

Western Québec School Board Annual Report

2017-2018

**Western Québec School
Board January 29, 2019**

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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 on student achievement and professional development 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 OVERVIEW

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 25 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 are 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 7200 students from Kindergarten through Secondary V. Over 90 percent of this enrolment is 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 and Vocational sector is more than 550 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 General English programs, French Immersion and Enriched French academic programs, transition and induction programs, Work Oriented Training programs, Life skills programs, along with pre-kindergarten and daycare services. We also engage students by offering a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities in sports, cultural, character building, and community-oriented activities along with a variety of student-centred services offered in our 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 disadvantaged students, a significant rate of students who are identified as special needs, budget adjustments, a high mobility rate between provinces, high declining enrolment in several of our sectors, and capacity issues in our urban core buildings. 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 can make it more difficult for children to access the public English school system in Québec. Only when a parent meets certain requirements can a child be educated in English. Consequently, the English school boards in the province, including the WQSB, are facing declining enrolment while French school boards are anticipating a significant increase in enrolment. Immigrants who move to our region and parents who received a French education in Québec or in another province can be denied access to English public schools.

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 because some high school students move out of the province prior to receiving a Québec high school diploma or certification. As well this has created a problem with 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 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 assigned based on mothers without high school diplomas and parents being inactive in the work force. A higher ranking means a higher socio-economic disadvantage, and that presents more challenges for students to achieve success. In schools with rankings of 8, 9, or 10, additional grants are allocated to support educational initiatives and programs.

Retention and recruitment

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

WQSB ALIGNMENT WITH MEES STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2018

Considering the MEES Strategic Plan, the WQSB has undertaken the following:

Orientation 1 – Increase perseverance and school success

- Strategies are supported and embedded in school and centre management and educational success agreements.
- Promote teaching profession:
 - A New Teacher Induction Program offers mentoring for all new teachers to the board. This program provides support and contributes to the retention of staff.
 - Excellence in Teaching Awards to recognize outstanding teachers.
 - Teaching and Learning Programs in place to ensure continuous improvement in quality teaching and learning.

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

- The WQSB partners with other boards and regional and provincial partners to ensure that needs are met.

Orientation 3 – Pertains to higher (college and university) education sector

Orientation 4 – Maintain conditions that favour the pursuit of studies

- The WQSB supports academic advising activities, career days, student for a day activities, mini-university, annual reports for actions and strategies about this orientation.

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

- The WQSB has developed and offers a full vocational training program through e-learning and is using distance delivery (video conference) to deliver programs between centres.
- The WQSB uses LEARN services to provide small groups of students in distant schools with secondary studies optional courses.
- The WQSB has integrated Indigenous Success projects to support aboriginal students in its schools and centres.
- The WQSB has five Community Learning Centres.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Western Quebec School pedagogical consultants for the core subjects supported learning communities in all schools during the year 2017-18. Mathematics, English, and French teacher networks were facilitated by the pedagogical consultants in all schools in support of their school success plans and school data teams. This is in alignment to ensure “*a Focus on Pedagogy to Improve Teaching and Learning*”. Depending on the school’s professional development plan, support emphasized:

1. Instructional Strategies
2. Curriculum Development
3. Assessment and Evaluation for Learning and of Learning

English Language Arts

Teacher Level Groups, Professional Development, and Board-Wide Marking Centres

- ❖ Teacher Induction Program: ELA overview PD, BAS Training, Introduction to Response
- ❖ Serravallo Strategies
- ❖ Intro to English Language Arts Resources
- ❖ Secondary V Network: Article & Response Writing
- ❖ Engaging in Purposeful Talk: Management Team Meeting
- ❖ Continuum of Literacy
- ❖ Craft Lessons
- ❖ Response/Narrative
- ❖ Daily 5:
- ❖ Feedback/Conferencing
- ❖ Secondary V Network: Article & Response Writing
- ❖ Lucy Calkins Writing Transitions Group
- ❖ Professional Book Club
- ❖ Cycle 2.2 WQSB Common Formative Assessment Marking Centre Anchoring Session
- ❖ Cycle 3.2 MEES Examination Marking Centre
- ❖ Secondary II Common Examination Marking Centre, Anchoring Session
- ❖ Secondary V Common Examination Marking Centre, Anchoring Session

Professional Development Innovation Grants (PDIGs)

- ❖ PDIG: Cycle One Lucy Calkins
- ❖ PDIG: Cycle 2.2 Formative Assessment Creation
- ❖ Elementary and High Schools – individual teacher support and Cycle team support

Board Level Support and Commitments

- ❖ Consultant Coaching and Mentoring Team (CCMT)
- ❖ Management Advisory Committee(MAC)
- ❖ Western Quebec School Board Debate Competition
- ❖ FACET Supporting the professional development of teacher teams participating in this program this year. Facilitating connections between FSL and ELA for the learner.

Provincial Level Commitments

- ❖ Language Arts Network (LAN): Committee comprised of ELA and FLS/FI provincial Consultants + representative from each DEEN, Recit, LEARN, and MEES: 6 Full Day Meetings
- ❖ Programme d'action communautaire sur le terrain de l'éducation (PACTE) Meetings
- ❖ LAN Anchor Group: 3 Consultants and 6 teachers representing 3 school boards take turns every 3 years creating anchor packages for SEC V Provincial Exam
- ❖ Ministry SEC V Validation
- ❖ Ministry Cycle 3.2 Validation

French Second Language

Teacher Level Groups

- ❖ Fall meetings with all new teachers in Coaching and Mentoring Program, going over evaluation, planning, curriculum and teaching strategies. Continual yearly follow-up
- ❖ Cycle 1, 2 & 3, Presentation of a new rubric in writing
- ❖ Secondary II Exam creation team in partnership with GRICS (Gestion du Réseau Informatique des Commissions Scolaires) for FSL BASE & ENRICHI Board wide exam
- ❖ Secondary V Exam anchor session
- ❖ Grade 6 exam produire des textes varies Marking Center

Ministry Projects 2017-2018

- ❖ Programme de formation collective en didactique des langues secondes: *Formation sur les ressources SigNature en FLS de base – complément à l'enseignement de la lecture et de l'écriture*
- ❖ NANS – New Approaches New Solutions – Northern Schools Meetings Cycle 1 – Focus on Vocabulary Enhancement and Lesson Activities

In School Level Support

- ❖ Elementary and High Schools – individual teacher support and Cycle team support
- ❖ Elementary and High Schools – exam roll out session in each elementary school and secondary school upon request

Board Level Support and Commitments

- ❖ Data Focus groups examined current data collection practices aimed to improve the collection process.
- ❖ Consultant Coaching and Mentoring Team (CCMT): included all consultants Teacher Induction Team consultants – review and support
- ❖ Elementary and Secondary Sector meeting support
- ❖ Language Network – Réseau des langues: meetings with provincial consultants
- ❖ Collective Project – Projet Collectif : working with provincial consultants on how to assess the readability of a text.
- ❖ Ministère de l'Éducation et Enseignement Supérieur (MEES) : meetings with provincial consultants as well as ministry representatives
- ❖ Concours d'art oratoire – French public speaking: competition held at the elementary and secondary levels for FSL students as well as French Immersion students.
- ❖ FSL BASE & ENRICHI Provincial Exam Validation

Mathematics

Teacher Level Groups & Teacher Professional Development in Mathematics

- ❖ NANS – Northern Schools Network Cycle 2 – Focus on teaching strategies
- ❖ Elementary Math Focus LCEEQ Math Initiative Cohorts 1, 2 and 3.
- ❖ Cycle 1, 2 and 3 Exam Roll-out Session in May - How to evaluate and administer exams
- ❖ Secondary Math Task Force Annual October Workshop with Ongoing Communication
- ❖ Board wide Elementary Math Exam Creation Teams Grade 2, 3 and 4 English & French
- ❖ Board wide Secondary Math Exam Sit Problem Teams Gr. 7, 8, 9, 10 CST, 10 SN
- ❖ Board wide Secondary Science Exam Creation Teams Gr 7/8, Physics and Chemistry
- ❖ Board wide Secondary Math/Science Exam Validation Teams Gr. 7,8,9,10, & 11 (21 exams)

MEES Success Projects in 2017/2018 Teacher Level Group Professional Development

- ❖ Success MST 27: Secondary 1 & 2 Science Exam Creation. (English and French)
- ❖ Success MST 14: LCEEQ Summer Math Institute follow-up 4 Day Workshop

MaST / GRICS Exam Participation

- ❖ Creation of June Grade 9 Math Situational Problem (World Skateboarding Championship)
- ❖ Creation of June Grade 10 SN Situational Problem (The Cookie Shop)
- ❖ Validation of June Science Grade 9 Applied Science and Technology Exam

In School Level Support

- ❖ Evaluation, planning, curriculum and teaching strategies in math and science.
- ❖ Meeting with Elementary and Secondary Math Teachers for one-on-one discussions from NANS schools in September and May to determine needs and offer growth feedback
- ❖ Management of the Google Drive an online platform for teacher resource sharing
- ❖ Consultation for math binders, classroom manipulative, workbooks, textbooks, evaluation tools and recording, and digital resources.
- ❖ In school Co-teaching and planning with teachers upon request
- ❖ In school and afterschool workshops, principal and school support for Professional Development Plans

Provincial Committees Member

- ❖ Math Science and Technology committee (MaST)
- ❖ DEEN sub-committee Committee Assessment Reporting Evaluation(CARE)
- ❖ Evidence Based Practices (EBP) and Lead Data Team – Action Research (LDT)

Professional Development and WQSB Committee Member

- ❖ Instructional Coaching – Professional Development - Chicago
- ❖ CARE Adaptations and Moderation Workshop Presenter
- ❖ Elementary and Secondary Sector and MAC meeting Focus on Pedagogy presenter
- ❖ Consultant Coaching and Mentoring Team member (CCMT)
- ❖ Jennifer Katz professional development (UDL) and Laura Lipton (Classroom Supervision PD)
- ❖ Thinking Classroom LCEEQ February Workshop

To finish the year, the pedagogical consultants reviewed and planned by reviewing the school's professional development plans. The focus was to support the schools by aligning professional development to their individual educational projects. This helped facilitate the pedagogical consultant yearly plans for 2018-19.

Partnership Agreement

Our 2013-2017 Partnership Agreement (extended to include the 2017-2018 year) clearly indicates the school board's core objectives, targeted results, and methods of assessing the achievement of objectives. 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 2017	Result 2017/2018
1. a. Increase the graduation rate and certification under the age 20.		
1. b. Decrease the number of school leavers.		
Increase the graduation rate and certification under the age 20.	80,0%	(2009-2010 – 7-year cohort) – 75.5%
Girls	81,0%	(2009-2010 – 7-year cohort) – 72.8%
Boys	80,0%	(2009-2010 – 7-year cohort) – 78.1%
First Nations	80,0%	WQSB Board data – 67%
Decrease the number of school leavers (from secondary 3 to 5)	147	61 (leavers in 2017-2018)
Rate of Sec. V students registered on September 30 who obtain Secondary Studies Diploma	85%	88,0%
Increase the success rate on uniform exams of Sec. 4 subjects mandatory for obtaining diploma		
History and Citizenship and Histoire	80,0%	No uniform exam from MEES
CST Math	80,0%	78.5%
Science Math	85,0%	84.0%
General Science	85,0%	80.0% (very small cohort)
Applied Science	82,0%	68.0%
Increase the success rate of Cycle 3.2 primary (end of cycle exams)		
ELA (MEES)	80,0%	88,0% Response 92% Narrative
FSL (CS)	80,0% FSL 95,0% IM	66,0% FSL 94,7% IM
Math (MEES)	75,0%	68,0%

Objectives	Target 2017	Result 2015/2016
2. a. Improve the quality of French Second Language.		
2. b. Increase the mastery of English Language Arts.		
Increase the success rate on the reading component of the Secondary 5 MEES French Second Language exam.	88,0%	65.1% (if we include Français Enrichi the rate is 73.0 %)
Increase the success rate on the written component of the Secondary 5 MEES French Second Language exam.	87,0%	83.7% (if we include Français Enrichi the rate is 85.3 %)
Increase the overall success rate of First Nations students on the Secondary V MEES French Second Language exam.	60,0%	70.8%
Increase the success rate on the Secondary V English Language Arts exam.	93,0%	98.7%
Increase the average mark on the reading and writing components of the secondary V ELA exam by 2% (from 71,0% to 73,0% and 70,7 to 72,7 respectively)	73% Reading 72.7 % Writing	74.5% Reading 77.1% Writing
Increase the success rate of First Nations students on the Secondary V English Language Arts exam.	80,0%	95.8%
3.Improve the retention and academic success of certain groups of students including students with handicaps, social maladjustment or learning disabilities		
Pre-Work Program (2015 cohort who received qualification at end of three-year program)	75,0%	80.7%
Semi-skilled Training	70,0%	44.0%
The rate of students who obtain a high school diploma (*percentage of students with special needs registered in secondary V on September 30, 2015, who acquired Secondary Studies Diploma)	75,0%	Data to Come
Increase the success rate of students with learning disabilities on uniform exams.	80%	Data to Come
4.Improving the health and safety environment in schools		
Decrease the rate of students who feel bullied.	Decrease from 20% to 17%	21% (Sec) 27%(Elem.)
Increase the rate of students who feel safe.	Increase from 84% to 87%	63% (Sec.) 56% (Elem.)
5.Increase the number of students in Vocational Training Program under the age of 20.	40	39

COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES

The WQSB Resource Teachers' Network completed its third and final year's focus on Universal Design for Learning. Jennifer Katz returned to WQSB for a two-day session on Design Labs. We hosted three other English school board teams for this informative and design focused work. We also collaborated with Lynn Senecal from Inclusive Schools' Network to explore her work through 'Teaching with Purpose'. These sessions allowed resource teachers of varying experience to further explore student learning profiles, analyze student work, refine observation techniques, situate student learning and develop recommendations for intervention. These sessions were strongly tied to our ongoing work with RTI, Response to Intervention.

Continuing our implementation of the CASP (Competency Based Approach to Social Participation) program, two training sessions were provided for teachers in the area of Literacy for All as well as a session on anchoring mentor texts to the curriculum content to ensure that teachers could focus their efforts on inclusive practices for our students on a lifeskills pathway.

Western Quebec's Suicide Intervention team, which is comprised of guidance counsellors and a social worker, collaborated to develop a Postvention support tool for administrators in the hours, days, weeks and months following a suicide. These cards were distributed to all principals to ensure that the school teams can respond effectively in the event that such a tragedy may occur. This highly qualified team of professionals continue to collaborate on prevention, intervention, risk assessments and postvention practices.

With the completion of the MEES Policy on Educational Success, the WQSB Complementary Services department reviewed and analyzed implications for the delivery of services for students with special needs. Priorities identified include early intervention, vulnerability factors, success rates for students with special needs, inclusion, Universal Design for Learning and diversity. As we plan and develop future initiatives, these priorities will guide our practices.

WQSB collaborated with a representative from CISSSO (Outaouais region) to support the transition of special needs students (with a significant and persistent disability) from school to active life. This 3 year planning process is referred to as TEVA/TSAL (Transition de l'école à la vie active/ Transition from School to Active Life). This partnership and collaboration will help to prepare students for life after school, by connecting them with outside organizations, supports and opportunities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING SERVICES (AEVT)

The WQSB Adult Education and Vocational Training Services provided education and training to approximately 1000 learners in 2017-2018. The five centres continue to remain a key resource to adult learners in region 07 and 08.

In Adult General Education, the centres continue to see a change in the number of part-time versus full-time students, with more learners opting for part-time schedules. The impact is a decrease in the generation of Full-Time Equivalent student funding but a need to continue to offer service to meet the needs in our five centres. The centres and clientele are benefitting from Ministry of Education grants that target additional support for complementary services (personal support, academic support and partnerships with outside organizations).

In Vocational Training, we have maintained and expanded in our rural centres through the offering of Accounting Studies and Secretarial via video conferencing. Pontiac Centre is the hub for this delivery with Maniwaki Centre and Val D'Or being the satellites. This delivery mode has allowed for small numbers of students to participate in the programs. We continue to offer a full complement of Health care programs although we are monitoring the changing labour market needs in this area and therefore will be adjusting our delivery to stay aligned.

In 2017-2018, AEVT continued to welcome international students to the Western Québec Career Centre. In 2017-18, approximately 45 international students undertook studies in Industrial Drafting, Residential and Commercial Drafting, Auto Mechanics and Welding.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Department

The Western Québec School Board employs approximately 1,000 full-time and part-time people across its vast territory and in 2017-2018, one of our main goals, as an HR team, was to examine every team members role. Accordingly, we adjusted dossiers and optimized our operations in order to be most our most efficient and effective selves. Or goal in going through this process was to provide improved services and support to all employees and volunteers and the schools, centres, and departments. The department reviewed the feedback and formulated solutions to best our employees in our schools, centres, and departments.

A primary role of the Human Resources department is to recruit the best and offer schools, centres, and departments the best qualified candidates for open positions possible. The HR Team has taken on, as a major role, recruiting qualified and professional candidates for all teaching, support staff, professional and cadre positions as they arise to help ensure that our students achieve their full potential. Recruiting and retaining qualified personnel in rural areas remains a challenging reality, notably in the teaching and professional fields. Initiatives are in place to promote recruitment while new strategies are developed to retain qualified personnel.

We are proud to offer direction and guidance to all employees and management personnel for issues involving staffing and labour relations. In addition, we provide all of our employees with services and advice related to career aspirations, compensation, benefits, disability management, and retirement planning. The operational theme for the HR department is to improve our services to support our employees. Our goal is to continually improve and to maintain a high quality of services for all of our employees.

As we continue our journey, all members of the HR Department are looking forward to consolidating our new learning to provide superior ongoing support and guidance to all employees of the Western Québec School Board Community.

As a School Board, we are committed to providing the best possible education to all children and believe that we can achieve this noble goal by harnessing the skills and knowledge that already exist within our schools.

By fostering staff to HR WQSB collaboration in a collective process of learning and support, our HR Team seeks to provide every school leader, teacher and student in our partnership with access to the combined wisdom of our department, external partners and all resources available to us.

FINANCE AND TAXATION

The finance department is responsible for the financial management of the resources for all sectors of the school board.

It develops an annual budget and distribution models of allocations and revenues through collaboration and consultation in accordance with the Education Act. The consultation process includes the Governing Boards of Schools and Centres, Parent Committee, Resource Allocation Committee, and the Special Education Advisory Committee.

Budgets Development

The budget process for 2017-2018 focused on providing the resources to support the objectives described within the board's strategic plan as referenced previously in this report.

The Resource Allocation Committee contributed in the development of a transparent distribution model for resources in teaching and student support. This included the consideration of basic school regulation, collective agreements, and equitable educational services across Western Québec school board territory. Students with special needs was an important part of the staffing discussions held with the Resource Allocation Committee.

The distribution of dedicated and protected funds respected their designations outlined in the budget rules and parameters issued by the Ministry of Education.

The school's and centre's base operational budgets considered socio economic ranking, distance from our urban cores, school programs and the school/centre's population. Safe and healthy environment for students and staff is recognized as imperative to teaching and learning and led to a review of the administrative support staff allotment in schools. Recommendations made by the Resource Allocation Committee were retained. This in response to certain needs expressed by the school senior administrators.

The board's central administration was increased slightly to ensure the boards responsibilities were not at risk.

2017-2018 budget was presented as balance despite the possibility of using 15% of the available accumulated surplus. The priority was focused towards the significant increase in the targeted Ministry grants and their management which included recruiting and staffing as well as reporting for the various positions and initiatives.

Details of the 2017-2018 budget can be found on our web-site at: <https://westernquebec.ca/>

Training, Support and Reporting

The finance department provided training and support to staff throughout the board who are implicated in financial activities. It ensured the accurate recording and reporting of expenditures. It continued to elaborate and maintain a coding structure of recording transactions in accordance with the regulations of the Ministry of Education, as well as for the analyzing and reporting needs of the central and school administrators.

The areas of financial activities include, however are not limit to, teaching activities, professional training for growth, grants, daycares, fundraising activities, user fees, special projects to our schools, centres and department, capital assets, cash flow, school board taxation, bursaries, donations and provision banks.

Staff transition was again a challenge in 2017-2018 due primarily to the availability of jobs at higher salaries with the Federal government and post-secondary organizations. Another noted factor was the announcement of regionalized taxation centres which created uncertainty towards retention of certain roles. The department maintained a focus in regard to training and succession planning amongst its priorities.

School board taxes:

School board tax rates are calculated by applying a formula set forth by the ministry in the provincial budget rules to ensure equity in the operating budgets across all school boards in the province. A key component in the formula for calculating the taxation rate is the property evaluation. The trend of taxpayers transferring their taxation support to Western Québec School Board continued despite the government's announcement of creating regional tax rates. By the annual deadline of April 1, the WQSB had received requests surpassing numbers of the previous year. This resulted in the 2017-2018 tax rate of \$0.13694 per \$100 of evaluation from the 2016-2017 rate of \$0.17978.

Following an active study, the province introduced Bill 166 which set out to remedy the disparity between tax rates within a common region. Changes in the tax rate impacts the individual taxpayer directly however does not change the revenues of the annual budget. The introduction of common regional tax rates was set to the lowest current rate on each region for the following year (2018-2019).

More on school board taxation can be found on our website at <https://westernquebec.ca/>

Financial statements 2017-2018

The department completed the reporting mandates of the Ministry of Education, the Auditor General, the Ministry of Revenue, Canadian Revenue Agency, and other organizations as requested. It collaborated with its external auditors from the firm of Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton to fulfill the year-end audit. The finance department also informed the audit committee of the financial activities of the school board.

On October 30, 2018, the Council of Commissioners adopted the school board's 2017-2018 financial statements. The surplus on operations of 1.92% brings the accumulated surplus to \$15 011 206. A percentage of the accumulated surplus may be made available to the school board in the subsequent year budget in accordance to the budget rules published annually by the M.E.E.S.

The 2017-2018 Financial Statements are available on the school board's website at <https://westernquebec.ca/>

Procurement Activities

The procurement Officer continues to oversee all procurement activities of the school board and provide training to the departments and schools on the By-Law 30 – *By-Law establishing delegations of Powers and Functions of the WQSB*.

Two employees of the WQSB have been designated *Secretary of the Selection Committee* following the completion of their certification by the Treasury Board.

During the period covered by this report, several stakeholders participated in training on laws and regulations pertaining to Public bodies contracts given by the AQCS and the Treasury Board.

The RARC and the Procurement Officer participated in trainings related to their respective responsibilities and participated in training on laws and regulations pertaining to Public bodies contracts, given by the Treasury Board.

In addition, the review process has been initiated to update our Procurement Policy and Procedures to comply with the new legislation introduced by Bill 108 - *An Act to facilitate oversight of public bodies'*

contracts and to establish the *Autorité des marchés publics*. Several compliance deadlines are to be met for the 2018 – 2019 Financial Year.

The following table represents the number of service contracts awarded, with its associated values, during the Financial Year 2017 – 2018, as required per Division VI, section 20 (2) of the *Act respecting workforce management and control within government departments, public sector bodies and network and state-owned enterprises*.

	Number of contracts	Total value
Service Contracts of more than \$25,000 in value awarded to a physical person	3	\$ 106,050
Service Contracts of more than \$25,000 in value awarded to a business	1 (*)	\$ 323,342

(*) 3-year contract starting July 1 2018 for caretaking services

BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

The Buildings Department's main goal is to ensure that all students and staff benefit from a safe and healthy environment. Our caretakers and our maintenance team strive to offer clean and well-maintained schools.

In 2017-2018, we invested over 5.3 million of dollars in renovation projects to either improve the status of the buildings, to increase their efficiency, or to offer new services. The following table lists the bigger projects completed in 2016-2017:

SCHOOL	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
Noranda	Gymnasium Renovation	\$ 600,771.00
	Electric Pannels, Access System, Firesystem	\$ 468,735.00
PETES	Major Repair on Exterior Walls	\$ 259,182.00
	Replacement of Windows	\$ 212,458.00
Buckingham	Gymnasium Renovation	\$ 410,894.00
	Phase 1: Interior Renovation	\$ 452,181.00
St-John's	Renovation of the toilets rooms	\$ 462,611.00
Chelsea	Replacement of Windows	\$ 462,611.00
	Replacement of Doors	\$ 146,265.00
	Phase 1: Interior Renovation	\$ 396,093.00
Poltimore	Renovation of the Washrooms	\$ 236,071.00
Namur	Complete Renovation of 3 classrooms	\$ 1,200,000.00

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

The Technology Department is facing several challenges; increasing needs and equipment, new laws and regulations and increasing threats. Most of our efforts have been concentrated on continuing the solidification and the standardization of the infrastructure.

We continue the migration of the schools on the centralized Active Directory, we installed the System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) to optimize the computer management, and we complete the configuration of Skype for Business as a new phone system and start the migration of schools on that new phone system.

TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM

The Western Québec School Board takes great pride in its innovative induction program, which has three guiding principles:

1. To provide opportunities for on-going professional learning for teachers and administrators;
2. To support teachers through a structured Mentor-Coach fellowship rooted in meaningful feedback and professional conversations that encourage growth; and,
3. To maintain a professional standard of high quality teaching for retention in every region of the Western Québec School Board through a multi-faceted evaluation process.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the Western Québec School Board hired a total of 70 new teachers to add to the 37 teachers in year two of the induction program. Under the direction of the Director General, these 107 teachers were supported by a team of two part-time consultants (75% and 50% workloads), and 58 Mentor-Coaches in 25 of our schools.

The TIP team conducted 40 formal classroom observations and evaluations of teachers in year two of the program. The consultants took on a supportive stance with Mentor-Coaches and year one teachers, spending a total of 78 days in schools conducting informal observations, providing feedback, offering curriculum support, modelling teaching strategies and participating in coaching meetings.

The TIP consultants facilitated large and small scale professional learning sessions for Mentor-Coaches throughout the school year, with a particular focus on framing feedback for optimal growth. The TIP consultants also led lessons at Management Team Meetings, sharing ideas about classroom observations and feedback, as well as establishing norms for the evaluation process.

Building on previous learning with instructional coaching expert Jim Knight, the TIP team, along with two school teams of administrators and Mentor-Coaches, traveled to Chicago to visit three model schools. The team observed and gathered information from schools at varying stages of embedding coaching into school culture. Ideas from the trip have been incorporated into Professional Learning sessions for Mentor Coaches. In particular, several schools are using video, an idea explored during the trip, as a strategy to foster rich coaching conversations and reflective practice.

Of the 70 year one teachers:

- 66% (46) were retained
- 19% (13) left the board for opportunities elsewhere
- 9% (6) were not reengaged due to performance reasons
- 5% (4) were not reengaged due to the unavailability of an appropriate position
- 1% (1) was not reengaged due to preventative leave

Of the 37 year 2 teachers:

- 81% (30) were retained
- 14% (5) left the board for opportunities elsewhere
- 5% (2) were not retained due to performance reasons

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The Department of School Organization & Transportation regrouped portfolios to best serve the organization and reduce costs.

The department's primary mandate is to develop and implement efficient tools and mechanisms that will ensure the ongoing support of both students and school administrators. The department's purpose is also, to deliver technical and administrative support to the organization and contribution to the overall planning of resources that benefit the educational system as a whole. The Department of School Organization also collaborates with other departments thus ensuring optimal support and guidance to all schools while continuing to keep students as our primary common focus.

We have a solid 'contingency plan' in place with the cross-training plan that was developed and implemented in previous years. This plan created cohesion among team members and assisted in the sharing of corporate knowledge across the team rather than any one individual being the keeper of critical information. The benefits of these continued efforts was appreciated once again this year while a member of our team was away unexpectedly. Two other members of our team were able to jump in and help immediately and held the fort for the three months the employee was away. This plan, although we expect it to be modified as a result of some upcoming changes, will continue moving forward.

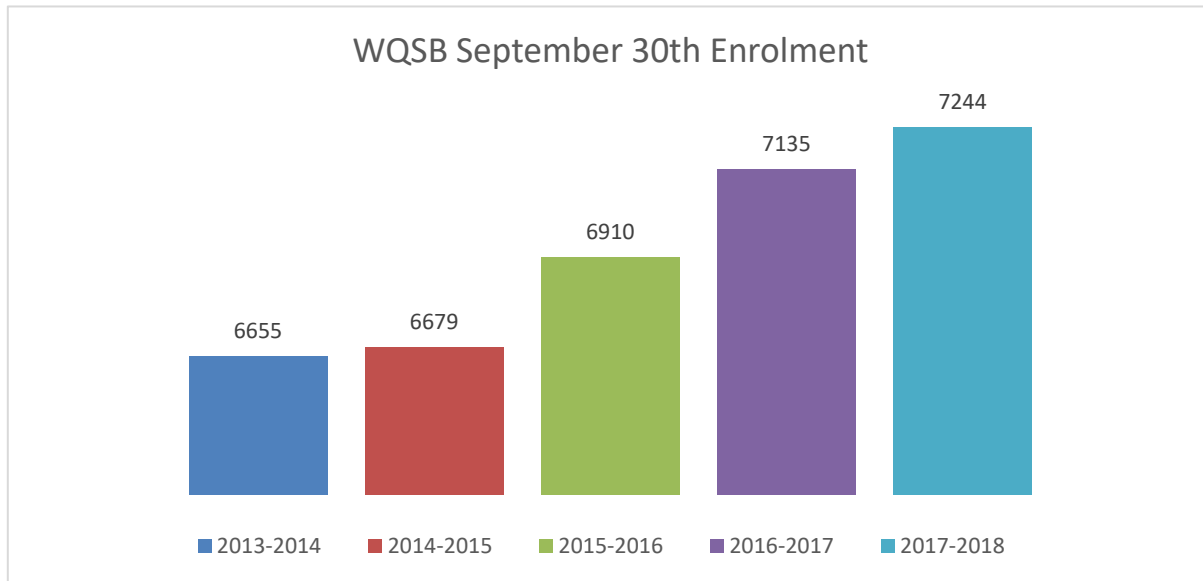
Listed are the different dossiers supported by our department:

- Student registrations and procedures;
- Student file audit
- Bill 101 requirements and certifications;
- Student enrolment;
- Student certification;
- Support schools with pedagogical software;
- Report cards;
- Timetables and scheduling;
- Academic result transmission;
- Data management;
- Management and distribution of exams;

- Cross-boundary requests and approval;
- Transportation

Enrolment – student population

The student demographic projection indicated an increase in the population which we are currently experiencing. The school board’s student population has positively shifted again. For the 2017-2018 year, the board saw an increase in enrolment for a total of 7244 students. This is the fourth consecutive year that the enrolment has increased.



Transportation

The Transportation Department continued with its commitment to ensure efficient, reliable and safe transportation for all its students. We continued to strive to improve customer service responding to the ever changing needs of our community.

With an 8.1 million budget, for the 2017-2018 school year, 119 buses travelled over 11,058 kilometers daily for a total of more than 2,023,614 kilometers for the year. While most of our students travelled by regular yellow school bus, some students required alternative modes of transportation designed to meet their specific needs, and were transported using seven-passenger vehicles. In total, 11 vans were in service travelling 584 kilometers daily.

Among our student population, 85 percent of them were transported to school on a daily basis, which proved to be challenging considering the size of our school board territory. While few accidents are attributed to school bus transportation, nothing can be taken for granted. Once again our department, in collaboration with our carriers, organized an annual safety campaign to promote the continued safety and security of our students. The ultimate goal of the safety campaign is to educate preschool and primary level students on the importance of adopting safe behaviors while being on or around school buses. Professional trainers met with elementary students and made safety presentations where they reviewed the danger zones, safe behaviors, and bus evacuation procedures. Schools also participated in a safety contest where banners, videos and slide show projects were submitted. The selected winners were awarded a free charter offered by the different bus companies.

This has also been an exciting year for our department. The implementation of two new technological tools has resulted in greater communication and efficiency allowing us to better meet the needs of our schools, the board and parents.

1. Implementation of REMIND

REMIND is a web-based application that we have implemented in the department enabling us to provide immediate information with respect to inclement weather, school closures and bus delays to school administration. This communication tool has been greatly received and appreciated by schools and has resulted in significant improvement in communication between our department and schools.

2. Implementation of Digital Bus Reporting

Digital bus reporting is another well-received application that is available via web or APP that was developed by our Team. This tool allows bus drivers to complete misbehavior reports or concerns about students to the school from the comfort of their bus using their mobile device or via computer. The new report takes only moments to complete. It is then automatically forwarded to the driver's employer (our contractor) for approval prior to submitting it the issue to the school. School administrators are then immediately advised when there is an issue that requires attention. This has resulted in very clear, well defined processes that have eliminated the need for paper reports, and allows intervention on serious issues to be addressed very quickly. This tool has not only been well received by the schools, drivers and contractors, but has also gained the attention of other school boards in the province.

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 2017-2018 school year, the Council of Commissioners held a total of eight (8) regular meetings and two (2) special meeting. The Board's Executive Committee held seven (7) regular meetings and one (1) special meeting.

LAW 19 – COMPLAINTS CONCERNING BULLYING OR VIOLENCE REPORT

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:

- an analysis of the situation prevailing at the school
- prevention measures
- measures to encourage parents to collaborate in preventing and stopping 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
- the required follow-up on any report or complaint

All WQSB schools have adopted their anti-bullying and anti-violence plans, which are reviewed on an annual basis with their Governing Board.

Because of amendments to the Education Act, school boards now have to report annually on the following: the nature of complaints reported to the Director General, the measures taken, and the number of complaints filed and received by the Student Ombudsman.

During the 2017-2018 school year, no complaints were received by the Director General of the school board.

CODE OF ETHICS REPORT

All school board Commissioners are subject to the “Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for the Commissioners of the Western Québec School Board”. During the 2017-20168 school year, no breach of this code was reported.

During the 2017-2018 school year, 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 school board’s website.

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Letellier Gosselin Duclos

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

BY EMAIL
WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Gatineau, July 26, 2018

Mr. Mike Dubeau
Director General
Western Quebec School Board
15, Katimavik Street
Gatineau (Québec) J9J 0E9
Email : mdubeau@wqsbc.gc.ca

Object: Ombudsman report for the school year ending July 1st, 2018
Our file: 17962-000 YL

Dear Mr Dubeau,

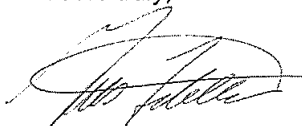
As requested by law, I am pleased to submit my report for the school year 2017-2018 ending on June 30, 2018.

I closed, for the end of school year 2017-2018, a total of nine files from previous years and as of July 1st, 2018, I have no active past files. As you may be aware, for reasons of confidentiality, I am unable to divulge the names of the people involved.

As for the school year ending the 30th of June 2018, I opened seven files of which one is finished and closed. Three files were for bullying.

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

Yours truly,



YVES LETELLIER, Lawyer and Ombudsman
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YL/nm