



THE VOICE OF
THE PARENT IN
EDUCATION

QFHS NEWS

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Message from the President

Interesting Times



The Chinese proverb states according to Wikipedia "**May you live in interesting times**" is an English expression purported to be a translation of a traditional Chinese curse. While seemingly a blessing, the expression is normally used ironically, with the clear implication that "uninteresting times" of peace and tranquillity are more life-enhancing than interesting ones, which, from a historical perspective, usually include disorder and conflict. The thing is though no link to the Chinese has been found.

Ironically, much the same could be said for what we sometimes refer to as a widely held belief, something that is also sometimes not true. The English-speaking community finds itself in just such a situation now concerning school boards. Both the government and the English-speaking community may be holding on to widely held beliefs, but both may indeed be incorrect in their beliefs.

Briefly, the government believes that reducing schoolboards to mere administrative structures will be more efficient and satisfy the constitutional requirements for linguistic minorities to maintain the management and control of their respective linguistic educational systems. The English-speaking community (ESC) is convinced that management and control equals preserving English language schoolboards. Both may be fundamentally wrong in their assumptions.

As the government has yet to formulate its "projet de loi" it is difficult to criticize their plans other than to say that regional centres filled with 'fonctionnaires' unfamiliar with our community and our schools will not be a formula that will benefit the community. However, we cannot be assured that in a case before the Supreme Court of Canada, the judges will view school boards as the structure that guarantees management and control of our education in this province. Nor can the Quebec government assume that its format will conform to the constitutional guarantees afforded minority linguistic communities under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

However, I think that we can safely assume over the next few months, with the "projet de loi" pending, and the English-speaking community gearing up to defend its rights, we will indeed be living in "Interesting Times".



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QFHSA NEWS.



Executive Director's Message



Community Representation Essential

There seems to be much speculation lately as to what is really going to happen to our Education system in Quebec this year. We have been waiting for legislation to be tabled that has been promised by the new Minister of Education regarding the abolishment of school boards as we know them, and the replacement by school service centers. There are tentative plans for parents to elect parent representatives to these new 'Boards' or 'Councils', for school staff to elect school staff reps and in some cases for students (high school) to elect student reps. But what about the tax payers without children in school? What about those individuals with children too young yet, or with children already

long since graduated? What about tax payers with no children at all? These members of the community will be expected to pay school tax to support the schools in their area but will be expected to do so without representation. **Taxation without representation!**

The Quebec Education Act currently allows for community representatives to be appointed to the governing boards of schools by the elected members of the governing boards.

Division II Governing Boards 42.

(5) two representatives of the community who are not members of the school staff, appointed by the members elected under subparagraphs 1-4.

As every government should wish to avoid imposing taxation without providing representation, there are several options: 1) Eliminate the school tax and raise income tax or property tax accordingly for everyone, or 2) find a way for the community to elect their representatives to each school governing board.

Raising taxes is never a popular move. Providing the means for communities to elect a representative to sit on each school governing board is the better choice. With today's technology and social media, an electronic ballot system could easily be created. Twin it with municipal elections, and voila. Once that is done, those community reps can elect, in turn, their own representatives to sit on the School Service Center's councils, along with the parent, student and school staff reps. In this way, everyone is democratically elected to represent their jurisdiction.

I would like to assume that the Minister has thought this all through and we can rest assured of everyone having due representation, when it comes to paying their taxes. It would not really take that much effort.

Let's wait and see.

Membership services

Regional Council: On February 9th, a regional council and executive training workshop was held for the Home and School associations in Western Québec. If you would like to host a regional council for schools in your area, please contact Marlyn.

Insurance: QFHSA staff recently met with the QFHSA’s insurance company to review the current insurance policy. The broker was very happy to see that the QFHSA collects executive lists, activity reports and financial statements from the local associations. A comprehensive list of local association activities was provided, and it was IMPRESSIVE! With end-of-year celebrations coming up quickly, please remember to have your Home and School added to the vendors’ insurance policy (bouncies) and ensure that there is an adequate number of volunteers at your event. The insurance company is now requesting 10 days notice to issue a certificate and will only issue certificates to Home and Schools in “good standing”.

“Good Standing”: Home and Schools have been notified of any outstanding documentation and fees. If paperwork, etc. is not up-to-date the association is considered to be not in “good standing”. Please report any discrepancies to Marlyn.

QFHSA AGM: Membership Chairs and Presidents will receive a notice indicating number of voting delegates that your Home and School may send to the QFHSA’s Annual General Meeting. Forms must be filled out identifying the members who will vote on your Home and School’s behalf.



Christopher Grady is the creator of Lunarbaboon, a webcomic designed for humans. In his spare time he is a family man and an elementary school teacher in Toronto.



www.lunarbaboon.com

Thank you, Gisela Amarica in Memoriam



01/03/2019 Gisela Amarica, Posed with her son Sandu (left) and his wife, Sue Stacho (right)

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Gisela Amarica in February. Gisela Amarica was a force to be reckoned with and was active with the Home and School movement in Quebec for over 50 years.

She served as a Home and School volunteer from 1956-1984, serving as a Home and School president first at Morrison (1972-73) and then at Malcolm Campbell (1984-85). How was she able to stay engaged for so many years? Her nine children, passing through the English school system, kept her in the thick of things. In fact, her long standing history with Home and School, earned her such awe and respect, that even volunteers with 15 or 20 years experience under their belt, felt like "mere newbies."

She served as QFHSA Vice-President in 1979 with Dr. Cal Potter, as Chair of the Constitution Committee in the early 1980s and was active with Canadian Parents for French. Gisela Amarica received the Leslie N. Buzzell Award in 1984, in recognition of her long service to Home and School, both at the local and the provincial level. In 2003, she attended the Annual General Meeting and was honoured for her 50 years of Home and School service.

I was both privileged and honoured to attend her funeral on February 11th at St John's Lutheran Church, both as QFHSA Executive Director and as a member of St. John's Church Council, where she was also a long-standing member as well. I heard first hand from her children what an extraordinary mother she had been- a woman ahead of her time and one who certainly knew her own mind and her own values. When asked why, after newly arriving in a country such as Canada, where she was only beginning to learn the language and culture, did she throw herself so much into the thick of things at her children's school?

In her own words, simply put, "They needed help!" And is not that the way we are all drawn to Home and School? Ambitious plans need many hands. Thank you, Gisela, for all you gave to Home and School.

QFHSA salutes one of our very best!

Why Co-opting is so Seldom Used in Education Governance



A Commentary by Brian Rock

Did you know that under Section 143 of the Education Act of Québec, the School Boards can co-opt two additional school board commissioners. I am very pleased, that in their wise deliberations, that most have decided not to avail them-

selves of this opportunity, and most of *les commissions scolaires* have followed suit.

Section 143 requires an onerous process: it involves consulting the groups most representative of the region's social, cultural, business, labour, health, and sports sectors. Considering that many of the School Board's territories of jurisdiction include more than one region, and how many sectorial groups in these regions are involved in social, cultural, business, labour, health, and sports activities, it is no wonder it is onerous! They may number in the hundreds!

Section 143.1: "must enable persons whose competence and qualifications are considered complementary to those of the commissioners or useful for the administration of the school board to sit on the council of commissioners. The persons must meet any selection criteria determined by regulation by the Minister." Furthermore, amendments in 2016 and 2018 to Section 143.1: "'must enable persons to sit on the council of commissioners who are active in the sports or health sector, with a view to promoting consideration of healthy lifestyles in school board decisions, or

who are active in other sectors."

Once the onerous procedures of true consultation are completed, the elected school board commissioners and the parent commissioners must by a majority of at least two-thirds narrow their choice to a maximum of two co-opted commissioners.

In La Coalition Avenir Québec's publication of January 17, 2018 titled "School governance plan - Who does what": "The governing boards are currently made up of elected officials. Parents, teachers, professionals, and other staff members therefore get a seat on their school's governing board by being elected by their peers. People from the business, arts, recreation, and community sectors are elected by cooptation. People sitting on the governing board will be called upon to play a bigger role." Is this a reference to what could be in 'le projet de loi' so (anxiously) awaited – the Draft Bill on Education expected to bring about the abolition of **An Act respecting school elections** E-2.3 and a plethora of amendments to the **Education Act** I-13.3.

Educated guesses are that the Education Minister Jean-François Roberge's plan of regional service centres for schools will be governed by boards of directors elected by representatives of the governing boards of the schools under the jurisdiction of the service centre. It is possible that the constitutional issue of management and control of minority schools may very well centre on the legitimacy of appointed co-opted community representatives on service centre board of directors chosen by co-opted community representatives on governing boards.

Brian Rock, the QFHSA Immediate Past President, is the Chairman of the QFHSA Rights and Resolutions Committee.

DIVERSITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

in Anglophone Quebec

Your Story, Our Story

2019 Travelling Exhibition for High Schools, Museums and Cultural Centres

For information, visit QAHN.org, or email us at home@QAHN.org

There are an infinite variety of groups, cultures, traditions, neighbourhoods and regions that have a connection with the English language in Quebec. QAHN's "*Diversity and Achievement in Anglophone Quebec*" project is exploring this historic and ever-evolving make-up of Quebec's English-speaking communities.

Cultural communities with ties to the English language have integrated their experiences into the fabric of society and have expanded Quebec culture through their own achievements, skills, and ideas. At the same time, the rich diversity of these cultural communities is celebrated across generations of families who preserve their own heritage. By creating a travelling exhibit that can go into high schools, museums and communities, this project can contribute to a wider understanding of Quebec history. The exhibit highlights a variety of cultures, regions and experiences and presents these stories in an engaging manner for students and communities across the province. The goal of the exhibit is to encourage conversations about diversity and identity in Quebec's history.

This free-of-charge exhibit funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage can be displayed in your local high school and includes a guest speaker presentation. For teachers there is a booklet to use as a resource to accompany the history curriculum in your classroom. The Teacher's Handbook will include colourful images and information from cultural community collaborators as well as suggested reading materials and sources for further research.

If you are interested in bringing the *Diversity and Achievement exhibition to your community or high school*, please contact QAHN toll-free at 1-877-964-0409 or 819-564-9595, or by email at home@qahn.org for more information.

About QAHN:

Founded in 2000, the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network is a non-profit, non-partisan organization engaged in promoting the preservation of the built, cultural and natural heritage of Quebec. QAHN aims to promote a greater understanding of the history of Quebec's English-speaking communities by informing, inspiring and connecting people through its activities. Membership is open to any organization or individual, regardless of language or cultural affiliation, with an interest in the history, heritage and culture of Quebec's English-speaking communities.

Regional Council—Western Québec Home and School Associations

On Saturday, February 9, 2019, representatives from seven (7) Home and School Associations from schools in the Western Québec School Board met at the school board office for a regional council and executive training workshop. They were joined by QFHSA President - Linton Garner; QFHSA Secretary - Debi Brown; QFHSA Director - Brian Rock and Membership Services Coordinator - Marlyn Brownrigg.

The group discussed banking, insurance, school fees, current educational issues, attracting volunteers, school libraries, school capacity and QFHSA committee work. During the afternoon training workshop, the roles and responsibilities of Home and School executives were discussed and QFHSA documentation was reviewed.

Thank you to all who gave up a Saturday to attend. The QFHSA looks forward to seeing everyone at the AGM on May 4th.

Communication Matters

2019 workshops & conferences

Practical skills for community organizations

March 25 Lennoxville
Let's be clear: How to use words with greater confidence and skill

April 5 Stanbridge East
Defining goals & telling your story: Communications planning basics

April 26 Gaspé Town
Facebook for non-profits: Tips for better social-media management

QUEBEC ANGLOPHONE
HERITAGE NETWORK
QAHN



RÉSEAU DU PATRIMOINE
ANGLOPHONE DU QUÉBEC
RPAQ

Visit www.qahn.org for dates, venue and registration details.

May 3 Wakefield
Engaging youth: Strategies to reach the under-30 crowd

May 17 Stanstead
Friending History: A study in online culture marketing

May 11 & May 15
North Hatley Lennoxville
From memory to story: Your guide to memoir-writing

Heritage, Culture and Communication: Balancing Traditional and Digital Media in a Changing World is an initiative of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN), with financial support from the Department of Canadian Heritage.



CANADIAN
PARENTS
FOR FRENCH



Poésie

Canadian Parents for French (CPF) has hired special project administrator Chelsea Craig to lead a province-wide community outreach project in Quebec & Nunavut. She will be working with various partners and volunteers to look at ways to improve access to new and existing French second or additional language resources, many of them CPF-derived, for youth, parents and educators in Quebec & Nunavut, as well as to create cross-cultural activities and opportunities to increase students' confidence in using their second-language skills. One such activity is O'Poésie, a French as a second language poetry contest open to youth in Quebec & Nunavut aged 10 to 17 years that allows students to use and discover the French language in a creative way.

O'Poésie – 3rd Edition: The deadline for the 3rd Edition is **May 15th 2019**.

You can send your poem or the poems of your students by email to ccraig@cpf.ca (with O'Poésie 3rd Edition in subject line).

Rules:

1. **All poems must be submitted by 8:00pm on May 15th, 2019**
2. **Poems must have a limit of 20 lines or less.**
3. **Only one entry per student can be submitted.**
4. **The contest is open to students aged 10 to 17 years that are registered in an English school board or English School in Quebec or use French as an additional language in Nunavut.**
5. **There are three categories: 10-13 years; 14-17 years; and one haiku category for 10-17 years.**
6. **Students may enter individually and not through a school. Proof of registration might be**

requested if necessary.

7. **Students may choose the theme and form.**
8. **Entries should be typed or neatly hand-written**
9. **Each poem should be submitted with an entry form (see below)**

O'Poésie Entry Form

Canadian Parents for French in Quebec is pleased to announce the winners for 2018 :

Each winner which will receive Antidote 9 offered by
Druide Informatique (value of \$130):

10-13 Poetry Category: Coralie Lanthier, Rosemere High, SWLSB – Le Cheval.

14-17 Poetry Category: Abbey Skerget, Beaconsfield High, LBPSB – Miroir, Miroir.

Haiku Category: Nathan Manorothe – Westmount High, EMSB

Participating teachers were invited to submit their name into a draw to win French books for their classrooms.

These books valued at \$50 were offered by ALQ and CPF Quebec & Nunavut Project as our way of thanks for supporting students creatively.

Jennifer Hay-Sabourin, Beaconsfield High School was the winner of the draw.

For its second edition, O'Poésie received 55 poems: 2 in the 10-13 years Category, 31 in the 14-17 years Category and 22 in the Haiku 10-17 years Category.

The participants came from 3 different English School Boards in Quebec: English Montreal School Board, Lester B. Pearson School Board and Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board.

A big congratulations to all those who participated.

Planning a school trip to Quebec city ?



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The Truth About Online Education

Would you send your child to an online school? If you live in British Columbia you might be part of the approximately 20% of parents whose child is enrolled in online classes or your child could be one in the over 5 million taking online classes in the U.S. In Quebec, however, relatively few students take online classes and there are a number of reasons for this. First and foremost there is no set policy within the Ministry of Education, and secondly it remains a relatively unknown and misunderstood part of the world of education. In fact, in Quebec this misapprehension is best illustrated by the terms used to describe online learning, that is, Distance Education. Expressed this way, it suggests distance between the learners and the teachers and resonates with old notions tied to correspondence courses. Some may remember magazine ads telling us we could become most anything if we enrolled in these correspondence/distance education programs. What you would get was a package with printed material with exercises and explanations which the learner was expected to complete on his own. Completion rates for these types of courses, not surprisingly, was extremely low. Since so many of the early forms of e-learning were so poorly designed, this particular delivery mode developed a bad reputation. For many, online education was and remains the poor cousin offering an inferior product to what learners can experience in a conventional classroom, but it is not necessarily so.

Sound and effective learning is dependent first and foremost on good pedagogy and effective instructional practice regardless of whether it is online or not. How many classes, whether in high school or university did we sit through where the teacher bored us to sleep and where we learned little to nothing? There is little difference between bad practice in a brick and mortar setting or in a virtual one. In truth, learning happens when teachers are able to create a learning environment that promotes a desire to engage in the process and to make the learning meaningful, authentic, and collaborative.

At LEARN, we started giving online classes in 1999 and we were pioneers in real time/online education. Since then we have taught thousands of high school students from across the province using a methodology that focuses on engaging students in a warm and personal setting. Our teachers are real people interacting with real students and they develop relationships that foster trust and collaboration. Over the years, our organization has won international recognition and our teachers have been called on to present in many countries, but more importantly, our students have generally scored better than average on exams and developed lifelong skills that will serve them well going forward. Our mantra is and will always be, *good pedagogy focused on student needs and interests. Online education like conventional brick and mortar education is only as good as the teachers and methodology they employ.*

Michael J. Canuel, Ed.D.
Chief Executive Officer
LEARN



Children need nature; nature needs children

I sometimes ask myself, as a biologist, how I ended up in education. This is definitely not how I envisioned myself working with wildlife and the environment. However, I discovered quickly that teaching children about nature is incredibly rewarding. Children have this instinctive fascination for the natural world and sharing my passion for nature with them is unquestionably the best part of my work. I sometimes wonder if, instinctively, children are attracted to the outdoors and nature because they know how much they benefit from it.

Nature is good for the body and the mind. Growing scientific evidence shows that, no matter your age, spending time in green spaces improves mood, increases self-esteem and can reduce stress. Unfortunately, with the advances in technology came a decrease in the time we spend outdoors. In his book, *The Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv coined the term "nature-deficit disorder" to describe the effects our disconnection with nature is having- particularly on children. Increasingly, it is found that spending too much time indoors has negative effects on concentration, physical and mental health. On the other hand, playing in green spaces leads to increased creativity, stimulates problem solving and improves cooperation in children. It also has beneficial effects on attention deficit, cognitive abilities and it encourages more active life habits.



On the other hand, nature has never been under so much pressure. Habitat destruction, pollution, climate change, invasive species, and new diseases are hitting many trees, plants, birds, animals, insects and pollinators from all sides. Actions, big and small, from individuals, companies, industries, and lawmakers are needed in order to protect the environment. As adults, we need to protect nature for our children and future generations. At the same time, our children will one day be the ones protecting the environment. Or not. As generations grow more disconnected with nature and the outdoors, it becomes harder to find the motivation needed to act. It is hard to protect something you know little about or do not feel a responsible connection to. Just as children need to connect with nature for their own physical and mental health, nature needs them to connect with it so they will want to protect it. It is a mutualistic symbiosis; each one needs the other and benefits each other in return.



As a bird conservation centre, Le Nichoir, focuses primarily on wild birds. Birds are an incredible way to connect with nature as they are everywhere, in the middle of the city or in the wildest woods. They are colorful, easy to observe and to hear. What better way to cultivate one's fascination for wildlife? In nature, everything is part of the ecosystem; knowing and caring about one aspect of nature is connecting with all of it.

Jo-Annie Gagnon, B.Sc. Environmental Biology- Wildlife

Education Program Coordinator at Le Nichoir Wild Bird Conservation Centre

Religious Accommodation in Quebec

In 2013, not so very long ago, the government of Pauline Marois introduced Bill 60, a Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, and providing a framework for accommodation requests.

Trying to legislate the Quebec controversy on reasonable accommodation, there was much controversy in Quebec and elsewhere about the charter, especially its proposed prohibition of public sector employees from wearing or displaying conspicuous religious symbols. Needless to say, cooler heads prevailed as did compassion and reason, and the Marois government was voted out of office.



Now, in 2019, with a new CAQ administration, the same old ghost is raising its head. It all comes down to what kind of Quebec do we wish to live in, build and contribute to? One that shuts people out or one that invites people- all people, in?

Now is a good time to remember QFHSA's stated position back in 2013, in response to Bill 60.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. (QFHSA) would like to thank the Committee on Institutions for the opportunity to respond to Bill 60. This Bill was studied in detail by the Rights Committee and the response of the Federation was passed by the Board of Directors on behalf of the membership.

QFHSA is opposed, in its entirety, to Bill 60, a Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men and providing a framework for accommodation requests.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is confident that both the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms already adequately safeguard and protect the principles of equality between men and women and the freedom of religion.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is confident in the secular nature of the Federal and Provincial Governments as they are now and deem no further modifications of the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms as necessary.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is opposed to the insertion of the Primacy of the French Language into the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms as it in no way affects state neutrality, equality of women and men nor does it address a framework for accommodation requests. Language legislation should stay within the Charter of the French Language.

When a Charter of Rights and Freedoms is frequently amended, in response to current situations, it should strive to improve on rights, not diminish them. To diminish rights takes away the inalienability of all rights and weakens a Charter. Bill 60 proposes to diminish the right of freedom of expression when it restricts the personal choice of wearing religious symbols.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. cannot be party to a proposed legislation, which if passed, runs contrary to what we teach our children insofar as tolerance, respect of individual rights and religious freedoms are concerned. Bill 60 undermines the Moral and Religious Education curriculum first implemented in 1997 by the Minister of Education at the time and later modified in 2008 to become the Ethics and Religious Culture program.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc. calls for the withdrawal of Bill 60.

QFHSA Presentation 2014—For the Record

In 2014, a delegation from the QFHSA's Rights Committee made up of Lawrence Depoe, Patricia Willis, Shadi Asodolahi and Carol Meindl, went to Quebec City to present a statement to the National Assembly Committee on Institutions in response to Bill 60, The Proposed Quebec Charter of Values. At that time, there were many aspects of the Bill we felt very strongly were violating the rights and freedoms of Quebecers, as well as some aspects that had no business in a Charter of Values, such as language. This year, the Legault government proposes to introduce, once again, legislation that will restrict the freedom of expression of religion by limiting who can wear religious symbols and who cannot. The following is the presentation made to the Committee on Institutions, February 19, 2014: For the record.

For 75 years, QFHSA members have passed many resolutions touching on the education, health and general well being of children. Education, especially these days, does not operate in a vacuum.

Who breaks a butterfly on a wheel?

This a famous quote from William Rees-Mogg, Editor of the Times in a 1967 editorial in response to the raid and arrest of Mick Jagger for drug possession. The sentence handed down to Mr. Jagger was unusually harsh.

It means putting forth tremendously more effort than is required in a particular situation. It made a case against making laws out of marginal cases,

Likewise, we believe that Bill 60 is a law designed to discriminate against 1.5% of its population. It also is like breaking a butterfly on a wheel.

Primacy of the French Language

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is opposed to the insertion of the Primacy of the French Language into the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms as it in no way affects state neutrality, equality of women and men nor does it address a framework for accommodation requests.

Language legislation should stay within the Charter of the French Language, which, in our opinion, already safeguards the future of the French Language in Quebec.

Education

We have concerns as to the affect of this legislation on the quality of education for our children. There has been progress in Educational reform over the years, much of it welcomed.

The Quebec public school system, in 1997 implemented a school curriculum called the Ethics and Religious Culture Program. *This was a result of Bill 95 An Act to amend various legislative provisions of a confessional nature in the education field.* In 1998 Marois, who at the time was education minister, co-authored a policy that called for "active and visible" diversity in Quebec's schools.

QFHSA Presentation 2014—For the Record Continued

It even instructed school boards to eliminate discriminatory rules and hiring practices, calling for a new policy of "Zero Exclusion" that would allow all citizens to participate in developing Quebec Society.

It also said pluralism was essential in Quebec society, stating "We believe that diversity, be it ethnocultural, linguistic or religious, permeates Quebec society and has the right to be expressed."

The Preamble of Bill 95 states the rationale for this amendment.

- The Ethics and Religious Culture program constitutes the culmination of a long process during which the Québec school system has shifted away from essentially confessional structures and orientations—both Catholic and Protestant to entirely non-religious structures.

- While maintaining their specificity, both the ethics and the religious culture areas of instruction grant a common place to the **practice of dialogue** and share the same objectives: **the recognition of others** and **the pursuit of the common good**. By joining together in one program instruction in both ethics and religious culture, a certain continuity is ensured since the optional programs already included moral education...

...The Ethics and Religious Culture program offers students from all backgrounds the tools necessary for a better **comprehension of our society and its cultural and religious heritage**. Students are encouraged to **open themselves to the world** and to develop their ability to act with others. By grouping all the students together, rather than dividing them into groups according to their beliefs, and by promoting the development of attitudes of tolerance, respect and openness, **we are preparing them to live in a pluralist and democratic society**.

- Ethics and Religious culture Program preamble

This set the stage for positive advancement in the curriculum, exploring the multi-cultural and religious diversity of the current population of Quebec schools. It opened up dialogue between students and fostered acceptance and tolerance then, now and for the future.

In 2012, the QFHSA watched with interest the tabling of a new piece of legislation, Bill 56 *An Act to prevent and deal with bullying and violence in schools*. Quebec was one of the last provinces to move on this issue and create a policy to address the problem of bullying behavior in elementary and high schools. The QFHSA wrote a brief on this Bill and offered constructive criticism to help clarify terms and modify the regulations and conditions. The resultant Legislation, *Loi 19 an Act to prevent and stop bullying and violence in schools*, was a welcomed piece of legislation which the QFHSA was glad to see passed into law.

As much of bullying behavior comes from a negative reaction to a perceived threat from "*the differences of the other*" and of the taking advantage of another person's vulnerability, a school policy on Anti-Bullying, reinforced by a strong Ethics and Religious Culture program, was perceived by us as a strong combination to help deter this growing problem. This was, indeed, the natural progression from a confessional school system to a linguistic system, in a pluralistic and democratic society that encouraged peaceful co-existence.

QFHSA Presentation 2014—For the Record Continued

It becomes a great concern to we, the parents, therefore, when we see much of this excellent progress accomplished by previous governments, being undermined and jeopardized by the elements present in Bill 60, which restrict the free expression of Religious affiliation in the civil service and more troublingly, in the sphere of the educators and administrative staff in our schools. To erase all evidence of religious identity is wrong. This is giving the wrong message to our children, and goes against the values we are working so hard to instill in them every day. In our schools we celebrate diversity, in the students and in the staff. We do not wish to eliminate it. It is a big world out there. We want our children to feel comfortable in it, not feel the need to white-wash it. To deny expression of religious affiliation is to limit the personal expression of the individual's identity.

Governments have no business dictating identity to their citizens. Identity is, and should always remain, a personal choice.

The premise of this law is a fallacy as it seems to assume that a teacher/administrator/civil servant wearing a religious symbol is incapable of being neutral. Where is the evidence for this supposition?

There is no research at all presented to back up the perceived threat addressed by Bill 60. It is restricting the rights of a small and vulnerable religious minority who were actively recruited to immigrate to a tolerant and undiscriminating Québec. Now the rules on the playing field are about to be changed.

It is opening the doors to bullying behavior, implicitly encouraging people to openly discriminate against religious and cultural minorities. We have seen evidence of it happening already. It is breaking a butterfly on a wheel.

Social Consequences- Health care/Applications for Social Assistance

Firstly, is the government willing to absorb the social consequences resultant from this legislation being passed into law? How will it affect the recruitment of medical professionals in light of the current shortage of general practitioners and nurses we are already experiencing?

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) estimates a need in Quebec for at least 700 more full time doctors to meet primary care and hospital services needs.

The *College medicin du Québec* estimates a need for 1000 additional doctors to meet the current needs of Quebecers.

QFHSA Presentation 2014—For the Record Continued

Of the 47 foreign trained doctors who applied for a license to practice last year, only half were granted permission. Foreign trained doctors who settle in Quebec already face systematic and unwarranted obstructions to get their license. Bill 60, with its ban on religious symbols, if implemented, will make it even more difficult to attract immigrant doctors and could introduce fresh discrimination against those who are already practicing here.

If even 60 foreign trained doctors, who already have their licenses, leave the province because they cannot continue to practice in Quebec, due to their religious identity, what will the government do about the additional shortage of doctors? They cannot all come from France.

Secondly, is the Government willing to financially support those families just getting by with the help of a daycare workers salary?

What are the financial costs to implement this legislation? Has the government itself any estimates of the number of teachers, doctors, nurses and others that would leave Quebec if the legislation would be passed as is? Our loss would enrich the coffers of other governments.

These will be the intended and un-intended costs of Bill 60.

School Success rates affected

We believe that Bill 60 could negatively affect high school retention and success rates in the Québec public school system. Some students could feel less inclined to finish school if they no longer see teachers that reflect their own culture or religious background in positions of authority. It is hurting the School Boards on the Island of Montreal, some who have the highest graduation rates in the province which could inevitably hurt all of Quebec.

Bill 60 could affect their interest in becoming educators in the public system themselves, if one cannot be both a committed member of a religious faith and be considered an impartial professional at the same time.

What incentive will there be for students of ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds, who may already be feeling marginalized by the dominant majority, to consider teaching careers, when they see no reflection of themselves in their current teachers. The subsequently reduced job opportunities because of these restrictions would be a further disincentive for students to pursue education as a career choice.

If you can be assured that mono-cultural/non-religious teaching staff can remain neutral and still be sensitive/ responsive to the needs of their culturally diverse students, why can you not be equally reassured that a teacher with a hijab cannot also be neutral and sensitive to a student of a different background than herself? What evidence can you produce that proves this wrong?

A professional is a professional is a professional. There is no connection between what they say and what they wear.

Quebec cannot ever truly realize itself in the 21st century as a fully mature nation, if we begin by treating our minorities with such disregard, discrimination, hostility and fear.

It is like breaking a butterfly on a wheel.

Parents Understand and Value English-Language School Boards in Quebec

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA) has been involved with the English public - school system of Quebec for 75 years. Home and Schools are grassroots, volunteer organizations that encourage and facilitate parental involvement in their schools and in their children's education.

QFHSA has observed many changes to the English school boards over the years, from the 70-80 English school boards before the creation of the Ministry of Education in 1967, reduced to 18 boards prior to the implementation of the linguistic system, and further reduced to the present 9 English school boards in 1998, covering the entire province of Quebec.

Over those years, our Home and School parents have been kept abreast of developments in education and have been active in many areas of concern: from school nutrition programs to peace education, from school bus safety to equitable competitive pay to teachers, from gun control to library support, and the list goes on. All these issues, in one way or another, impact our children. Our parent members have also been consistently concerned with, and interested in, school board governance and have adopted resolutions at their Annual General Meetings, over the years, offering recommendations on how to safeguard and improve them:

1964 Election of School Boards *objecting to taxation without representation and affirming the need of adult universal suffrage in all school board elections. (reaffirmed 1967)*

1976 Responsibility for Education: School Boards and Local autonomy *(reaffirmed in 1999, 2000 and 2003) strongly urging the Government of Quebec to maintain the responsibility for governance of education with linguistic school boards whose commissioners are democratically elected by universal suffrage and who are responsible solely for education.*

1977 Retention of English Schools *(reaffirmed 1998) requesting the Ministry of Education continue to respect the wishes and desires of the anglophone population, particularly in rural Quebec, by ensuring that all the English-speaking residents have access to English schools within a reasonable distance and the Government of Quebec provide sufficient funding to allow access to English schools within a reasonable distance.*

1981 Wider access to English Education *(reaffirmed in 1996, 2001, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2018) urging the Minister responsible for the Application of the Charter of the French Language, in conjunction with the Minister of Education, to recommend to the Government of Quebec that access to education in English be widened and to permit any child who has begun his/her education in English to continue his/her education in English.*

1994 Fair and Equitable school board electoral divisions *request the Minister of Education to amend Bill 106 to define an electoral process consistent with established democratic practices.*

1997 Rights of Citizens regarding the Electoral Lists for Linguistic School Boards *demanding the Minister make changes to the proposed law (Loi 109) to ensure that every potential voter whose name is on the permanent electoral list, and who wishes to vote, be required to register in the language board of their choice*

1997 The Territories of the New English Language Boards *urging the Minister of Education at the time to reconsider the map of English school boards so that the number of boards increase, and the size of the territory decrease, and that the Minister consider the wishes of parents, in any location, to be of prime importance in drawing boundary of any particular school board.*

1998 Increased costs for provisional councils which serve widely scattered, small, rural, isolated communities and Partnership and cooperation in the new linguistic system commitment to involve itself in promoting cooperation between various educational organizations existing in their school board communities so that the school system operates as efficiently as possible during the period of adaptation to the linguistic system implemented in 1998.

1999 Equity in distribution of resources requesting that the School Council of the Island of Montreal prepare a separate map to reflect the socio-economic background of English school students.

2005 Permanent Linguistic Voters List for School Board elections (reaffirmed 2006, 2014) urging the Minister of Education, Leisure and Sport to establish permanent linguistic voter lists, that such lists be based on the school board where dependent children attend or attended and that in cases where there are no dependent children in school, that eligible voters upon turning 18 years of age, who attended English schools, be deemed to have chosen to be registered on the list of electors of an English language school board where they are domiciled.

2016 School Board Governance: Bill 86 demanding that the Government of Quebec acknowledge its duty to support, defend and respect minority language educational rights, withdraw Bill 86 and formally enter in to a comprehensive consultation with the English linguistic minority community to identify and address our legitimate right to control and manage our institutions.

Our Home and School parents have been very aware of the role that school boards have played in the provision of equitable educational services to their children and they value the role their school board commissioners serve in addressing the individual needs of the schools in their electoral jurisdictions. Home and School parents played an important role in encouraging voter turnout in the 2014 school board elections, by hosting Meet the Candidate nights in their communities, as well as by encouraging their fellow parent members (and extended family members) to exercise their democratic right and go to the polls to vote. Home and Schools have worked in partnership with their school board representatives for 75 years and parental involvement in education has been one of the key factors in the success of the English school system in Quebec.

QFHSA will examine closely the proposed restructuring of the education system in Quebec, as tabled by Education Minister Jean-François Roberge sometime this year and remains committed to keeping our membership informed of the impact of this proposed legislation and to monitor the ramifications that “Service centers” may have on our children’s education. We wish to assure our members that parents and the community will have representation in the governance of these school service centers.

English-Speaking parents do indeed value their English education system and will work together with other educational organizations to support and protect them.



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info@qfhsa.org or the president of your local H & S association.



Canadian
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The Robb Nash Project SuperShow is coming to Montreal

For the last ten years, Robb Nash has been bringing his story of inspiration and hope to students all across Canada. Robb's passion to reach young people has not wavered and his determination to offer them hope has not changed.

In his teenage years, Robb himself endured enormous mental, emotional and physical trauma when the vehicle he was riding in collided with a semi-trailer on an icy rural Manitoba highway. Pronounced dead at the scene, he was resuscitated and for years had to deal with the mental and physical scars suffered in the accident. There were times of great depression when he didn't want to be alive. But as Robb was learning to deal with his trauma, he realized that he was not alone and that there were many other people struggling to do the same thing. That's when Robb realized that he wanted to take his second chance at life and make it count.

Robb started a band and used music as a platform to spread a message of hope and healing. After a successful music career; which included three top ten hits on Canadian hit radio with his band: Live On Arrival, Robb decided to give up his career in the musical mainstream and dedicate his life to reaching youth. Combining music and storytelling as his method, he created The Robb Nash Project. With a new band, Robb toured reserves, schools and youth detention centres helping others with his inspirational story. As the tour grew, so did the need for more shows.

Conventionally, the tour model was to reach 150 schools and approximately 50,000 kids in a given school year. Robb's vision changed in order to consolidate schools into one venue, reaching the same number of students and giving them an even richer, more meaningful experience. The new shows would be dubbed "SuperShows". This concert-like experience is brought to youth in a theatre setting and offers them a true opportunity to connect with Robb and his message. Now the Project performs about 50 SuperShows per year increasing their capacity to reach more kids. Within the concert, Robb will cover challenging subjects like; self-harm, addiction, cyberbullying and suicidal ideation; issues that youth are struggling with every day. Robb uses a special blend of music, storytelling, and humour to delve deep into these difficult topics while leaving them with a sense of hope and renewed purpose. Students find Robb and his bandmates to be very relatable and down-to-earth people. As a post-concert keepsake, students are given a full colour tour journal to help process the presentation and read through inspirational quotes and lyrics. Educators and counsellors also receive a guide with suggested use of the materials.



In the Fall of 2020 The Robb Nash Project will be coming to Montreal. This is a unique opportunity for students to be impacted in a very positive way and make a powerful breakthrough. If your school would like to attend one of the up-coming SuperShows at no cost to them, please contact Karen at info@robbnash.com.

Focus on



The locals

Baie-Comeau High School

BCHS Home and School Association concluded its annual fund-raising initiative on December 21st by drawing prizes for those who had participated in the chocolate sales. Just over \$1200 was raised; the money goes towards paying for the numerous special events at BCBS throughout the school year.

That same day, a scrumptious variety of desserts were supplied by the H&SA in order to help the Secondary IV-V students fundraise for their upcoming April 2019 school trip to London, England. The students managed to raise \$780 by organizing a spaghetti lunch.

As in years past, the H&SA organized a visit from Santa Claus. He distributed a hand-wrapped gift to every student.

BCBS benefits in so many ways by the volunteers who help organize and support these and other special activities.



St. Charles Elementary

“Together We Can Achieve”

St. Charles Home and School (H & S) hosted the ever popular Movie Night featuring Hotel Transylvania 3 Summer Vacation on December 7th. The students always enjoy this event - watching a movie with their friends in their py-jamas! A memorable moment of the evening was the spontaneous dancing of the macarena.

To begin the Christmas holidays and in keeping with St. Charles tradition, H & S hosted Breakfast with Santa on December 21st. This is a much anticipated event that all the children, staff and volunteer parents enjoy. The children have a wholesome breakfast with a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus with a sing-a-long at the end. This year the staff surprised the students with their own rendition of the song ‘Twelve Days of Christmas’ which was hilarious and had the whole crowd singing.

The second half of the school year began with another successful Open House where H & S showcased their fundraisers and events and the H & S Grad committee organized the Grad Bake Sale. As the school year moves into spring, St. Charles H & S will be busy helping staff with Carnival, organizing Staff and Daycare Appreciation Week, preparing for the second clothing drive and hosting another Movie Night.



Chelsea Elementary School

Ready. Set. Blast Off! Chelsea Elementary celebrated staff with a fun 2019 theme... "Thanks for launching our learning!" Staff were treated like royalty for the week with dozens of appreciation notes displayed on our space-themed bulletin board, a surprise staff room make-over that drew lots of attention and gratitude, daily draws for gift cards and thoughtful creations, as well as small gifts of supplies in the shape of a personalized rocket. To cap it off, a potluck luncheon recognized all the staff who make Chelsea such a dynamic learning community. This event is a highlight every year with Chelsea Home and School Association!



Grenville Elementary School—Winter Carnival

The Home and School of Grenville Elementary School played an integral role in the success of a changed format for the annual winter carnival. The staff chose to organize an array of outdoor activities to take place in our expansive, welcoming playground.



Following a ride through town on a horse-drawn wagon, the entire student body participated in an hour of skating at the local rink (a skate-a-thon sponsored by the H&S brought in 1625 \$). By lunchtime, all students and staff were ready for a hot meal, again provided by Home and School volunteers.

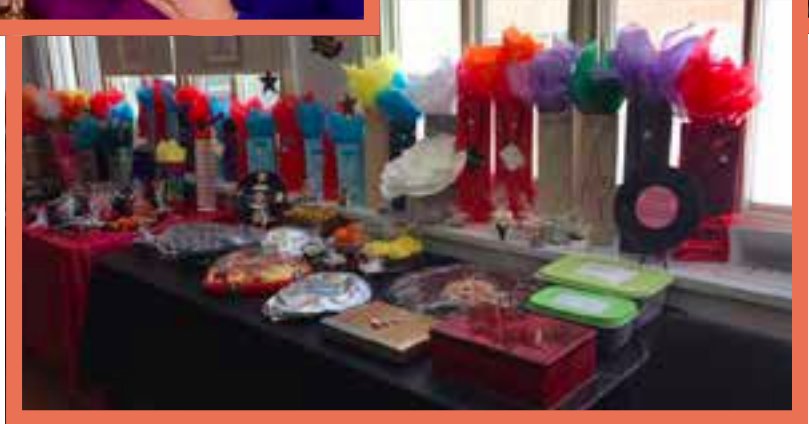
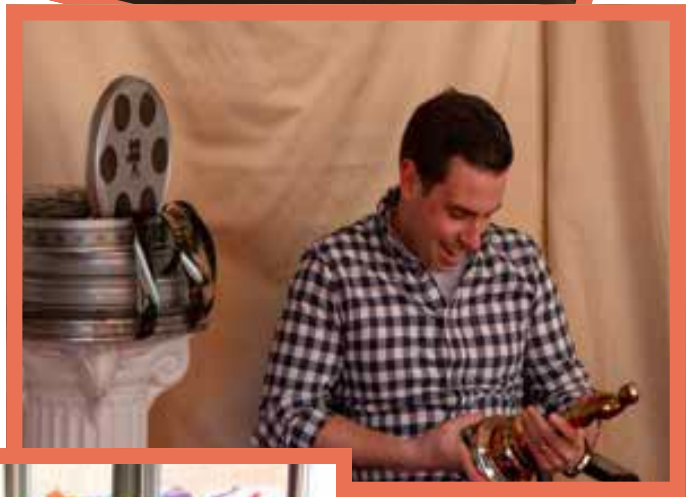


The teachers from GES planned a series of winter activities - snow-shoeing, a match of dodgeball in the snow, Kin-Ball in the snow and a snowball target practice. By mid-afternoon, a cup of hot chocolate became a warm intermission before returning outside to complete a full-day program of winter fun. Working with the staff and depending on Mother Nature's abundant gift of snow, resulted in a cooperative experience that offered winter enjoyment for all involved.



“Hollywood Theme” Teacher-Staff Appreciation Week—Beaconsfield High

The staff and teachers at Beaconsfield High School were treated to a week of appreciation and “star treatment” for all they do for the students. There were lunchtime treats including an Academy Award photo booth (including a real Oscar!) daily thank you treats in mailboxes and a BIG lunch on Thursday including door prizes! We couldn’t have done it without the generosity of the students, parents and guardians who helped out by contributing time, food, money and prizes to make this a wonderful week for all. The BHS Home and School thoroughly enjoyed spoiling their teachers and staff!



Souvenir Elementary

Souvenir Elementary school has an elf. A very special busy elf that prepares special magic bags of shiny sparkly dust for the young students. What kind of magic dust you might ask? Magic Unicorn Dust of course! With the help of another local elf, our principal Mr. Ruggi, little bags of magic dust are distributed to each K, grade 1 and grade 2 homeroom classes. Our very generous elf and her helpers, prepared a letter from Santa Claus as well as a bag of dust for each student. This very special letter and package brings joy and fun to the classroom – students and teachers alike.

The letter is addressed personally to each student, since Santa knows everyone's name, and it starts with letting the students know that they made it on the nice list and are receiving this special letter. Santa thanks them for having love and light in their hearts, we all know how hard that can sometimes be as....."Kindness to others, sharing, and hard work" are the things Santa looks for. Now children might wonder how the reindeers fly, so Santa let us all in on a secret that I am now sharing with you. Unicorns migrate to the North Pole and as they frolic in the forest the magic dust from their horns cover the North Pole. Santa has kindly shared the magic dust with the students of Souvenir. That's when our special elf gets to work. She not only prints and addresses the letter for each student, she packs the colourful magic dust, and ties it up all up in a special bow. Each letter is lovingly rolled up, packaged together with each bag and carefully delivered to each homeroom.

Each student is instructed to sprinkle the dust outside their house so when Santa sees the sparkly house he knows where to stop first. I am sure anyone flying over Laval this Christmas was able to see magic-dust runways throughout the neighbourhood. Although Santa spares some magic dust for us, the reindeers have enough for him to help them fly on Christmas Eve.

It's been the third year now that Souvenir Elementary has had the privilege of receiving these special letters and they are loved by all. The teachers' eyes sparkle when they talk about how their young students react. Parents call the school to ask if the students will be receiving the magical dust again. It's a magical special moment that the students all share together. Every year more grades are added, since the children who received the letters in Kindergarten look forward to them the next year. I have to admit, my husband and I sometimes argue about Santa - I believe and he doesn't. We explain to our young son he has to figure it out for himself, especially this year when he has been really questioning it. But - he has his special letters stored away in his memory box and although he has his doubts, on this Christmas Eve, at midnight, when we sprinkled our magic dust and made a runway for Santa on our driveway my son absolutely believed. To tell you the truth, I think his father did too.

To see more work from Souvenir's special elf checkout her website

austinmacauley.com/author/merkourisdimitra

Lindsay Place High School H&S



THANK YOU TCBY

As many of you know, Home & School fundraising at the high school level can be very challenging. However, we are happy to share that TCBY has consistently been our strongest fundraiser. This is thanks in large part to Lenny, Alana, and the amazing team at TCBY! They have always given us the flexibility to order smaller quantities of different flavours and pick up at their store to save on shipping. This allows us to test out different options and identify best sellers (so far the top three are Vanilla/Chocolate Swirl, Vanilla Cake Batter, and Cotton Candy). We also recently set up a sample station for the latest flavour on our list – banana – and it was a huge hit! If we can help any of you fellow members with additional tips and/or sign templates, etc. please feel free to contact us at lphshomeandschool@gmail.com.



Our Amazing Alumni

We are lucky to count alumni H & S members among our group of supporters, including the wonderful Barbara Schneider. Barbara has been an active Home & School member since 2001. Her roles over the years have included Vice President, Membership Chair, and Recording Secretary. She also served as a member of the QFHSA Board of Directors. Barbara continues to be a valuable member of our Home and School and Governing Board, passing on her expertise to new members as they join and providing guidance to newly elected executives. We are very grateful for our alumni!



WHERE IS MY SCHOOL?

Disappointed that your school is not in the Focus on the Locals section? Please talk to your Home and School members and submit the

wonderful things your association is doing to news@qfhsa.org for our next issue in June 2019.



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