational centres, school boards, schools, etc.

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Goal 4: Re-construct the high school organization and curriculum for the Reform.

Priority Actions:

1. Retrain high school staff to make student needs a priority.
2. Provide evaluation of all levels.
3. Address the needs for all students - remedial and other.
4. Provide classroom supervision to enhance and ensure the above.
5. Set objectives for the end of each cycle – e.g. A student at the end of the last cycle will be able to.....
6. Implement the Reform ensuring a more cross-curricular approach with emphasis on learners' needs as opposed to subject specialization.
7. Create a junior high school or middle school between elementary and high school.
8. Include program enrichment for as many students as possible.
9. Put more emphasis on Best Practices.

Potential Partners:

MEQ, Boards, teachers, professionals, principals, administrators, universities, etc.

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Goal 5: Find ways to maintain and enhance English schools.

Priority Actions:

1. Schools partner with their communities to identify opportunities for economic development. Identify and map local assets in various sectors (e.g. tourism). Develop plans based on these assets and build community capacity to survive economically. Economic opportunities within and around the community that are self-sustaining will lead to jobs. Employment opportunities will influence youth migration and attract outsiders with children. More children will lead to sustainable schools.
2. Examine opportunities for sharing physical resources with French schools and other community groups to reduce costs (Sutton model.).
3. Examine opportunities to locate elementary and secondary schools in the same building if they are both in the same community.
4. Provide English schools as a training ground for English second-language teachers in French schools.
5. Seek sponsorships from the private sector and endowment funds to underwrite costs for human and physical resources for the schools beyond those funded by the MEQ.
6. Where enrichment or specialized programs cannot be provided for English students, consider providing access to French programs such as music, dance, art.

Potential Partners:

Communities, French school system, school boards, private sector, etc.

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Goal 6: Ensure meaningful use of technology.

Priority Actions:

1. Provide more and better professional development for teachers in the effective use of technology.
2. Empower the students.
3. Adopt the approach of "*Each one teach one*".
4. Recognize and work with the new learning dynamics associated with technology (i.e. role of the teacher, empowerment).
5. Focus on project and skills-based learning.
6. Recognize that technology is a tool not an end in itself.
7. Make use of current technology (videoconferencing) to deliver programs to remote school populations e.g. Low enrollment subjects such as physics, master teacher lectures and teacher professional development.

Potential Partners:

Private sector, teacher associations, universities, technology centres, federal government via Industry Canada, etc.

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Goal 7: Provide more human resources for classroom support at all levels

There is a perception that the success of students would improve if lower student/teacher and student/professional ratios could be provided. Apart from the question of staffing ratios, there is a serious shortage of English services that should be provided to the education system by other agencies, in particular, the health and social service network. This deficiency is evident throughout the province but is most acute in the rural areas.

Priority Actions:

1. Ensure that all English schools have adequate access to such professional services as psychologists, speech and behavioural therapists, psycho educators, substance abuse counselors and special education technicians.
2. Ensure that the CLSC's and the rest of the Health and Social Service network live up to their obligations in regard to service delivery and support to the English education system.
3. Increase resources to ensure that the Youth Protection network meets its obligations to the English community.

Potential Partners:

MEQ, MSSS, Community Services, CLSCs & volunteers, etc.

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Goal 8: Ensure that teacher training and recruitment meet Quebec needs.

Priority Actions:

1. Adapt teacher-training programs in Quebec universities to at least include appropriate content to meet the needs of the School system e.g. the principal concepts embodied in the Reform.
2. Take steps to make teaching and school administration sufficiently appealing careers to attract the numbers required to replace the elevated retirements currently foreseeable.
3. Ensure that teacher training prepares new candidates to work bilingually in classrooms using technology effectively with all students, some of whom will likely have special needs.

MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION & TRAINING TASK FORCE

Chair: Peter Riordon

Vice Chair ETSB, Director and Past President QESBA
Eastern Townships
p.riordon@acbm.ca

Jody Meacher: Youth co-chair

Teacher, special interest in ICT
Eastern Townships
jmurray@alumni.concordia.ca

David Daoust

Former DG, Riverside School Board
Chateauguay Valley
ddaoust@communitytable.ca

Elaine Freeland

Former ADM, MEQ Anglophone Services
Montreal
elaine.freeland@ca.enter.net

Anne MacWhirter

Former teacher, QFHSA representative
Gaspé
agmacwhirter@hotmail.com

Ian MacWhirter

Commissioner, former administrator
Western Quebec
gretaiian@rougenet.qc.ca

Patti Moore

CQSB
Quebec City
moorep@cqsb.qc.ca

Fred Rokni

Champlain College CEGEP
South Shore
Linda3fred@cs.com

MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION & TRAINING TASK FORCE
(continued)

Diane Ratcliffe

Past President, QESBA

Hudson

diane_ratcliffe@rptmotion.com

Joan Rothman

EMSB, special interest in inner city/poverty

Montreal

joanprothman@aol.com

Ron Silverstone

ED AAESQ, former administrator adult ed, EMSB

Montreal

aaesq@cam.org

Marie Thibault

Bishops University, English history website

Eastern Townships

mthibaul@bishops.ca

Collette Turnbull

Commissioner

SevenIslands

johnt@bbsi.net

MEMBERS OF THE GDP STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair

Hugh Maynard, Executive Director, Quebec Farmers' Association
Sainte-Anne-de Bellevue, Quebec
maynardh@qfaqyf.org
514-398-7844

Task Force Chairs

Arts & Culture

Jane Needles, Montreal
jneedles@sympatico.ca
514-487-1011

Business & Employment

James D. Hughes, Montreal
jhughes@epoc-montreal.ca
514-877-7810

Communications & Media

Charles Bury, Birchton
charbury@netrevolution.com
819-875-5793

Education & Training

Peter Riordon, Sutton
p.riordon@acbm.qc.ca
450- 538-4306

Health & Social Services

Marion Standish, Rougemont
marion.standish@sympatico.ca
450-469-3432

Heritage

Edward F. Laberee, Lennoxville
elaberee@abacom.com
819-875-5776

Leadership & Visibility

John Trent, Chelsea
oa@magma.ca
819-827-4407

Youth:

Jennifer Johnson Blouin, Quebec
res-dev@hollandcentre.ca
418-683-9274

MEMBERS OF THE GDP STEERING COMMITTEE
(continued)

Resource persons:

GRUNDY MARKETING INC., Susan Grundy
grundy.mackenzie@sympatico.ca
514-489-4915

Quebec Learner's Network (QLN), Peter MacGibbon
peter@qln.ca
819-778-2270 # 1666

Centre for Community Organizations (COCO)
Frances Ravensbergen, Gillian Keefe, Manuela Petersen
coco@cam.org
514-849-5599

Bisson & Associates, Ronald Bisson
ronaldb@bisson.ca
613-596-6004

QCGN staff:

Deborah Hook, Executive Director
hookd@qcgnc.ca
418-681-2112

Christiane St Laurent, Coordinator,
programs@qcgnc.ca
418-681-2112