

VOLUME 60 ISSUE 4

WINTER 2022

QFHSA NEWS

THE NEWSMAGAZINE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL MEMBERS

A New Year Begins
And the Winter Fun Has Begun!

Building Strong Working Relationships
In Your School Community, p. 3

Welcoming our Pre-Ks and Ks:
How Home & Schools Can Get Involved, p. 8

Creativity in the Schoolyard:
Inspiring Home & School Projects, p. 12



The Quebec
Federation of
Home and School
Associations

In this Issue

Fostering Great Working Relationships	3
President's Message	6
Dates to Remember	6
Executive Director's Message	7
Thank You to our Vendors (Fall Conference)	7
Welcome to Kindergarten	8
Family Workshops Coming Soon	9
The QFHSA's Major Awards	9
Spotlight on the Board of Directors	10
Join the QFHSA Board of Directors	10
The Rights Subcommittee: Priorities for 2022-23	11
Home and School Resolutions	11
Reinventing the Schoolyard	12
How Will the Court Challenges Program Help Safeguard Anglophone Rights in Quebec? <i>A Commentary By Brian Rock</i>	15
The QFHSA at the QPAT Convention	16
What We Choose to Remember	17
Literacy News	19
Membership Services—The Latest News	20
Welcome to New Home & School Associations	20
Focus on the Locals	21

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.

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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.

Fostering Great Working Relationships in Your School Community

MANY PEOPLE make up a school community. There are students and teachers, of course, and support staff as well as the school administration led by the principal. Then there are the people on the school's governing board, in the local Home and School Association, and at the school board.

Schools thrive through the contribution and collaboration of all. But what does this collaboration look like and how is it achieved? And what role does the local Home and School Association play in relation to all these players? These were the questions QFHSA Board President Rosemary Murphy explored in her December 1st workshop. This was the first of several events the QFHSA plans to have in 2022/23 to replace the day-long Fall Conference originally scheduled in November.



Photo from Adobe Stock

For her presentation, Rosemary drew upon her years of experience advocating for education in Quebec, whether as a parent commissioner with the Lester B. Pearson School Board, as an executive director and board member at the Quebec English School Boards Association, or as a volunteer with the Home and School movement.

Rosemary believes strong school relationships are built through an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the main players: **the school board, the principal, the governing board, and the local Home and School Association**. What follows is the handy primer Rosemary created to explain each group's/person's role, using information from the Quebec Education Act and other sources. (Education is a provincial responsibility.)

About School Boards

Each English public school is part of a network of schools in one of the province's nine English **school boards**. A school board:

- Is a legal person established in the public interest.
- Is administered by a Council of Commissioners.
- Organizes the educational services provided by the government.
- Develops policies.
- Consults with its community.
- Reports to the provincial government.

About Governing Boards

Every school is overseen by a **governing board** composed of parents, school staff, students (for secondary schools), and members of the wider community. A governing board:

- Is a decision-making body that assists in defining policy guidelines and operating procedures to meet the educational needs of all students.
- Approves or adopts the following for its school: the success plan; the educational project; the subject time allocation; the approach for implementing the basic school regulations; the enrichment or adaptation of programs; the rules of conduct and safety; the school fees; the use of the premises; field trips; the approach for implementing student and special education services; the school budget; and the governing board's operating budget.
- Analyzes the school's situation and needs.
- Informs parents and the community of the services provided.
- May organize other educational services.
- May solicit funds.
- Is consulted by the school board and principal.
- Consults with its community.
- Reports to the community and the school board.

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Fostering Great Working Relationships

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About School Principals

Appointed by the school board, the **school principal**:

- Is the school's academic and administrative director.
- Is responsible for the management of staff and the school.
- Works with staff to provide educational services to ensure that all government rules and regulations and all board policies are followed.
- Assists the governing board in its functions and powers, but does not have voting rights on the governing board.
- Encourages the participation of staff, parents, and students in the life of the school and their collaboration in fostering student success.
- May join Home and School meetings but does not have to be a member of the local association.

About Local Home and School Associations

The **local Home and School Association** is entirely volunteer run. Although most volunteers come from the school's parent community, parent alumni, grandparents, and others who share an interest in supporting student success and the school community may also be Home and School members. The local Home and School Association:

- Is obliged to have a constitution and by-laws and a volunteer code of conduct.
- Is obliged to have a president, treasurer, and a secretary/membership chairperson. *Rosemary notes that three to five parents at minimum are needed to establish a new local association.*
- Has its own bank account.
- Provides its members with clear financial statements and minutes at every meeting.
- Must submit a year-end report to the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA) annually.
- Determines programs, projects, and activities (both educational and financial) within the school in collaboration with the principal and staff.
- Ensures that the principal has all the information needed to present programs, projects, and activities to the governing board.
- Votes on funding and allocation of support for governing board-approved programs, projects, and activities.

As the descriptions show, the local Home and School does not work in isolation. It is part of an important network that includes the governing board and principal, and effective communication within this network is vital. What can Home and School volunteers do to promote good communication? Rosemary shared her insights and workshop participants made important suggestions, too. A summary of the major points discussed is provided below.

Keep Everyone in the Loop About Home and School's Plans

Any Home and School activity organized **must be approved by the governing board in advance**. This includes activities occurring during and outside of school hours. How does this approval process happen? It starts with a meeting with the principal. At the meeting, Home and School shares the plan for an activity or fundraiser, providing as much information as possible. The principal then presents the proposal to the governing board for approval.

Given the principal's role as intermediary between Home and School and the governing board, it is important for local associations to strive for open and clear lines of communication with their principals.

A good practice is for Home and School to schedule a meeting with the principal early on in the school year to discuss the year's plans. The goal is to map out the schedule of Home and School activities for the entire year in advance. The principal is then able to share the proposed schedule with the governing board with the understanding, of course, that things may have to be adjusted as time goes on. This advanced planning sets the stage for a smooth-running year, reducing the number of last-minute requests or surprises.

Tips for Home and School Meetings:

- Make sure that the principal or another school delegate sits in on your meetings. This is a good way to ensure the lines of communication are open. It is also helpful to have a member of the school staff on hand to answer some of the questions that come up in the meeting.



Photo from Adobe Stock

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Fostering Great Working Relationships

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- Share the meeting agenda with your principal/school delegate in advance. This gives the person time to prepare for the issues that will be discussed.
- At each meeting, provide clear financial statements to your members.
- Create minutes for each meeting.

Fundraising Tips:

- When planning fundraising activities, it is a good idea to iron out in advance how you plan to use the money. Keep in mind that you want to support projects that benefit the school and promote student success.
- Good money earners are often the fundraisers that provide welcome services for parents.
- It may be possible for the school board to pay for some or part of a capital project you are contemplating. Before you take on a new project (like replacing school water fountains, painting lines in the schoolyard), ask your governing board if the school board can cover some or all of the cost.
- Home and Schools can organize directed fundraising for a long-term goal (a new schoolyard play structure, for example). Again, for these large projects, be sure to explore other funding sources (your school board, municipality/borough, your local MNA). *Read how two Home and Schools are tackling their schoolyard embellishment projects in the article on page 12 of this issue.*
- Create an allocations committee that will decide how funds will be used. While the school's administration, staff, and governing board can certainly make suggestions on how Home and School funds could be used, the final decision rests with the voting parents at the allocations meeting.
- That said, keep those wish lists from the governing board, principal, and school staff in mind. See if you are able to raise funds for these requests, but also remember that your allocations committee may



have already earmarked the funds for something else. It is worth remembering, too, that governing boards have the power to solicit funds themselves.

Other Tips:

- Find a way to let your parents know all that Home and School does for your school community. Some suggestions: Share your news on social media, via the principal's e-bulletin to parents, or distribute your own newsletter to parents.
- Provide a monthly report to the governing board. This keeps everyone in the loop about your activities (and your financial picture). It also ensures that there are realistic expectations about what monies can be raised and spent that year.

This workshop sparked a lot of good discussions. Attendees asked questions and the helpful suggestions and advice from the group flowed freely. We learned, for example, about the challenges some Home and Schools are having getting the volunteers they need. It is a problem aggravated by the time required for police checks.

Rosemary also took a few moments in her workshop to share the history and mission of the Canadian Home and School Federation (CHSF). It is hard to believe that the CHSF was created more than 125 years ago. Established in Nova Scotia in 1895, the CHSF's first Quebec meeting took place in 1919 at Macdonald College High School in Ste. Anne de Bellevue.

Home and Schools have a very long history of supporting schools, students, and families. Working in collaboration with their principals and governing boards, Home and School volunteers have an important role to play in their school communities. As Rosemary reminded us, in the end, we are partners working towards a common goal: to enhance our children's education and enrich their lives.

Karen Henchey,
Communications Officer



Photos from Adobe Stock

Keeping Pace with the Politics

A Message from the QFHSA's President



WELCOME TO 2023. Part of the QFHSA'S mandate is to keep our members informed of legislation that affects education in any way. With that in mind, I would like to highlight the following: In 2022, several bills were passed into law by our provincial government that do indeed have repercussions for Quebec education. Laws 21, 40, and 96 were seen as ways to take away one's choice of religion; to remove the right to manage one's schools and to elect one's commissioners; and to protect one language by curbing the rights of another.



Image from Adobe Stock

Though many rallied, wrote letters to their local MNA, held town hall meetings, screamed and yelled, the laws were proclaimed. If you would like to learn more about Law 96, I invite you to watch the Town Hall organized by the Task Force on Linguistic Policy. Visit YouTube and in the search bar, type "The Truth about Bill 96." You can also use this link: <https://bit.ly/3Wyg7Rj>.

Now in 2023, another bill is close to passing into law. The federal government's C-13 Bill proposes to amend the Official Languages Act of 1969 whose purpose was to ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada. It was revised in 1988 to specify that

English and French were the country's two official languages. Bill C-13 proposes to recognize French as a minority language in Canada, to specifically and exclusively recognize Quebec's Charter of the French Language (Law 96), and to promote and protect the French language in Canada and Quebec. If you wish to understand Bill C-13 and its implications, I recommend watching the Quebec Community Groups Network's webinar on the topic. To access the presentation, visit YouTube and in the search bar, type "QCGN Understanding Bill C-13." You can also use this link: <https://youtu.be/xJe9287QmcA>.

A number of organizations, including the QFHSA, believe Bill C-13 will adversely impact the English-speaking community of Quebec. Briefs that describe the bill's repercussions and make recommendations to amend it have been sent to both the House of Commons and the Senate Standing Committee, which has been studying the bill since November. This review process will continue in January and possibly into February. For your information, the QFHSA has sent a brief to the Standing Committee. We will keep you informed of any and all developments.

The QFHSA's Rights Subcommittee has made Bill C-13 a priority along with Laws 21, 40, and 96. If you would like more information or would like to join in the discussion at the QFHSA's Rights Subcommittee, please contact us.

Take care and stay safe.

Rosemary Murphy

Dates to Remember

Wednesday, January 18	QFHSA Education Subcommittee Meeting
Saturday, January 21	QFHSA Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, January 27	Family Literacy Day
February 5 to 11	Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week
Saturday, February 18	QFHSA Board of Directors Meeting
Saturday, March 18	QFHSA Board of Directors Meeting
February and March	QFHSA Family Winter Workshops

Looking Back on 2022 and Ahead to New Opportunities in 2023

A Message from the Executive Director



IN MANY WAYS, 2022 has been a successful year. Many Home and School Associations got back into the swing of things as access to their schools opened. Probably our Home and Schools would have loved to have done much more but found it difficult to find enough parents willing to volunteer their time to assist at Home and School activities. (Happy to have their child participate in them, but not so willing to sacrifice the time themselves.) This was a great disappointment and frustration to many Home and School coordinators, I know. However, I believe that all kinds of organizations around the province are finding themselves in the same situation. This is part of COVID's legacy. Not enough people available to do the work.

So many people have gotten "out of the habit" of being "out and about" and helping "here and there." Even though restrictions have loosened,

people are again hearing warnings about social gatherings and recommendations to wear masks. A significant percentage of our students were out of school this past fall with COVID, the flu, and/or RSV (respiratory syncytial virus). It is not surprising if parents wished to stay home and minimize their risk of spreading these viruses to other family members.

The QFHSA was not unaffected by this situation either. Our beloved in-person Fall Conference, an event that we had been obliged to hold online for the past few years, had to be cancelled. It was the first time in decades that the event was not held. The fact of the matter was we simply did not receive enough registrations to hold a viable event. Ironically, in past years when we planned the in-person Fall Conference, we often started to panic 2 weeks before the event when we did not see many reg-

istrations coming in. Then, just as we were beginning to consider cancelling, a week before the event registrations would come in and all would be well. Same thing every year...

Except this year.

Preliminary feedback has been that parents no longer have the time to dedicate 8 hours on a Saturday to one event. But the QFHSA is not ready to throw in the towel yet! The conference committee is planning to hold several free workshops in the coming months. The workshops will likely be a combination of in-person and Zoom offerings as the QFHSA still believes in the benefit of face-to-face events.

Here's looking to 2023 and all the opportunities it will offer us. Let's make the most of them!

Carol Meindl

Thank You

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations would like to thank the following companies and individuals that booked information booths at our November 12th Fall Conference event. Thank you for your support of our non-profit organization's activities. We look forward to welcoming you to a future QFHSA event.

Canadian Parents for French CPF Quebec & Nunavut
<https://qc-nu.cpf.ca>

Everblast Play Company
www.everblastplay.com

Félix & Norton Cookies
www.felixandnorton.com/pages/fundraising

Online Empowerment
www.OnlineEmpowerment.ca

Plantables
www.plantables.ca

Services Prestige: Distributeur Chocolat Lamontagne et Meilleur au Monde
www.Lamontagne.ca www.WorldsFinest.ca

Super Recycleurs
www.superrecycleurs.com

The Quebec Association of Geography Teachers and Global Educators
<https://geographyteachersofquebec.weebly.com/>

Top Tutorat
<https://toptutorat.com/>

News for You



WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN

WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN is a program that brings families, schools, and communities together to support a successful transition to school for our children. The program encourages early learning through play-based activities and recognizes the importance of parental engagement for student success.



A school with a 4-year-old kindergarten provides yet another set of parents to bring aboard.



The program is based on research in early learning and family engagement, grounded in inquiry and experiential play-based learning, and introduces/incorporates the six global competencies. It provides schools with ideas and resources to warmly welcome families into the education system. It encourages families to engage with their children. It offers families information about resources available in their communities to help parents support their children's development.

Welcome to Kindergarten is currently offered in many English schools in Quebec with 4-year-old and 5-year-old kindergarten programs, mostly in the English Montreal, Eastern Shores, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier school boards. Many of the schools involved have a Home and School Association. Although the program is fully funded by the schools, Home and Schools can still be involved in some way.

Home and Schools recognize that the time to attract parents to the activities of their association is when the kids are in kindergarten. Kindergarten parents are often very eager to get involved and to know what is going on in the

Recognizing this opportunity that Welcome to Kindergarten brings to recruit new members, some of our Home and Schools have found ways to assist and support the program in their school. They are providing books and cookies for the students when they first arrive and their parents are receiving an orientation to the school. Other Home and Schools are providing play dough for the Welcome to Kindergarten kit.

Talk to your principal and see if there is a role your association can play in welcoming these parents of young children. Maybe there is a small gift you can provide to the children with your Home and School's name on it for future reference. Parents of young children benefit from the sense of community that comes with being part of a Home and School. Supporting your Welcome to Kindergarten program is another way Home and School can support literacy and enhance the education experience of children.



Carol Meindl,
Executive Director

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The QFHSA's Awards Program:

Celebrating Exceptional Educators, Initiatives, and Volunteers

THE QFHSA'S MAJOR AWARDS PROGRAM recognizes the important contributions of students, educators, and parents to Quebec education. Local Home and School Associations are invited to submit nominations for five major awards. More information about the awards is available on our website www.qfhsa.org. From our Home Page, select "Events" on the left menu, then select "Awards."

You will also find nomination forms for each award on the website. The deadline for submissions is April 30th.

Pat Lewis Environmental Award

This award honours elementary or high-school level students for their outstanding efforts towards an environmental cause.

Pat Lewis Humanitarian Award

This award honours elementary or high-school level students for their outstanding efforts towards a humanitarian cause.

Gordon Paterson Award

This award recognizes an outstanding educator who has given long service to Quebec education and has encouraged the participation of parents.

Lewis Peace Prize

This award recognizes an individual or group who contributes to a safe and peaceful school or community.

Home & School Volunteer of the Year Award

This award is given to a long-time Home and School volunteer who has made a significant positive impact on Home & School and school life.



Tayba Huot receiving her 2022 Volunteer of the Year award from QFHSA board members Bobbi Brown (left) and Rosemary Murphy (right)

News for You

Spotlight on the QFHSA Board of Directors: *Chris Schaler*



Chris Schaler was elected to the QFHSA board of directors on June 3rd, 2021. A Gatineau resident, Chris has been a dedicated volunteer in the region's educational institutions for many years.

Chris's long volunteer career began when he became a parent volunteer at Pierre Elliot Trudeau Elementary School (PETES). Need a Santa Claus, a dad to help out at an event? Chris was always ready to lend a hand. From 2009 until 2013, he was a member of the school's governing board, and has served as the governing board's chair.

In 2014, he was elected as a parent commissioner in the Western Québec School Board. It is a position he held for 7 years.

In 2018, Chris also lent his time and talents to the Heritage College Foundation, a registered charity that support the Outaouais region's only English CEGEP. From June 2018 until March 2022, he was a member of the foundation's board of directors. During his tenure on the board, he served as board chair and treasurer.

A parent, a volunteer, a seasoned board member, and a former school board commissioner—Chris Schaler brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the QFHSA's board of directors.

A belated welcome to one of our pandemic-elected board members!



Celebrating the holidays at PETES



Cooking burgers at a school event



Celebrating the news that PETES will receive an \$18 million investment in the growth of the school (The Lab-École Project) In the photo: Chris, local elected officials, the school board director general and chair, and the PETES school community



Recognizing the Heritage College Foundation/Centraide partnership to support students and families in need

Join the QFHSA Board of Directors

Help us make an impact in the lives of Quebec children and youth! The QFHSA is actively seeking interested persons to volunteer to serve on our Board of Directors.

Directors are involved in all aspects of the organization, from keeping up to date on issues concerning education and rights, to exploring new projects, to promoting literacy, to offering best practice advice to local Home and School Associations. Directors sit at community tables and bring the perspective of the parent to the attention of education stakeholders and decision makers. Directors also help draft resolutions and briefs to the federal and/or provincial governments. Directors assist in the development of new projects for Home and School students and parents. There is plenty to do and the job can be a wonderful and rewarding learning experience.

The QFHSA Board of Directors meets on average eight times a year to discuss Home and School policy and plan our organization's events. If you or someone you know is interested in joining our team, a great first step would be to sit in on a board meeting as an observer to see what it is all about. For more information, please call the QFHSA office at 514-481-5619 or email info@qfhsa.org.

News from QFHSA Committees

The QFHSA Rights Subcommittee: Priorities for 2022-2023

THE MANDATE of the QFHSA Rights Subcommittee is to address topics concerning individual rights and freedoms within the Quebec education system and to provide suggestions to the QFHSA Board of Directors where deemed necessary and/or valuable.

The QFHSA Rights Subcommittee, chaired by Natasha Drysdale and vice-chaired by Brian Rock, has held its first official meeting of the 2022-2023 school year. At the meeting, the subcommittee confirmed the year's priorities, which are as follows:

Recurring/Ongoing Priorities:

- School boards and *Law 40: An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance*
- Systemic Racism and *Law 21: An Act respecting the laicity of the State*
- The new Culture and Citizenship in Québec Course, which is currently being piloted in schools (The course replaces the Ethics and Religious Culture Course.)
To see the draft version of the new course, visit the Ministry of Education's website <http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/>. In the search bar, type "Draft Programs" and scroll down and click on "Culture and Citizenship in Québec Program." You can also use this link: <https://bit.ly/3h1y3cR>.
- English CEGEPs and *Law 96: An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*

New Priorities:

- Minority language communities and *Bill C-13: An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to*

other Acts

- Bilingual representation and *Law 9: An Act respecting the National Student Ombudsman*
- Use of the Notwithstanding Clause

The subcommittee has already written a brief on Bill C-13, which was submitted to the federal government by the QFHSA.

The subcommittee's primary focus will be on Bill C-13 and the new Culture and Citizenship in Québec Course pending developments regarding Laws 40, 21, 96, and 9. We will also be looking into the specifics of the Notwithstanding Clause given its recent excessive use in legislation to circumvent Charter rights.

The Rights Subcommittee is open to the public and welcomes fresh voices. We typically meet monthly on a weeknight at 7 p.m. via Zoom. If these topics interest you and you would like to join the conversation, please email info@qfhsa.org.

Natasha Drysdale, *Rights Subcommittee Chair*



Home and School Resolutions

Are there issues that affect all Home and Schools that your members believe should be addressed at the provincial level? Your ideas and input are very much welcomed. Talk to your Home and School members and find out what is on their minds. These discussions may lead your Home and School to draft a resolution to bring to the QFHSA Annual General Meeting in 2023.

The deadline for first drafts of resolutions to be considered is **April 7th**. The QFHSA will be happy to provide tips on writing a resolution. Please send your draft resolutions to the QFHSA Resolutions Subcommittee by email to info@qfhsa.org.

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News for You

Reinventing the Schoolyard: *A Space for Play, Learning, and Community*



Photo from Adobe Stock

LIVING THROUGH THE COVID pandemic changed us. It made us reflect on the way we live, work, study, and play. We saw that safety could be found in open, outdoor spaces rather than in crowded indoor spaces. We renewed our appreciation of the natural world around us. How timely, then, that local Home and Schools have taken the initiative to make their schoolyards much more than a place to run and play at recess (although that is an important part of the school day too!).

Here's the story of the schoolyard embellishment projects at two local Home and School Associations, Dorval Elementary, located in Montreal's West Island, and South Hull Elementary, located in the Outaouais.

Deciding on a Project

Dorval's Story

At Dorval Elementary, the schoolyard improvement project was first discussed about two years ago, in the midst of the pandemic. Co-President Melanie Ball recalls that at the time, Home and School approached the then-principal for ideas for spending some of the healthy balance of funds it had at the time. (Melanie shares the president duties at Dorval with Kendra McFadden. In the wonderful way volunteers do, Melanie and Kendra have developed a great partnership, each taking the lead on different aspects of the job.) After canvassing the school's teacher population, the

principal came back with the following wish list in order of priority:

- Create comfortable and attractive learning areas in the schoolyard. At the time, the school had an outdoor classroom made of a semicircle of rocks, but there was no shade. Two items were on the wish list: Create shade for the existing classroom and create a second learning area on the senior side.
- Inside the building, refurbish and update the school stage.
- Outside again, create a modular playground structure for the Cycle 1 students.

Dorval Home and School set its sights on the top item on the list.

South Hull's Story

Like Dorval, it was the principal of South Hull Elementary who proposed the schoolyard improvement project. Thinking back to how it all began, Chloé O'Shaughnessy, president of South Hull Home and School, explains: "Some renovations in recent years, including the addition of a bus lane, had left the yard in need of an upgrade. As parents, we completely agreed that an upgrade/face lift of the school yard was necessary! We were happy to do our part to help out."

South Hull's plan for the schoolyard is to create spaces for fun play and education. The goals are as follows:

- Create an outdoor classroom.
- Update much of the existing play infrastructure.

Getting Started

Dorval's Story

As an important first step, Dorval Home and School created a sub-committee dedicated to the project. Home and School invited all parents in the school community to join the committee. Also on the team were teachers and the school's new principal. After much brainstorming, the team came up with the following plan:

- For the outdoor learning area on the senior side: Purchase three sturdy metal picnic tables with parasols.
- For the existing outdoor classroom: Create much-needed shade by purchasing large shade sails like the ones seen in Dorval's parks. The beauty of this type of product is that it is supplied by an established company that carries insurance. The company assumes responsibility for installing, maintaining, and also storing the sails during the winter months.

Continued on the next page

News for You

Reinventing the Schoolyard

Continued from the previous page

South Hull's Story

South Hull Home and School also created a committee. Chloé describes the important role committee members are playing in this project: "From organizing fundraising events, to filling our forms, to working with the principal to find appropriate ideas for the yard, this would not be possible without the hard work of our incredible parent and teacher volunteers."

Funding the Project

Dorval's Story

Dorval Home and School was able to pay for the senior learning area with the funds it had on hand.

The shade sails are another story. After some research, the committee realized that the purchase would cost much more than anticipated.

But then something wonderful happened. The committee had the idea to approach the City of Dorval to inquire about possible funding. Not only did the city agree to support the project, but it offered to pay most of the cost of the shade sails!

Melanie describes the impact of Dorval's contribution: "It's great. It is amazing. If you don't ask, then you don't know." It is a win-win situation for all: the school will have a great outdoor space for learning and during the summer months, members of the larger Dorval community could make use of the space.

Dorval Home and School also received a sizable donation from an

individual, and the donation was matched by the donor's employer.

To Melanie, the great thing about receiving the funding windfall is that Home and School can now focus its attention on other items on the priority list.

More Information about Dorval's External Funding Process

The Lester B. Pearson School Board is acting as the intermediary for the City of Dorval's gift. For legal purposes, the city's funding cheque must be made out to the school board, which then directs the funding to the school.

Dorval Home and School's private donor and his employer were able to receive tax receipts for their donations with the assistance of the QFHSA. Being a registered charity, the QFHSA partnered with Dorval Home and School and was able to set up a Dorval fund. The donations were made to the QFHSA and the funds were passed on to the local association.

South Hull's Story

South Hull Home and School has secured tripartite funding for its schoolyard project. How does tripartite funding work? The Home and School raises funds for the project and this amount is matched by both the local school board and the provincial government.

It is an option that the team learned about from Brian Rock. A former QFHSA board member, Brian is also a longtime South Hull volunteer. Brian's participation on this committee, writes Chloé, "has been vital in help-

ing us navigate the programs available to aid in the amassing of funds." In addition, a local city councillor made an important donation to the project. South Hull Home and School also solicited contributions from the school's parent community and the response was impressive.

Thinking back on the funding process, Chloé says proudly, "Grant applications and parent donations went a long way!"

Work Progress

Dorval's Story

Dorval's new senior learning area was available for use in Fall 2022.



A class in progress at Dorval's learning area on the senior side of the schoolyard

With funding now secured for the shade sails, Melanie expects them to be installed before students return to class in Fall 2023.



Shade sails (sample)

Continued on the next page

News for You

Reinventing the Schoolyard

Continued from the previous page

South Hull's Story

The COVID pandemic has not been kind to South Hull's project. Chloé explains: "We were ready to roll, and then COVID struck and we had to temporarily suspend the project. There was also an election that resulted in the local city council person being replaced, and so there was some doubt about promised funding for a while."

With the pandemic's construction boom, contractors are in great demand. This has made it challenging for South Hull to attract bidders for their project. The committee is hopeful that the schoolyard embellishment project will get underway shortly after the school closes for the summer break.

Thinking of Taking on a Similar Project?

Here are five tips from Dorval and South Hull:



Understand that these projects take time.

Melanie explains: "Companies and suppliers don't work at the same speed. Timelines need to be considered. If you are getting funding from somewhere, that takes time for approval." Chloé shares the following advice: "Pack your patience! These projects are big and costly, and you will likely hit some unexpected challenges along the way. It will be worth it but do not expect it to happen overnight!"



Form a committee for the project.

Both Dorval and South Hull had great success with their committees. Melanie advises putting together a strong team that includes the principal, teachers, and representation from the school community.



Work on your budget early.

You may be surprised by the cost of things!



Have a wish list and prioritize the items.

Dorval Home and School found it very helpful to receive that priority list from the principal. Melanie cautions that you can't get all of the items on the list done right away, but she advises to "do them in order of priority that will most benefit the school and the community."



Look for friends and family in the community that can help by donating items or services or providing them at a reduced cost.



Look for friends and family in the community that can help by donating items or services or providing them at a reduced cost.

Chloé from South Hull has this advice: "Reach out to all parents. Because we are a government town, we have some parents who are well versed in applying for government grants and these are not necessarily your regular volunteers. Be vocal about the help you are looking for and you will likely find it."

Dorval Home and School was able to save on the cost of the senior learning area project thanks to one of the school's parents.

And one final tip: Remember that you are doing good and important work for your school community.



All of those hours spent on the project will have a lasting impact. Chloé explains: "We know as an Association that our work is positive on current students, but it is such an amazing feeling to know that we will have an impact on a legacy project that will exist long after our children have left the school and we have moved on."

A huge thank you to Melanie Ball of Dorval and Chloé O'Shaughnessy of South Hull for sharing valuable information and insights about their Home and Schools' schoolyard improvement projects. We can learn so much from one another, and Melanie and Chloé are excellent teachers!

Karen Henchey,
Communications Officer



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How Will the Court Challenges Program Help Safeguard Anglophone Rights in Quebec?

A Commentary By Brian Rock

THE OBJECTIVE of the Court Challenges Program of Canada (C.P.C.) is to provide individuals and groups in Canada with financial support to access the courts for the litigation of test cases of national significance. The CPC is also used to clarify and assert certain constitutional and quasi constitutional official language rights and human rights in Canada.

The Government of Canada has allocated an annual investment of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) for the Court Challenges Program. Each year, a minimum of \$1,500,000 from that fund is dedicated to the clarification of official language rights.

Two independent expert panels, an Official Language Rights Expert Panel and a Human Rights Expert Panel, are responsible for rendering decisions regarding the Court Challenges Program funding. The panels are composed of experts who report to the University of Ottawa. They receive administrative support from this independent organization.

Grist for the mill has been provided by Quebec's *Coalition Avenir Quebec* government over its first 4 years in office. On the floor of the National Assembly of Quebec, Simon Jolin-Barrette, then Minister of Immigration, Diversity, and Inclusiveness of Quebec, was the sponsor of the government Bill 21, *An Act respecting the laicity of the State*. Law 21 was passed, received royal assent, and came into force on June 16, 2019.

Jean-François Roberge, then Minister of Education and Higher Education of Quebec, was the sponsor of the government Bill 40, *An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance*. Law 40 was passed on February 7, 2020, and received royal assent on February 8, 2020. Law 40 came into force on February 8, 2020, turning *les commissions scolaires* into *les centres de services scolaires*. The nine English-language school boards have not become school service centres as of yet.

And no doubt, the most controversial of all, Simon Jolin-Barrette, then Minister Responsible for the French Language of Quebec, was the sponsor of Bill 96, *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Quebec*. Law 96 was passed on May 24, 2022. Law 96 received royal assent and came into force on June 1, 2022, with some exceptions.



Photo from Adobe Stock

Law 96 attempts to unilaterally amend the Constitution Act of 1867 in the following manner:

CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867

166. 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.

And flying under the radar and receiving by far the least attention, Jean-François Roberge, then Minister of Education of Quebec, was the sponsor of the government Bill 9, *An Act respecting the National Student Ombudsman*. Law 9 was passed on May 31, 2022, and received royal assent on June 3, 2022. Law 9 came into force by decree with exceptions.

Continued on the next page

News for You

A Commentary by Brian Rock

Continued from the previous page

And let us not leave the federal government out of this mess of pieces of legislation. The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, M.P., the Minister of Official Languages of Canada, tabled in the House of Commons of Canada on April 5, 2022: the government Bill C-13: *An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.*

The members of the Standing Committees on Official Languages of both the House of Commons and the Senate of Canada are completing the process of receiving briefs regarding Bill C-13.

And now we play the waiting game as we observe these pieces of legislation meander their way along through the lower-level courts to eventually arrive at the Supreme Court of Canada. This is when the Court Challenges Program of Canada will help to safeguard anglophone rights in Quebec.

Brian ROCK, B.A., M.Ed., a past president of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA), is a retired school principal and a former secondary English and history teacher. Brian serves as the corporate secretary of the CEGEP Heritage College Foundation in Gatineau.

Brian also serves as chairman of the COalition For the Future of English Education in Québec (COF-FEE-QC) as well as chairman of the Committee for the Enhancement of the Curriculum of the History of Québec (ComECH-QC). Brian remains active with the QFHSA as vice-chair of the Rights and Resolutions Subcommittees.

Note: The opinions expressed in this commentary are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA).



The QFHSA Attends the QPAT Convention October 14 and 15, 2022

IN MID-OCTOBER, QFHSA staff and board members were on hand to warmly welcome teachers (and prospective teachers) to our booth at the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers' annual convention.

The QFHSA was happy to share recent issues of the *QFHSA News* along with excerpts from our Children's Literacy Resource Guide and other QFHSA resource materials with attendees.

It was nice to meet Home and School members from Gaspé and Western Québec who stopped by the QFHSA booth during the QPAT convention. We also met teachers hailing from all over the province and heard about their activities. Congratulations to Perrie Lo Dico, a teacher at Nesbitt School, who was the lucky winner in our draw for a Born to Read book bag.



What We Choose to Remember: A Must-See Documentary for All Quebecers



GUY REX RODGERS, the founding executive director of the English Language Arts Network (ELAN), took on a very interesting pandemic project. He set out to discover why so many of the English-speaking Quebecers polled by the provincial government's Secretariat for Relations with English-Speaking Quebecers said they did not have a sense of belonging nor a sense of identity as Quebecers.

For this project, Rodgers, a writer and long-time member of the Quebec arts community, took on the role of documentary filmmaker. The result was *Waves of Change*, a fascinating series of short documentaries that explored the roots of the non-francophone communities of Quebec. Then from *Waves of Change* came *What We Choose to Remember*, a documentary that deftly combines material from the shorter films.



Photo courtesy of Guy Rex Rodgers

What We Choose to Remember begins with “person on the street” interviews. Standing in a busy area of downtown Montreal, Rodgers shows passers-by the city’s flag and asks them to identify its five symbols. It turns out to be a bit of a challenge. Rodgers explains that the symbols represent the city’s original inhabitants and the countries of origin of

its earliest settlers (the white pine for indigenous peoples; the *fleur-de-lis*, France; the rose, England; the thistle, Scotland; the shamrock, Ireland). The flag reminds us that three of the four groups of settlers came from English-speaking countries. So why don’t we hear much about these other founders of Montreal and why do so many of their descendants and other non-francophone Quebecers feel unmoored in present-day Quebec? Rodgers investigates.

For the documentary, Rodgers had the clever idea of gathering together individuals from distinct waves of immigration to share their family histories and personal experiences. The result is a series of captivating accounts of what it means to be an immigrant to this province. We hear from descendants of the English/Irish/Scottish old stock, we hear from the adult children of parents from later migrations, and we hear from people who have their own vivid memories of their arrival in Quebec.

The documentary also asks pointed questions about belonging in Quebec and addresses myths and stereotypes. Indeed, the people we meet, the stories they tell, and the honest and frank opinions they share create a gripping portrait of Quebec’s non-francophone community.

The film is also a history lesson. Interspersed with the personal stories are historical and contemporary facts and figures about our province. We see the challenges a majority

French-speaking province and its francophone citizens have living in the midst of an overwhelmingly English North America. We learn about the FLQ Crisis, the rise of the Parti Québécois, and Bill 101. Rodgers explains how Bill 101 addressed some old wrongs, including the overly English character of Montreal and the salary inequities experienced by the province’s francophones. We also learn how the impulse to protect and preserve the French character of Quebec affected the non-francophone minority in the province.

Who Are We and Where Did We Come From?

As depicted in Montreal’s flag, the earliest waves of non-francophone immigrants came from Great Britain and Ireland. In the film, their descendants share stories of farmer ancestors who lived in Quebec’s rural regions. These stories debunk a couple of myths about English Quebecers: Not all anglophones lived on the island of Montreal nor were they titans of business. Indeed, the 1861 census confirms that there were English speakers in almost every region of Quebec. Even today, you can find English-speaking communities in such areas as the Ottawa Valley, the Eastern Townships, the Gaspé, and the Lower North Shore—though the communities are much smaller than they once were.

The documentary also tells the story of those who immigrated to Quebec

Continued on the next page

News for You

What We Choose to Remember

Continued from the previous page

from the Second World War to 2010. We meet, for example, Dominic Cusmano, whose parents came to Canada from Italy in 1945 when the Italian economy was in shambles and many emigrated for work and a better life for their children. We meet Dimitri Nasrallah, who came to Quebec with his family from Lebanon. We meet Zoonie Nguyen, who along with her parents and seven siblings, left South Vietnam by boat the very last day before the Communist takeover. They, along with the other participants in this documentary, show the diversity of Quebec's anglophone and allophone communities.

What's It Like to Immigrate to Quebec?

Your immigrant experience depended a lot on when you arrived in Quebec. Stephanie Ein's ancestors were Romanian Jews, while Walter Chiyen Tom's family came from China. Both ended up in English Protestant schools. The reason? At the time, Quebec's public schools were either Protestant or Roman Catholic and if you were not a Roman Catholic, you were not welcome in the French Catholic school system. There was a feeling that having non-French speakers would harm the integrity of

the French language in the schools. But by 1977, it became a priority to bring new immigrants into the French school system to help bolster the number of French-speaking Quebecers. In the film, immigrants who arrived post Bill 101 shared their educational experiences. For Selina Ma, an immigrant from China married to a French Canadian, there was no choice: her children had to go to French school. However, the family speaks English at home to ensure the children get a good grounding in both languages. As in Selina's family, today's anglophone and allophone families see the necessity of raising bilingual children.

When it comes to employment, early waves of allophone immigrants often took whatever jobs they could get. In the film, several people recalled how their parents worked in the restaurant industry, for example, though they had education and training in other fields. If you are an anglophone or an allophone, it is still not easy to find a job in Quebec. Kakim Goh, who immigrated from Singapore, says that finding employment has been his greatest barrier. His experience is borne out in the 2011 employment statistics Rodgers shares in the documentary. When compared with unilingual francophones, unilingual anglophones earn 10% less; bilingual anglophones earn 8% less; and

French-speaking allophones, 36% less. It's a sobering picture.

The Challenge of Belonging

How welcome do you feel in your own province? That seems to depend on when you arrived. Rodgers observed that of all the people he interviewed, those who arrived after 1995 had the strongest sense of belonging to Quebec. He wonders if it is because they and their families did not live through the FLQ Crisis of the '70s and the two referendums. In the documentary, we learn how the words of former premier Jacques Parizeau blaming "money and the ethnic vote" for the 1995 referendum loss deeply stung the allophone community, leaving feelings of sadness and alienation.

Those who remained in Quebec through the tumultuous '70s, '80s, and '90s have made a conscious effort to become bilingual. According to the documentary, 95% of current Quebecers understand French.

But Rodgers talks of a new problem, the focus on "mother tongue." This creates a clear divide between *pure laine* Quebecers and the rest of us. How welcome do you feel if you are worried about the comments you will receive about your accent when

Continued on the next page

Photo courtesy of Guy Rex Rodgers



News for You

What We Choose to Remember

Continued from the previous page

you speak in French? Marina Byezhanova, who arrived in Quebec from Ukraine in 1998 describes having “an inescapable feeling of otherness that I need to accept.” The good news is that so many in the documentary showed a determination to assert their place in Quebec. Though some may identify as Montrealers first, Canadians second, and Quebecers third, Quebec is still their home.

Where Do We Go from Here?

In November, Guy Rex Rodgers was a guest at the meeting of the Coalition for the Future of English Education in Quebec (COFFEE-QC). After Rodgers talked about *What We Choose to Remember*, something interesting happened. Meeting attendees were eager to share their own Quebec origin stories. It’s a phenomenon Rod-

gers has seen happen before: the documentary does a good job of validating the experience of non-francophone Quebecers.

Then the discussion turned to the Quebec government’s recent enactment of Laws 21 and 96. One participant said that while he empathized with the government’s concern to preserve and protect the French character of Quebec, he did not feel it was going about it in the right way. “We are not a threat,” he explained. Rodgers talks about the importance of building “us-ness”: a term that he uses to encompass all Quebecers. After all, anglophones, allophones, and francophones all have a place at the table when our province discusses policy.

What We Choose to Remember does so many things well. It is an absorbing and educational film that confirms Rodgers’ belief that the En-

glish-speaking community has an important story to tell—a story that needs to be remembered by all Quebecers. Through their vivid stories and the truths they tell, the remarkable people in the film describe what it means to be a non-francophone Quebecer. Our voices need to be heard. *And we all belong.*

Karen Henchey,
Communications Officer

How to Watch *What We Choose to Remember*

What We Choose to Remember is available for viewing free of charge on the following website: <https://whatwechoosetoremember.ca/>. Filmmaker Guy Rex Rodgers encourages people to use the film and share the link with anyone who would be interested.

Literacy News

Holiday Donations from the Literacy Subcommittee

Once again, thanks to the QFHSA’s partnership with First Book Canada, the QFHSA was able to donate books to local associations for holiday baskets and gifts.

This year, 12 Home and Schools participated and 250 books were donated for distribution to families in need. If your school donates holiday baskets for those in need in your neighbourhood and you would like to consider adding children’s books next year, contact the office and get on our list. Books are the gift that keeps on giving, long after the holiday treats are gone.

Thank you to all the Home and Schools who support others in their communities throughout the year.

Marlyn Brownrigg,
on behalf of the Literacy Subcommittee



The book delivery to Beechwood Home and School Association. The books were included in the holiday baskets for five families.

A Few Words from Membership Services

Home and Schools are back in business this year and it has been great to see. If you are a new Executive member and are feeling a little lost, please do not hesitate to contact the QFHSA office for some support and guidance.

Speaking of business as usual...

All QFHSA documents and fees are now **overdue**. If your association is “in arrears,” you will receive an email in the next few weeks listing any outstanding items. The preliminary list of Home and Schools “in good standing” has already been sent to the QFHSA’s insurance company for our policy renewal. If your association has not submitted the \$50 administration fee, then your Home and School was not included on this list.

Membership: If membership fees are still trickling in, please send the payments to the QFHSA office in batches, and don’t forget to email the updated lists to Marlyn by February 28th. Membership Chairs will be advised of any discrepancies between the list and payments at the beginning of March.

Constitution and By-Law Updates: These documents should be updated every few years to reflect changes in your Home and School’s operating procedures. Did your association move to online payments, banking, etc., during COVID? Has the composition of your Executive changed? Now is the time to set up a subcommittee to update these documents so that they can be approved at your spring AGM



Regional Councils: As the QFHSA was unable to hold regional councils in the fall, online meetings will be scheduled for the evenings of **Monday, January 23rd** and **Thursday, January 26th**. As in previous years, these meetings give Home and School executive members the chance to exchange ideas and get their questions answered.

Marlyn Brownrigg,
Membership Services Coordinator
marlynbrownrigg@qfhsa.org; 514-481-5619

Welcome to the New Home & School Associations

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations is very pleased to announce that two additional Home and School Associations have joined our federation: **Hadley Junior High** and **Knowlton Academy**.

Located in Gatineau, Hadley Junior High is part of the Western Québec School Board. As its name suggests, Knowlton Academy is located in the Town of Knowlton and is part of the Eastern Townships School Board.

Welcome to the federation, Hadley Junior High and Knowlton Academy!



Images from Adobe Stock

Focus on the Locals

In the **Focus on the Locals** section, we share news and information from our local 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@gfhsa.org.



A Very Happy Return to School at Genesis and the Excitement Continues!



Genesis Home and School has been very busy! To begin the school year, we planned a huge welcome back community event in the schoolyard! Over 300 people came to support our small school.

Staff and students have been supporting our monthly pizza fundraiser days and TCBY days! Thank you to the volunteers who plan these special fundraisers and to all the volunteers that help execute and support them.



This fall, we also organized a chocolate fundraiser. Congratulations to all our students for raising \$13,000. Special congratulations go out to our top selling class, which was one of our new Pre-Kindergarten groups! Wow! This lucky class will enjoy a pizza party on behalf of our association.

At the end of November, we organized a sweet table for the staff. It was a winter wonderland of delicious treats for all!



Lastly, we decorated the school entrance with a new tree and beautiful decorations mostly donated by the community for the holidays! Wishing everyone a very happy New Year!

On to Halloween at Genesis or should we say Salem. The witches were back for one day only! Winifred, Sarah, and Mary spooked all the students and staff in the Forbidden Woods! The students enjoyed a Hocus Pocus-themed fun-filled day making slime, playing games, dancing, and enjoying a magic show and more!



Submitted by Tina Rosato, Genesis Home and School Association

Focus on the Locals



The Return of the Holiday Lunch at St Patrick Elementary School

When it came time to plan the holiday events at the school, many of us asked our children, "What is your favourite part of the holidays at St. Pats?" Almost unanimously they all said, "We miss eating together at the holiday lunch."

To make this a reality, parent elves spent weeks preparing by renting tables, locating decorations, and planning a kid-friendly menu that everyone could enjoy. Parents, faculty, staff, and students were all able to enjoy this festive event that truly brought out the spirit of togetherness.

Happy New Year from the St. Pats' Home and School!

*Submitted by Gina Giambalvo,
St. Patrick Home and School Association*



Island Fun

Greetings from Grosse-Île Home and School on the Magdalen Islands! We had a wonderful Halloween event in October. We wrapped mummies, we enjoyed the spooky decorations and some very spooky characters too! The days flew by and before we knew it, Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived for a visit! The fun on that very special day continued past sunset.

*Submitted by Nelia Patton,
Grosse-Île Home and School Association*

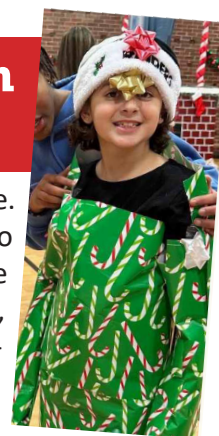


Focus on the Locals

Santa and Mrs. Claus Make a Triumphant Return to St. Charles Elementary

After a few years away, Santa and Mrs. Claus finally returned to St. Charles for our annual Breakfast with Santa event. Since 2020, we have adapted and found creative ways to make this event happen, and this year was no exception.

With the hard work of our wonderful team of Home and School volunteers and staff members, we pulled off a new and very fun version of our beloved event!



Santa and Mrs. Claus made their grand appearance with a walk around the school as all of the students cheered on from their classroom windows.

Students were then treated to a breakfast and fun holiday story brought to them by their very own Grade 6 elves, who also escorted classes to the gym where they got a taste of what it was like to be an elf in the North Pole. There, they played some reindeer games led by Santa and Mrs. Claus. They had a good old fashioned snowball fight and



blew off some steam with a freeze dance. The younger kids chased reindeer who had sneaked out of their stalls in a game of "elf-elf-reindeer" (duck-duck-goose), while the older kids practiced their wrapping skills by "gift-wrapping" one of their own teammates.



After all of their hard work, Mrs. Claus treated students to cookies for an afternoon snack and Santa rewarded them with a candy cane.

Tons of fun was had by all, and we can't wait to do it all over again next year! What a great way to head into the holiday break!



Submitted by Christine Iannuccilli and Talia D'Costa on behalf of St Charles Home & School Association

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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