

Quebec's Ministry of Education should accept responsibility for issues that fall within its mandate

Montreal, Tuesday, July 6, 1999 – Quebec's Ministry of Education should accept responsibility for issues that fall within its mandate rather than place the onus on parents of children who are floundering in a French school system.

"There is no reason why all children still mired in the so-called welcome classes, after two years, cannot be systematically evaluated and assessed to determine whether they should continue within the French school system or be transferred to the English school system," stated Alliance Quebec President William Johnson. "It's time for the school boards to call back their professionals to address this desperate situation before the beginning of the next school year."

"The fact that a ministry employee, can maintain the system functions smoothly while a spokesman for the Marguerite-Bourgeoys school board maintains Avonelle Titus' situation is by no means unique clearly demonstrates there is a serious problem in the system," continued AQ Vice President Anthony Housefather. "It would appear government employees themselves are unaware of what is happening in their own system."

Clearly there is a need for a global review of students in similar situations.

Alliance Quebec insists that the ministry of education must evaluate and assess the viability and effectiveness of instructional services provided for the development of the children in this category.

Alliance Quebec has received numerous inquiries since the Avonelle Titus' case became public less than two months ago and is currently working on the Sheean Shomar Johnson case (see attached letter). Violet Francis, Shomar's mother, repeatedly requested that school officials evaluate her son to fulfil the requirements for transfer to the English-school system. Her request was denied and she was directed to speak with the school board's lawyer. This clearly indicates the situation was serious, the Shomar Johnson case was mishandled. Once again Alliance Quebec, through the intervention of its lawyers, will work to ensure that Shomar Johnson is properly placed for his further education this coming school year.

"These unfortunate children's academic development has been put on hold long enough and regardless of the percentages of students affected one more child's year wasted is one child too many," concluded William Johnson.

Alliance Quebec will continue to work to ensure English-speaking children who cannot adapt to the French school system receive every opportunity to acquire the education and skills they will need in the years to come.