

**ADVISORY BOARD
ON
ENGLISH EDUCATION**

**THE REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS
ALONG LINGUISTIC LINES**

BILL 107

An English School Perspective

REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF QUEBEC

JUNE 1994

**COMMISSION DE L'ÉDUCATION EN LANGUE ANGLAISE
ADVISORY BOARD ON ENGLISH EDUCATION**

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PREAMBLE

At the Advisory Board's first meeting of the 1993-1994 school year, a strong consensus emerged that the issue of school board reorganization should be addressed and that the English-speaking community should be consulted as to its views on language based boards and informed about the legislation governing their implementation.

Since November 1993, members of the Advisory Board have attended numerous school and community meetings on the subject of school board reorganization. They were invited to hear the concerns of the school community and the wider community and, in some instances, to provide or to clarify aspects of the law. Furthermore, the main element in the process of consultation undertaken by the Advisory Board included a questionnaire sent to the school committees, orientation committees, staff councils and principals in each of Quebec's English schools. In addition, every organization associated with English education in Quebec received the same consultation. All were urged to send responses to the questions posed or their opinions on other facets of school board reorganization in order to assist the Advisory Board in the preparation of its report to the Minister of Education.

The principal aim of this Report is the identification of the needs of a viable English school system in relation to a school board structure based on language. Throughout our discussions, consultations and inquiries, we have found that school board reorganization is closely linked to the development of better education for young English-speaking Quebecers; education that is better adapted to today's requirements, better suited to the English-speaking student body and more responsive to the social and cultural values and aspirations of Quebec's English-speaking community.

"Our group felt that change can be a positive factor, and that if the consultative process is used correctly to set up the new boards, there should be no reason for people to fear change. Instead, it could be viewed as a positive thing. The transition from confessional to linguistic boards should be viewed as an opportunity to make necessary changes, and to renew our educational system."¹

¹ School Committee, School Council, Orientation Committee, Student Council, Commissioner, Hudson High School; Hudson; Lakeshore School Board.

There is a conviction across the English-speaking community that reorganization can be successfully carried out, that it will bring dividends, if two basic principles are adhered to.

Over and over again, the element of trust is invoked. As the Holland School Committee put it, "The essential values to strive for in approaching this changeover are consultation, cooperation and compromise, fairness and open discussion."² And in order to generate that necessary trust, the Greater Hull Parents' Committee brief asked for "ongoing, straightforward, understandable information of the process".³

Another perceived imperative for the successful implementation of linguistic boards is that they be community-based. "Territorial divisions between boards must not separate a homogeneous population", say the Montérégie Catholic School and Orientation Committees and the English-speaking Catholic Commissioners.⁴ This sentiment is echoed in English-speaking school communities across the province. As expressed by the principal of Centennial High School, "We should avoid the establishment of "super-boards" that will become bureaucratic nightmares of the 21st century. Focus must be on serving the communities in which schools exist."⁵

The community is seen as the natural foundation of the school board structure. Communities, therefore, should be taken into account when boundaries are drawn up. "In determination of boundaries, the arbitrary redrawing of boundaries merely to reinforce the perception that we are building new entities cannot be advocated. Such arbitrariness would not recognize the legitimacy of most existing territories. On the other hand, an equally arbitrary use of the boundaries of existing Protestant school boards to define the territories of the new English school boards must also be avoided."⁶

The Advisory Board is unanimous in its endorsement of linguistic school boards and in its conviction that Quebec's English-speaking community, if given the chance, will both actively support the reorganization and greatly benefit from it.

² Holland School Committee; Quebec City; Greater Quebec School Board

³ Greater Hull Parents' Committee; Aylmer; Western Quebec School Board

⁴ Fernand Blais; English-speaking Catholic Commissioners; Presidents of Orientation & School Committees of English Catholic Schools; Montérégie region

⁵ L. Davis, Principal; Centennial Regional High School; Greenfield Park; South Shore School Board

⁶ Provincial Association of Catholic Teachers

CONTEXT

In the 1993-1994 school year, there were 98,603⁷ students enrolled in Quebec's English elementary and secondary public schools. "Between 1972 and 1990, enrolment in English public and private schools fell by 57 %, from 250,000 to 108,000."⁸ It would be misleading to describe the school populations and the schools themselves as forming an English school network. It is a hybrid system that needs to take concerted remedial steps to counteract the effects of the dramatic decline in enrolments over the last 20 years which is significantly greater than the decline experienced in French schools.

Although the decline seems to have tapered off at the elementary level, it continues nevertheless, markedly at the high school level. There is no reason to believe that there will be overall growth in the English system in the foreseeable future. One of the factors contributing to this is the lack of easy access to an English school in some places. The decline between 1986 and 1993 has been significant in Montreal, following a general population trend, as well as in the more isolated rural regions. In 1986, the population in English schools, public and private, was 119,790. The enrolment for the 1992/93 school year was 110,735 and for the 1993/94 school year it is 110,719.

While these figures pertain to the youth sector, further study and careful attention also has to be paid to the adult population and the centers in operation to serve this group. School boards are facing a growing responsibility to provide primarily a general education for this segment of the population, a certain proportion of which requires technical and vocational education as well.

The Task Force on English Education wrote in its report dated January, 1992 as follows:

"There are a number of factors which have affected the nature and shape of the decline in English school enrolment. The general political and economic climate in Quebec, combined with the mobility of English-speaking Quebecers, has increased the rate of emigration among young English-speaking Quebecers and discouraged immigration to Quebec of English-speaking people. Bill 101, restricting admissibility to English schooling, has accelerated the decline by shutting out a significant portion of the English school network's traditional replacement clientele."

⁷ Source of enrolment figures - MEQ

⁸ Task Force on English Education; Report to the Minister of Education; January, 1992

Three hundred sixty-four (364) public schools in Quebec⁹ offering English elementary and secondary education are under the jurisdiction of thirty-four (34) Catholic school boards, seventeen (17) Protestant school boards and three (3) special status school boards. Most Catholic school boards include only one or two English schools, only eight have three or more. In the Montérégie region, for example, 4,353 students are distributed among fourteen schools in ten different Catholic school boards. Three Protestant boards in Quebec offer only English education, enrolling all students eligible for English language instruction including Catholic students. This is arranged through ententes with the overlapping Catholic boards which offer only French education.

Two thirds of English schools have less than two hundred (200) students, more than one third enroll fewer than one hundred (100).

School board affiliation does not necessarily reflect the religion of the student. Statistics show a percentage of Catholics registered in Protestant boards. These numbers may always have been misleading because one can declare oneself Catholic or Protestant or "other" in order to facilitate enrollment in the school of one's choice. For the purposes of our analysis however we have taken "Catholic" and "Protestant" to mean those affiliated with Catholic or Protestant educational structures.

The stumbling block to the consolidation of English education has been structural not educational or political. Since school boards are designated as Protestant or Catholic, a significant portion of the population cannot identify with them.

Cultural and community control over the education of their children is not possible for all English-speaking Quebecers. Community control over education is an illusion. English-speaking Catholics and all those who are in a school board by entente are disenfranchised in the boards where their children attend school. Furthermore, as minority stake holders in predominantly French Catholic boards, they have difficulty electing someone from their community to those boards due to lack of numbers in any given ward. The same pattern is true for French-speaking Protestants in Protestant boards which are predominantly English, which makes non-representation linguistically even-handed in its unacceptability.

⁹ See Table - Appendix A

The issue of community representation, of which some English-speaking Catholics and French-speaking Protestants are deprived, is an important factor. The fact that, for reasons of demography, there are many more Catholic boards than Protestant ones, English Catholic schools are controlled by a large number of separate and disparate boards. Their treatment and status is not uniform throughout the system. They are often isolated and vulnerable.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The consolidation of English education under the aegis of language-based school boards across the province is endorsed by the vast majority of English-speaking Quebecers. For educators and administrators in the English school community, the reorganization cannot come too soon. As stated in our Interim Report, "Linguistic boards represent an historic opportunity for the English school system to become a viable network, to begin focussing on gain rather than drain at a time when the system itself is unlikely to grow. Linguistic boards will produce a network in which common needs can be jointly met and common problems jointly solved. They provide a context of consolidation that has been lacking and sorely missed in the past."¹⁰

The significance of this consolidation on English language education and the urgency of its implementation were underlined in all but a few of the 150 briefs¹¹ submitted to the Advisory Board in response to a questionnaire sent out to the School Committees, Orientation Committees, Staff Councils and principals of all English schools in addition to all the organizations affiliated with English education in Quebec.¹² Responses to our community-wide consultation stressed the need for consolidation that would facilitate sharing among school boards. School boards based on the language of instruction are seen as the only way of achieving these objectives.

A strong consensus emerged in favour of a school system that reflects the English-speaking community as a whole in any given region and on a province-wide basis. A large measure of community control at the school board and individual school levels is sought.

¹⁰ Interim Report; Advisory Board on English Education; January, 1994

¹¹ List of respondents - Appendix B

¹² Survey details - Appendix C

The Anglophone Regional Parents' Committee of the Baldwin-Cartier School Commission puts it this way, "The community must play a direct role in the identification of schools which are to be closed, and schools which are to be changed from their existing linguistic designation."¹³ Community control is equated with decentralization. The Woodland School Council has this to say, "Our commitment is to quality education for our students. By that we mean that we need to have effective schools with the flexibility to respond appropriately to meet the varying needs of students. One of the ways to achieve this, in our view, is to decentralize power both to the school board level and to the individual schools, giving them greater freedom to serve their diverse clientele."¹⁴

The parents of Elizabeth Ballantyne School "believe that an effective school can best be realized when decision-making powers are decentralized. The school must have the concrete means to put its educational project into practice. This would entail more local control over finances, the right to consultation on hiring, and a more flexible curriculum."¹⁵

The issue of where decision-making powers should lie in the reorganization of school board structures is an integral part of the attitudes of English-speaking Quebecers towards the proposed reform. A consensus bordering on unanimity has developed around more decision-making powers at the school level. Rather than weakening the perceived need for linguistic boards, it has strengthened it. The reorganization is seen as a way of re-adjusting decision-making. The English sector Parents' Committee of the Chomedey-de-Laval School Commission believes with many other of our respondents that "the school should exercise a primary role in the decision-making which affects the educational needs of the students. The board should play a supportive function by providing the required resources and in maintaining minimum and equitable standards."¹⁶ The role of the school therefore is seen as pedagogical and the role of the board supportive.

The support side of the educational endeavour is of vital importance to English schools. Because the English "system" is smaller, more dispersed with proportionally more small schools than the French sector, services are scarcer and less accessible. The regrouping of English schools into consolidated structural entities will give the English system a sounder service base on which to count for the sharing of pedagogical and support services that the present structural fragmentation makes so problematical.

¹³ Anglophone Regional Parents' Committee; Commission Scolaire Baldwin-Cartier

¹⁴ Woodland School Council; Verdun; PSBGM

¹⁵ Elizabeth Ballantyne School Committee; Montreal West; PSBGM

¹⁶ Parents' Committee, English sector; La Commission Scolaire Chomedey-de-Laval

Recommendation: Support services essential

1 - Recommend that the new school boards be encouraged to collaborate on sharing services. In order to ensure access for all students and schools, large or small, urban or rural, to the services essential to support student success, it is further recommended that the Minister of Education facilitate and reward these initiatives.

The focus should be on schools rather than administrative functions. There is a convergence of ideas and aims that lends support to the opportunity for change. Examples of these practices already exist and the principles are supported by the Minister's Report, "Moving Ahead".¹⁷

A reduction of the bureaucracy at all levels means changing the way special projects, student services, local capital projects are handled. Local boards should decide how best to allocate funds within their networks. Decentralization of all functions including special education and Bill 101 could be monitored by audit. Schools should play a larger role in decision-making. This would make the element of local control real and the need for local accountability important.

None of these ideas are new. They have, however, begun to appear practically possible with the proposed consolidation. They follow along the general lines of what the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation suggested "Changes to the organization of educational services should favour a greater flexibility and the placing of a more outright responsibility at the school level as the only foundation on which to base mobilization and commitment on the part of the people most directly involved." (Chapter II.2.1.2) The Conseil also stresses, in its outline of a new and improved model of education management, that "Decentralization is often interpreted as a purely technical method of management, a geographical displacement of certain activities from the centre to the peripheries without in any way moving the seat of real power. In this regard, decentralization is often confused with deconcentration".(Chapter II, 2.2.3). The Conseil warns against this interpretation. Instead, "It is the desire to share in shaping a same institutional culture which must from now on become the link that binds the educational endeavour of each school within the system. We must move from "management by structure" to "governance by culture".(Chapter II, 2.2.2).¹⁸ The Conseil's considered opinion of what is good for the Quebec school system as a whole speaks directly to the needs of viable English education in Quebec.

¹⁷ Moving Ahead; Minister of Education; November, 1993

¹⁸ Superior Council of Education; Annual Report; 1991-92.

From general preoccupations to particular concerns, responses to the Advisory Board's questionnaire reflect a significant lack of trust in the present system on the part of English Catholics, an attitude that is absent from English Protestant replies. A fair and equitable apportioning of resources in a reorganized system is also of concern to Catholics, their past experience having taught them not to take empowerment for granted.

English-Catholic members of our community articulate a strong demand for religious instruction and pastoral services and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the guaranteed right to designate a school's confessional status. It appears from their responses that Protestants have only mild interest in the whole issue of religious instruction. Teacher responses, whether they be Catholic or Protestant, are in favour of retaining moral and religious instruction.

Protestant groups overall show a greater interest in local control, school autonomy and decentralization. Teacher groups we heard from of both denominations indicate an equal interest in the development of this approach.

All groups expressed a unanimity of opinion on the desirability of building an English system of quality and on the need for stability and continuity through the transition period between the old system and the new. The importance of flexibility, particularly in matters of curriculum, is also a common theme. These observations are consistent throughout and no significant differences appear from region to region.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGE

The commitment to change however does not come without pockets of resistance to certain aspects of change. Some parents are satisfied with the education their children are receiving under the present system. There is some hesitation about a school system whose sole defining factor is the English language.

Some Catholic schools outside the Montreal area enjoy a good deal of autonomy. The predominantly French-speaking boards to which they belong leave them pretty much on their own. The larger ones can provide an adequate level of services. The orientation and school committees, which came into being with those parts of Bill 107 implemented in 1988, provide community and parent input that stands in lieu of control from the board level. The parents and administrators of these schools worry about exchanging their quasi-autonomy for a structure in which they might lose their Catholic identity without gaining any particular educational benefits.

The idea that small groups of Catholic schools could be taken over by larger Protestant Boards to form English boards that are new only in name is one that still haunts many Catholic school communities. As a south shore Catholic school orientation committee brief put it, the implementation of linguistic boards must come about as "a partnership of equals and not by simply expanding some of the existing school structures to incorporate new clients and territories."¹⁹

One Protestant board (South Shore) has a growing clientele in its French sector which it is loath to lose. The English-French mix has kept the board itself strong and has contributed to giving a bilingual and bicultural dimension to the education of both French and English students .

Conversely, another concern in the Protestant system is that language will not be the sole structural criterion and that the confessionally neutral neighbourhood school will be difficult to achieve throughout the system because of pressure by Catholics to designate schools as Catholic, as the law permits, where the majority of parents wish it. From a traditionally heterogeneous Protestant school board perspective, the "common" English school, with the choice of confessional instruction as part of the curriculum, is the ideal and one of the great advantages of language based boards.

When asked what kind of confessional guarantees should be expected in a new English school board, the majority of respondents to our questionnaire were satisfied with the provisions of the Education Act. Some Catholic parents are anxious to retain the religious character of their schools and are concerned about a school system whose sole defining factor is the English language.

The vast majority of responses, however, indicated that whatever the religious commitment of the constituencies they represented, the Education Act provided sufficient guarantees of their traditional rights. The provisions of the Education Act are seen as today's best compromise between those who would have more and those who would have no moral and religious content in the school curriculum. "The confessional guarantees in the law have been fundamental to our position on linguistic boards all along and therefore we can accommodate neither extreme. It is of vital importance that the new boards be committed to the scrupulous application of the law as it applies to confessionality...anything less will...hasten the reconstitution of the current fragmented system for the English, where one sector will again find itself depending on the benign neglect of its co-religionists."²⁰

¹⁹ Terry Fox School Committee; St. Hubert; La Commission Scolaire Taillon

²⁰ Provincial Association of Catholic Teachers

Recommendation: Religious instruction and confessional status of schools

2 - Recommend that the present provisions of the Education Act be maintained in order to ensure student access to religious instruction, pastoral animation or a confessional school where appropriate.

PRESERVATION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

A constant theme throughout our study of the implications of reorganization was an insistence on the importance of preserving programs which were already in place. School communities are very committed to programs which have been developed over time and with which their respective schools have become identified. Much as consolidation is sought, it must not be brought about at the expense of individual school initiatives or educational programs with wide community support. From French immersion programs to services for children with special needs, there is a wide variety of educational priorities to which educators and parents are committed. Certain alternative schools like FACE (PSBGM) in Montreal or outreach schools which may serve a small number of students who are at risk of dropping out should be maintained until the merger-related dust has settled. The establishment of linguistic boards must not jeopardize quality and initiative. The objective is not a leveling process but rather an empowering one.

All groups call for the continuity of existing programs and demand that changes to current patterns of education be gradual under the new boards. There is a general consensus that disruption can be avoided by putting change squarely into the hands of the new school boards. Furthermore, this would ensure that the spirit and the letter of the Education Act would be followed because the School Committees and Orientation Committees would be consulted about any proposed changes affecting their school. There is no provision for such consultation in the transition period proposed in the law.

"As parents we urge policy makers to envision a school system that puts the needs of children first. Decisions should be made based on how changes are ultimately going to affect the children who are the future of Quebec".²¹ The emphasis on how reform would affect the children in existing well established programs was prevalent. The stability is considered imperative. There is a general anxiety on the part of all groups that if steps are not taken to prevent it, the children's education may be disrupted because of decisions based on administrative imperatives but uninformed about parental priorities.

²¹ Elizabeth Ballantyne School Committee; Montreal West; PSBGM

All things considered general agreement would seem to favour declaring a freeze or moratorium, unless the school consents to a change, from the time of the decree to extend through the period of transition until the new school boards can properly make those decisions.

Recommendation: Stability for educational programs and students

3 - Recommend that a moratorium be decreed on existing programs which schools wish to maintain when the new territories are declared. This will allow the new school boards, once in place, sufficient time to evaluate the programs and to make decisions on changes in accordance with the needs of their schools and communities.

APPREHENSIONS

There is concern with the mechanisms of transition. The Provisional Councils as set out in Bill 107 are found unsatisfactory by general consent. Their composition is seen as unwieldy. There is a strong consensus that the establishment of new boards should not be left entirely to the old boards on which English Catholics feel they have no representation.

"School board elections and the provisional councils as they are to be set up according to Bill 107, are not satisfactory. The composition of the provisional council from the commissioners of the existing school board could result in serious conflict. Can they be impartial and objective while dismantling their own school board and eliminating their own positions? We really don't believe they can, so we recommend that the existing school boards have one representative each. The parent representatives should be the majority and the other groups have one representative each."²² This is from the Leonardo da Vinci School's Orientation Committee. The advice may not be the optimum solution to the transition process but it reflects a widespread concern about its fairness in the distribution of assets and positions as well as about community input into decisions affecting any changes in school programs due to changes in school board structures.

It is essential that the reorganization of school boards be carried out in a manner which ensures full and equitable participation of all sectors of the English-speaking community during the period of implementation.

²² Leonardo da Vinci Orientation Committee; Montreal; CECM

One of the factors deemed essential to any successful implementation of linguistic boards is that they be and be seen to be newly constituted and not simply a series of take-overs. The English Catholic community must be assured that it will not be taken over and that it will have a say in the process. Catholic (predominantly French) and Protestant (predominantly English) boards should not be allowed to stack the decks of administrative appointments and the creation of new positions, etc. in which the minority has no say. A fairer and more efficient transitional mechanism is required.

Current legislation will require amendments. For example, the articles pertaining to Provisional Councils in the Education Act would require modifications.

Recommendation: Transition to linguistic boards

4 - Recommend that the Education Act be amended to change the composition and mandate of the provisional councils and that this be replaced by a mechanism which ensures long term decision-making for a new school system that is carried out primarily by those elected to serve on the new school boards.

The following proposal is based on the general feeling that Provisional Councils are not workable as presently constituted and that the new organization should not be shaped by the old.

A. Electoral councils will be formed from amongst those boards which are wholly or partially on the territory of the new linguistic boards and which currently deliver educational services in the language of the new board. Each electoral council will be composed of members of the council of commissioners from each existing school board which has jurisdiction over students served in the language of the new board. Boards with jurisdictional responsibility over at least 5% of the students to be enrolled in the new board should have proportional representation with a minimum of one representative. Councils will have a maximum of 25 members. These persons shall be delegated to represent the interests of the population to be served by the new board. The concept also allows for the inclusion of parent commissioners, including those representing the minority language population. The councils assume the responsibility for the election process for new boards including determining the wards and appointing chief returning officers.

B. New boards are elected in November '95 (instead of spring '96). Their role during the period prior to July 1st is to negotiate the transition of administration. Some school commissioners would have a dual function if they also served on the old board.

The rationale for this approach is that it assures that decisions are made by those who will have responsibility for and therefore a real interest in the new establishments. Following an election, there will be a clear mandate, continuity in decision-making and elected English Catholic representation. In many regions, the majority population would be not disturbed. It would provide for the least possible disruption to schools and students during the transition.

These councils would have the responsibility essentially, to define ward boundaries and appoint the returning officers, providing for the transfer of responsibility from the old confessional boards to the newly formed linguistic ones.

Recommendation: Mechanism to arbitrate disputes

5 - Recommend that an impartial tribunal, a 'commission juridique' or 'commission d'appel', be established composed of three arbitrators, charged with settling disputes to serve the aims of the Education Act. It must take into account the best interests of the students and without preference for any religious or linguistic group. This tribunal should be empowered to have final jurisdiction on all disputes of property or territory referred by either party in the dispute.

Recommendation: Public information on change

6 - Recommend that the Minister of Education undertake to inform the public of the changes to the system of education at all stages of the transition to ensure appropriate citizen participation in the electoral process and to keep parents abreast of the changes which would affect their children.

EXPECTATIONS

The Metis Beach School Committee brief summed up the overall feelings of the English-speaking community about the linguistic school board issue, "We would like to express our desire that the impending reforms be carried out with the least possible delay and with the integration period being as short as possible. The longer the uncertainty about the implementation of the reforms, the more anxious and uncertain we become about the future of our children's education."²³

Reform is expected to give the English school sector the needed impetus and resources to improve the quality of English education across Quebec. It won't solve all the problems but it should help the English education community to find its own solutions to many of them, from the present dearth of student services to a more uniformly effective French language training.

The pooling of the resources of English education and the community consolidation that it represents are also seen as providing an opportunity for increasing community participation in the delivery of education which in turn would encourage greater involvement by parents in their children's education at home and in school.

"We have to develop and offer programs giving parents the necessary tools and confidence to take part in various school committees. Teacher-parent collaboration must be strengthened. This should be encouraged and promoted as mentioned in the Education Act 107, English schools should stress parents' involvement and participation."²⁴

The community base on which linguistic boards would be founded would, it is believed, give parents the necessary confidence and feeling of ownership to become more involved in the education of their children in both the home and school settings.

²³ Metis Beach School Committee; Metis Beach; Eastern Quebec Regional School Board

²⁴ St-Joseph's School Parents; Val d'Or; La Commission Scolaire de Val-d'Or

A school board structure based on the educational needs of the English-speaking community, which reflects that community and allows it to define its priorities within the regime pédagogique is now seen to be within the grasp of English-speaking Quebec. The loss of that opportunity would be a serious blow to the raised expectations of English-speaking Quebec and to the right of the linguistic minority to control and manage their schools as expressed by the Supreme Court in the Mahé judgment. Furthermore, delaying all reform would be very detrimental to English education.

Once linguistic school boards are established, the English-speaking community must be guaranteed the control and management of its school system. The greater community involvement in education hoped for with the reorganization of Quebec's school system along linguistic community lines could also lead to stronger school boards right across the networks. This is not a specifically "English" issue. It holds for the French sector too. The best school boards are those with community input.

School boards which reflect and are seen to address the social, linguistic, geographical, demographic and economic characteristics and needs of the different regions would be more likely to generate interest in the larger community. Their status as community institutions would be enhanced. The effect of their being viewed as belonging to the community rather than to the state would encourage greater participation in the election of school board commissioners. In many cases today, candidates have to be dragooned into running for positions on school boards, many more are elected by acclamation. It is a wonder school boards are as good as they are given the small voter turnout. This makes them easy prey to special interests. Making them more accountable to the respective demographic communities they serve would help raise their social and political stock. If at the same time, school board elections were held in conjunction with municipal elections, voters would have a harder time sloughing them off as someone else's business.

Education does not spring from school boards. They do not of themselves dispense it. No one sends his or her child to a school board. School boards do not set educational standards and priorities for the whole of society. But school boards are a fundamental part of the delivery of education. They act as a buffer between the Ministry of Education, which by the nature of government bureaucracy tends towards standardization and control in the name of quality, equity and efficiency, and the primary source of education, the school. The more decision-making powers devolve to the school level, the greater the protection of their autonomy schools will need. The school board is the meeting ground, clearing house and overseer of the educational expectations of the communities it represents. The more it is seen as belonging to those communities, the better it can rise to their expectations.

Recommendation: Urgency of reform for English education

7 - Recommend that the reorganization of school boards along linguistic lines according to articles 111 - 112 of the Education Act be carried out without delay.

Recommendation: School boards that reflect community

8 - Recommend that the determination of boundaries of new school boards be based on the following considerations: natural community affiliation and recognition of regional differences; respect for municipal boundaries; territorial size must not be an obstacle to community participation and communication; a student number sufficient to ensure sound administration and services to support quality education.

Recommendation: School board elections

9 - Recommend that the Education Act be amended to allow school board elections to coincide with municipal elections and that enumeration be conducted jointly.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation: Support services essential

1 - Recommend that the new school boards be encouraged to collaborate on sharing services. In order to ensure access for all students and schools, large or small, urban or rural, to the services essential to support student success, it is further recommended that the Minister of Education facilitate and reward these initiatives.

Recommendation: Religious instruction and confessional status of schools

2 - Recommend that the present provisions of the Education Act be maintained in order to ensure student access to religious instruction, pastoral animation or a confessional school where appropriate.

Recommendation: Stability for educational programs and students

3 - Recommend that a moratorium be decreed on existing programs which schools wish to maintain when the new territories are declared. This will allow the new school boards, once in place, sufficient time to evaluate the programs and to make decisions on changes in accordance with the needs of their schools and communities.

Recommendation: Transition to linguistic boards

4 - Recommend that the Education Act be amended to change the composition and mandate of the provisional councils and that this be replaced by a mechanism which ensures long term decision-making for a new school system that is carried out primarily by those elected to serve on the new school boards.

Recommendation: Mechanism to arbitrate disputes

5 - Recommend that an impartial tribunal, a 'commission juridique' or 'commission d'appel', be established composed of three arbitrators, charged with settling disputes to serve the aims of the Education Act. It must take into account the best interests of the students and without preference for any religious or linguistic group. This tribunal should be empowered to have final jurisdiction on all disputes of property or territory referred by either party in the dispute.

Recommendation: Public information on change

6 - Recommend that the Minister of Education undertake to inform the public of the changes to the system of education at all stages of the transition to ensure appropriate citizen participation in the electoral process and to keep parents abreast of the changes which would affect their children.

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APPENDICES

1993 - 1994 PROFILE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION IN QUEBEC SCHOOL BOARDS (YOUTH)

APPENDIX A

REGION	# School boards offering English Instruction					# English schools by region						# of English students by region						# of students by region			
	Cat	Pro	Dis Cat	Dis Pro	Spe Sta	Elem.		Second.		Elem & Sec		Presch & Elem		Secondary		TOTAL		Eng.	Fr.	TOTAL	%
						Cat	Pro	Cat	Pro	Cat	Pro	Cat	Pro	Cat	Pro	Cat	Pro				
aspésia-Iles de la Madeleine	2	1				2	3	1	2		5	136	667	29	619	165	1 286	1 451	16 567	18 018	8.1
as St-Laurent							1		1				14		18		32	32	37 018	37 050	0.1
aguenay - Lac St-Jean	1	1					1		1	1		156	124	119	73	275	197	472	55 135	55 607	0.8
ébec	2	2				1	5	1	2			487	627	341	485	828	1 112	1 940	82 158	84 098	2.3
audière - Gaspésie							1		1				117		74		191	191	67 828	68 019	0.3
uricie - Bois Francs	1	1					3		3	1		177	333	78	259	255	592	847	74 439	75 286	1.1
strie		1					11		3				2 091		1 304		3 395	3 395	39 019	42 414	8.0
ontérégie	9	3	1			10	28	3	7	1	8	2 860	7 681	1 493	5 777	4 353	13458	17811	174404	192215	9.3
ontréal-Centre	6	2				39	46	18	33	4	6	13227	17295	9 044	11895	22271	29190	51461	141167	192628	26.7
ival	2	1				4	11	1	6	1		1 600	2 431	1 175	2 017	2 775	4 448	7 223	44 925	52 148	13.9
naudière	1					1						343				343		343	56 436	56 779	0.6
urentides	1	1		1		1	5		1		1	312	1 256		827	312	2 083	2 395	59 409	61 804	3.9
taouais	5	1				5	13	4	4	1	2	1 261	2 905	934	2 016	2 195	4 921	7 116	41 559	48 675	14.5
itibi - Miscamingué	2					1	1	3	1	1	1	273	223	182	194	455	417	872	27 465	28 337	3.1
te-Nord		1		1	1		4		1		11		608		384		992	992	16 524	17 516	5.7
rd du Québec	1				2	1	2		1		22	12	1 054		996	12	2 050	2 062	6 424	8 486	24.3
TAL	33	15	1	2	3	65	135	31	67	10	56	20844	37426	13395	26938	34239	64364	98603	940477	1039080	9.5
TAL-Excluding special status School Boards	33	15	1	2		65	132	31	67	10	25	20844	36041	13395	25794	34239	61835	96074	937053	1033127	9.3

LISTE DES GROUPES DE RÉPONDANTS / LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Écoles / Schools

Allancroft, School Committee
Argyle Academy, Orientation Committee
Arundel, School Committee
Baie Comeau H.S., Orientation Committee, School Committee, School Council and Baie Comeau Teachers' Association
Bishop Whelan, Orientation Committee
Boucherville, Orientation & School Committees
Chambly County H.S., School Committee
Champlain, School Committee
Charles A. Kirkland, School Committee
Chateauguay Valley Regional H.S., Orientation Committee
Children's World Academy, School Committee
Courtland Park (Dorval), School Committee and Home & School Association
Courtland Park (St. Bruno), Orientation Committee
Dalkeith, Orientation & School Committees
Dorset, Orientation Committee, School Committee and Home & School Association
Dr. S.E. McDowell, School Committee, Parent Committee Chair, Parent Commissioner and Teacher
Dunrae Gardens, School Committee
Elizabeth Ballantyne, Subcommittee on Linguistic Boards Consultation
Emily Carr, Orientation Committee
Evergreen, Orientation & School Committees
Franklin, Orientation & School Committees
Frederick Banting, Orientation & School Committees
Gardenvue, School Committee
Gault Institute, School Committee
Gerald Mc Shane, Orientation & School Committees
Greendale, Orientation & School Committee
Harold Napper, Orientation & School Committees
Hemmingford, Orientation & School Committees
Heroes' Memorial, Orientation Committee
Holland School, School Committee
Honore Mercier, Orientation Committee
Howard S. Billings Regional H.S., School Committee
Howick, Orientation & School Committees
Hudson H.S., Orientation Committee, School Committee, School Council, Students' Council and School Board Commissioner
Huntingdon Academy, Orientation & School Committees
Immaculate Conception, Orientation Committee
John Adam Memorial, School Committee
Jubilee, Orientation & School Committees
Keith, School Committee
Knowlton Academy, Orientation Committee
Lachine H.S., School Committee
Laurendeau-Dunton, Orientation Committee
Lennoxville, School Committee
Leonardo Da Vinci, Orientation Committee
Lester B. Pearson Comprehensive H.S., Orientation Committee
Mackay Centre, Orientation & School Committees
Mansonville, Orientation Committee
Marymount Academy, Orientation & School Committees
Massey Vanier H.S., Orientation & School Committees
Meadowbrook, Orientation & School Committees
Metis Beach, School Committee
Mount Bruno, School Committee
Mountainview & Lake of Two Mountains, School Committees
Mountainview (Otterburn Park), Orientation Committee
Northview, Orientation & School Committees

Pontiac Protestant H.S., School Committee, Teachers and Parent Commissioner
 Preville, Orientation Committee
 Richelieu Valley Regional H.S., Orientation & School Committees
 Riverdale H.S., Orientation & School Committees
 Rosemere H.S. & McCaig Elementary, School Committees
 Roslyn, Orientation & School Committees
 Royal Charles, Orientation & School Committees
 Royal Vale Alternative, School Committee
 Royal West Academy, School Committee
 Seignior, School Committee
 Sir Wilfrid Laurier Jr. H.S., Orientation & School Committees
 South Hull, School Committee
 St. Aloysius, Orientation Committee
 St. Alphonsus H.S., Orientation Committee
 St. Anthony, School Committee
 St. Bernard, Orientation & School Committees
 St. Charles, School Committee
 St. Edmund, School Committee
 St. Francis of Assisi, Orientation & School Committees
 St. Francis, School Committee
 St. Joseph (Huntingdon), Orientation & School Committees
 St. Joseph's (Val D'Or), School Committee
 St. Lawrence, School Committee
 St. Mark's, Orientation & School Committees
 St. Mary's, Orientation Committee & Two Elected Commissioners
 St. Patrick & Saguenay Valley, Orientation Committees
 St. Patrick (Maniwaki), School Committee
 St. Patrick (Pincourt), School Committee
 St. Patrick (Trois-Rivieres), School & Orientation Committees
 St. Paul, School Committee
 St. Veronica, School Committee
 Ste. Foy, School Committee
 Terry Fox (Saint-Hubert), School Committee
 Terry Fox (Pierrefonds), Orientation Committee
 Wagar H.S., Orientation & School Committees
 Westmount H.S., School Committee
 William Latter, School Committee
 Windermere, School Committee
 Woodland, Orientation Committee.

Individus **Individuals**

Daniel R. Chadwick, teacher, Ste. Thérèse
 Dianne Piacente-Levine, Lachine
 Ernst Reid & Johanne Cantin, parents
 Helen A. Savitsky, librarian, St. Laurent
 Jean-Paul Laniel, Pierrefonds
 John Prevost, parent, Ile Bizard
 Judy James, parent
 Kamel Helmy, teacher, Marymount Academy
 Mrs. St. Louis, parent
 Penny McEwan, parent
 Ron Czerkawski, Allion School Committee member, Lasalle

Conseils d'école & Directeurs, Directrices School Councils & Principals

Beaconsfield H.S., School Council
Boucherville Elementary School , School Council
Boucherville Elementary School, Principal
Centennial Regional H.S., Principal
Courtland Park (Dorval), School Council
D'Arcy McGee H.S., Principal
Don Bosco Elementary, Teaching Staff
Dorset Elementary , School Council
Dr. S.E. McDowell Elementary School, School Council
Emily Carr, Teaching Staff
Heroes' Memorial , School Council
John XXIII Elementary, Teaching Staff
Marymount Academy , School Council
McLearn School , Teaching Staff
Queen Elizabeth Elementary School, Teaching Staff
Royal West Academy, School Council
Saguenay Valley Schools, Principal & Teaching Staff
Saint John Bosco School , School Council
Saint Mary's Elementary, School Council
St. Bernard , School Council
St. Mark's School , Principal
St. Patrick (Jonquiere), Principal & Teaching Staff
Sutton School, Teaching Staff
Willingdon School, Teaching Staff
Woodland School, School Council

Commissions scolaires & Comités de parents School Boards & Parents Committees

Baldwin Cartier, Anglophone Regional Parents' Committee
Baldwin Cartier, Rosalie Fata, Assistant Director General
Chomedey de Laval, English Sector Parents' Committee
Eastern Townships, Parents' Committee
Jerome Le Royer, Morty Ellis, Director, English Educational Sector
Laurenval, Scott Conrod, Director General
South Shore, William Johnson, Director General
Western Quebec, Peter Frood, Commissioner, Greater Hull Sector
Western Quebec, Greater Hull Parents' Committee

Organismes & Groupes Organizations & Groups

Federation of English-Speaking Catholic Teachers
Lakeshore Teachers Association
Monteregie, English-Speaking Catholic Commissioners and Presidents of Orientation and School
Committees of English-Speaking Catholic Schools
Provincial Association of Catholic Teachers
Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations
The Association of Drama Educators of Quebec
The English Speaking Catholic Council
The Quebec Library Association

**COMMISSION DE L'ÉDUCATION EN LANGUE ANGLAISE
ADVISORY BOARD ON ENGLISH EDUCATION**

**Consultation - Linguistic School Boards
Resumé**

A consultation on the future shape and organization of English education was conducted by the Advisory Board on English Education between January and April 1994. Every organization involved with English education and all English schools were invited to write to the Advisory Board and to respond to a series of questions. The results of the consultation follow.

Total responses - 150

Respondents -

School Committees -	69
Orientation Committees -	49
Staff Councils -	25
Principals -	9
Boards/Parent Committees	10
Organizations -	7
Individuals -	12

(Includes responses submitted jointly)

Region -

2 -	4	(2 C, 2 P)
3 -	5	(2 C, 3 P)
5 -	4*	
6.1 -	5	(1 C, 4 P)
6.2 -	35	(11 C, 16 P, 8*)
6.3 -	74	(37 C, 34 P, 3 N)
7 -	12	(6 C, 6 P)
8 -	1	(C)
9 -	1	(P)

(Includes organizations representing groups throughout Quebec;

* Represents Protestant school boards serving Catholic students by entente)

The general tone and content of the responses can be interpreted as follows (some responses did not contain answers to all the questions and some commentary was not applicable to the issues affecting the reorganization) -

1. What is your vision for a new English school system in Quebec?

- a. The overwhelming majority strongly endorses linguistic school boards. With the exception of three or four individual schools, the only group of schools to favour the status quo is found within the South Shore Protestant School Board.
- b. Most responses emphasized that the system must be able to provide a quality education.
- c. The English linguistic school boards must be equitable with the majority and have access to the necessary funding and resources.
- d. The new system should reflect the English-speaking community.
- e. A system is desired that allows a large measure of community control, at school board and school levels.

2. What part should members of the English education community play in planning for the new linguistic school boards?

- a. There is a consistent demand throughout for community consultation and joint planning involving educators, parents and boards.
- b. The parent role was stressed by all regions, and by most groups including teachers and principals.

3. How can an English school system best be organized to ensure the quality of English education?

- a. Responses stressed the need for consolidation, with sharing among school boards, and for schools that have a strong base in the community.
- b. School boards of reasonable size were preferred by the vast majority. Territories should not be too large and should not divide communities or municipalities. Montreal island responses indicated a majority favoured two boards with relatively balanced populations.
- d. The system must be organized so that schools are able to meet individual needs and special needs of students.

4. What kind of decision-making powers does the school need in order to be most effective? What decision-making powers should the school board have?

- a. Decentralized decision-making is preferred with a greater role for the school in curriculum and school budget decisions.
- b. Responses indicate that the role of boards is to set basic policy, distribute resources equitably and provide services for schools.
- c. A significant number felt that the powers defined in the Education Act were appropriate.

5. What services do you consider essential for a new English school board to offer?

- a. The need for special services and programs geared to exceptional or special needs students was the most often repeated response to this question. Sixty-eight (68) responses signalled the need for increased and better social and psychological services.
- b. Consultants, professional development for teachers; transportation services, and adult services were identified as essential.

6. What kind of confessional guarantees would you expect in a new English school board? What kind of confessional services would you expect in the school?

Guarantees for choice of various religious programs and pastoral animation was widely endorsed by all groups. There was some demand, primarily by Catholic groups in some regions, for guarantees for the confessional status of the school. The provisions of the Education Act satisfy the majority.

7. Do you anticipate particular problems in the reorganization? If so, what solutions would you suggest?

- a. There is a general fear on the part of all groups of disruption of the children's education.
- b. All responses from English Catholic groups expressed concern about lack of representation of the English Catholic community and/or parents.
- c. Most groups foresee power struggles.

d. A majority expressed dissatisfaction with Provisional Councils as defined in the Education Act. The composition is considered unwieldy and the establishment of new school boards should not be left in the hands of the old boards.

e. There was concern expressed by some that a linguistic division could cause deterioration in relations between English and French.

Solutions:

a. More information presented in an objective manner is needed.

b. Consultation with and representation of the English-speaking community throughout the process of change is demanded.

c. There was a widespread call for change in the composition and role of the Provisional Council.

d. There is a recommendation by many that an impartial mechanism for settling disputes should be set up.

8. What are your expectations regarding stability of existing schools and programs during the transition?

There is a general consensus that a moratorium is necessary in order that disruption can be avoided. All groups call for continuity for programs and students. Any changes should be gradual and decided by the new boards.

9. What values do you consider to be of primary importance in approaching this changeover?

Respect and fairness are demanded in an open process which includes all.