

QCGN Statement on Superior Court Ruling on Quebec's Secularism Law

A Good Day for Minority Education Rights

MONTREAL, April 20, 2021 – The Quebec Community Groups Network welcomes today's Superior Court ruling which declares that Quebec's secularism law – [*An Act Respecting the laicity of the State*](#) – violates Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms regarding minority education rights.

In a landmark ruling for Quebec's English-speaking community, Justice Marc-André Blanchard declares the legislation does not apply to English school boards and their personnel. Pending an appeal by the government of Quebec, the decision applies to all English school boards in the province and will eventually have an impact for all official language minority school boards across Canada.

Justice Blanchard, who heard from experts who declared that having teachers from diverse backgrounds is important for minority students, affirmed that the choice as to the hiring of teaching staff rightfully belongs to English school boards which have the right to "recognize their linguistic and cultural specificity." Since our boards value and celebrate religious and ethnic diversity, they have the right to hire staff that reflects their intrinsic values.

While the QCGN hails the court decision to exempt English school boards, it is disappointed that Justice Blanchard did not find that Quebec's laicity legislation contravenes gender provisions contained in Section 28 of the federal Charter that guarantee "equally to male and female persons." The QCGN intervened on this issue during the court's hearings last December.

The QCGN is also disappointed that Quebec Justice Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette, the architect of the secularism law, said the province will appeal the ruling.

Read the [court ruling](#).

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores, and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

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