

VOLUME 59 ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2021

Welcome,
Summer!

QFHSA NEWS

THE NEWSMAGAZINE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL MEMBERS

Pandemic School Year Two: *Done!*

A Fantastic Effort:
Home & Schools Keep Spirits High, p. 7

A Look Back at our 77th AGM:
*An inspiring speaker, an impressive list
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The Quebec
Federation of
Home and School
Associations

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is an independent, incorporated, not for profit volunteer organization dedicated to enhancing the education and general well-being of children and youth.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. promotes the involvement of parents, students, educators and the community at large in the advancement of learning and acts as a voice for parents.

With support from

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et Enseignement
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Québec 

Funded by the
Government of Canada

Canada 



QFHSA NEWS

The Voice of the Parent in Education

Continuously published since 1949

Volume 59, Issue 2

Official Publication of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations

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Printing: The Business Box, Kirkland

Circulation: 5000 copies

Advertising Manager: Karen Henchey

Editorial Board: Carol Meindl,

Marlyn Brownrigg, Mimi Tabaczuk

Deposited with: Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec; National Library of Canada

ISSN: 1924-9284 (Print),

ISSN: 1925-797X (Digital)

Annual Subscription: \$15.00

Individual Copies: \$4.00

QFHSA on the Web: www.qfhsa.org

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All submissions may be edited for length, clarity, accuracy, grammar, and spelling.

Cover photo credit: WavebreakMediaMicro, stock.adobe.com

A huge thank you to the local Home and School Associations that shared their photos for this issue.

We welcome your letters!

You are invited to send us your comments/suggestions on this edition of the QFHSA

News by email to news@qfhsa.org.

A Cornucopia of Resolutions... *and a Call to Action*

IN THE SPRING OF 2020, we were in the early grips of the pandemic and everything was up in the air. We had looked at a May Annual General Meeting as doubtful and decided to postpone it until August with a very pared-down agenda. Just the basics. We had no resolutions to present at that time.

How different the spring of 2021 has been! The QFHSA's Education and Rights Subcommittees have been hard at work all year and have produced a cornucopia of resolutions, each one of them solid and timely.

The pandemic highlighted the strain that teacher shortages and poor air ventilation in schools had cast on education. It made holding school board elections undesirable for safety's sake, especially if the widespread use of mail-in ballots was not going to be encouraged.

Decisions on Bill 21 reinforced our conviction that a better and inclusive history curriculum needed to be taught in schools and also that a more wide-spread consultation process was needed when developing all new curricula for our schools.

The clear skies and quiet neighbourhoods in March and April of 2020 due to the shutdowns highlighted the need to reduce pollution in as many ways as possible, for our children's and grandchildren's sakes. In response, the QFHSA drafted a resolution to address this issue.

In all, eight resolutions were developed. They are described below.

The QFHSA Education Subcommittee developed five resolutions:



Resolution 2021-01: Request for Free French Instruction Services for All Who Request Them

This resolution calls on the provincial government to offer free French-language instruction services to all Quebec residents—not just students in public or private schools and newcomers to the province—but to everyone who has a desire to improve their French language skills.



Resolution 2021-02: Evaluation, Improvements, and Investments in School Buildings

This resolution addresses the on-going deterioration of our school buildings, which have largely been ignored by successive ministers of education for decades. The pandemic and the need for adequate ventilation to minimize viral transmission in class “bubbles” brought the problem into sharper focus. The time is now to invest in renovations and upgrades of all school buildings in Quebec.



Resolution 2021-04: Request to Revise and Improve the Secondary III and Secondary IV History of Quebec and Canada Curriculum

This resolution repeats the call for a Quebec history curriculum that is truly inclusive, one that represents the diverse society that has contributed to the history of this province. Bill 21 has helped bring to light the need for a reform to the curriculum to eliminate biases and false narratives.



Resolution 2021-06: Curriculum Development

This resolution is the natural companion to the resolution on the history curriculum described above. Part of the problem with the current history curriculum is

Continued on the next page

A Cornucopia of Resolutions...

Continued from the previous page

that it is the product of inadequate consultation and does not incorporate information that may not suit a predetermined narrative. It is clear that to produce better curricula, it is necessary to consult a wider range of credible sources and gather input from parents and minority-group representatives.



Resolution 2021-07: Addressing the Issue of the Teacher Shortage in Quebec

This resolution addresses the chronic shortage of teachers in Quebec public schools and the consequential overcrowding in schools and classrooms. Teachers need to be recognized as the professionals they are, paid a competitive wage, and given better working conditions—all for the sake of our children and their education. A 1-year education teaching certificate had been available, but it was discontinued after 2009. At the time, Quebec had a plethora of teachers. That clearly is no longer the case and perhaps now is the time to offer this simpler path to a teaching license to address the shortages.

The QFHSA Rights Subcommittee proposed two resolutions:



Resolution 2021-03: Mail-in Ballots for School Elections

The on-again/off-again 2020 school board elections and the success of the mail-in ballot process in the 2020 American presidential election made the need to push for mail-in ballots for Quebec school board elections even more pressing.



Resolution 2021-05: Permanent English Voters' List for School Elections

As Bill 40 has been stayed, meaning that it temporarily does not apply to English school boards, and as there have been difficulties in the past to have an accurate voters' list ready for school board elections, this resolution reiterates the necessity of updating the voters' list prior to the next election.

The Home and Schools at St. Thomas High School and Children's World Academy both proposed draft resolutions that dealt with environmental issues. These were combined into one resolution.



Resolution 2021-08 Environmental Awareness

As the climate crisis escalates, more pressure is rightly put on organizations and individuals to change the way they do things. This resolution urges Home and School Associations to be aware of the environmental impact of their activities, and make efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle wherever possible.



Photo from Adobe Stock

Local Home & School Associations were invited to share the draft resolutions and gather their members' feedback. At a special caucusing meeting held on May 19th, QFHSA committee members and delegates from local associations discussed and fine-tuned the resolutions. The final drafts of all eight resolutions were presented and adopted at our June 3rd Annual General Meeting. Shortly afterwards, the resolutions were sent to various destinations, both governmental departments and community organizations, for information and a call for action. To read the resolutions in their entirety, I invite you to visit the QFHSA website. On our Home Page, select "About" from the menu and then select "Resolutions" (or use this link: <https://bit.ly/35AzLZ7>).

The process of researching, developing, and finalizing the resolutions has been a long and rewarding experience. I would like to thank all who participated in this important exercise. Well done!

Carol Meindl
Executive Director

Light at the End of the Tunnel

AS I WRITE THIS ARTICLE, I note that we are now a year and a half into this pandemic—a pandemic that has affected us all in one way or another. Some of us have lost jobs, family members, and social support. Some of us have been inconvenienced, but the disruption to our lives has not been significant. As adults, we can understand what is going on, even if we don't like it. It is for our children that we have the most concern.

It is all too obvious that our children have suffered from the lack of daily social interaction with their peers and extended family members. The shifting from online to in-person instruction has been difficult, but kids are resilient and love routine, even if it is a new routine. Once they settle into it, they are fine. However, the pandemic has highlighted the disparity in the opportunities and resources available to kids in different regions of the province. Couple that with chronic shortages in health and social services for English-speaking youth even at the best of times, and we may learn that overall, our community has suffered more than the francophone sector.

Our teachers have been amazing and have proven what true professionals they are, adapting to continuously changing conditions and always keeping the best interests of their students in mind.

As the school year winds down, parents, students and teachers continue to adjust to the government's rules as they change.

And then we head into the summer break. Will day camps be available for those children who need them the most? Will our teenagers find summer jobs? Will families be able to retreat to the cottage or travel to make this summer special? Still so many uncertainties...

But there is light at the end of this tunnel in which we have found ourselves drifting through. Secondary students are being vaccinated and the process will continue over the summer months. Schools should be back full time this fall. Slowly, as the percentage of eligible adults vaccinated increases, the economy will open up again, ever so slowly. Dinners on terraces, indoor dining, theatres, gyms, and church services will all be back to full capacity and life will be back to some semblance of normalcy. Home and Schools should



Photo from Adobe Stock

be able to enter into activities again with enthusiasm, reweaving their own part of that social network they have lost, and drawing new parents into that network.

But to expect that everyone will be able to put these past two years behind us and act as though they



never happened would be a great mistake. We have seen where the weaknesses are in our society and we need to address them, not ignore them yet again.

We know there is certainly work to be done when it comes to our education system. The eight resolutions the QFHSA membership recently adopted focus on such challenges as the teacher shortage, curriculum problems, shortcomings in the way school elections are organized, unhealthy school buildings, and the climate crisis, as shown in the article on pages 3 and 4 of this issue.

From our overworked and underpaid teachers, to our need for clean, well-ventilated schools and the necessity for all organizations to reduce their carbon footprints by finding ways to reduce the waste produced by their activities and promote reducing, recycling, composting and repurposing, there is much work to do.

We have a unique opportunity ahead of us. To paraphrase George Santayana: "Those who refuse to learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

Carol Meindl

Welcome to the 2021-2022 Board of Directors

THE QUEBEC FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS is very pleased to announce that **Rosemary Murphy** was elected to the position of President of the 2021-2022 Board of Directors at our organization's 77th Annual General Meeting. We also warmly welcome three newcomers to the board, Nick Giannakoulis, Samantha Patel, and Chris Schaler. This year's annual general meeting also saw the re-election of six current board members.

The 2021-2022 QFHSA Board of Directors:

Rosemary Murphy, President
Ginette Sauvé-Frankel, Executive Vice-President
Maxime Côté, Vice-President
Natasha Drysdale, Vice-President
Wanda Leah Trineer, Treasurer
Debi Brown, Secretary
Linton Garner, Immediate Past President (ex officio)

Elizabeth "Bobbi" Brown, Director
Nick Giannakoulis, Director
Samantha Patel, Director
Brian Rock, Director
Chris Schaler, Director

Dates to Remember

July 10	QFHSA Board of Directors Meeting
July 15	New Executive List and President's and Treasurer's Reports due (Sent to the QFHSA office)
August 21	QFHSA Board of Directors Meeting
Early September	Parenting Discussion Activity: <i>Back to School, Back to... Normal?!</i>
September	Executive Workshops
September 25	QFHSA Board of Directors Meeting
October/November	QFHSA Fall Leadership Conference for Parents

Acknowledging the Land on Which We Meet

Before the 77th Annual General Meeting got underway, Outgoing President Linton Garner made this important statement: *"The office of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations is situated on the unceded territory of the Kanien'kehà:ka, a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst many First Nations including the Kanien'kehà:ka of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Huron/Wendat, Abenaki, and Anishinaabeg. We recognize and respect all First Nations communities, on whose lands our Home and School associations operate, as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet."* If they do not do so already, Local Home and School Associations may wish to make similar statements at the start of their meetings.

Are the Kids Alright?

Local Home & Schools Are on the Case!

GETTING AN EDUCATION DURING A PANDEMIC is no easy task. Parents have had to deal with a great deal of uncertainty, worry, and so many questions! Will there be a COVID outbreak at my child's school? In my child's classroom? How can Home & School volunteers make school life as normal as possible despite the restrictions in place? It turns out that much could be accomplished during this long, drawn-out pandemic, as we learned at our May Zoom meetings with local Home & School presidents.

It's All About Community and Support

For a lot of Home & Schools, the usual major fundraisers were replaced by smaller, often online initiatives. Many local Home & Schools shifted their focus away from fundraising, concentrating instead on building community and bolstering school spirit. There have been drive-in movies, creative scavenger hunts, photo contests on Facebook, virtual talent shows, dance parties, and trivia nights, Beaver Tails trucks, pizza parties and pizza-making contests, jellybean guessing games, and more. Realizing the importance of outdoor play and activities during the pandemic, many Home & Schools purchased toys and equipment to ensure each class bubble had fun outdoor things to do. This most definitely was a year for giving back, for supporting our schools, staff, families, and communities with the goal of making the year memorable despite its challenges. You can learn more about some of the amazing activities local associations organized in the "Focus on the Locals" section in this issue.

Marveling at the Generosity of Parents

Teacher and staff appreciation activities were a highlight of the school year—and again, Home & Schools found creative ways to celebrate. Some made thanking teachers and staff a year-long project, with monthly coffee mornings and occasional treats/gifts. Home & Schools have been hugely impressed by the generous donations parents have made for these events—donations that often far exceeded the goals set by the Home & School.

Home & Schools also shared how they have been able to help families in financial need thanks to the donations

their school community made specifically for this purpose. One Home & School has started a Breakfast Club pantry to ensure no child was hungry at school. It truly takes a village to raise (and support) a child, and Home & Schools are indeed an important part of this village.



Photo by Max Fischer from Pexels

Are We Going to School Today?

The province managed to keep most schools open for the entire school year. How has this reality played out in each school? We learned in May that some schools had no class closures at all. In others, very few classes were affected. However, parents of high schoolers reported more outbreaks and learning disruptions. In addition, schools in the Outaouais region had the extra challenge of being closed for more than a month this spring. The good news: local associations said that whenever a class had to pivot from in-person to online learning, the process was seamless. Indeed, the consensus was that online learning has been a much better experience this school year compared to last. At the same time, several parents noted that online learning is more challenging for younger students.

Grad Events?

It is the second graduation season under the pandemic. Once again, schools have had to find new ways to celebrate their graduates. Several Home & Schools reported that teachers and other staff members were taking the lead

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News for You

Are the Kids Alright?

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and planning class parties. In one school, for example, the Grade 6 students will have a day-long celebration and some of the event will be live-streamed to parents. Home & Schools are helping by providing funds for gifts for the graduates (grad T-shirts, hoodies, for example) and supplies/special items for the events.



Volunteering for St. Pat's H&S

Home & School Memberships: Next Year Will Be Better

There is no doubt about it—the pandemic has made it extra challenging for local Home & Schools to recruit members. With no in-person events like curriculum nights, it was hard for Home & Schools to meet parents, and parents did not have the volunteer opportunities that a normal school year brings. However, a couple of Home & Schools have found new ways to reach their families. They are pairing each new family with a H&S mentor ready to provide information and answer questions.

As we say goodbye to another school year, it is important to celebrate our dedicated Home & School volunteers, who have managed to make plenty of excellent lemonade from all the lemons the pandemic threw their way. Home & Schools have become adept at using online resources for meetings and fundraising—and some of these new ways of working may endure as we look ahead to a more normal 2021/22 school year. Thank you, Home & Schools, for all the light and hope you brought to our children and our school communities in these exceptional times.

Karen Henchey
Communications Officer

Fundraisers that Worked

Despite the slowdown in fundraising for many Home & Schools this year, there were some successes. Here are a few examples:

- **Spring Seeds/Plants** (Plantables, Make It Sow)
- **Maple Syrup** (Especially for the Home & School that used a local producer)
- **Parents Eat In/Dominos Fundraiser/Fun Food Delivery Nights** (Home & Schools partner with local restaurants. Families place an order for a take-out meal from the restaurant on a specific night and H&S receives a percentage/fixed dollar amount from the orders.)
- **M&M** ongoing fundraisers (10% of sales to the H&S)
- **Cookie Dough** fundraiser (Who doesn't like cookies?)
- **Scholastic/Babar Books** Online Book Fairs
- **Read-a-Thon Event** (For every book or chapter read, parents/families donate an amount.)




Struggling to get your Home & School online?

You want a solution that:

- ✓ has an easy to manage website
 - ✓ allows online payments & registration
 - ✓ simplifies fundraising management
- ... all without stressing out your volunteers.



Your struggle ends here....

 <p>Save Time & Energy We've done the research.</p>	 <p>No Trial & Error We've built this <u>for H&S</u>.</p>	 <p>Let Us Support You We're committed to your success.</p>
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Online
Empowerment

Visit www.OnlineEmpowerment.ca
for more info

Advocating for our Teachers:

Thoughts from Heidi Yetman, QPAT President and Keynote Speaker at the QFHSA's 77th Annual General Meeting

THE QFHSA'S 77TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING got off to a great start with a wonderful and thought-provoking presentation by Heidi Yetman, the evening's special guest speaker. The president of the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT), Ms. Yetman spoke about a number of issues, including the contract negotiations with the Quebec government, Quebec's three-tiered education system, and what it is really like to be a teacher in Quebec (a career that was made even more challenging during the pandemic).

As head of Canada's oldest union, representing more than 8000 teachers in the province of Quebec, Yetman has been involved in the long and challenging negotiations with the Quebec government for a new collective agreement. As Yetman describes, the negotiations started quite well in January 2020, were put on hold on March 13th, taken up in earnest 2 days later with the goal of reaching an agreement by the end of March 2020, only to be suspended again. Over a year and a half later, a sectorial settlement was reached on April 21, 2021.

How Are Our Teachers?

Yetman described in detail the situation for Quebec's elementary and secondary school teachers. To begin, they are paid the lowest in all of Canada. (To compare, after 10 years of experience, a Quebec teacher makes a little over \$65,000; an Ontario teacher, over \$98,000.) In Que-

bec, the teacher salary scale has 17 levels and it usually takes a teacher 15 years to get to the top level. Elsewhere in Canada, the top of the salary scale is usually reached in 9 to 10 years. With such working conditions as large classes that often include students with individualized education plans (IEPs), the requirement to perform extra school duties, and limited support for new teachers, it is no surprise that 25 to 30 per cent of new teachers leave the profession within the first 5 years.

When you add to the mix the challenges brought on by the COVID pandemic, you have a recipe for teacher burnout. Indeed, Yetman said that in a mid-September survey conducted by QPAT, teachers reported feeling overwhelmed, tired and stressed—something they often feel in June. The scary thing was that the school year had only just begun. In a Canada-wide survey of over 14,000 teachers conducted by the Canadian Teachers Federation in October, the findings were equally worrisome: 66% of teachers said they were concerned about their mental health and 82% expressed varying levels of frustration maintaining the safety protocols. Also revealing: 87% of respondents were finding the constant changes in rules/protocols another source of frustration—and we know how often this has happened in Quebec! Yetman also noted that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted women, and 75% of Quebec teachers are women. It is a tough situation.



The Consequences of Quebec's Three-Tier System

In Quebec, private schools are heavily subsidized by the government, making them more affordable for the middle class. As a result, Quebec has more students enrolled in private schools than any other province. Yetman observed that this reality has created competition between the private and public education sectors. Public schools have had to market themselves, to compete with one another and with private schools to attract students. Parents have become clients. Meanwhile, teachers are feeling the pressure to help sell their schools, and have come away from the whole experience feeling undervalued.

Further, as Yetman pointed out, research shows that educational success is linked to the quality of the students in the classroom. With the top-scoring students moving to private schools or elite programs within public schools, it does not bode well for the success of the students who find themselves in the "regular class," which includes those having a difficult time at school. Students with special educational needs end up being lost in the classroom if they do not get the support they require.

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News for You

Advocating for Our Teachers

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Indeed, support for children with special educational needs is a real concern for teachers. Although 90% of students with IEPs are integrated into regular classrooms in the English sector, the worry is that these students are not getting the in-class support they require.

The Contract Negotiations: The Issues, The Results

QPAT brought to the negotiation table specific areas of concern, notably **teachers' salaries and their salary scale, class size, and class composition**. QPAT firmly believes that by paying teachers better salaries and improving their working conditions, we send the message that we value the profession. This will, in turn, attract more people to the teaching profession.

Yetman was able to report that some gains have been made in the new agreement. For one, teachers in the first six levels of the salary scale will see a salary increase, as will those at the top of the scale. The government agreed to eliminate 1 of the 17 levels in the salary scale.

And while QPAT could not get the government to reduce class sizes (with the exception of kindergarten classes in disadvantaged areas—they will have one less student per class), a new committee on class composition has been created. The findings of this committee will be useful for the next round of negotiations, which should happen in 2023. Another gain: there will be 300 new classes created across the province as needed. This means that schools can open up an extra class when circumstances require.

In addition, there will be more closed classes available. To explain, closed classes do not replace integrated classes, but are designed to provide the supplemental support that is sometimes not available to students in their regular classroom.

How Can Parents Help our Teachers?

After her presentation, Yetman answered questions. The topics discussed included the consequences of Bill 40 (which created service centres with little clout compared to school boards); Bill 96; and supporting students with IEPs.

In addition, Beaconfield High School's Home and School delegate asked, *"As a Home & School is a parent group, what can we do to advocate for teachers and their working conditions other than supporting the picket lines?"* Yetman shared this advice: "I think that it is really important first of all to be informed. We have a lot of information on our QPAT website so you can take a look and be informed. The other thing that you can do is you can attend your commissioner meetings and say... 'What are you doing to take care of those people in the buildings?' You are allowed to go



Photo from Adobe Stock

to those commissioner meetings and ask questions and ask for answers. I think that is really important too... Another thing you can do also is write letters to your commissioners, to your school boards, to your MNAs saying 'Are you taking care of the people on the ground who are working really hard for our children?'" Yetman's words encourage us all to engage, to take a stand on issues of consequence to our teachers, our children, and our community.

Before signing off to join yet another meeting, Yetman thanked Home and Schools for all the work they do. Recalling the lunches and treats she received in her teaching days, Yetman smiled and said, "It was an amazing thing." It is always nice to know the work of local Home and School Associations is appreciated, especially at the end of this very long year.

Karen Henchey,
Communications Officer

Online Resources: What Home & Schools Are Using A QFHSA News Bulletin

In this long COVID pandemic, an online presence seemed more important than ever! This past spring, the QFHSA has compiled information about the online resources and services some of our local Home & School Associations are using. Thank you to all the Home & School Associations that participated in our February 2021 brainstorming session and all the individuals who have provided information and advice for this document. If your Home & School is looking to increase its online activity or improve its current set up, this bulletin is for you. Please Note: For the most up-to-date information on the companies/services mentioned, please click on the embedded links in the bulletin. You can find the News Bulletin on the Home Page of our website (or you can use this link: <https://adobe.ly/3qczxRC>).



QFHSA Annual General Meeting 2021: *Yet Again, It Was an Unusual One!*



COVID-19 CONTINUED TO AFFECT all of us. This year, the QFHSA Annual General Meeting was held on June 3rd, 2021. This was not our usual end-of-April/beginning-of-May date, but not the extraordinarily late date of August 22nd either, which was when last year's event was held. It was a sign of things slowly creeping back to normal-ish.

We were thrilled to have Heidi Yetman, President of the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers, as our keynote speaker before the business session began, and she had much to share in terms of our teachers' current working conditions and ongoing contract negotiations. Our parent members have certainly been keenly aware of how hard our educators have been working to adapt to the ever-changing teaching environment they have found themselves in this past year and a half. So much more could be done to support them and our children would certainly benefit, if there was the will to do so along with a true understanding of the needs. The QFHSA was happy to provide this opportunity for our parents to hear the teacher's point of view.

Similar to last year, there was a delay in the completion of our Financial Statement, but rather than postpone the AGM to the end of the summer, we decided to present the draft financial review to our delegates to vote on. As the difference between the draft copy and the final version would only be an auditor's note at the end that would not affect the financial numbers, we decided that, under these unusual circumstances, we would trust our membership to be understanding... and they were. The financial review was

accepted in principle, with the promise of distributing the final version when it was available, post AGM.

Unlike last year's AGM, where we had no resolutions to caucus and adopt, this year we had **eight solid resolutions!** The topics addressed ranged from school-board elections to the teacher shortage, from French language instruction for all to environmental awareness. All eight resolutions are described in the article on pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter. The resolutions were translated into French and then sent to many government and organizational destinations for information and for a call for action.

We had not presented and adopted so many resolutions at one AGM since 2001! Fun fact: At the 1999 AGM, the QFHSA membership adopted a whopping 18 resolutions! Please note that in 1998, school boards in Quebec went from confessional to linguistic... with much associated upheaval and uncertainty. The years 2020 and 2021 are proving to be just as significant in terms of potential changes to our education system and the peaceful language coexistence between the French majority and English minority communities in Quebec.

As there were so many resolutions and the AGM would be held virtually again and with only two hours allotted (for sanity's sake), we decided we could not reasonably caucus the resolutions in our usual way of breaking into groups, discussing and editing the resolutions separately, and then bringing them back to the entire assembly for a vote. So instead we invited all registered delegates to a Resolution Caucusing

Session on May 19th to examine the draft resolutions and suggest edits. At the meeting, the 15 people in attendance reviewed each resolution, one after another, checking its wording and making suggested edits to improve the resolutions without changing the original intent. This approach worked quite well and we were able to present the resolutions at the AGM with confidence.

The final item on the agenda was the election of the Board of Directors and the Officers of the Federation. We said goodbye and thank you to **Renate Sutherland** and **Meaghan Dufour**, who both stepped down from the board. We also elected four new directors: **Carl Garrett** (ESSB), **Samantha Patel** (EMSB), as well as **Nick Giannakoulis** and **Chris Schaler** (both from WQSB).

We also elected a new president, **Rosemary Murphy**, and we look forward to her leadership. Rosemary thanked **Linton Garner**, our outgoing president for his service to the Federation and indicated her pleasure with his continuing in an advisory capacity as the immediate past president. The QFHSA Board of Directors thus stands at 14 members strong!

As efficient as it was to hold a pared-down AGM online within a 2-hour time period, we missed the camaraderie of rubbing shoulders with our members and taking the time to share a meal and celebrate our volunteers at an awards banquet. Here's hoping 2022 will make all that possible again!

Carol Meindl,
Executive Director

BILL 21 / BILL 40 / BILL 96:

Three Cars on a Train Taking Quebec Down a Dark Tunnel

SINCE THE ELECTION OF THE CAQ in 2018, the English community has seen various pieces of legislation adopted that seriously affect our education sector. Bill 40 would abolish our democratically-elected school boards, Bill 21 would limit who can be hired as a teacher in our public schools, and now Bill 96 would limit the growth of our English CEGEPS to 17.8% of the total CEGEP student population in Quebec.

A final judgment on **Bill 21**, *An Act respecting the laicity of the State*, was made this spring by Justice Marc-André Blanchard, who declared that the most contentious parts of the law—the religious symbols ban for many government employees—can't be applied to English schools. The desire of our English school boards to foster diversity by choosing who they hire remains protected by Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Bill 40, *An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance*, had left the control and management of our school boards up in the air. Last year, both the Superior Court and Quebec Court of Appeal considered the issue important enough that they suspended Bill 40 in the English sector. It is a battle that many involved in believe will end up at the Supreme Court, as the government will appeal Justice Sylvain Lussier's ruling. The on-again/off-again 2020 school board elections were one of the casualties of that uncertainty. Many incumbent commissioners were persuaded to stay on for another term, so many were elected by acclamation and elections were avoided in their wards (a desirable outcome during a worldwide pandemic). There are only a few school wards that require elections to choose a commissioner to fill vacant seats at the board. The CAQ government has yet to announce their appeal of the Superior Court's decision.

And now **Bill 96**, *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*, with its 100+ pages

of legislative amendments, will have far-reaching effects on life in Quebec and specifically the Greater Montreal Area. The extent to which it will affect businesses in Quebec under federal regulation and public signage remains to be seen. To read more on the subject of Bill 96, please see Brian Rock's article on the following pages.

It was welcome news to see the government adopt the principle of free French language instruction services for every adult in Quebec who requests it, but disappointing that they will be provided through Francization Quebec and not through local community organizations. Also disquieting is the decision to limit the course length to 6 months, after which students, once tested, should be considered fluent. And what if they are not? Could they take the course again?

It is also a relief that municipalities, currently bilingual, will be able to pass a motion to keep their status. It is important for our seniors and immigrants to be able to access necessary information and services in a language they are most comfortable with until such time as their French skills are sufficient to navigate an often complex bureaucratic world.



Photo from Shutterstock

Debate on Bill 96 will commence in the fall and will, no doubt, consume the media cycles, as the devil will be in the details. Our community will need to turn to the federal government and the minority language communities outside of Quebec to serve as allies. This fall will see a debate on Bill 96, and probable decisions on Bills 40 and 21. Much rides on these important discussions, including the integrity of our Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, which will be regularly thrown on the tracks of the oncoming CAQ train by Notwithstanding Clauses.

What a way to emerge from a pandemic!

Carol Meindl, *Executive Director*

Does Bill 96 Really Disturb the English-Speaking Community and Is There Anything We Can Actually Do About It?

A Commentary By Brian Rock

BONJOUR, HI! I am a retired history of Quebec and Canada teacher who had the unenviable task of explaining the **Meech Lake Accord** of 1987 and the **Charlottetown Accord** of 1992 to Secondary IV students at Baie Comeau High School on the Côte-Nord when the 15- and 16-year-olds were more worried about getting a date for the Friday night dance in the gymnasium. On top of all that, this was in the school building where the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney had once been a student, and he was then not only the local Member of Parliament, but also the Prime Minister of Canada, and he seemed to drop by the school every time he travelled from Ottawa to Baie Comeau.

But back to the subject at hand: **Bill 96: An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec**. So many things are wrong with it, starting with the planned amendments to the Canadian Constitution. See 90Q.1 and 90Q.2 below:

"CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867

159. The Constitution Act, 1867 (30 & 31 Victoria, c. 3 (U.K.); 1982, c. 11 (U.K.)) is amended by inserting the following after section 90:

FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF QUEBEC

*90Q.1. Quebecers form a nation.
90Q.2. French shall be the only official language of Quebec. It is also the common language of the Quebec nation."*

Questions to be asked regarding 90Q.1: Who belongs to the Quebec *nation*? Do Quebec anglophones, do Quebec allophones, do francophones in the rest of Canada, including the Acadians in New Brunswick?

And regarding 90Q.2: What about the **Official Languages Act of Canada**? Are we really headed to asymmetrical federalism with a country of Canada constituted of a *nation*, nine provinces, and three territories, with perhaps some of the provinces wishing to unilaterally declare themselves as nations in the same way that the majority Government of Quebec is attempting to do?

I never thought that I would miss as much as I do now the federalist-in-your-face courageous leadership of the late Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Perhaps it is time for his son Justin to read some of the scholarly articles his father wrote on federalism and the constitutional responsibilities and duties of the Prime Minister of Canada.

Even justices of the Quebec courts have expressed concerns about the manner in which the majority Government of Quebec nonchalantly resorts to the use of closure (*le bâillon*) to stifle proposed amendments to legislation from the Official Opposition and the two other opposition parties in the National Assembly of Quebec.

Justices of the Quebec courts are



even more concerned about the repeated usage of the Notwithstanding Clause to override fundamental freedoms written in the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**:

"2. a) freedom of conscience and religion; b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression"

They also note the following from the **Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms** (Chapter C-12):

"3. freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association."

Need I call to mind **Law 21**, **Law 40**, and now **Bill 96** amending mainly the **Charter of the French Language (Law 101: Chapter C-11)**. Monsieur Legault, the Notwithstanding Clause was never intended to be used as a steamroller squashing individual rights in favour of the collective rights of legislating "*French as the common and only official language of the Quebec nation.*"

Continued on the next page

News for You

Bill 96

Continued from the previous page

Mr. Premier of Quebec, it is so important to abide by the democratic principle of majority respect for the minorities, especially when you have a solid majority of seats in the National Assembly of Quebec, and your honeymoon with the electorate is still so surprisingly strong. Monsieur Legault, please be aware that many critics refer to your frequent usage of *le bâillon* and the Notwithstanding Clause as “tyranny of the majority.”

So readers, what can you do as individuals?

The First Step: Find out as much as you can about Bill 96. The constitutional experts vary in their opinions

about 90Q.1 and 90Q.2. Follow the debate through your media of preference: newspapers, radio, television, social media...

The Second Step: Express your concerns about Bill 96. Call the offices, email, and/or write snail mail letters to: the Prime Minister of Canada, your Member of Parliament, the Premier of Quebec, the Minister Responsible for the French Language of Quebec, and/or your Member of the National Assembly of Quebec.

The passage of Bill 96 will be a marathon, not a hundred-yard dash. Time is still of the essence in a marathon of this importance. So please follow through on Steps One and Two as soon as possible!

Brian Rock, B.A., M.Ed., is the Chairman of the QFHSA Education, Rights, and Resolutions Committee. A former secondary-school history teacher and school principal with the Eastern Shores School Board, he is also the Chairman of the Committee for the Enhancement of the Curriculum of the History of Quebec (ComECH-QC). Brian writes a monthly column, “Between a Rock and a Hard Place,” that delves into the mysterious dealings in education, politics, and history, and other subjects of current interest. The column appears in several Quebec newspapers.

Note: The opinions expressed in this commentary are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the QFHSA.



Congratulations to Brian Rock Recipient of the 2021 Outstanding Contribution to Education Award, Quebec Provincial Association of Retired School Educators (QPARSE)

The QFHSA would like to congratulate Board Member Brian Rock on an award he so richly deserves. Brian works tirelessly for the QFHSA. He currently is the chair of our very productive Education, Rights and Resolutions Committee. Brian also held the board president position for a number of years.

In her presentation honouring Brian Rock, QPARSE Past President Jan Langelier describes Brian's educational background and his long and productive career in education. A keen student of politics, history, and education, Brian holds a teaching certificate from McGill, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Montreal, and a Master of Education degree in Administrative Studies from Bishop's University.

As an educator, Brian has taught at the secondary, CEGEP, and university levels. With his excellent leadership skills, Brian has taken on the following roles: high-school principal, president of the Baie Comeau Teachers Association, member of the Advisory Board

on English Education, and executive director of the Regional Association of Western Quebecers.

His is not an idle retirement. In addition to dedicating a huge amount of time to his work with various community groupings and committees, his insightful articles appear in three Quebec community newspapers.

In her excellent tribute to the 2021 QPARSE award winner, Jan Langelier writes:

Brian is a doer and has always been actively involved in many areas of education, from teaching, to leading, to advising, to representing, and when needed to criticizing in order to right wrongs. Brian cares deeply about education and in particular about the rights of Anglophones in this province. We are all beholden to Brian for this dedication and commitment.”

The QFHSA could not agree more. *Congratulations, Brian!*

Celebrating Our Volunteers

The QFHSA Unsung Heroes of 2020-2021

This award recognizes Home & School and/or school volunteers who have proven to be helpful, reliable, available, and courteous, who honour their commitments throughout the school year, are willing to take on additional responsibilities when the need arises, and are involved in everyday school life. Their dedication merits recognition locally and provincially.

Home and School Association	Award Recipients
Beacon Hill Elementary	All Staff at Beacon Hill Elementary, Mrs. Brayne, Mr. Lagimodiere, Miss Lynn Milburn, The Flower Chalk Art Team (Samantha Whipps, Melissa Lim, Catherine Fini and all the volunteer artists), The Home & School Executive, Tracey Blouin, Stephanie Gartner
Children's World Academy	Tania D'Alessandro, Karen Macdonald, Anne Moorhouse
Edgewater Elementary	Maria Ligon
Edinburgh School	Sandra Cambone, Marie-Hélène Cartier, William Cho, Radu Emil Covaciu, Vanessa Mendaglio, Niki Spiropoulos
Evergreen Elementary	Maeghan Blaise Andrew, Barbara Hamilton, Melinda Paradis, Elizabeth Phillips, Sarah Simunic
Gardenview Elementary	Jamie Auger, Alicia Tandubuana
Genesis Elementary	Genesis Elementary Staff
Hillcrest Academy	Karen Palassian
St. Charles Elementary	Elena Iftime
St. Patrick Elementary	St. Patrick Elementary Lunch Ladies, Kinga Breining, Nathalie Cheff, Jennifer Colantonio, Jodi Esterson, Gina Giambalvo, Mélanie Grégoire, Mary-Kate Jackson Yule, Lisa MacDonell, Jennifer Murphy, Marie-Josée Paquette, Jael Symes, Tracy Witzke
South Hull Elementary	Kathleen Emberson, Ahmed Hassan

Celebrating Our Volunteers

The QFHSA Golden Torch Award Recipients 2020-2021

This award recognizes Home & School Association or committee members who have demonstrated active leadership, organizational skills, encouragement of the participation of all volunteers, and whose dedication merits recognition locally and provincially.

Home and School Association	Award Recipients
Beacon Hill Elementary	Christine Barnes, Samantha Whipps
Children's World Academy	Laura D'Adamo, Barbara Giallo, Linda Kong, Celine Peron, Nathalie Tremblay
Edgewater Elementary	Marcy-Lynn Lewis
Evergreen Elementary	Jennifer Gilligan, Susan Nowak
Forest Hill Senior	Colleen Sardinha
St. Charles Elementary	Donna Coelho Weekes
St. Patrick Elementary	Andrea Cappelli, Jael Symes, Mimi Tabaczuk
South Hull Elementary	Nick Giannakoulis

2020-2021 QFHSA Newsletter Award

École Primaire Beaconsfield

Kudos to **École Primaire Beaconsfield** Home and School for managing to publish three delightful newsletters during the year that lifted spirits and kept parents well informed during uncertain times.

*Honourable Mentions go to **Forest Hill Junior Home and School** and **Margaret Manson Home and School** for their wonderful publications.*

Parenting Pre-Teens: Stop, Listen, Discuss

Lessons Learned at the QFHSA's Spring Parenting Workshops

WHY ATTEND a parenting workshop? Because it is an opportunity to get off that hectic parenting highway for a little while—an opportunity to think about where you have been, where you are now, and where you are going. When you are a parent of an almost-teen about to make that exciting, but stressful move to high school, it is an especially good time to take a moment to consider your role in these new circumstances. The QFHSA's parenting workshops on the evenings of May 12th and 26th allowed parents to do just that. The workshops were led by Karen Delage, a family life educator who has worked with the Youth Protection mandate for over 15 years.



Photo from Adobe Stock

What Is Going On? *Understanding Your Child's Stages of Development*

In the May 12th workshop, Karen Delage encouraged us to try to remember our own experiences moving from elementary to high school. Most of us recalled the excitement of the change to the big school, but also how nervous we felt. Would we make new friends? Lockers, changing classrooms, it was a lot—and it will be a lot for our own children too. This short activity really helped us to understand how our own children may be feeling at this time. Karen then described the distinct stages of development a child typically experiences.

From 8 to 10 Years: The Age of Rules

At this age, children really focus on the rules; they have a strong sense of right and wrong (and can be quite rigid about this). They are also starting to look at their par-

ents with a more critical eye, detecting any discrepancies between what they say and do. Since fairness and justice are so important to children at this age, it is a good time for parents to make sure the family rules are clear, consistent, and make sense. Because children tend to be very sensitive to criticism at this age, it is important to be mindful of how we communicate with them.



Karen's Tip: Delivering Feedback

When you need to give constructive criticism, try this method:

- Begin on a positive note (“You really did a good job of cleaning your room...”)
- Then clearly state the problem and the actions you expect (“But there are a couple of things still left to do—your garbage hasn’t been emptied and those glasses need to go in the dishwasher...”)
- Finish up with words of encouragement (“You’ve got this!”)

Image by OpenClipart - Vectors from Pixabay

From 10 to 12 Years: The Age of Idols

At this age, your child is looking for role models. Their peers and the media influence them a great deal. Although they seem to be turning away from us, our children need us more than ever at this time. As parents, we want to find ways to stay connected with our pre-teen so that we can guide them and redirect their interests to healthy/positive choices if necessary.

At this stage, children are beginning to develop their critical thinking skills. It is completely normal for them (and their development) to start challenging the rules and expectations placed upon them. Be ready to discuss and explain the reason for those rules with your children, listen to them, and adjust the rule if it is no longer best adapted to the developmental needs of your child. At the heart of all your discussions should be your family's values.

This is a good age to start giving children what Karen calls “zones of control” or new responsibilities. Let them try to manage these responsibilities themselves. Instead of

Continued on the next page

For Parents: News and Information

“doing for” our children, we are starting to “do with” our children. And when you do a task together, remember to be patient when the task takes more time. The goal is to encourage your child to learn something new, build his self-sufficiency, and self-confidence.


how to support them during this often-tumultuous time.

Family Values to Guide Our Decisions, Our Actions

What are your family’s core values? Honesty? Kindness? Respect? Karen explained that our core values are the basic beliefs each family lives by. As your child enters adolescence, Karen explained that it is more important than ever to make sure the family’s values are clear and understood by all. Start by having a discussion with your partner and then invite your children to join in. You might begin by asking each child to identify his/her top three values. The goal is that together the family will reach a consensus on the values everyone can agree to live by. Why is it so important for your child to know and understand their values? They help build your child’s “moral compass,” which contributes to their identity construction and comes in very handy in a challenging situation (at school or with their peers, for example).

Karen explained that families can create rules based on their core values. Here are her suggestions:

- Make the rule an affirmation. For example, “In this family, we tell the truth.”
- Be sure to acknowledge your children when you catch them respecting the rules.
- Create clear, consistent and well-adapted consequences when a child does not respect the rule.



Karen’s Tip:
Supporting Your Child’s Growing Independence

When your child’s wish for more independence leads them to want to do something you do not feel quite ready for (walking home alone from school was an example parents shared in the workshop), Karen encourages parents to figure out a solution with their child. In the case of the solo walker, you could:

- Run through scenarios with your child, making sure he/she knows how to handle potential problems or dangers. (Carry a whistle and use it; seek out the nearest adult, etc.)
- Try some practice walks together.
- Think of what may help relieve your anxiety. Perhaps let other parents know of your child’s new walk-home routine; enlist the help of friends along the route to keep a lookout for your child.


The ultimate goal: To find a way to satisfy your child’s wish for a little more independence while reducing the parental stress this new step brings.

From Age 12 to 14: The Age of Individualization

At this age, our children are naturally quite self-centred, and are really separating themselves from their parents. It is a time when parents will want to redouble their efforts to keep the channels of communication open, to really listen to their children and let them know that their words and feelings are important. Although there will probably be more closed bedroom doors and less easy affection from our children at this time, parents remain a guiding authority in their children’s lives. We are the mentors and coaches that patiently encourage our children farther along the route to adulthood.

Being the Parent Your Adolescent Needs: Sharing Your Values, Supporting Your Child’s Growing Autonomy

At the May 26th workshop, Karen Delage delved deeper into the adolescent years, a time when children are building their identities and when parents are figuring out



Karen’s Tip:
The 1, 2, 3 Rule

How do you deal with non-respect of the rules?

1. Start by making sure your child is well aware of the rule and your expectations—has everything been stated clearly? Is your child able to identify the reasoning behind the rule?
2. If the rule is not respected a second time, remind your child of the rule, this time stating that there will be a consequence if the behaviour happens again. Let them know what they can expect and remind them that whatever happens next is THEIR responsibility!
3. The third time the rule is not respected, the child gets a consequence (and be sure to follow through with the consequence). Karen also recommends that the consequence should happen as soon as possible after the offending behaviour occurs.

For Parents: News and Information

Encouraging Autonomy

When they reach the teen years, our children want to have more freedom to do what they want. Again, this is a normal stage in their development. As parents, we want to balance that wish for more independence with a sense of responsibility. Your teen needs to earn the rewards of independence by meeting his commitments, like getting his homework or household duties done before he can chill out on the computer.

On the topic of responsibilities, Karen encouraged us to do a little online research to find age-appropriate chores for our children. As they grow, we have moved from the “doing for” stage, through the “doing with” stage, and are now working our way towards the “have them do” stage. Let your teen take more of a leadership role; you remain in the periphery to guide if needed. Consider putting a Chore Chart on the fridge. It is a clear way to show what is expected. Karen also reminded us to “catch our child doing good” and reward them for their efforts—with encouraging words or perhaps an allowance.



Karen's Tip:
Keep the Lines of
Communication Open

Set aside space and time to talk with your teen.

- Ask open-ended questions to start the conversation.
- Ask “what if” questions to get your teen to look at the pros and cons of an issue and develop their critical thinking skills.
- Share your wisdom, but at the same time show that you do not have all the answers.
- Make your home a safe space for your teen to share his/her thoughts and feelings.
- Watch your own reactions—try not to overreact/avoid making swift judgements.

At this age, our teens have a strong sense of fairness; they will challenge rules that do not sit well with them. These are important opportunities for discussion. Not only will the exercise help your teen develop his/her critical thinking skills, but it will allow you to explain the reasons behind the rule. The discussion will likely turn into an elaborate negotiation in which you try to find the middle ground.

Our teens are keenly aware of the liberties their peers have and will likely want the same. But what if you are

not comfortable with the freedoms your child's friend enjoys? One parent described how the Fortnite video game was a deal breaker in her home: the game would not be played in their home despite what may be happening in other homes. Karen coached parents to be clear with their reasoning, to stay calm, and avoid letting the discussion devolve into an argument. But if you find the discussion is getting heated, Karen recommends parents say what needs to be said with respect, and then walk away. And if you lose your cool, stop the argument and return to it when you have calmed down and feel more in control of your emotions. It is worth remembering that we are all human and no one is perfect!

Thank you to Family Life Educator Karen Delage for leading our parenting workshops and thank you to all the parents who joined us. And so we return to that hectic parenting highway, only this time, we have an emergency kit at the ready!

Karen Henchey, *Communications Officer*

Workshop facilitator Karen Delage offers various webinars and group work with parents and their teens, providing prevention-based education and skills. She can be reached at parentefocus@gmail.com/514-575-5591.

*Join us for our Next Parenting Event!
Coming Fall 2021*

**BACK TO SCHOOL,
BACK TO... NORMAL?!**

After the crazy 2020-2021 year we had, how can we get ourselves (and our children) on track for this new school year? Come join in the discussion! We will be sharing our thoughts and suggestions.



This Zoom discussion activity is for parents of children of all ages—from Kindergarten through Secondary V! *More information will be available in the early fall.*

Membership Services – The Latest News

Membership Housekeeping June 2021

IF ANY YEAR NEEDS TO BE DOCUMENTED, it is this one so please send in the **President’s Activity Report** and the **Treasurer’s Financial Report** by July 15th.

The QFHSA wants to hear about the challenges, the changes, and the successes during these pandemic years. These reports are kept as part of your Home and School’s historical records.

By June 30th, executive list forms, etc., will be up on the QFHSA website. Please send in the new Executive List as soon as possible so that the new team will be on the QFHSA e-bulletin list.

Executive Training Workshops: As usual, training workshops for new executives will be offered in the fall. Stay tuned!

E-Bulletins: Please note that occasionally emails from the QFHSA (sent through Constant Contact) may end up in a spam or promotions folder. If you have not heard from us, please check your other email folders.

Goodbye to executive members and other volunteers who have finished their terms or are “graduating.” If your child is moving on to high school, please join the high school Home and School Association. The level of involvement is different, but the information you will receive is valuable.

Office Support: The office will be partially open during the summer, and the staff will continue to check emails from home.



St. Patrick’s volunteers on the job!

Have a great summer!

Marlyn – marlynbrownrigg@qfhsa.org

Thank You!

To the executives who hung in there!

To the executives who stayed on an extra year to keep things running!

To the Home and Schools who rolled with the punches!

To the teams that kept the Home and School viable and active in this usual year!

To the members who supported their local association and the school staff!

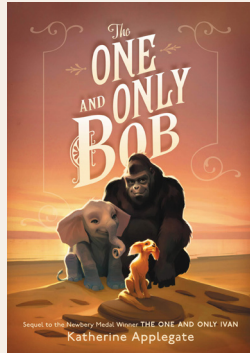
To the school staff who partnered with Home and School to keep activities running!



A Thank You Note from the Gaspé

The QFHSA literacy team sent boxes of new and almost-new books to New Carlisle High School's Grade 3/4 class. Here is the thank-you note we received from Miss Carroll and her Cycle 2 class:

The students in my class were so excited to receive the books sent to us! They love having all of the new books to read in our classroom library. The selection was very appropriate for their level and interests. We have read a lot of the picture books as a class and are especially excited to read the chapter book The One and Only Bob, having gotten to know the character in The One and Only Ivan. I and the students appreciated the gift of books very much. Thank you.



Born to Read Is Back at St. Pats!

St Patrick Elementary in Pincourt has brought back the Born to Read Program! Our community includes many young families and it is our collective goal to uplift our littlest members in literacy. Thanks to the QFHSA, we were able to distribute the canvas tote bags filled with great board books to five of our wee shamrocks. Dad Cortland Ungar and his daughter Layla were kind enough to pose for this great picture. Our goal is to carry this program into the next school year and for years to come.



Happy Reading, Everyone!



Remembering Dr. Harry Kuntz, 1934-2021 Heather McBride, 1945-2021

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations was saddened to learn of the passing of Reverend Dr. Harry Kuntz on April 3 and Heather McBride on April 28.

A Presbyterian minister with a life-long passion for education, **Reverend Dr. Harry Kuntz** taught high school and served as the Secretary of the Protestant Committee of the Superior Council of Education in the Quebec Ministry of Education until his retirement.

The QFHSA remembers Dr. Kuntz's contributions as a consultant to the QFHSA's Rights Committee. Together with Rights Committee Chair Calvin Potter, Dr. Kuntz wrote the document, "Whither the Protestant School System in Quebec" in 1988 for the QFHSA.

The QFHSA salutes Dr. Kuntz and Ms. McBride for their years of dedicated service to the Quebec education system.

Heather McBride had a very long, successful career as a teacher in the Lakeshore/Lester B. Pearson School Boards. In their lovely tribute, Ms. McBride's family wrote, "Heather was that teacher you wanted on your staff or educating your child (or being your mom)." The QFHSA remembers Ms. McBride as an extremely dedicated volunteer with the Edgewater Home and School Association, where she served as both fundraising chair and president. She was one of those volunteers who were happy to lend a hand whenever and wherever they were needed.

Focus on the Locals

In the *Focus on the Locals* section, we share news and information from our associations. **Thank you to all of the Home and Schools that contributed to this issue.** We would love to hear from your Home and School too! Before sending photos, please make sure you have the permission of those appearing in the photos. We invite H&S members to send in your news to news@qfhsa.org.

Forest Hill Junior Starts a New Tradition with their First Annual School-Wide Scavenger Hunt!

With the lockdown preventing many families from traveling and participating in the many enjoyable activities associated with a traditional Spring Break, Forest Hill Junior Home & School decided to launch its First Annual School-Wide Scavenger Hunt! The hope was to provide an event that was COVID-safe, generate excitement within the community, and be a fun family activity to keep the students active, engaged, and busy over the week-long break. The event was made into a fundraiser to support future H&S initiatives, with a nominal registration fee of \$10 per family.

The response to the event was overwhelming! Over 100 families participated and had a blast hunting, building, baking, and creating as they checked off all the items on their lists. It was a great way to connect with each other, show community and school spirit, and engage with fellow schoolmates, as they posted their items on the Home & School's private Facebook page for all participants to see.

The event generated 596 Facebook posts in total and had a net profit of \$950! The winning family selected from the participants was fitted with school clothing as their prize! The success of the scavenger hunt has encouraged the committee to make the event an annual activity. Staff and students alike are excited for what next year's hunt will bring!

*Submitted by Kim Beardsell,
Forest Hill Jr Home & School*



Take a picture of your family baking together....



Take a picture of a future Olympian...



Take a picture of a work of art...



Take a picture of a snow person...



Take a picture of a wild animal...

Margaret Manson's School Yard Gets an Incredible Makeover: *A Space for New Friends, Imagination, and Fun!*



Following two years of dedicated community donations and diligent planning by Home & School and the school's Play Yard Committee, we are ecstatic that the beautification of our play yards is finally complete!



The students were blown away with the fun games and inspiring activities that have been incorporated into the school's playing grounds. A fantastic end-of-year surprise!



This incredible initiative is the culmination of a committed effort to research, conceptualize and design in a clever and inviting way. We can't wait to see all the ingenious ways the children use them in their play.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Play Yard Committee for all the work and time they devoted to this initiative and to our amazing Margaret Manson community for sponsoring this effort since its inception.

*Excerpt from the Margaret Manson
Home & School Newsletter
May 2021 Issue*



Focus on the Locals

A Year In the Life of a Busy Home and School: *The St. Patrick Pandemic Edition*

What does a Home and School look like during a pandemic? St. Pats answers that call! It looks like school staff rolling up their sleeves and pitching in. It looks like innovative thinking and an exponentially increased online presence. It also looks like it always has, kind-hearted, hardworking volunteers coming together, 2 meters apart, and getting things done!



Some of the many activities we celebrated, at a distance were: Halloween door decorating contests, school-wide holiday pizza parties, seed trays for the whole of Cycle One, an online Babar Books sale, drive-in movies, and so much more!

The face of our Home and School changed significantly this year, but the smiling faces behind the scenes remained steadfast to their commitment to make our school shamrock!



Here are some pics of what we were up to this year!

Submitted by Mimi Tabaczuk, St. Patrick Home & School



Focus on the Locals

First Day of Spring? Time to Count the Flowers in Beaconsfield!

Looking to spread hope and joy on the very first day of spring, Beacon Hill Home and School Association organized a Chalk Art Flower Counting Contest. On the eve of the event, volunteers, chalk in hand, spread out across the local neighbourhood and drew a total of 112 flowers. It was the first time Beacon Hill organized such an event, and it is a keeper! It was a perfect (and timely) spirit-lifting community event.

Also at Beacon Hill elementary, the children enjoyed contributing to the Giving Tree in the school lobby. Students were invited to donate a loonie or toonie to place a leaf on the tree.



This initiative together with a Dress-Down Day raised over \$1300 to support Beacon Hill's foster child through Plan International.

*Submitted by Melissa Lim,
Beacon Hill Home & School*

A BUSY SPRING AT BAIE-COMEAU HIGH SCHOOL

Despite the pandemic situation, Baie-Comeau High School (BCHS) and its Home and School Association (H&S) have had a busy spring organizing a myriad of activities.



The Easter Bunny (helped out by H&S parents) dropped off a smorgasbord of treats in early April. Homemade cookies, cupcakes, Jello, and other treats were offered to the students on the afternoon of April 1st. There were even surprise Easter eggs!

This year's Annual Bean Supper was organized in a very different manner.

The menu was the same as in previous years: beans, a roll, fried potatoes, salad, and dessert. The difference was that all the meals were pre-ordered with specific pick-up times. The take-out containers were recyclable and/or reusable. The orders were packed in a special BCHS tote bag and given out as per the schedule. Our H&S made a profit of \$1245, and used most of the funds for bursaries for the Secondary V graduating students. Thank you to our small group of dedicated volunteers.

The last H&S event of the school year



was the traditional year-end barbecue lunch. While respecting health guidelines, students and staff lunched on hot dogs, hamburgers, chili, fresh veggies, a fruit drink, and a dessert.



As the year drew to a close, our H&S had to say farewell to two long-standing members. Isabelle Harvey, our chair, is leaving after a remarkable 17 years of involvement. Principal Stephen Kohner is retiring after supporting the H&S activities for 28 years at BCHS. Let's hope they both return as volunteers in 2021-2022!

Submitted by Stephen Kohner, Principal

Focus on the Locals



At CWA: Showing our Appreciation for Teachers, Treating our Students, and Raising Funds

As the year progressed, we continued to adapt to COVID protocols. Our school staff and teachers are to be commended for keeping our children safe, all while making learning fun and engaging. The children still had an amazing year filled with knowledge and excitement.

Photo by Pixabay from Pexels



We decided this year our staff needed to be recognized for all their efforts, so we extended our staff appreciation week. Small treats were delivered to the school for all the staff to enjoy on a monthly basis. The treats varied from fruit cups, lunch from Villa Toscana, sushi, and zeppoles, to name a few.

The students were treated to maple lollipops as a Cabane à Sucre treat. With the warm weather here, we are treating the students to "Freezie Fridays" and TCBY ice cream.

This year we were lucky to have many members renew and many new members join our H&S committee. Together, we came up with new, creative and exciting fundraisers. One of those fundraisers was Super Recycleurs. Parents dropped

off their donations of clothing, blankets, towels and sheets. These items were then weighed and an amount was given to our H&S fund. Thank you to everyone who donated.

We also continued with our CWA Restaurant Takeout fundraisers where a local restaurant would donate a percentage of their restaurant sales (by mentioning CWA upon order online or by phone) during a particular weekend.

With the year coming to an end, we have a new graduating class. The Class of 2021 will celebrate their graduation this year, but it does come with its challenges due to COVID restrictions. The school and H&S are pulling together and doing our part to make it memorable for our grads.



Photo by RODNAE Productions from Pexels

We would like to thank all the members and parents of the graduating class. We will miss their input and involvement in H&S. Have a safe and exciting summer. See you in September.

Excerpt from the CWA Newsletter, June 2021 Edition

Foot Loose at St. Charles Elementary!

To mark the end of the 2020-2021 school year, St. Charles Home and School organized a COVID-friendly fun day for all of the students. Foot Loose is a long-standing tradition at St. Charles and so we were so happy to bring this event back to the students after not being able to host it last year.

Although we were able to give the kids a day of fun and treats, the event was obviously very different from years past. There were no inflatable games and the classes were kept in their bubbles, so we had to run the event over two days. Even with all of the changes, the children had so much fun and were happy to be outside with their friends playing games, having freezies, and playing with the new frisbees and jump ropes that Home & School bought for them. Thank you to our Foot Loose Committee for all of their hard work and thinking outside of the box. A Big Thank You to our St. Charles staff for running the games and making sure the children had a day of fun!

Excerpt from the St. Charles Newsletter, June 8, 2021 Edition



Focus on the Locals



Kids Get Reading at Grenville... and End the Year with Fun, Fun, Fun!

The sun is out, our shorts are on, and all we can think about is ice cream! Our kids, teachers, staff, and parents are super excited to start their summer break. But before we can do that, here is an update from Grenville Elementary Home & School:

After the maple syrup fundraiser ended in the spring, we had to come up with one last fundraiser, so we put our thinking caps on and decided to have a Read-a-Thon. The smaller children read short stories while the older kids read chapter books. We sent out pledge forms, money was raised, and prizes won. Parents and teachers alike were super proud of all the students' accomplishments, from Pre-K all the way up to Grade 6.

For our graduating kindergarteners, we prepared books with homemade bookmarks to give to our little readers during the graduation ceremony that took place in our school yard. The graduating Grade 6 class was treated to an extended school day in the school yard, which was equipped with a water slide and bouncy castles. The event included an outdoor movie, hot dogs, hamburgers, s'mores and a bonfire too!!

We thought our kids deserved more at the end of this long year, so we decided that a pizza party with dessert was in order during the teacher-planned Fun Day held just before school ended for the year.

Math books and agendas will be purchased for all grades next year, another one of the many ways Grenville Home and School likes to give back to our parents & students.

We hope that you have enjoyed reading about all our adventures this year at Grenville Elementary. Happy Summer from all of us at GES Elementary Home & School!

Submitted by Michelle Deslauriers, Grenville Home & School



SHARE YOUR NEWS!



Photo by Anissa Thompson from FreemImages

What is happening in your Home and School community? Fun fundraisers? Special events? Please let us know and we will be happy to share your news in our *Focus on the Locals* section in an upcoming issue of the *QFHSA News*. Send your submissions to news@qfhsa.org

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