

Annual Report

2011-2012

Western Québec School Board
June 2013



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PREAMBLE

The Western Québec School Board, through its strategic plan, establishes a general framework by which decisions are made regarding our stated future outcomes, as well as how these outcomes will be achieved, measured and evaluated. It is a process in which our collective efforts and resources are focused towards student achievement and professional development in order to foster an environment conducive to learning, and to strive for excellence. The strategic plan outlines the directions of our organization in concert with the core strategies aimed at achieving our main objective, individual student achievement.

WESTERN QUÉBEC SCHOOL BOARD

The Western Québec School Board territory borders the province of Ontario, and serves 155 municipalities spread across a surface area of over 90,000 square kilometers (twice the size of Nova Scotia). It is the third largest of the nine English boards in terms of geographic size. There are twenty-five schools for youth sector students, three of which are located above the 43rd parallel in the northern region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The remainder of the youth sector schools is located in the southern region of the Outaouais, which partially surrounds the National Capital Region of Ottawa-Gatineau.

The Western Québec School Board's youth sector population is approximately 6,600 students from Kindergarten through Secondary V. Over ninety per cent of this enrolment is located in the Outaouais region, with the remainder situated in three schools in the northern region. There are also five Adult Education and Vocational Training Centres, one in the northern region, and four in the southern region. Enrollment in the Adult sector is more than 400 full-time students.

The Western Québec School Board employs more than 1,000 people in several categories of employment, most of them working directly with students.

Programs and services offered by the Western Québec School Board vary from core English programs to full French immersion programs, transition programs, work oriented training programs, pre-kindergarten, daycare services, sports, cultural, and social activities, and a variety of other services offered in the schools and centres.

CHALLENGES

In addition to its large and partly remote territory, the Western Québec School Board faces many challenges that include socio-economic disadvantage, a high rate of students who are identified as special needs, important ongoing budget cuts, a high mobility rate between provinces, high declining enrolment in several of our sectors, and capacity issues in our urban core sector. Although the School Board has put in place strategies to minimize and overcome these obstacles, it is important that the strategies put in place focus first and foremost on student success.

Law 101 and Enrolment:

The Western Québec School Board operates in a predominantly francophone environment and the accessibility to English instruction is limited to the provisions of the Charter of the French language (law 101). This makes it more difficult for parents to access the public English school system in Québec. Immigrants and those who received a French education in Québec or in another province are denied access to English public schools. Only when a parent meets certain requirements, can a child, and any of their siblings, be educated in English. Consequently, the English school boards in the province, including the Western Québec School Board, are facing declining enrolment while French school boards are anticipating a significant increase in enrolment.

Since 2001, the Western Québec School Board enrolment has declined from 8,158 to 6,572, representing a net loss of 1,700 students. Although our schools have implemented different models of programs, and the Board has developed marketing strategies to overcome the declining enrolment, the birth rate in the province coupled with the requirements of Law 101 to English education, continue to be obstacles that limit the growth of enrolment. Nonetheless, the enrolment projections are expected to increase slightly in the next five years to 6,800 students.

High mobility rate:

Many of the Western Québec School Board's schools border the province of Ontario. People often move back and forth between the two provinces in search of the best living conditions. This common trend results in a high mobility rate for the student population. Consequently, the School Board's dropout rate is inflated as a result of high school students moving out of the province without a high school diploma or certification. As well, this often creates a problem in regards to retaining teaching staff.

Students with Special Needs:

One of the Western Québec School Board's objectives is to increase the retention and the success of students with special needs. While we are proud of the strides we have made over the past few years in supporting students with special needs and securing success rates significantly higher than provincial ones, WQSB continues to face challenges in this area. Equitable educational services must be accessible to all students; therefore, students with special needs must have the same learning opportunities as others regardless of their geographic location. As the special needs student population is growing and the regular student population is decreasing, the school board's prime challenge is to continue providing the same level of quality education in all of the schools within its jurisdiction.

Socio-Economic Ranking:

In Quebec each school has been assigned a ranking number (1 to 10) based on the socio-economic factor. The socio-economic rank is based on mothers without high school diplomas and parents being inactive in the work force. The higher the ranking and therefore the socio-economic disadvantage, the more challenging it is for students to achieve success. In schools with rankings of 8, 9 and 10 additional grants are allocated to support educational initiatives and programs.

Budgets:

In a time of provincial budget cuts, notably in the education sector, the Western Québec School Board budget has experienced its share of cuts over the last few years. In fact, these cuts were largely attributed to the precarious state of public finance in the province. As previously stated, the decline in enrolment has accelerated the loss of financial resources. Despite the budget constraints, the School Board has managed to minimize the impact on the delivery of education while decreasing administrative and operational cost.

Retention and Recruitment:

The Western Québec School Board employs approximately 1,000 full-time and part-time people across its vast territory. School board initiatives are set in place to promote recruitment activities while developing new strategies to retain the qualified personnel. Recruiting and retaining qualified personnel in rural areas remains a challenging reality, notably in the teaching and professional fields.

VISION & MISSION STATEMENT

The Western Québec School Board, which covers a vast and diverse area, is an English school system dedicated to developing life-long learners who contribute to society and are prepared for the future.

We are committed to academic excellence, quality education and social, emotional and moral development.

We respect and promote the rights and responsibilities of the individual while maintaining student centred learning in a safe and healthy environment.

We value our parents and communities as partners involved in working collaboratively with us to enrich our programmes and achieve our goals.

PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Western Québec School Board must ensure three key principles when undertaking any initiative within the strategic plan and partnership agreement:

1. The initiative must be viable and sustainable
2. The initiative must be accessible to all
3. The initiative must provide the same quality of opportunity for all

These principles were the core foundation on which the strategic plan was developed in order to meet our challenges.

1. Increasing graduation and qualification rates for all students in all sectors
2. Maintaining viable community schools and centres in times of declining enrollment
3. Optimizing and aligning financial resources to support the School Board's strategic direction

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The Western Québec School Board must continue to develop as a learning organization, and support individual communities dedicated to lifelong learning.

Strategic Direction 1: Continue to increase individual student achievement

- a. Increase graduation rates and certification of all students in schools and centers
- b. Close the attainment “gap”






Strategic Direction 2: Cultivate staff development and learning within a culture of best practices

- a. Create learning partnerships
- b. Develop and sustain learning networks
- c. Promote staff growth in a knowledge managed organization

Strategic Direction 3: Establish and maintain safe and healthy school learning communities

- a. Promote a safe and secure learning environment in schools/centres
- b. Promote healthy lifestyles
- c. Promote extra-curricular activities

Our 2011/2012 Partnership Agreement clearly indicates the School Board’s core objectives, targeted results, and methods of assessing the achievement of objectives. The five objectives are:

-  Increase graduation and qualification rates of students under the age of 20
-  Improve the quality of French Second Language and improve the quality of English Language arts
-  Improve the retention and academic success of certain groups of students including students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities
-  Improve the health and safety environment in schools
-  Increase the number of students under the age of 20 in vocational training

Action Plan

Western Québec Direction 1: Increase individual student achievement

Target Areas	Strategies	Indicators	2011-2012 Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Decrease the number of leavers -Maximize the potential of the individual student -Ensure that all students have access to the support they need for success (regardless of the geographical location) -Increasing success rates in the core and certifying subjects (math, science, history and languages) -Increase the success rates of French as a second language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify potential leavers, and work with them in order to implement preventative strategies. -Portal Community for different teachable subjects. This initiative is offered by teacher-leaders, and provides remote access to additional resources as needed. -Building various networks, providing sharing and learning opportunities for teachers, principals, consultants and support staff -Board-wide subject networks in Social Sciences, Science, Math, FSL and Literacy -Distance Learning for students (delivery provided in partnership with LEARN) -Support for student in transition phases: Identify students with academic difficulties in order to monitor the transition from Cycle 3.2 to Cycle 1 -Summer school -Rosetta Stone Initiative (support for FSL) -Develop student performance Exemplars -Monitor progress (success rates) -Appropriate Program Placement for students in pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Higher graduation and qualification rates -Reduced number leavers -Success rates in MELS exams 	<p><u>Graduation and Qualification Rates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In 2012, 74% of our Secondary V students graduated with a Secondary Studies Diploma. (Note, many of those who did not receive the diploma returned to school to continue working toward it) - Our 2004, 7 year cohort graduation rate was 72.9%. (Note this rate is adversely impacted by the high mobility rate of the cohort who move out of province) - In the WOTP pathways, 68% of those students in year three of Pre-work received certification while 48% of student in Semi-skilled were granted certification. <p><u>Leavers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -in 2011-2012, 132 students left the system, an annual decrease of 86 since the benchmark year of 2010. It is important to note that of these leavers, 32 indicated quit, while more than 30 moved out of province. The remainder have shifted to other schools or centres. <p><u>Success Rates in MELS exams</u></p> <p><u>Cycle 3.2 Elementary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The 2012 success rate on the Cycle 3.2 Math exam was 66% (F- 64% M-66%). This is in an increase of two % from 2011, but 9% from our 2013 target of 75% success. -The 2012 success rate on the Cycle 3.2 English Language Arts exam was 86% (F- 86% M-81%), This is an increase of 17% from 2011 and exceeds our target of 75% success. -The 2012 success rate on the Cycle 3.2

			<p>French Second Language exam was 81% (F-83% M-79%), This is an increase of 14% from 2011 and exceeds our target of 75% success.</p> <p><u>MELS Secondary Uniform Exam Success Rates</u> Below find a compilation of the success rates on the 2012 uniform exams. It is important to note that this is the first year of Uniform exams at the secondary level since the implementation of the QEP. In the areas of History, Applied Science, and Math we are below our targets for 2016. In English Language Arts we are on target and in French Second Language we have exceeded our target in reading but are below the target in writing.</p> <p><u>Secondary IV</u> History and Citizen Ship: 59.7% CST Math: 76.2% Science Math: 76.6% Applied Science: 52.9% General Science: 82.6%</p> <p><u>Secondary V</u> French Second Language (writing component):80% French Second Language (reading component):67.9% Secondary V Ministry English Language Arts: 93%</p>
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Western Québec Direction 2: Cultivate staff development and learning within a culture of best practices			
Target Areas	Strategies	Indicators	2011-2012 Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop support networks for teachers and support staff within the system -Increase retention of new teachers -Ensure quality of teaching and learning - Provide sharing opportunities for teachers, support staff and students to motivate and encourage them to maximize their potential -Provide learning opportunities for teachers, support staff and students to motivate and encourage them to maximize their potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -New Teachers Induction (coaching and mentoring) -Teaching and learning programs -Provide workshops on instructional strategies -Pedagogical workshops for consultants -Literacy Leaders -Board-Wide Curriculum Maps -Anchoring Sessions -Resource Bank, ensuring availability of materials and resources in the instruction of French -Guidance Counsellors network -IEP writing: professional development for teachers on the effective writing of Individual Education Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -New teachers evaluated as satisfactory and above -Guidance network formed and operational -anchoring sessions held in Math, ELA in FSL in Elementary -networks in place and operational in core subject areas -exam results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -2012 New Teacher Program (Year 1): 60 teachers, 54 rated satisfactory or better -2012 New Teacher Program (Year 2): 28, all rated satisfactory, 18 rated good or outstanding -guidance group in place, 4 meetings per year -anchoring sessions held in core subjects at elementary and at Sec. V FSL and ELA -networks in place in the following areas: Literacy, Math, FSL, Social Sciences, Science, -exam results, see Direction 1

Western Québec Direction 3: Establish sustainable learning communities			
Target Areas	Strategies	Indicators	2011-2012 Progress
-Promote Healthy Schools and eating habits -Decrease the rate of students who feel bullied and increase the rate who feel safe at school	-Anti-Violence Initiative (consultants helping schools to develop effective programming and facilitate implementation) -Spiritual Animation Program -Training Noon-hour supervisors -CIRT/INCIRT: Crisis intervention teams in schools. An information package to make students aware of this service -Emergency preparedness plans	TTFM survey results on bullying and safety Nutrition frameworks in schools and centres	According to Tell Them From Me survey data the rate of students who felt bullied in 2011-2012 was: Sec. 20%, Elem. 23% According to Tell Them From Me survey data the rate of students who felt safe at school in 2011-2012 was: Sec. 83%, Elem. 87% All schools and centres had nutrition frameworks/guidelines in place

CODE OF ETHIC REPORT

All Commissioners are subject to a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. During the 2011-2012 school year, no breaches of this code were reported. All members of the Council of Commissioners respected their duties and obligations as set forth in the code. The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct applicable to the WQSB Commissioners can be consulted by the public on the school board's website at: <http://cswq.wqsb.qc.ca>

REPORT ON THE REDUCTION PLAN AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES (BILL 100)

With the adoption of Bill 100 in the year 2010, the legislative purpose was to reinstate a provincial balance budget in the year 2013/2014 by introducing new measures in several of the Provincial Ministries and Agencies. These new measures, notably in the education sector, targeted a reduction in administrative fees along with the abolishment of one administrative position for every two retirements. Following are the targets and are in effect as of the 2010/2011 school year:

1. School boards must reduce their administrative cost by 10% by the year 2013/2014.
2. School boards must reduce cost associated to professional development, travel, and publicity by 25%. The reduction may be applied globally within all of three areas.
3. School boards must reduce their management and administrative personnel through attrition (2:1).
4. All performance bonus “prime” is suspended until further 2014/2015.
5. School boards must provide an account thereof on an annual basis.

As of June 30, 2012,

- ✚ Three (3) administrative positions were abolished by the School Board.
- ✚ The administrative fees was reduced by \$184 000 since 2009/2010, a net decrease of 10.4 %
- ✚ The professional development, travel, and publicity budget was reduced by \$68 000 since 2009/2010, a net decrease of 37%.
- ✚ Performance bonuses were not allocated as per a provincial decree
- ✚ The School Board produced an annual report to the MELS

OMBUDSMAN REPORT

GATINEAU

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Letellier Gosselin
A V O C A T S - B A R R I S T E R S

Gatineau, le 22 novembre 2012

By email: rvezina@wqsb.qc.ca

Mr. Richard Vézina
Director of Legal Services,
Secretary General
Western Quebec School Board
15 rue Katimavik
Gatineau (Québec) J9J 0E9

Objet: Western Quebec School Board Student Ombudsman
N/d: 17962YL

Dear Sir,

As required by law, I am pleased to submit my first yearly report as the Western Quebec School Board's Ombudsman, for consideration by your Council of Commissioners.

Since the ombudsman is new to parents or students, they were obviously not familiar with its existence and powers. Therefore the school year ending July 1st 2012 was not particularly busy. The same cannot be said of the present school year as my next report will indicate.

I must also indicate to the School Board that most of my contacts with parents last year resulted in directing them through the grievance process as provided for, in the School Board's bylaws. I am happy to report that none of these complainants had to require further involvement from me.

Furthermore, the School Board's management team must be commended and thanked for their availability and openness to my interventions. The best proof of this resides in the fact that I did not fill any appeals before Council last year.

Also, none of the complaints dealt with bullying and similar conducts.

I was involved in one file which required my presence at Darcy McGee which resulted in a settlement of the issue at hand. The other six files that I was involved in, have been dealt with by phone or a meeting at my office.

One file started at the beginning of 2012 and was ongoing until I recently settled it by being present at a meeting at Philemon Wright.

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A V O C A T S - B A R R I S T E R S

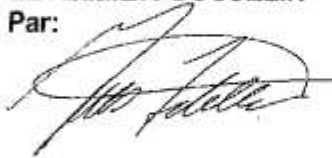
As you may be aware, for reasons of confidentiality, I am unable to divulge the names of the people involved.

I am looking forward to continue working with the students and parents of Western Quebec School Board and I am available to meet with Council if required.

Yours Truly

LETELLIER GOSSELIN

Par:



YVES LETELLIER, Lawyer and ombudsman

YL/ld