



THE VOICE OF
THE PARENT IN
EDUCATION

QFHSA NEWS

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WINTER 2019

Keynote Geoff Kelley

Talks Bill 40

Page 4

Fall Conference Workshops

Not-For-Profit Status

Migrating Online

The Importance of Sleep

Page 5-7

QFHSA Anniversary Celebration

Page 8-9

QFHSA Response to Bill 40

Page 14-15





Message from the President



THE YEAR HAS COME to a close, and there have been a number of disturbing issues that have confronted the English-speaking community over that time period. We are all aware of the threats to our English school system that the proposed Bill 40 represents and the implications of the disturbing undertones of law 21 banning religious garb in public institutions. In our community we are acutely aware that as a minority, the impacts of such changes will disproportionately affect us by lessening our voice within our schools and not allowing us to exercise our right to hire whom we see fit to educate our children.

This year, the Quebec Federation of Home and Schools celebrated its 75th year of existence which predates both the Education Act and the Ministry of Education. In addition, it is the 100th year anniversary of the first Home and School meeting in Quebec which took place at Macdonald High School in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue. The Home and School movement, which is particular to the English education sector, has reflected how our community has organised its network and has involved parents directly in the education of their children throughout its history.

One result is the raising of millions of dollars to support initiatives like enhancement of school grounds, school graduation celebrations, books for the library and sometimes even salaries for animators and extra-curricular activity personnel. Our community, and particularly our students, have been the better for it and Home and School involvement has contributed to our higher student success rates, as compared to our French-speaking counterparts who do not have Home and School Associations attached to their schools.

Are we the sole reason for this success? No, but we are contributors and it's because of the dedication our local associations demonstrate week by week within their schools. The work parents do inside Home and School institutions contributes to both the quality of school life and student success. I can't imagine any better mission or impact than that and we must encourage the government to let our community continue organize itself as it sees fit. Our system is not broken as the government has stated on numerous occasions. Maybe it's time the government take a page from our book and apply it throughout the Quebec public education system.

As we pause to take a break during the holidays, it's time to seriously reflect on what we want to see for the future of our community. Our constitutional guarantees will mean very little if we are not prepared to speak out and tell the government they are making a terrible mistake with their proposed changes. Schools and school boards are integrally wound through the fabric of our community's sense of belonging, identification and an important public showing of the values we have built in our system. We cannot imagine a time when it wasn't so, and many of us are worried about a future where it isn't at the core of our aspirations for the future of the school system in our community.

Happy holidays and all the best in the New Year.

Linton Garner
President
Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations

SAVE THE DATE
AGM 2020
May 2nd, 2020



Executive Director's Message

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Knowledge is power.

IT'S TIME TO REFLECT on this past year. It seems that every other year we are faced with some serious legislation coming down from Quebec City that will detrimentally affect the education of our children. This year was no exception with Law 21 in the spring and now Bill 40 in the fall. Both these pieces of legislation have the potential to cast a shadow over our schools.

In this 75th anniversary year, it is just as important today, as it has been in the past, to be aware of what is going on in education and how it may affect our children. Back in 1963, with the Parent Commission, Home and School's Operation Bootstraps offered concrete suggestions on how to improve the Quebec school system and education for all.

Home and School is about more than just the fundraising of cultural projects and resources for schools. That is part of it, of course, but it is also about providing social services to parents such as opportunities to network, attend workshops, contribute to school community and stay informed. When a Home and School has a good working relationship with its principal and teaching staff, respectful dialogue is possible and joint projects can be realized to everyone's satisfaction. When parents know what is going on in the wider arena of education, they can see how it may affect their school down the road.

Knowledge is power.

It was important for QFHSA to stand with Coalition Inclusion Quebec this year against Law 21 and with APPELE Quebec against Bill 40, shoulder to shoulder with representatives of the English Parents Committees' Association, Quebec English School Board Association, and the Quebec Community Groups Network. It is still important to recognize and challenge

legislation whenever it threatens to erode the right of parents to choose the education system that they feel is best for their children.

In 2013, QFHSA joined forces with other Education stakeholders for the **Coalition Priorité Education** petition protesting cuts to the education budget going on at that time. In 2015, QFHSA helped launch COFFEE-Quebec (Coalition For the Future of English Education in Quebec) which led to the Elections System Study Panel, chaired by the Hon. Marlene Jennings and produced the "**Jennings Report**".

And, so it goes, back through the years. Every time there is a threat to the English school system that we know and love, Home and School parents will be there. In the meantime, take a rest from your labours over the holidays and come back refreshed.

Carol Meindl

QFHSA-Board of Directors Meeting Dates

January 10, 2020

March 21, 2020

April 18, 2020

May 23, 2020

June 13, 2020

Geoff Kelley Talks Bill 40 at Fall Conference



"THERE IS A DARK CLOUD on the Quebec horizon". So warned Geoff Kelley, Chair of APPELE- the Alliance for the Promotion of English Language Education in Quebec and this year's keynote speaker at the QFHSA Fall Conference. Fundamental issues are at stake with **Bill 40: An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance**. The CAQ government wants to work quickly which leaves no guarantee that things will be done well, witness the recent mishandling of the PEQ program.

Bill 40 is a *projet de loi* that affects 84 different acts and regulations with far-reaching implications for the control and management of the English school system by the rights holders. It is a highly complicated piece of legislation, so complicated as to be unworkable. Just to figure out the makeup of the Board of Directors of the proposed school service centers is baffling. How to find enough parents to fill these volunteer positions not to mention find community representatives who can speak for the whole catchment area?

Mr. Kelley filled us in on the history of APPELE Quebec from the first mention of the CAQ's campaign promise to abolishment of school boards, leading to the gathering in March of the English education organizations that decided to take the lead: QESBA, QCGN, QFHSA and EPCA, who, in turn, invited other education stakeholders to join them and become active. A Leger poll was commissioned to gauge the degree of attachment English-Speaking Quebecers held for their school boards over the summer, and the results were pleasantly surprising. A strong majority of English-speaking Quebecers were satisfied with the job their school boards were doing and were seriously against their being abolished. Members of APPELE met with the Minister in August and although the meeting was very cordial, it was clear how the Minister saw the School Service Centers operating as appointed by the Government. He wanted to define the English community rights holders as strictly only parents with children in the system. Not at all satisfactory.

On October 1st, the day Bill 40 was tabled, members of APPELE met to receive the first copies and begin dissecting the amendments listed that would affect the current Quebec Education Act. Reaction was a bit mixed as the minister seemed to be willing to entertain a dual system, where, on the English side, he was open to doing things a bit differently.

However, apart from the legal arguments against many elements in the *projet de loi*, there are many practical arguments, one being can this actually work? Being so complicated, it is difficult to figure out how to vote and who can vote, let alone who can run for office. It was clear that APPELE did not want to have to go to court to oppose this legislation, even if it would be just to do so, as it would be prohibitively expensive. The fundamental principle is one of community participation, which raises the constitutional question.

If only parents that already serve on a governing board are the ones who can run for a parent position on the Board of Directors, that disenfranchises 95% of parents who are not eligible to run. How is that community participation?

How can four community representatives cover an area the size and diversity of a Central Quebec School Board or an Eastern Shores School Board? A much better idea would be to have a parent rep and a community rep from each ward. That would be a better model for representation and community involvement.

The English Community is willing to admit that there are areas in the current management of school boards that can and should be improved and we are willing to be part of the solution, but will not tolerate school boards being abolished completely when the student success rate in English schools is at an all-time high. Why throw the baby out with the bathwater?

APPELE Quebec held its own public hearings on November 19 at le Méridien Versailles Hotel and heard from all the organizations which were not invited to present before the Committee on Culture and Education November 4-13, 2019.

We appreciate the work of APPELE in gathering the education community together to oppose the abolition of school boards in the Quebec school system and we thank Mr. Kelley for taking the time to join us at Fall Conference and explaining the work his organization is doing.

Fall Conference Workshop: Not-For-Profit Status



Miatta Gorvie - Centre for Community Organizations

AT THIS YEAR'S FALL CONFERENCE, Miatta Gorvie was invited to address our members and field questions regarding the logistics of applying for not-for-profit status.

Miatta Gorvie is an affiliate facilitator with the Centre for Community Organizations. She is a legal professional, educator and mediator. Often, Home and School associations come across opportunities to partner with other organizations to finance a desired long-term project only to find that they do not qualify, as they do not have official not-for-profit status. Miatta provided some basic information on applying for not-for-profit status: **Key**

Questions To Think About Before Incorporating A Non Profit and Organization and Incorporation of a Non-Profit Organization in Quebec walking our members through a comparison between not-for-profit and charitable status responsibilities and obligations. Not-for-profit status may not be desirable for all Home and School Associations, but it may be a good step for some. Miatta fielded questions from the audience and gave a basic understanding of what would be involved in getting NFP status.

QFHSA advises any Home and School who would like more information on applying for not-for-profit status, to call the office. QFHSA will arrange a joint meeting between associations and Miatta Gorvie, who will be invited to return to examine more specifically each association's individual needs.

The **Centre for Community Organizations (COCO)** is dedicated to helping build a more socially just world by supporting the health and well-being of community organizations in Québec. Through supporting organizational development, offering training, disseminating resources, producing research, and by strengthening links between nonprofit organizations, COCo helps to promote the vitality of the community sector in the province.

Fall Conference: Friends From Afar

WE WERE PLEASED to receive our H&S friends from Grosse Ile, Quebec. Members Joy Davies, Heather Turnbull and Nelia Patton joined us for the Fall Conference at Macdonald High, as well as for our Banquet Dinner at the Ceilidh Room on McGill's Campus nearby. During the dinner service interesting conversations were enjoyed, as they often are, and a little piece of Grosse Ile history came to light. Member Joy Davies had recently discovered a plaque commemorating the start of their Home and School journey in 1967! Below is the picture that was shared. If this doesn't exemplify the best reason to get together for these occasions, I don't know what does! Verbal stories and history shared, become archived stories and history for the ages. Thanks for the visit, ladies!



Fall Conference Workshop: Migrating Online

Written by: Mimi Tabaczuk



Cassandra Bezos, Christmas Park; Natalie Filiou, Lord Aylmer; Neil Lindsell, Beacon Hill

AT THIS YEAR'S QFHSA Fall Conference we held a workshop entitled 'Migrating Online' to host an open-forum style discussion on the transition of H&S operations and finances online. We were fortunate enough to have the participation of three knowledgeable H&S members, who gave excellent 10 minute presentations each, exploring the online tools their H&S Associations have used in recent history.

Firstly we heard from Cassandra Bezos, Christmas Park, regarding their use of tools such as MailChimp, Polydojo, and Google Forms. They have been transitioning to electronic payments for their activities and have found wonderful success in removing the 'middle-man' when using kiddy-mail to send and receive communications and money. Their parent outreach has also been improved and appreciated by the school community at large.

Next, the current treasurer of Beacon Hill, Neil Lindsell, presented his perspective on the cost-effectiveness of online payments and storefronts. Beacon Hill H&S's use of Shopify to create their H&S website **beaconhillhomeandschool.myshopify.com** has been an exciting way for them to use many payment methods to receive funds from parents, whether for merchandise, fundraising or H&S run events. There is also the incredibly useful feature of binary form functions, meaning, at the close of an event or payment meframe, the submit button can be made inactive, thus limiting or eliminating last minute requests. A benefit on the merchandise front has been that they can change pricing easily and include 'sold out' options when inventory is low. Customizability has been key for this favourite tool of the Beacon Hill H&S.

Lastly, but not least of all, Natalie Filiou of Lord Aylmer H&S and owner of Novel Forms Website Design shared with the group the many online tools they use to streamline their internal processes and to effectively communicate with their membership. For their

website, they've used Weebly, and Natalie's own talents to create lordaylmerhs.ca. They have used this as a platform for the receipt of membership forms, merchandise sales and event tickets. The website has aided in the collection of parent contact information and it has allowed them to easily connect a child to their parent for administrative purposes. They have also used 3rd party companies such as Stripe, Square and PayPal to collect payments from families. Going paperless, in part because of these online options, has reduced their need for 'paper trails' and has contributed to a greener H&S experience.

Following the presentations, many of the members who attended this session posed timely questions regarding online merchandise sales, fundraising campaigns, ongoing food-based activity registration and, of course, the use of online banking for their treasuries.

One thing that was made very clear at the end of the day, there is still much, much more that needs to be addressed when it comes to the online presence and online tools of our local H&S Associations. This workshop was a very positive first step in that much-needed discussion. Home and Schools looking toward the future will undoubtedly include extending their virtual presence to remain effective, efficient and to optimize their communication and operation.



Fall Conference Workshop: The Importance of Sleep

Fall Conference Workshop - Facilitated by Tracy Braunstein, Certified Pediatric Sleep Consultant

SLEEP, OR LACK OF IT, is an issue that affects us all – the young and the old. Tracy gave parents some tips on how to improve sleep habits for the whole family and the areas of the brain and body that are affected by lack of sleep.

There are four (4) key components to promote good sleep hygiene:

- a) Sleep Environment
- b) Bedtime Routine
- c) Scheduling
- d) The Ability to Self-Soothe

Tracy took time to answer a variety of questions from the group. Participants appreciated her honest answers, her easygoing manner and her advice on taking control of the often-times challenging situations.

Tracy's blog can be found at sleeptightsolutions.com.

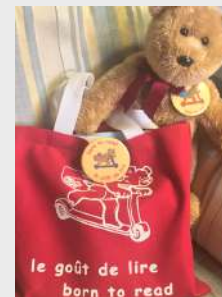


Literacy



Books from First Book Canada

QFHSA HAS NEW BOOKS TO GIVE AWAY! School families "in need" can benefit from books that the QFHSA has purchased from First Book Canada. Principals can decide which students could benefit most from the book distribution. Please contact Carol Meindl at the QFHSA office for more information on getting some of these books to your school and into the homes of our students.



Born-To-Read

FOSTERING LITERATE environments has been one of the QFHSA's mandates for many years. Consider starting a Born-To-Read program at your school. Bags of books make wonderful gifts for babies, toddlers and hopefully future kindergarteners! The QFHSA will provide your Home and School with some Born-To-Read bags and board books to get the program started.

QFHSA's Anniversary Celebration: An Evening to Remember

Written by Carol Meindl

ON NOVEMBER 9, QFHSA hosted an evening to honour the 75 th birthday of the Federation and 100 years of Home and School activity in Quebec. The banquet was held in the Ceilidh Room on the Macdonald Campus of McGill University, to acknowledge the fact that the very first Home and School meeting was held nearby at the Macdonald Campus School in 1919.

The evening program offered special treats for those in attendance, including a cocktail hour with live music, courtesy of four members of Lindsay Place High School String Orchestra. It felt appropriate to showcase a sample of a program supported by Home and School parents at this anniversary. The dinner itself was prepared and served by Bouquet Garni, a local Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue caterer, and the food was seasonal and delicious. Chris Blais of Manta Studios kept the mood mellow with some quiet jazz music playing in the background while Matthew Haley and Howard Kay circulated around the room videotaping and photographing the event.



Lindsay Place High School String Orchestra Musicians

Linton Garner, QFHSA President, opened the evening with a welcome to all the Home and School members and special guests. In attendance were Jan Langelier, President of Association of Administrators of English Schools of Quebec (AAESQ), Arlene Morell, Vice President of Canadian Home and School Federation; (the National body CHSF), Noel Burke, Chair of Lester B Pearson School Board, Russell Copeman, Executive Director, Quebec English School Board Association (QESBA), Heidi Yetman, President of Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT), Cameron Gray, President Quebec Association of Geography Teachers (QAGT).



Special Guests

In attendance by special invitation, were Mary Skagos, Shadi Asadollahi, and Sheila Desormeaux, three of our past Administrative Assistants, invited as a tribute to the many members of the staff who have kept QFHSA running smoothly over the past 75 years. Additionally, in attendance were Marissa Stimpson and Bing Bai, two of our most recent part time archivists, invited to represent the archivists involved in organizing 75 years of historical material. Special acknowledgement was made of Rod MacLeod, Mary Ann Poutanen and Josee Martel (2000-2004), and Marion Daigle and Carol Ohlin (2005-2017), whose foundational work has been instrumental in developing the History of Achievement Anniversary project. Fourteen Home and School associations from the local area attended with a few associations coming from the Gatineau and one all the way from Grosse Ile!



QFHSA Staff Past and Present



Rod MacLeod

The program continued with special presentations from Rod MacLeod, historian, who shared a story from QFHSA past that he felt exemplified the beginnings of QFHSA's strong mandate for advocacy and educational rights: "The Outremont Question of 1947".

Leo La France, former Assistant Deputy Minister of Education - Anglo Sector and former principal and teacher in Home and School schools, had been invited to share his thoughts as well but, unfortunately, could not attend due to a sudden family emergency. His remarks were read instead by QFHSA Executive Director, Carol Meindl. Leo had always admired the energy and initiative that Home and School parents demonstrated and learned early on to “recognize talent and get out of the way to let them operate!”



Carol Meindl

After supper, Cathrine Le Maistre, Chair of the Advisory Board on English Education, shared some of her own past experiences as a member of Edgewater Home and School back in the 1980s, when her own children were young.



Cathrine Le Maistre

And finally, Casey Stilwell, former President of Macdonald High Home and School, one of the many in a long line of presidents that have led that Association since 1947 took the stage. She described Home and School involvement as an “opportunity”- an opportunity to meet other parents your own age and with kids in the same school. The opportunity to work together on projects and activities and to build community. The opportunity to hone your skills as a community leader and pass the baton on to then next generation.



Casey Stilwell

The evening crested with a special presentation to three of our four oldest Home and School Associations: Royal Vale H&S, (51 years); Macdonald High H&S (62 years); Willingdon H&S, (75 years); and Roslyn H&S, (an astounding 85 years old)! Each of these schools received a plaque which named the founding President and Treasurer for their Association, and the current title holders in 2019. Macdonald, Willingdon and Roslyn also received memory albums with a collection of QFHSA NEWS articles that had been submitted over the years.



Macdonald High H&S



Willingdon H&S



Roslyn H&S

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations offers a sincere thank you to the Secretariat Responsible for Relations with English Speaking Quebecers and the Department of Canadian Heritage, for their financial support in helping us celebrate this milestone for Home and School in Quebec.

And now, we begin the next chapter for Home and School... so see you all again in 2044 for the 100th!



QFHSA

Fall Conference 2019



Arlene Morell,
Vice-President CHSF



Stephen Colpitts, Assistant Deputy
Minister of Education and
Higher Education



Renate Sutherland,
Past President QPARSE



Cathrine Le Maistre,
Chair ABEE

Anniversary Banquet 2019



Front: Rod MacLeod, Russell
Copeman, Cathrine Le Maistre

Back : Carol Meindl,
Linton Garner



Front: Bobbi Brown, Natasha
Drysdale, Lynn Fundaro

Back: Margaret Thompson,
Roy Dudley, Leah Trineer, Joanna Genovezos



Front: Gilles Morin,
Sheila Desormeaux, Andrea Cappelli

Back : Mary Skagos,
Sarah Beth Hardy, Casey Stilwell

QFHSA

Anniversary Banquet 2019



Front: Willingdon H&S (Carmen Nicolas, Geneviève Trudeau, Maya Doughan, Sally Burnett, Sarah Soifer)

Back : Bing Bai, Marlyn Brownrigg, Marissa Stimpson



Front: Cameron Gray, Brian Rock, Maria Teresa Mastracola

Back : Heidi Yetman, Debi Brown, Jan Langelier, Renate Sutherland



Front: Lynn Collins, Barabra Schnider, Rosemary Murphy

Back : Noel Burke, Shadi Asadollahi, John Ronald, Arlene Morell



Chelsea H&S (Christina Staniszewski, Keri George, Michelle Hoyt, Tracy Mui); St. Michael's H&S (Maggie Holmes, Silvana Tapia); William Latter H&S (Sarah Beth Hardy)



Bryan Hamon, Mimi Tabaczuk, St. Patrick H&S (Taedra Harris, Melanie Moore); Grosse Ile H&S (Nelia Patton, Joy Davies, Heather Turnbull)



Lord Aylmer H&S (Angele Duval Belanger, Lianne Pickhard, Melanie Beaudoin, Natalie Filiou)

The Home and School Network 1944-2019

Written by Bing Bai

QUEBEC FEDERATION OF HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS (QFHSA) has launched an interactive map to mark member Home & School (H&S) associations over the past 75 years. This map visualizes the history of Quebec H&S in general, but also embeds with each member Home & School a small piece of their historical past, e.g., the archival photos, founding executive committees etc. This part of the project recognizes our historic H&S associations by using today's technology as QFHSA continues to evolve in this digital age.



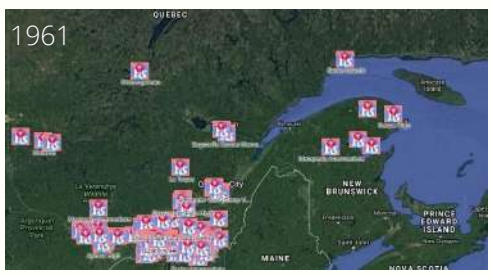
The last 75 years witnessed a significant expansion of our network. From the Gaspé in the east, Noranda in the west, Gagnon in the north and Beebe in the south, Home and School has left footprints across the territory of Quebec.

The earliest period of QFHSA dates back to 1944. The Quebec Provincial Council of Home and Schools merged with the Greater Montreal Federation of Home and School Associations to form the QFHSA. By 1947, forty-seven H&S associations joined the organization with the majority of them from the Greater Montreal region.

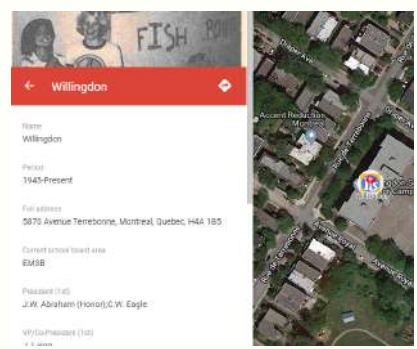


The next two decades saw a golden age of QFHSA. With the arrival of the baby boom after World War II, QFHSA successfully attracted 193 member H&S associations to join the Federation by 1961, nearly quadrupling its size compared to the 1940s. Meanwhile, the network was not

contained around Montreal region anymore, as quite a few H&S appeared in the Gulf of St. Lawrence area. The QFHSA logo can even be spotted in the much less populated northern Quebec. Today, after experiencing ups and downs amid the turbulence caused by a series of Quebec discriminatory education policies toward English schools, QFHSA has 86 members in our network.



Some H&S have been part of the Federation since the very beginning. In 1945, under the leadership of President Mr. C.W. Eagle and Treasurer Mr.G.F. Shaw, Willingdon Home and School joined QFHSA. By clicking on the Willingdon H&S icon in the interactive map, its historical information shows up in the side bar. The photos and news clips contributed from our archives, most of which were published in QFHSA newsletters before, also are displayed in this column. For example, a 1978 photo of Willingdon H&S Fun Fair (below) shows how joyful these kids were. The QFHSA archive team continues to upload archive pictures to this map. Don't be surprised if you see yourself or your former classmates' pictures on our map.



Information page of Willingdon H&S

If you wish to find out more about our interactive map, please visit our website: www.qfhsa.org/map



Update from Membership Services

- ALL DOCUMENTS, reports, membership lists and fees are now overdue. Contact Marlyn to find out if your association is “in good standing”.
- Would your association like to host a regional council for Home and Schools in your area? Coordination would be done by the QFHSA office – all that is needed is a Home and School willing to provide a location and refreshments. Please email Marlyn if your Home and School is interested in organizing this event.
- Upcoming:
 - **January 27, 2020 - Family Literacy Day**
 - **Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week (CHSF) - February 9-15, 2020**
- QFHSA Information: To not bombard Executive members, the QFHSA sends out E-Bulletins to the Home and School President and Vice-President on a monthly/bi-monthly basis and publishes other information in the QFHSA NEWS. Please read this information carefully and add QFHSA news to your monthly meeting agenda. In June, pass along any important information to your successors.

Welcome to New Home & School Associations

Crestview Elementary School and **Laval Junior Academy**, both in the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board, joined the QFHSA network in the Fall.

Welcome Aboard!

Youth Exploring Science 2019-2020



INVITATIONS have gone out to principals in High Schools with H&S in the regions, with an opportunity to apply for a small grant to buy science experiment equipment and materials for special projects. Deadline to submit proposals will be January 15, 2020. Invitations have been sent to Baie Comeau, Metis Beach, New Carlisle, St Michael's and La Tuque. (New Richmond High was the 2018 recipient). Ask your principal if they shared the information with their science teachers!

Response to Bill 40: English School System Losing Spirit

As Presented At The APPELE Quebec Hearings



ON OCTOBER 1, 2019, the CAQ Minister of Education and Higher Education Jean Francois Roberge tabled **Bill 40, An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance**, fulfilling an election promise made by Premier Francois Legault to abolish school boards in Quebec.

This lengthy and complex projet de loi affects more than 84 separate acts and regulations and proposes a governance model that is unnecessarily complex and unmanageable.

The short time frame which had been allotted for communities affected by this proposed law, to study it in detail and to present comprehensive briefs to the Committee on Culture and Education was also disappointing. A government confident in the strength of its arguments should have no hesitancy in inviting as wide a range of members of the education sector as possible to bring forward every perspective and critique, and should take the necessary time to hear all those who have something of value to share.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations' Rights Committee is studying this bill and will address all the areas that give concern. Once complete, it will be submitted to the Committee as a record of what our concerns were and will be, if indeed, this bill is passed in its current form and implemented.

Home and School is at the grassroots level of the community, encouraging parents to volunteer in their children's school and to be involved with their education. We see firsthand the struggle there is to find enough parents with the time, energy and dedication to volunteer on school committees and activities in their local school. Parents' available time is stretched to the limit. We anticipate great difficulty in finding enough parents to sit on these proposed School Service Centre Board of Director positions, especially if they are already serving on local governing boards and possibly with a myriad of other community organizations. It is often the same parents serving everywhere. We know we are not alone in this observation as many volunteer organizations struggle with the same challenges.

However, there is another element of this bill that has not been getting much media attention, but gives the QFHSA concern: the repeal of Section 6, the amendment to Section 36 and the repeal of Section 226:

Section 6 of the Current Quebec Education Act states:

Students other than those enrolled in vocational training or adult education are entitled to student services in spiritual care and guidance and community involvement.

1988, c. 84, s. 6; 1990, c. 78, s. 54; 1997, c. 96, s. 6; 2000, c. 24, s. 18.

Section 36 definition of a school:

A school is an educational institution whose object is to provide to the persons entitled thereto under section 1 the educational services provided for by this Act and prescribed by the basic school regulation established by the Government under section 447 and to contribute to the social and cultural development of the community. A school shall...facilitate the spiritual development of students so as to promote self fulfillment.

In keeping with the principle of equality of opportunity, the mission of a school is to impart knowledge to students, foster their social development and give them qualifications, while enabling them to undertake and achieve success in a course of study.

A school shall pursue its mission within the framework of an educational project.

1988, c. 84, s. 36; 1990, c. 78, s. 54; 1997, c. 96, s. 13; 2000, c. 24, s. 19; 2002, c. 63, s. 2; 2016, c. 26, s. 1. 2002, c.

And Section 226 states:

Every school board shall ensure that schools offer to all students student services for spiritual care and guidance and community involvement.

1988, c. 84, s. 226; 1997, c. 96, s. 65; 2000, c. 24, s. 28.

According to **the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service Support documents**, as found on the Ministry of Education website, "**spiritual life**" is defined as "*an individual quest within the context of a community, one rooted in the fundamental questions of the meaning of life, and that tends toward the construction of a consistent, motivating and continually evolving vision of existence.*" and "**community involvement**" is defined as "*a contribution of the individual to community life based on the recognition of the value and dignity of human beings and oriented toward the construction of a more harmonious and supportive society.*"

It goes on to observe: *Spiritual life and community involvement are distinct, yet interrelated, notions. In fact, – the individual's vision of existence motivates and guides his contribution to social life and – his involvement in society enriches and transforms his spiritual life. As a result, a person's spiritual life and community involvement are symbiotically related.*

The spiritual values that this service encourages in our students are “love, hope, confidence, perseverance, courage to live, self-improvement, inner life, dignity, happiness, wisdom, truth, quest, creativity, etc.” and, through community involvement, to foster such values as “sociability, honesty, dialogue, tolerance, respect, responsibility, mutual help, service, friendship, altruism, participation, compassion, peace, solidarity, justice, etc.”

The goal of the service is to “*foster the development of an autonomous and responsible spiritual life among students and their contribution to building a harmonious and supportive society.*”

The nature of this service “*is non-confessional, provides an opportunity for the students to develop certain dimensions of their lives that are different from those explored in cultural, athletic or recreational activities offered by the school.*”

These areas of operation of the service were left to each school board to implement as they saw fit, as they addressed the needs of their unique student populations and as budget restrictions allowed.

By repealing Sec 6, amending Sec 36 and repealing Sec 226, the Ministry is removing the assurance that our students will have access to spiritual care and guidance and community involvement as defined by the current **Quebec Education Act**.

Yet, the Ministry wishes to amend the mission of the school boards with a modified version for the proposed school service centres:

The mission of a school service centre is to establish educational institutions in its territory, to support those institutions and to accompany them by procuring access to the goods and services and offering the optimal conditions enabling them to provide students with quality educational services and see to their success so that the population may attain a higher level of knowledge, social development and qualification. (Bill 40 #93. Pg 34)

The repeal of Sections 6 and 226 and the amendment of 36 seem to contradict this intent to support **social development**. If society desires that its population attains a higher level of social development, then school life must provide part of the training ground for that development.

One of the activities of this current service offers is “to provide guidance to students and members of the staff- meet with students, members of the staff and parents on an individual basis (death, separation, conflicts, distress, advice, etc.) In moments of tragedy and loss, special services must be available, on call, to tend to the needs of the parents, staff and students.”

Part of the mission statement of Home and School is “...dedicated to enhancing the education and **general well-being** of children and youth.”

We see the current school boards as supporting students’ overall well-being and social development by ensuring that our students

receive spiritual care and guidance and community involvement as currently defined in the non-confessional model of the Quebec Education Act.

It is not possible that the Minister of Education does not value the education and social development of the whole child, nor could he wish to not encourage and promote community involvement, as defined in the current Education Act so it must be concluded that the repeal of Section 6 and 226 and the amendment of Section 36, is a knee-jerk reaction to seeing the word “spiritual” and, in a zeal to apply Law 21, opting to repeal the whole service rather than rename it with something that might seem less “religious” such as perhaps: “metaphysical care and guidance and community involvement”. Why throw the baby out with the bathwater?

We fail to see how this repeal of Section 6 and 226 and amendment to 36, addresses school organization and governance nor in any way, benefits our students, parents or school staff.

We fail to see how the requirement for parents to also serve on a local governing board in order to have eligibility to serve on a school service centre’s board of directors, will encourage the necessary number of parents to willingly step up to this level of governance, even with the proposed inadequate remuneration. Lack of time is a greater concern and the QFHSA predicts that many of the seats will remain empty.

Considering these conclusions, we offer some recommendations.

1. The QFHSA urges the Minister of Education to **withdraw Bill 40 in its current form** and to take the necessary steps to hear from all stakeholders in education wishing to contribute, in order to proceed in the best possible way to improve the current system that will result in enhanced education and increased school success for all students.
2. Should the Government and the National Assembly decide to proceed with Bill 40 in its current form, we urge the Minister of Education **to remove the stipulation that parents running for a position on the Board of Directors of School Service Centres also serve on their local governing boards**, in order to open up the pool of parents eligible to run for these positions and thus provide for wider community representation and involvement.
3. Given the Ministry’s current definition of spiritual care and guidance, as values all Quebecers must share, **we request that Sections 6 and 226 not be repealed and Section 36 not be amended, and we request that the government continue to support these necessary services in our school system and refresh their budgets**. We consider the repeal of these two sections and the amendment of section 36 as misguided and would seriously undermine our children’s well-being and their social development toward good citizenship in Quebec.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations invites the Committee on Culture and Education to consult our parent members to determine the best ways to improve Quebec’s public school system for the benefit of all students.

Fundraising-The Why and the What For?

Written by: Marlyn Brownrigg



DUE TO A LACK OF adequate investment in Québec schools, parents have taken on the responsibility of filling the funding gaps so that students benefit from new programs and materials. Although fundraising is not supposed to be the sole mandate of Home and School, the QFHFA recognizes the importance of this to local associations.

This Fall it has come to the attention of the QFHSA Membership Committee that the allocation of fundraising monies is becoming a contentious issue for some local associations. Please keep in mind the following when planning fundraisers and provide your members with as much information as possible so they can allocate funds responsibly.

- **Allocation Plan:** In consultation with the administration, look at what the priorities are for the school year and where there is a need for resources (not staffing). Is a new program being implemented, is there going to be an influx

of new students, does the school yard need to be improved, etc.? Start each school year with a wish list of items and projects.

- **Target Fundraising:** Although parents should always be aware of where fundraising dollars are going, have target fundraisers for specific projects.
- **Spend to benefit all students:** When allocating funds, spread the money out to benefit the most students possible. Even though all teachers may not take advantage of the wish list offer, give all staff a chance to participate.
- **Carry-Over:** Yes, a Home and School is permitted to carry-over some funds to get the next year started or if the association is saving for a long-term project. QFHSA recommended, carry-over amounts vary depending on school population, opening year activities, etc.
- **Number of Fundraisers:** Home and Schools are encouraged to spend their funds in a timely manner. Please be mindful that parents often fundraise for hockey, Scouts, Guides, etc. Cut back on fundraisers, have a year of "giving back" and give your volunteers a break if your Home and School fundraising has been very successful or if a project has been cancelled resulting in surplus funds.
- **Communication:** Communicate Home and School projects and plans with the Administration, Home and School parents and Governing Board. "Toot" Home and School's horn when fundraising monies have paid for activities, events and materials.

Congratulations to Natalie Filiou

ON NOVEMBER 11, Natalie received the Bernie Brennan Award for Outstanding Citizenship and Service to the Lord Aylmer Community during the school's Remembrance Ceremony. Natalie has been actively involved in our Home & School and the school community for over 8 years. She has worked closely with our Home & School as the Communications, Web and Media Coordinator, and has dedicated much of her time to many initiatives with the school and as a volunteer member on different Committees and Boards through the Western Quebec School Board. Thank you, Natalie, for your contributions and dedication to our Lord Aylmer students, parents and school.

Pic, left to right: Mr. McDonald, teacher at Lord Aylmer, Natalie Filiou, Mr. Brennan's son, Patrick Brennan, and Eldon Keon, Principal at Lord Aylmer. The Bernie Brennan Award was created three years ago to honour Bernard "Bernie" Brennan and his tireless work within the Aylmer community and the Lord Aylmer School.



Focus on



The locals

Baie-Comeau

Submitted by Stephen Kohner, Principal

OUR HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION helped kick start the 2019-2020 school year with its annual “Welcome Back to School” barbecue lunch. Well over 100 students, staff, parents, alumni and friends of BCHS showed up to enjoy a lunch of corn on the cob, hotdogs, home-made chilli, fresh vegetables, fruits and juices. The lunch was paid for by the H&S thanks to their fund-raising efforts and operating funds.

We took advantage of the parental presence to start our membership drive, to introduce our new staff, and to have a social occasion to catch up on each other’s comings and goings.

Thank you to our volunteers and to our Secondary IV-V students who helped out in the kitchen and to help serve the food. As usual, there were not a lot of leftovers!



Honoré-Mercier

THANK YOU to our amazing volunteers who helped make the Honoré-Mercier book fair a fun event for our students.



Genesis

The Genesis Home and School Association had a very busy start to the school year! Our annual chocolate bar drive ran for three weeks and generated an impressive return. The Fundraising Team organized an evening, adults-only event that included dinner and circus entertainment at a local reception hall. The night generated a significant profit for our H&S through ticket sales, sponsorship booklets and raffle sales! This year we introduced a pizza lunch fundraiser (once a month) and have seen a great interest from students so far this year. Our ongoing TCBY sales are also popular. An incredible profit of 17 000\$ has been raised for the first half of the year!

Also, our team of volunteers put together an outdoor movie night just before Halloween, where families were treated to hot chocolate, coffee and lots of other goodies! Donations were collected to support the Ste Justine Pediatric Cardiology Unit.



Lord Aylmer

Creating a Strong Partnership with our School

WE ARE ESPECIALLY proud to share the news of this exciting new project! Our Lord Aylmer Home & School has teamed-up with the staff at Lord Aylmer School to help them renovate the Junior Campus Library.

This library project began over a year ago when teachers and staff came together to plan out some ideas to rejuvenate the library and transform it into a bright, inviting and, of course, fun space that was multi-functional and engaging.

The first step of the project was painting a lovely mural on all the walls of the library, and it didn't take long for our Home & School volunteer members and parents to take on that task! They were thrilled to help out, and excited to see the students enjoying the beautiful new space.

"Our partnership with the school is amazing and so special. I love it!" said Lianne Pickhard, Treasurer of the Lord Aylmer Home & School and H&S Team Lead for the Library project. "Books are magical for kids- they captivate them! So, it was important for us to make the library a space that was both calming and inviting. Ms. Bosley has such amazing ideas, and I am so fortunate to be able to help her create that vision."

It took staff and volunteer parents a good two weeks of painting- and their work is simply amazing! The beautifully detailed woodland scene includes large trees painted against a warm and soothing blue sky, while adorable wildlife peek through branches or walk in groups in the background. The scene is a perfect backdrop to the soon-to-be-added reading nooks, Chromebook Stations, comfortable seating, desks and tables, as well as a fun woodland treehouse.

"We are so fortunate to have this partnership between such dedicated volunteers from our Home and School and our equally devoted members of staff said Eldon Keon, Principal at Lord Aylmer.

All are working tirelessly toward a common goal: that of creating something special for our students that will enhance their educational experience. And it is this energy and relationship between our Lord Aylmer School and Home & School that allows for projects to transform into something even greater than what is intended when the projects are first developed. Our students are the benefactors of this strong partnership."

So far, our Home & School has funded, in-part, the purchase of Chromebooks (2016-2017 project), as well as contributed \$450 to the school for painting supplies for the mural.

We would like to thank the following teachers and staff involved in the development of the project: Lee Ann Stencill, Jessica Simon, Lucie Schryer, Maria Bosley, Sonia Dubreuil, Heather Sedaway and Victoria Barrett. A huge thank you to Lorna Pement, a Lord Aylmer mom and Home & School member, for designing the mural and to Lianne Pickhard for her role as the H&S Team Lead.

We would like to highlight the following individuals for their amazing work on the mural: Lindsay Richards, parent and H&S Member, Lianne Pickhard, parent and H&S Member, Maria Bosley, Resource Staff at Lord Aylmer and Library Project Coordinator, and Lorna Pement, parent and H&S Member (pictured left to right). Also helping out was our lovely Janneke, student at Lord Aylmer (not pictured).



Bringing School & Community Together for a Successful Christmas Bazaar!

Our Lord Aylmer Home & School has been actively involved in the Aylmer community for over 30 years, supporting local businesses and community organizations by committing to buying local, increasing community engagement and actively participating in activities that positively affect all of our Aylmer families. Our Home & School Christmas Bazaar is a perfect example of school and community coming together towards a common goal- organizing a successful fundraising event that all of our families can enjoy!

Lord Aylmer Continued...

THIS YEAR, OUR BAZAAR included a Christmas Market with 38 local vendors, who also donated their own goods to our Raffle; a large-scale Raffle with over 100 prizes, made possible by the generous contributions of our local businesses and artisans; a fun Kids' Cap Game with prizes and toys for all; as well as a fundraiser lunch and bake table made possible by our families who donated chili and baked goods.

We were especially thrilled by our kids' Activity Corner- which included a Craft Corner, Santa Photo Booth and Drumming with Santa:

While parents shopped, our kids had creative fun at our Craft Corner, which was organized and hosted this year by the Western Quebec Literacy Council (WQLC). Activities included a fun literacy-based bookmark craft, literacy-based games with prizes and a creative space for writing letters to Santa and making Christmas cards and crafts for friends and family.



- In the morning, our free Santa Photo Booth offered an opportunity for our kids to spend some extra special time chatting with Santa. The volunteer photographer made sure to highlight those special moments, and parents could download those digital keepsake photos on our H&S website. New to this year was our Santa Photo Booth Sponsors. Due to their generosity, we were able to make the Booth extra special by purchasing a new suit for our volunteer Santa, and outfitting the Booth with a new chair, rug, lanterns, Christmas tree, and cute lights and decorations. We also created 100 Kids Activity Bags, which Santa gifted to visiting children. Each bag included crayons, colouring pages, stickers, a slap bracelet and bouncy ball.
- Once the kids had had their picture taken at the Photo Booth, they then had the opportunity to join our afternoon drumming circle with Santa. We welcomed Krishnan Sundaram from Flow Drumming and the WQLC, who organized and hosted this event. The drumming was a huge success and the kids all had a blast!

We are especially thankful to everyone for helping us make this year's Christmas Bazaar such a successful community event!

Grenville

A Little Bit of Magic, written by: Tammy Hoare

ROWS OF PRECISELY SET RAINBOW COLORED TABLES awaited the eclectic assortment of items that the crafter's and small business owners are passionate about. When the doors opened at eight you could feel the excitement. Student volunteers helped to cart in hand blown glass, jewelry, knitting, wooden puzzles, preserves, books, baking....a list so long that in the end 58 tables are piled high with wares that intrigued all who came to shop.

The annual Craft Fair is a magical community event. Vera Young who plans and organizes down to the finest detail makes everyone involved feel special and cared for and the friendly atmosphere on the day is a testament to her and her fellow volunteers. Families and friends that hadn't had a chance to meet for some time could be seen hugging

and holding hands, chatting in the aisles as they browsed and bought. Past students came in, much more mature, some sporting unfamiliar mustaches, for a chance to meet up with their childhood teachers. Vendors happily chatted with new and the familiar customers that have come back to shop year after year. Most sellers so thrilled with their day that before leaving asked to be booked in for next year.

When the day was done the Grenville Elementary School Craft Fair raised \$2500 for student activities but it's value -in my opinion- is worth much, much more.





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 info@qfhsa.org for our next issue in March 2020.



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