

# Annual Report

2012-2013

Western Québec School Board  
January 2014



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## PREAMBLE

The Western Québec School Board's strategic plan, establishes a general framework under which decisions are made regarding our stated future outcomes, as well as how these outcomes will be achieved, measured and evaluated. It states that our collective efforts and resources are focused towards student achievement and professional development in order to foster an environment conducive to learning and striving for excellence. The strategic plan outlines directions for 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 an 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 43<sup>rd</sup> parallel in the northern region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The remainder of the youth sector schools are 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. 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.

### **Bill 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 (Bill 101). This makes it more difficult for children 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 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's student 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 declining enrolment, the birth rate in the province coupled with the requirements established by Bill 101 to access English education, continue to be obstacles that limit the growth of enrolment. Nonetheless, the enrolment is expected to increase slightly over the next five years to 6,800 students.

### **Mobility rate:**

Many Western Québec School Board schools border the province of Ontario. People often move back and forth between the two provinces in search of the best living conditions. This 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 prior to receiving 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, we continue 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 proportion of students with special needs is growing our prime challenge is to continue to provide the same level of quality education in all of the schools within our jurisdiction.

### **Socio-Economic Context:**

In Québec, each school has been assigned a ranking number (1 to 10) based on the socio-economic factor. The socio-economic ranking 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.

### **Budget:**

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 these budget constraints, we have 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. Initiatives are put in place to promote recruitment while new strategies are developed to retain qualified personnel. Recruiting and retaining qualified personnel in rural areas remains a challenging reality, notably in the teaching and professional fields.

## WQSB ALIGNMENT WITH MELS' STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2013

With regard to the MELS' Strategic Plan, the Western Québec School Board has undertaken the following:

Orientation 1 – Increase perseverance and school success

- ✚ See partnership agreement annual report for actions and strategies with regard to perseverance and student success.

Promote teaching profession:

- ✚ WQSB has New Teacher Induction Program in place which includes mentoring for all new teachers to the Board. This program provides support and contributes to the retention of staff.
- ✚ WQSB has introduced Excellence in Teaching Awards to recognize outstanding teachers.
- ✚ WQSB has Teaching and Learning Programs (Improving and Outstanding) in place to ensure continuous improvement in quality teaching and learning.

Orientation 2 – Respond to training needs of individuals as well as labour market

- ✚ See partnership agreement annual report for actions and strategies with regard to this orientation.
- ✚ WQSB partners with other boards and regional and provincial partners to ensure needs are met. Examples of this are a Carpentry program for the Algonquins of Barriere Lake, Homecare program to five First Nations communities.

Orientation 3 – Pertains to higher education sector

Orientation 4 – Maintain conditions that favour the pursuit of studies

- ✚ See partnership agreement annual report for actions and strategies with regard to this orientation.

Orientation 5 – Support and education system that meets the needs of communities

- ✚ WQSB is an active partner in the Comité d'amélioration de la perseverance scolaire (CAPS).
- ✚ WQSB has developed and offers a full vocational training program through e-learning and using distance delivery (Video conference) to deliver programs between centres.
- ✚ WQSB uses LEARN services to provide small groups of students in distant schools with secondary studies optional courses.
- ✚ WQSB has a centralized Aboriginal Success project to support aboriginal students in our schools and centres.
- ✚ WQSB has four Community Learning Centres.

## EDUCATION

Language Arts Report 2012-2013: the WQSB has a literacy team that consists of a .5 secondary literacy teaching consultant, a .5 elementary literacy teaching consultant and a part time literacy project coordinator. In 2012-2013, the literacy team supported the following literacy networks:

- ✚ Early - Cycle 1 & 2
- ✚ Transitions - Cycle 3 & Cycle 1 Sec
- ✚ Secondary - Sec V

Within these professional learning communities at each cycle level, lead literacy teachers from each WQSB school participated in professional development training workshops to:

- ✚ Explore new texts
- ✚ Consider new Literacy approaches
- ✚ Collaboratively develop lesson plans
- ✚ Share student work and build common student evaluation practices
- ✚ Review Ministry (MELS) literacy directives for provincial exams

The lead literacy teachers within their respective schools:

- ✚ Increased knowledge and capacity
- ✚ Ensured their teacher colleagues received information/resources
- ✚ Shared authentic classroom work and assessment practices

At the end of each PLC all PowerPoints, lessons and supporting documents were posted on the WQSB Portal to ensure that quality teaching materials, projects, and lessons were:

- ✚ Easily accessible to all teachers.
- ✚ Providing for consistency of classroom instruction.
- ✚ Supporting and building capacity in new teachers

The literacy team also attended ministry meetings, assisted with exam preparation, operated Government exam marking centers within WQSB, visited schools to provide on-site support, assisted in training teachers to carry out system-wide elementary reading assessments.

## EDUCATION - PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Our 2012/2013 Partnership Agreement clearly indicates the School Board's core objectives, targeted results, and methods of assessing the achievement of objectives. To view the Partnership Agreement 2012/2013 Annual Report please consult the school board's website. The five objectives outlined in the Partnership Agreement 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

Objectives	Target 2013	Result 2012/2013
<b>1. a. Increase the graduation rate and certification under the age 20.</b> <b>1. b. Decrease the number of school leavers.</b>		
Increase the graduation rate and certification under the age 20.	80,0%	72,7% (2005 cohort of 7 years)
Girls	81,0%	
Boys	74,0%	
First Nations	58,0%	
Decrease the number of school leavers	188	Not available (MELS)
Increase the success rate on uniform exams of secondary 4 subjects mandatory for obtaining diploma		
History and Citizenship (includes Histoire)	75,0%	77,8%
CST Math	79,0%	71,1%
Science Math	85,0%	78,2%*
General Science	80,0%	87,4%
Applied Science	80,0%	80,5%
Increase the success rate of Cycle 3.2 primary (end of cycle exams)		
ELA (MELS)	75,0%	76,7%
FSL (CS	75,0% FSL	76,5% FSL
	85,0% IM	94,2%IM
Math (MELS)	70,0%	68,0%



Objectives	Target 2013	Result 2012/2013
<b>2. a. Improve the quality of French Second Language.</b> <b>2. b. Increase the mastery of English Language Arts.</b>		
Increase the success rate on the reading component of the Secondary 5 MELS French Second Language exam.	62,0%	86,0% (if we include Enrichi the rate is 88.1%)
Increase the success rate on the written component of the Secondary 5 MELS French Second Language exam.	91,0%	84,3% (if we include Enrichi the rate is 86.4%)
Increase the overall success rate of First Nations students on the Secondary V MELS French Second Language exam.	50,0%	
Increase the success rate on the Secondary V English Language Arts exam.	93,0%	93,2%
Increase the success rate of First Nations students on the Secondary V English Language Arts exam.	80,0%	
<b>Improve the retention and academic success of certain groups of students including students with handicaps, social maladjustment or learning disabilities</b>		
Pre-Work Program	60,0%	84,8%
Semi-skilled Training	53,0%	60,7%
The rate of students who obtain a high school diploma (*percentage of students with special needs registered in secondary V on September 30, 2012 who acquired Secondary Studies Diploma - 54/73)	Not targeted	73,9%*
Increase the success rate of students with learning disabilities on uniform exams.	80%	80,5%  63 students wrote 205 exams. There were 165 successful results (80,5%)

Objectives	Target 2013	Result 2012/2013
Increase the success rate of students with special needs in achieving Individual Education Plan goals objective. (regular students).	70,0%	71,5%
Increase the success rate of students with special needs in achieving Individual Education Plan goals objective (handicapped students).	70,0%	77,9%
<b>Improving the health and safety environment in schools</b>		
Decrease the rate of students who feel bullied.	Reduce by 5,0% (Sec. baseline 22,0% Prim. baseline27,0%)	Sec. 18,0% Prim. 21,0%
Increase the rate of students who feel safe.	Increase by 5,0 % (Sec. baseline 77,0% Prim. baseline 79,0%)	Sec.84,0% Prim.85,0%
Increase the rate of students who participate in extracurricular sports and cultural activities.	Increase by 5,0% Sec. - Sports - 51 % Clubs - 49 % Prim. - Sports - 54 % Clubs - 47 %	Sec. - Sports -56,0% Clubs - 48,0% Prim. Sports -57,0% Clubs - 42%
To have a nutrition policy in all schools by the year 2014.	All	All
Increase the number of students in Vocational Training Program under the age of 20.	55	30 (2011-2012)

## DEPARTMENTS

### **Complementary Services**

The Complementary Services Department was active in implementing several new initiatives and continuing with our extensive Professional Development programs.

Professional Development is conducted through our Resource Teachers Network, Learning Communities, PDIG grants and ongoing individual coaching. Karen Hume, a well-known educator, spoke at our open RTN session on the subject of 'Student Engagement'. It was also through our RTN that we launched our technology initiative, providing each Resource teacher with a laptop and the Word Q-Speak Q software for use by students with special exam conditions. The Complementary Services Department continues to focus on the IEPs that staff create and implement for our students with special needs. Additional training for staff was provided through the RTN and small group and individual sessions at the schools. We focused on writing SMART goals and were rewarded for these efforts by an improved rate of success by the students achieving their IEP goals over the course of the school year.

The Work Oriented Training Pathway is in its 5th year of implementation. This pathway is now available at all of our secondary schools, regardless of student enrolment numbers. All elements of the WOTP, both academic and related to the work placements, are in place. Our WOTP Consultant was able to report that we had reached our Partnership Agreement goals for student certification.

The Complementary Services Department accepted an offer of service for advanced training of qualified professionals in Suicide Intervention. Our team of 5 professionals participated in the intensive training program and have subsequently been able to provide expert support to a variety of schools in critical situations.

During 2012-13, there was a focus in enhancing our Complementary Services Portal. It is now possible to find excellent information from our Drug and Alcohol social work technicians, effective strategies from our Autism Spectrum Disorders specialist, programming and intervention techniques from the Speech and Language Pathology team, and presentations from many of the guest speakers at our RTN. Up-coming Professional Development opportunities are also posted as are links to the MELS Centres of Excellence. Finally, we used additional funding from the MELS to hire another consultant for the Complementary Services Department. Anne Armitage joined the department to provide services and support for students on a Life Skills pathway, particularly those students who are integrated in regular classroom settings.

## Human Resources

The primary role of the Human Resources department is to hire, promote and develop qualified and professional staff to ensure that our students achieve their potential. We offer direction and guidance to management personnel for issues involving staffing and labour relations. In addition, we provide all of our employees with services and advice related to careers aspirations, compensation, benefits and disability management.

The operational theme for the Human Resources department in 2012-2013 was change. The year began with a reorganization of the department at the senior administration level with the appointment of a new Director of Human Resources and one support staff position. The Assistant Director of Human Resources retired along with an administrative technician whose main dossiers were salary insurance and pensions. In all, out of a department of seven employees, four had departed either through retirements or transfers. The new structure of the Human Resources department that began the 2012-2013 school year consisted of six employees, three of which were new to the department, and all of whom took on new dossiers and responsibilities. Despite the challenges ensued because of these changes, the Human Resources department was able to maintain a high quality of services to our employees.

The department also took on the responsibility for the New Teacher Induction Program. The aim of the induction program is three fold: 1) To ensure that we support and grow good teachers through collaboration and coaching; 2) To establish a professional standard of high quality teaching for retention in every region of the Western Québec School Board; 3) To provide meaningful feedback to teachers and administrators that encourages professional conversations. During the school year, the Western Québec School Board hired a total of 41 new teachers to add to the 37 teachers in year two of the induction program. These teachers were supported by a team consisting of two teacher leaders and 25 teacher coaches under the direction of the Director of Human Resources. In all, the team conducted 82 classroom observations and evaluations of new teachers. The retention rate for year one teachers was 66% (27), with 17% (7) being unsuccessful and 17% (7) leaving the board for various reasons. Out of the 37 year two teachers 92% (34) were retained, with 5% (2) being unsuccessful and 3% (1) left the board for opportunities elsewhere. As we continue our journey, all members of the Human Resources Department are looking forward to consolidating our new learning to provide ongoing support and guidance to all employees of the Western Québec School Board Community.

## Technology

In 2011 the Technology department submitted a five year plan to the Council of Commissioners for its approval. On June 4th, 2013 the Director of Technology submitted a report for 2012-2013 to the Corporate Committee of the school board. The following is a summary of the major accomplishment of the department.

In the fall of 2010 the technology department was tasked with conducting a preliminary analysis of the network infrastructure. This first report was presented to the technology committee, to senior administration and to the Corporate Committee. The recommendation was that the infrastructure was aging and would require ongoing budgetary resources. It was predicted that over the coming years most of the infrastructure that provided broadband to the schools would need to be upgraded. A technology consulting firm was contracted to provide the WQSB with technical specifications on the architecture of the network and routing to optimize our system. During the school year 2012-2013, WQSB went out to tender, purchased the required equipment, and made major improvements to the technology infrastructure. A total of 97 network switches in 23 buildings were upgraded. As a result of this upgrade, the internet broadband access to schools and centres increased from 1 GB to 10 GB with an increase of 100 MB to 1 GB to the desktop. The goal of this major infrastructure project is to provide stable high speed bandwidth to all of our schools and centers, and ultimately of supporting a “bring your own device” (BYOD) strategy for our students.

As a pilot for our BYOD strategy, the Technology department in partnership with two schools implemented a project whereby equipment, training and support were provided to two classrooms, one each at the elementary and high school sectors. As part of this project Pearson Canada was contracted to provide web based educational resources to support student learning. This pilot project has been extended to the school year 2013-2014.

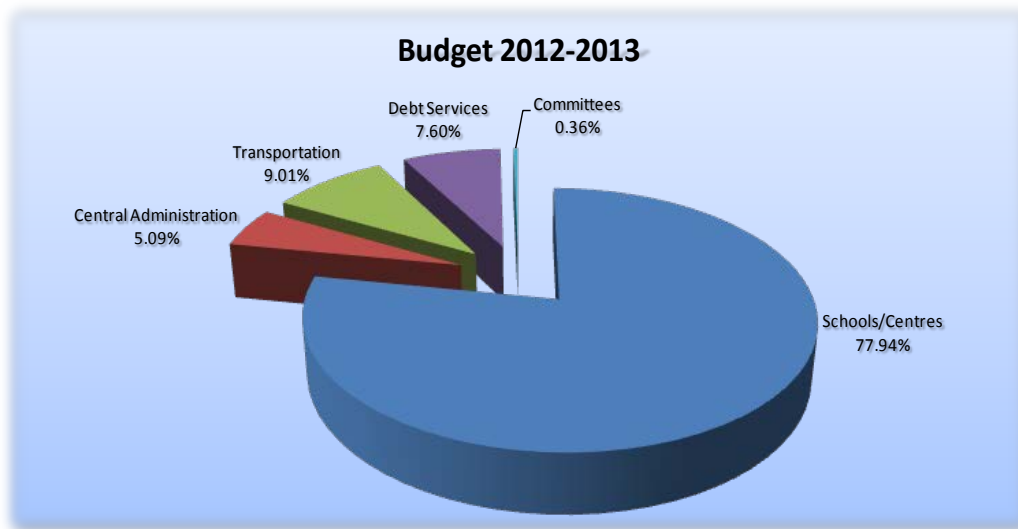
During the school year 2012-2013, the technology department made major improvements to the infrastructure supporting internet services, storage of data and network services to schools and the board office. We have also made significant strides in helping to develop a BYOD strategy in our schools, while at the same time equipping our facilities with modern teaching tools with the addition of 68 SMART boards in classrooms. We are striving to make data driven decisions that are both cost effective and offer our clients top quality service. As more and more demands are placed on the technology department, we are exploring new organizational models to implement for the coming school year.

## Finance

The School Board Finance Department continued to manage and monitor the financial resources of the schools and centres towards meeting their targets set within their Management Educational Success Agreements, for which a Manager continued to support their school budgets and grants. As well, three schools received support on a deficit recovery plan. School audits were performed with no major incidents. Nonetheless, unforeseen events and developments became increasingly challenging with the movement of personnel and the need for cross-training among staff. Considering that this was not a common practice, reorganizing workloads to meet cross-training demands was somewhat of a controlled adventure. For a period, there were challenges of communication, interpretation and understanding, however, by year's end, change was embraced.

### School Board Budget

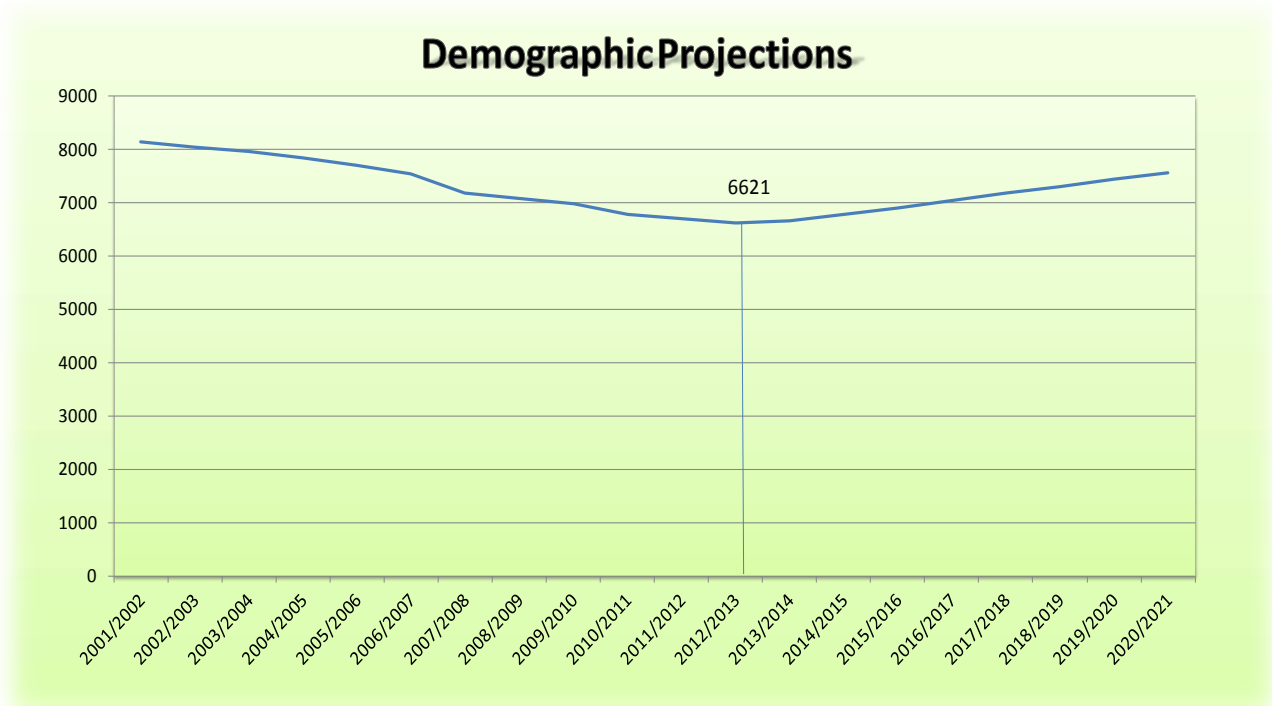
In the summer of 2012, the School Board's annual budget, estimated at \$82 million, was adopted by the Council of Commissioners and is shown as follow:



Included in the budget are school taxation revenues. The taxation team issued 53,121 annual invoices totaling \$11,885,780. This amount was augmented by the portion of the company rate invoicing in CS du Lac-Temiscamingue, CS Rouyn Noranda and CS des Laurentides, to attain a total of \$11,974,514. Revenue returned to the province through revised invoicing was \$332,197 over 10,877 invoices. The portion of additional assistance by the province that was directed into a reduction to the taxpayer totaled \$4,632,233. The maximum taxation revenues calculated in the Western Québec school board's budget was \$16,619,098. The staff rotation and training curve contributed to outstanding accounts totaling \$2.3 million by June 30th, 2013.

In June 2010, bill 100 was adopted by the Québec National Assembly which calls upon school boards to reduce administrative expenditures by 10 per cent by the end of the June 30, 2014 fiscal year. In addition, school boards must reduce their management and administrative personnel through attrition at a rate of 2:1. To that end, the School Board has met its target for 2012/2013 by decreasing its administrative expenses by 29 % from 09/10 (target was 10%) and its travel, publicity, and professional development expenses by 34% (target was 25%).

From an enrolment perspective, the School Board's student population on September 30, 2012 was 6621 compared to 8153 in 2001-2002, a net decrease of 18%.



By the year 2013 the School Board projects a gradual increase of its student population due to the increase of birth rate and should be reflected in the MELS' future demographic projections.

### School Board Surplus

In October 2013, the Council of Commissioners adopted the School Board's 2012/2013 financial statements presenting a surplus of \$ 1 448 086. It should be noted that the financial statements are presently in accordance to the GAAP and take into account land values, capital asset costs, sick leave and vacation provisions. As of June 30, 2013 the School Board's accumulated surplus was \$10 910 574.

## **Buildings, Equipment and Transportation**

Safety and Security in Schools: The buildings and equipment department has undertaken over the last few years, several projects intended to increase the safety and security environment of schools and centres. These initiatives included the transformation and renovation of main entrances by securing all access points to buildings and installing swipe card systems. Furthermore, the majority of the School Board's capital projects (transformation and renovations to buildings) were aimed at improving the school environment such as air quality (new heating systems, mechanical ventilation systems, electronic thermostats, removal of asbestos from old boiler systems, etc.), changing windows and roofs, and updating playground structures and equipment.

Air quality and radon testing were also part of the School Board preventive maintenance program. Caretaking staff were trained on detecting visual mold issues. As well, an outbreak team (specialized cleaning crew) was put in place in the event of an outbreak (scarlet fever, H1N1, etc.).

Emergency Preparedness Plans were reviewed by all school administrators and several drills (fire, lock in, lock out and lock down) were practiced regularly in all schools and centres.

The Transportation Department has also undertaken initiatives to promote safety on school buses. The School Board's annual bus safety campaign was successful which has been showcased both regionally and provincially by winning a provincial award. The school buses were equipped with live GPS systems along with cameras. At all times, safety of students and drivers remain a priority for Western Québec.



## Secretary General

The Western Québec School Board's Secretary General coordinates, oversees and ensures the efficient functioning of the activities and meetings of the council of commissioners and of the executive committee. The Secretary General oversees the Board's policies, by-laws, official records, access to information and protection of personal information, copyrights, electoral process and legal services. The Secretary General provides advice and expertise to the Director General and to all administrators of the school board concerning legal and corporate matters.

During the 2012-2013 school year, the council of commissioners held a total of 9 regular meetings and 2 special meetings. The Board's executive committee held 9 regular meetings.

During the year, the commissioner position for Electoral Division 2 became vacant and was filled by the appointment of Commissioner Normand Young.

After much discussion and consultation, a new and revised Safe Schools Policy was adopted. This was needed in order to comply with new requirements imposed by changes to the Education Act that aim to directly address bullying and violence issues in schools.

As a result of changes to the School Elections Act, the territory of the Western Québec School Board was re-divided for the upcoming November 2014 school elections, going from 19 electoral divisions to 11.

Finally, 2012-2013 ended with the launching of a newly redesigned and streamlined board website. This initiative was deemed necessary to make our site more user friendly and to address a number concerns that had been raised by our community over the years.

## BILL 56 - REPORTS ON COMPLAINTS CONCERNING BULLYING OR VIOLENCE

In June of 2012, amendments to the Education Act were enacted with a view of preventing and stopping bullying and violence in schools. As a result of these amendments, every school was required to adopt and implement an anti-bullying and anti-violence plan. These school plans must include, with respect to bullying and violence:

- ✚ an analysis of the situation prevailing at the school;
- ✚ prevention measures;
- ✚ measures to encourage parents to collaborate in the prevention and stopping of bullying and violence and in creating a healthy and secure learning environment;
- ✚ procedures for reporting, or registering a complaint;
- ✚ the actions to be taken when a student, teacher or other school staff member or any other person observes an act of bullying or violence;
- ✚ measures to protect the confidentiality of any report or complaint;
- ✚ supervisory or support measures for victims, for witnesses and for the perpetrator;
- ✚ specific disciplinary sanctions for acts of bullying or violence; and,
- ✚ the required follow-up on any report or complaint.

As of the legal deadline (December 31, 2012) established to adopt these plans, all WQSB schools had adopted their anti-bullying and anti-violence plans.

Also as a result of these amendments to the Education Act, a new obligation was created for school boards to report annually the nature of complaints reported to the Director General of the school board, the measures taken and the proportion of those measures for which a complaint was filed with the Student Ombudsman.

During the 2012-2013 school year, 3 (three) complaints were received by the Director General of the school board as reported below:

Complaint	Type	Validated		Reported to the Ombudsman	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Elementary	Bullying		X	X	
Secondary	Bullying		X	X	
Secondary	Bullying		X		X

## CODE OF ETHICS REPORT

All commissioners are subject to the Western Québec School Board's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for the Commissioners of the Western Québec School Board. During the 2012-2013 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 our commissioners can be consulted on the Board's Website (<http://cswq.wqsb.qc.ca>).

## REPORT ON BILL 100 – REDUCTION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

With the adoption of Bill 100 in the year 2010, the legislative purpose was to reinstate a provincial balanced budget by 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 for 2013/2014:

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

As of June 30, 2013,

- ✚ One (1) administrative position was abolished;
- ✚ The administrative expenses (travel, contracts, materials, professional development) was reduced by 29% since 2009/2010, exceeding the target of 10%;
- ✚ The professional development, travel, and publicity budget was reduced by 28% since 2009/2010, exceeding the target of 25%;
- ✚ The annual performance bonuses were annulled for hors-cadres; and,
- ✚ An annual report on potential departures from administrative personnel was submitted to the MELS.

## OMBUDSMAN REPORT



**Gatineau, February 12, 2014**

By mail

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

**Object: Western Quebec School Board Student Ombudsman  
O/File: 17962-006 YL**

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To the Council of Commissioners,

I am pleased to submit my second annual report as the student Ombudsman, for the Western Quebec School Board, as required by section 220.2 of the Quebec Education Act. For the purpose of this report I will regroup, under different headings, the nature of the complaints I may have received from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

I must commend the School Board, its employees and representatives for their cooperation at all times and at all levels of my work. My requests were promptly addressed, my calls were promptly returned and my exchanges with the School Board were always cordial and respectful.

Another of my findings deals with the fact that nearly all the complaints, which were addressed to me, had not been dealt with as provided for in the School Board's complaint process. Most parents felt they should involve me at the very beginning of their complaints. In some instances, I accepted to be part of the process at that early stage. This allowed me to act as much as a mediator than as an Ombudsman. I was quite successful in bringing a resolution to most of the situations when I got involved earlier.

### **Registration or eligibility issues**

I have dealt five cases on registration issues. All of the issues under this heading were settled to the parents' satisfaction.

### **Problems based on specific student needs**

I have had three cases of students who had specific needs and special education requirements. All of these issues were brought to a satisfactory conclusion. However, there is one case which started prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 of this particular school year and I understand it's still an ongoing process. I have met with the School Board directors and

the principal. I am satisfied that the problem stems from the parents of this autistic child. I found the School Board to be particularly patient in this instance.

### **Complaints on qualifications of specific teachers**

I have had two instances where parents complained that the School Board did not hire or retain local teachers and hired incompetent ones. I was reassured by the School Board of the process insuring that the hiring of teachers were carryout. I am not aware that any of these complaints were followed through by the parents.

### **Bullying**

I have had three cases of bullying reported to me. One of them dealt with physical violence by an older student on a 9 year old student. I understand this situation was cleared up and I was not called upon to review as an Ombudsman this particular situation.

I was also made aware of bullying on one of the school buses used by the School Board. Again, this case was dealt with appropriately.

Finally and more disturbingly, I was made aware of Cyber bullying by an older student towards a younger female student. This situation is dealt with at the School level through an information campaign either by the police department and/or persons who are professional on this subject. I felt that this issue was not dealt with promptly. Unfortunately for the student, she was so affected by this situation. I am particularly worried since this seems to be a prevalent situation in schools.

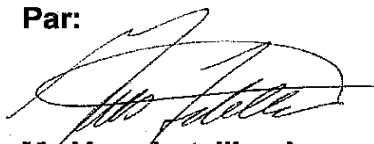
I must add, unfortunately, that notwithstanding the fact that Cyber bullying of minors constitute a criminal offense, when it is committed by students who are minors, the police seldom file charges. In our case, matters could have been worse. I would hate to see a more dramatic event arrive under such circumstances.

I am available to answer your questions when this report is filed.

Yours Truly

**LETELLIER GOSSELIN**

Par:



**Me Yves Letellier, Lawyer and Ombudsman**

YL/gbl

**Letellier Gosselin**