

# **Western Québec School Board Annual Report**

**2019-2020**

**Resolution #: C-20/21-86**

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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 comprises 25 schools and five adult education and vocational training centres across two administrative regions, 07 and 08. The board's territory is large, covering more than 90,000 square kilometers and spread over 155 municipalities. Schools and centres are located throughout this territory with the largest located in the urban tract of Gatineau. The sheer size of our territory and the dispersion of the English speaking population within that territory have required an organization of schools and centres to meet this challenge and ensure access to our clientele.

The school configuration is as follows: 13 elementary schools, 2 Junior high schools (secondary I and II), 2 secondary schools (secondary I to V), 2 senior secondary schools (secondary III to V), 1 kindergarten to secondary II school and 5 kindergartens to secondary V schools. WQSB operates three joint adult general education and vocational training centres, one adult general education centre and one vocational training centre.

The Western Québec School Board's youth sector population is approximately 7400 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. Enrollment in the Adult and Vocational sector is more than 600 full-time students with the majority in two centres in Gatineau.

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 several full-time four-year old kindergartens and daycare services. Adult general education, vocational training programs, customized training and workplace upgrading are also offered as well as career counselling and referral services to adults. 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

The following realities, while not all directly influential on student achievement, impact the board's ability to make the most efficient and effective use of its resources. The overarching issues that continue to confront the WQSB include distance and dispersion (impacts the organization of schools and centres to ensure accessibility), a high mobility rate (impacts retention and success of students and skews statistics from MEES), socio-economic factors (impacts student achievement), recruitment and retention of qualified teaching staff in our rural schools and centres (impacts the quality of teaching and learning).

### **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.

In alignment with the MEES Strategic Plan, the WQSB has undertaken the following:

**Orientation 1 – Offrir à toutes et tous, dès l'enfance, les meilleures conditions pour apprendre et réussir tout au long de leur vie (Provide to all, from childhood, the conditions to learn and succeed throughout life)**

### **Axe 1 – Prevention and Accompaniment**

- The board has implemented 10 full time four-year-old kindergarten programs in Socio-economic disadvantaged areas
- Early intervention professionals (transition agents, literacy consultants, social services officers etc.) work in all our elementary schools
- Partnerships solidified with outside agencies to ensure collaboration and support for students and families

### **Axe 2 – Qualification and Graduation**

- Strategies for student success are in place in each school and centre and supported by the board's commitment to success plan orientations.
- Programs in place to ensure quality teaching and learning to positively impact student success – these include The Teacher Induction Program, Outstanding Teaching Programs, teacher subject networks, New Approaches, New Solutions school networks and networks to support implementation of culturally relevant curriculum and Indigenous pedagogy

### **Axe 3 – Physical Activity, Sports, Recreation, Outdoor Activities - Pertains to the Sports sector**

**Orientation 2 – Offrir des milieux de vie et d'apprentissage innovants, stimulants, accueillants, sains et sécuritaires (Offer stimulating, innovative, welcoming safe and secure e-learning environments)**

### **Axe 1 – Well-being and Engagement at School**

- There are 8 WQSB schools involved in *Ça bouge à l'école* to promote daily physical activity
- The WQSB runs an environmental Awareness and Outdoor Education program
- All WQSB secondary schools are benefitting from the parascolaires grants to engage students in one hour a day of activity

### **Axe 2 – Teaching Personnel**

- The WQSB has a two-year Teacher Induction Program that provides mentors/coaches to all new teachers to the board. This program supports retention and ensures quality of teaching.
- The WQSB has developed a recruitment strategy to help fill positions in both urban and rural schools.

### **Axe 3 – Infrastructure**

- The WQSB has a plan of action and a comprehensive analysis of the state of buildings.

## WQSB COMMITMENT TO SUCCESS PLAN

The plan objectives and intended outcomes focus on the following areas:

- Graduation and Qualifications
- Equity – reducing the achievement gap between groups
- Language Proficiency – increase proficiency on grade 4
- Educational Path – reduce delay on entry to high school
- Living Environment – all schools in good condition

The table below outlines the Ministry objectives, the WQSB school board data and targets set for 2022 and outcomes to date.

**Important Note:** The COVID-19 pandemic brought the closure of schools and centres as of March 13, 2020, therefore, complete data is not available to update the information below. Only those sections for which data is available have been updated. Updated data will be in bold.

MEES Objective 2030	WQSB Actual Situation		Target - 2022	Indicator	Outcome to date
	2008 cohort	2009 cohort			
Increase to 90% the proportion of students under the age of 20 who obtain a first diploma or qualification, and to 85% the proportion of these students who obtain a first diploma (Secondary School Diploma or Diploma of Vocational Studies)			82%	Graduation and Qualification rate after 7 years of secondary school	2011 cohort after 7 years – 78.7% <b>2012 cohort after 7 years – 84.9%</b>

Reduce the achievement gap between certain groups of students	Boys: 71.1% Girls: 77.9%	Boys: 78.1% Girls: 72.8%	Reduce the gap between boys and girls by 5%	Graduation and Qualification rate after 7 years of secondary school	2011 cohort Boys: 74.4% Girls: 88.8% <b>2012 cohort</b> <b>Boys: 82.1%</b> <b>Girls: 88.5%</b>
	EDHAA:53.2% Regular students: 83%	EDHAA:53.6% Regular students:85.7%	Reduce the gap between EDHAA and regular students by 7%		2011 cohort EHDAA: 57.3% Regular 93.5% <b>2012 cohort</b> <b>EHDAA: 65%</b> <b>Regular 94.8%</b>
	Socio-economically disadvantaged schools:	Socioeconomically disadvantaged schools:	Reduce the gap between the 8, 9 and 10 schools and the 1, 2, 3 schools by 10%		2011 cohort Ranking 1 to 7: 79.8% Ranking 8 to 10: 73.8% <b>2012 cohort</b> <b>Ranking 1 to 7: 87%</b> <b>Ranking 8 to 10: 70.8%</b>
	Ranking 1, 2, 3:78.3% Ranking 4,5,6,7:74.8% Ranking 8,9,10:66%	Ranking 1,2,3:80% Ranking 4,5,6,7:76.8% Ranking 8,9,10:67.2%			
	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>			<b>2018-2019</b>
Reduce to 10% the proportion of students entering secondary school at age 13 or older	13.3%	9.8%	Reduce the proportion of students entering secondary schools at age 13 or older to 8.8%	The proportion of students age 13 or older at entry to secondary school	11.8%

90% success rate on the writing component of Ministry Grade 4 language of instruction exam, public sector	At this time there is no MEES grade 4 exams in language of instruction.  WQSB will set a target on the writing component of the <b>Grade 6</b> exam	85% of students will be successful on the writing component of the Grade 6 English language arts exam	Success rate on the writing component of the Grade 6 Ministry exam	Not Available – COVID-19
All school buildings in a satisfactory state	17% of buildings are in good condition	Increase the percentage of buildings in good condition to 83%	Indice d'état des bâtiments du parc immobilier	N/A

### **Western Québec Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

In addition to the MEES objectives, the Western Québec School Board has chosen to set objectives in the following areas: success at end of elementary cycles in core subjects of English, Math and French; success on MEES uniform exams in secondary 4 and 5; proportion of students registered in secondary 5 on September 30 of a given year who obtain a diploma in June of the same year

<b>WQSB Objective</b>	<b>Actual Situation</b>	<b>Target - 2022</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Outcome to date</b>
Increase success rate in Cycle 2 Elementary English	Benchmark to be established June 2018	90%	Overall success and proficiency in subject	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase success rate in Cycle 2 Elementary Math	Benchmark to be established June 2018	90%	Overall success and proficiency in subject	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase success rate in Cycle 2 Elementary French second Language	Benchmark to be established June 2018	90%	Overall success and proficiency in subject	Not Available – COVID-19



Increase success rate on Cycle 3 Elementary English exam	88%	90%	Overall success and proficiency on exam	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase success rate in Cycle 3 Elementary Math exam	66%	85%	Overall success and proficiency on exam	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase success rate in Cycle 3 Elementary French second Language exam	80%	90%	Overall success and proficiency on exam	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase success rate on Secondary 4 History and Citizenship Uniform Exam	67.2%	80%	Success rate on Secondary 4 History and Citizenship Uniform Exam	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase success rate in Secondary 4 Math Uniform Exam	CST – 71.1% Science – 66.7%	80% 85%	Success rate in Secondary 4 Math Uniform Exam	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase success rate in Secondary 4 Science Uniform Exam	Applied – 79.1% General – 76.9%	85% 85%	Success rate in Secondary 4 Science Uniform Exam	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase success rate on Secondary 5 English Language Arts Uniform Exam	Production – 95% Reading – 89.7%	95% 95%	Success rate on Secondary 5 English Language Arts Uniform Exam	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase proficiency on Secondary 5 English Language Arts exam (average mark)	Production – 74.3% Reading – 72%	78% 75%	Proficiency on English Language Arts Exam	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase success rate in Secondary 5 French Second	Production – 74% Comprehension –	80% 78% 96%	Success rate in Secondary 5 French Second Language	Not Available – COVID-19

Language Uniform Exam	72.2% Interaction – 94.3%		Uniform	
Increase the rate of Secondary 5 students registered on September 30 who obtain a Secondary Studies Diploma	88%	95%	The rate of Secondary 5 students registered on September 30 who obtain a Secondary Studies Diploma	Not Available – COVID-19
Increase the rate of vocational training students who obtain a Vocational Studies Diploma	Benchmark will be determined using 2016-2018 period	80%	Success rate of students obtaining Vocational Studies Diploma (by program)	Not Available – COVID-19

## EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Western Quebec School Board pedagogical consultants continued to support the school learning communities during the year 2019-20. English, French, and Math teacher networks in all schools were facilitated by the pedagogical consultants in support of educational projects.

Depending on the school's professional development plan, support was emphasized with regard to the priority, teacher learning goal, impact on teacher learning, and impact on students.

English Language Arts support included initiatives designed to support new teachers, build shared leadership, and improve early reading instruction while nurturing community ties across WQSB. A new-teacher network grew from a series of four focused, online mini-sessions in the fall. Elementary and secondary teachers participated in The Global Read Aloud, and three optional book clubs for teachers of all grades were offered over the course of the year. Cycle 1 teachers came together several times for whole-day professional development sessions to examine early reading behaviour; furthermore, the sessions were supported within classrooms via consultant school visits. A leadership team consisting of eight teachers from Elementary and Secondary schools met several times to study new texts and reflect on teaching practices. Elementary Cycle 2.2 experimented with regional marking centres, hosting distanced marking triads online. Local school professional development plans continued to be supported in the areas of talk and vocabulary, essential teachings, reader response, and the French-English language connection. Through grants, a networking project that served to unite teachers across the board while using mentor texts to improve student success began; however, due to Covid 19, only one of three meetings took place. In addition to tasks specific to WQSB, they continued to represent our school board provincially on the DEEN (Directors of English Education Network) Language Arts Network (LAN), the MEQ (Ministry of Education) *Programme d'action communautaire sur le terrain de l'éducation* (PACTE), and both MEQ Evaluation validation committees.

Math support included all new Math teachers with planning, instruction, and evaluation. They established the NANS (New Approaches New Solutions) Cycle 1 (13 schools) Math Network and continued the Cycle 2 Network (17 schools). The consultants lead the Elementary Math Focus Task Force in developing a professional development opportunity for Summer Math Teachers (32 teacher participants) and created over 20 editions of the Cube Newsletter for (200+) teachers. They supported schools in meeting the goals outlined in their professional development plans (8 schools). The Urban Elementary Math Leadership Network supported local school needs (12 schools). Secondary Math and Science teachers were supported in ongoing networking for Secondary Math and Science Teachers including curation of resources in the Google drive and sharing pedagogical strategies. The math consultants organized the creation of local and provincial summative evaluations with teachers for Gr. 2,4,7,9,10SN, 10CST, 11SN, Science and the Environment and Chemistry. In provincial initiatives, the WQSB math consultant co-chaired the DEEN-Subcommittee Committee for Assessment Reporting and Evaluation and represented the LCEEQ (Leadership Committee English Education Quebec) Math Sub-Committee to develop virtual professional development to teachers during the pandemic shutdown. They were involved and co-created weekly activities for math students and support documents for teachers across the province during the shutdown.

For French support, there were many focus areas under which the suggested actions were in the elementary and the secondary levels. One focus was acquiring teacher competency with the SigNature Approach. The intent was for teachers to understand its benefits for students' success. It was an intensive two-day training program with follow-up teaching/student learning. This PD (professional development) was included in the schools' PD plans. Another focus was enhancing leadership and accountability through a Data Analysis Project. This involved teachers from all cycles to analyze year-end results in the reading competency. The planned actions included to improve reading comprehension across the cycles. There was an emphasis on strengthening programming to improve achievement in FSL (French Second Language) through groups like PLCs (Professional Learning Communities). Some of the approaches included to facilitate the professional learning discussions amongst French teachers related to a variety of program needs and working on the POL (Progressions of Learning). The consultants supported Cycle 3 teachers with the Evaluation process with the help of the Ministry of Education representative. The last focus was the implementing of effective practices for planning, teaching, and assessment in schools. Unfortunately, some projects were delayed due to the pandemic. In addition to tasks specific to WQSB, the consultants continued to represent our school board provincially on the DEEN Language Arts Network (LAN) and the MEQ Evaluation validation committee.

## **COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES**

The WQSB Resource Teachers' Network continues for a second year with a focus on Wellness, ensuring our understanding and our practices are contributing to a positive, and safe learning environment. Through a better understanding of Social Emotional Learning and positive mental health and wellness, our students will be more available for individual success. A two-day session was held with Sharon Casey from Lavoie Solutions, on the topic of Solution Focused Schools. We continued with our annual sessions to support new resource teachers, special needs programming, a module on Attention and Executive Functioning as well as an intro to "Daily 5". A technology day was held to introduce a variety of tech tools and applications to support students in a diverse classroom. Our spring sessions on IEPs were done remotely through Teams, due to the COVID19 pandemic.

The MEES' Sexuality Education learning content is in its second year of implementation. Schools were supported with resources and materials as well as three days of sessions related to elementary

and secondary programming as well as sexuality education with an emphasis on students with special needs.

Complementary Services has supported a 'Positive Schools' PLC to bring together five school teams who collaborated over the course of the past two years. The focus has been to establish a common understanding of the Solution Focused Approach for Schools and to explore the principles and techniques of the approach. Through this collaboration we strive to enable teams to better work with youth and families to cope with challenging student behaviours and to work as a team to foster a healthy school climate. In this year we completed our third and fourth session with Sharon Casey (Lavoie Solutions), whereby team members began to learn how to coach each other through the approach and the challenges faced in schools.

Other ongoing services for students and schools include:

- Early intervention with social services officers, re-adaptation and speech and language services
- Speech and hearing correction officers supported our SLP services
- Psychological testing and services
- Social worker services
- Pedagogical and special needs consultant services
- Drug Awareness Resource team services
- Sexuality Education resource and PD support
- Special education technician support for students with Autism
- CPI training and support (Crisis Prevention and Intervention)
- Guidance Counsellor support
- Suicide Intervention Team

The global COVID19 pandemic has brought challenges in terms of the delivery of service for vulnerable populations as well as for students with special needs. It has also fostered creative and innovative ways of addressing the need for equitable service delivery for all students. It has pushed our understanding of attachment, well-being, the role of community, diversity, vulnerability and how we define success for all students. Our future planning will, with a UDL perspective, plan for access to opportunities while acknowledging and addressing barriers that will potentially be encountered.

## **ADULT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING SERVICES (AEVT)**

The WQSB Adult Education and Vocational Training Services provided education and training to approximately 1000 learners in 2019-2020. The five centres continue to remain a key resource to adult learners in region 07 and 08.

In Adult General Education, the trend of part-time learners continues in our urban areas, 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 2019-2020 we were able to engage a professional and a social services officer to support learners in our centres.

In Vocational Training, we continue to offer a 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. Our heavier infrastructure programs, automobile mechanics and welding and fitting continue to do well with good recruitment and retention. Our Commerce programs have been adapted

(individualized, distance and blended delivery) to ensure continued viability.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw the closure of our centres on March 13, 2020 and the impact on programs was great. Many students were unable to continue their studies at a distance for a variety of reasons including family responsibility, technology access and health. Centres provided support and frequent check ins as well as opportunities for review. The groups will complete their programs in the 2020-2021 year.

The Pontiac Centre and the Western Quebec Career Centre both offered the specialized Skills Training Certificate targeted to train individuals for employment in long-term care facilities. The graduates of this program were part of the more than 7000 trained to support the health care system.

## **TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM**

The Western Quebec 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 2019-2020 school year, the Western Québec School Board hired 61 new teachers to add to the 46 teachers in year two of the induction program. Under the direction of Director General Mike Dubeau, these 107 teachers were supported by a team of three part-time consultants (70% Amy Curry, 50% Jeff Harvey and 50% Sylvie Pouliotte), and 58 Mentor-Coaches in 24 of our schools. The TIP team benefits greatly from administrative support provided by Rachel Vincent.

Prior to the Covid-19 school closure, the TIP team supported administrators in 48 formal classroom observations of teachers in year two the TIP program. The consultants took on a supportive stance with Mentor-Coaches and year one teachers, visiting schools to conduct informal observations, provide feedback, offer curriculum support, model teaching strategies and participate in coaching and Reflective Record meetings.

All new Mentor-Coaches took part in professional learning to develop skill and understanding about how to be an effective coach. Optional professional learning opportunities were provided to experienced coaches during the school year on a variety of topics including observations, feedback and coaching frameworks.

The TIP consultants developed a comprehensive workshop titled “Planning the WQSB Way”. All TIP year one and two teachers participated in this professional learning session. This workshop, which will become a key component of TIP training, is rooted in WQSB teaching values and beliefs, specifically that students should be engaged in meaningful learning that provides opportunities for all to reach their potential.

Key take-aways from the “Planning the WQSB Way” workshop were shared with principals at the December Management Advisory Committee meeting, with a focus on how leaders can support TIP teachers in applying professional learning and how to provide meaningful feedback about the planning competency.

TIP consultant Amy Curry was part of a WQSB team that traveled to England to visit and observe schools where coaching culture is an integral part of school life. Learning and collaboration made possible on this trip has led to coaching audits in several WQSB schools, where knowledge and best practices from the TIP are helping to improve and shape coaching practices for TIP and non-TIP teachers.

While the Covid-19 school closure limited the TIP team's ability to work in-person with teachers, principals and mentor-coaches, the team stayed in contact with all stakeholders to ensure that support was available and provided.

Of the 61 year one teachers hired in the 2019-2020 school year:

- 62% (38) were retained
- 30% (18) left the board for opportunities elsewhere
- 8% (5) were not reengaged due to performance reasons

Of the 46 year two teachers hired in the 2019-2020 school year:

- 93% (43) were retained
- 7% (3) were not retained due to performance reasons

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### HR Department Role and Goals

The Western Québec School Board employed approximately 1,985 full-time and part-time people across its vast territory and in 2019-2020. Accordingly, our HR goal was to provide improved services and support to all new and current employees and volunteers and the schools, centres, and departments. 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.

The HR department had two main key goals in 2019-2020:

- 1) A continued goal on the recruitment of competent and qualified staff for our schools, centres, and departments. 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; and,
- 2) A continued goal is to process and share the results of the THI survey we participated in April 2019. The HR department will review the feedback and formulate the best solutions for our employees in our schools, centres, and departments.

In March 2020 we began to work with other school boards, the MEQ, our Unions and Associations, Santé Publique, INSPQ and CNESST to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and insure the safety and health of our staff and students. The Human Resources Department worked to develop and deploy

guidelines and processes to deal with the new reality of coping with COVID-19 occupational safety measures, supporting telework, processing medical exemptions and recruiting staff from all categories of employ to support schools and the board office. We continue to work on maintaining and adapting to the COVID-19 protocols, working with CNESST, recruiting staff, developing our mental health strategy specific to the impact of COVID-19, and to develop a campaign to increase our employee participation in our EAP and EAFP.

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.

## **REPORT ON LAW 17 – ACT RESPECTING WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL**

The following table outlines the total number of remunerated hours per employee groups for the period from December 2014 to March 2019. In comparing three columns, the total number of remunerated hours for the Western Québec School Board has increased by 260,664 hours.

<b>Category of Personnel</b>	<b>Jan. 2014 to Dec. 2014</b>	<b>April 2016 to March 2017</b>	<b>April 2018 to March 2019</b>	<b>April 2019 to March 2020</b>
Management	91,738.80	8,8075.59	93,185.90	102,709.40
Professionals	43,639.13	5,3232.34	64,528.47	83,732.04
Teachers	774,020.66	847,118.77	888,202.16	893,982.47
Support Staff	405,255.53	446,060.88	516,627.62	564,353.77
Maintenance	92,318.58	106,083.67	105,092.45	107,369.43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,406,972.69</b>	<b>1,540,571.26</b>	<b>1,667,636.60</b>	<b>1,752,147.10</b>

The increase in remunerated hours is due to:

- a) The youth sector student population increased from 6679 (2014) to 7134 (2017) to 7259 (2018) to 7502 (2019) to 7369 (2020) causing an increase in remunerated hours covering all areas of employment for 2019-2020. Although there was a decrease from 2019 to 2020 the statistics may be impacted in the next school year.
- b) MEES has established a significant increase in Grants/Measures that are directed towards educational interventions in schools. Most of the increase in remunerated hours was in direct services to students (teaching and special education support).
- c) Our school board benefits from the MEES new early intervention strategy by adding K4 classes. These student numbers are included.

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.

### **Budget Development**

The budget process for 2019-2020 focused on providing the resources to support the objectives described within the board's Commitment to Success plan as referenced previously in this report. Consideration of basic school regulation, collective agreements, and equitable educational services across Western Québec school board territory is also an essential part of the process.

The Resource Allocation Committee continued to meet and exercise their role in the budget process.

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

The schools' and centres' base operational budgets continue to include 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.

2019-2020 budget was presented with a deficit considering the MEQ regulations allows up to 15% of the available accumulated surplus to be accessed. The budget planned for 11% use, that being \$1,206,056 of the \$1,632,062.

Details of the 2019-2020 budget can be found on our website 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 centre and school administrators.

### **School board taxes**

For the 2019-2020 school year, tax rates were published by the MEQ for the French School Board's territories and the Western Québec School Board, as with all English School Boards, were required to use the same rate as the French school boards on common territory. This continued to protect disparity between the French and the English school boards on the shared territory, however, as a result the Western Québec School Board had 10 different taxation rates to calculate the invoice of its various sectors of territory.

Taxation revenues 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.

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



## Financial statements 2019-2020

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 Samson et Associés to fulfill the year-end audit. The finance department also informed the audit committee of the financial activities of the school board.

On December 1, 2020, the Council of Commissioners received the school board's 2019-2020 financial statements. MEQ repeated the 15% of the accumulated surplus regulation in 2020-2021.

**The 2019-2020 Financial Statements are available on the school board's website at <https://westernquebec.ca/>**

## BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

The Buildings Department ensures all students and staff benefit from a safe and healthy environment. Our caretakers, maintenance workers and the entire team strive to offer clean, well-maintained and comfortable schools.

In 2019-2020, we invested over 9 million dollars in renovation projects to either improve the status of the buildings, increase their efficiency or to offer new services. The following table lists the major projects started in 2019-2020:

School	Project Description	Budget
Eardley <i>Gatineau</i>	Patching and Painting of Interior Walls and Division of Three Classrooms into Six Classrooms	\$ 320,000
Centre L'Envol <i>Temiscamingue</i>	Renovation of the Roof	\$ 200,000
Greater Gatineau <i>Gatineau</i>	Renovation of the Student Toilet Blocks	\$ 357,021
Poltimore Val-des-Monts	Roof Repairs	\$ 234,353
Pontiac High School Shawville	Interior Renovation	\$ 400,000
Symmes / D'Arcy McGee <i>Gatineau</i>	Mechanical Work in the Laboratories, Renovation of the Changing Rooms and Replacement of the Gymnasium Lighting	\$ 450,000
Symmes / D'Arcy McGee <i>Gatineau</i>	Dismantling, Renovation, Relocation, and Reinstallation of Portable Classrooms from Chelsea Elementary School to Symmes/D'Arcy McGee High School	\$ 350,000
Symmes / D'Arcy McGee and Hadley / Philemon Wright <i>Gatineau</i>	Replacement of bleachers	\$ 150,000
Symmes / D'Arcy McGee <i>Gatineau</i>	Addition of office space and meeting room	\$ 130,000

Wakefield <i>La Pêche</i>	Modification of the Geothermal Equipment and Water Runoff	\$ 803,148
Western Quebec Career Centre <i>Gatineau</i>	Roof Phase 2	\$ 725,000

## INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Keeping information security as a priority, the IT department ensures the development, implementation and maintenance of technological infrastructure; installs and maintains the equipment and software needed for the operation of the organization and offers training to users.

In 2019-2020, with regard to security of information, we proceeded with a Risk Analysis on all information assets. We revised Policy E-9: The Appropriate Use of Information & Communication, and we developed the Information Resources Master Plan. The plan outlines the 4 orientations, the 7 objectives and the 18 actions that will align the technology department with the needs of the organization as well as the obligations of the external public organizations.

Our user support team completed several projects mainly in telecommunications and also treated over 4800 helpdesk requests.

Finally, with the pandemic, our team offered several training sessions on how to use technology for distance education.

## 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 communities.

In a collaborative effort, the Transportation Policy was reviewed bringing clarification to our procedures and guidelines. For the 2019-2020 school year, with an 8.6 million budget, our 118 buses and 12 vans were originally scheduled to travel over 11,500 kilometers daily for a total of more than 2,110,300 kilometers. However, with the school closures that happened mid-March due to the pandemic, our transporters had to shut down their operations until school resumed in May. During this difficult pandemic period, we were able to meet every challenge and successfully transported students in a safe and healthy environment.

Although fewer accidents are attributed to school bus transportation, nothing can be taken for granted. In collaboration with our transporters, the 2020 Safety Campaign was organized and completed just before the school confinement due to the Covid-19 pandemic. All elementary students were presented an original bus safety video created and produced by some Pontiac High School students in which they simulated a bus crash and performed a review of all the bus safety procedures.

## SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The Department of School Organization & Transportation maintained as its primary mandate to develop and implement efficient tools and mechanisms that will ensure the ongoing support of both

students and school administrators. The Department of School Organization continued with its efforts to efficiently and effectively deliver technical and administrative support to the organization. In fulfilling its mission, the Department of School Organization collaborates with other departments in a sustained effort to ensure that all schools receive optimal support and guidance so as to maintain students as the primary common focus.

Of particular note, the Department of School Organization successfully introduced the Parent Portal to all WQSB schools, enabling parents the ability to access marks, report cards, student timetables, and other information as posted by individual schools. Training was provided to support staff, and to parents at individual schools.

Registrations for a number of K-4 schools was conducted via an on-line lottery.

Dossiers that the Department of School Organization supported during the 2019-2020 school year:

- 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
- Management and distribution of exams
- Cross-boundary requests and approval

### **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. The Western Quebec School Board saw an increase in enrolment from a 2018-19 total of 7488, to 8045 students for the 2019-2020 school year. This is the sixth consecutive year that the enrolment has increased.

## **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 support to the Director General and to all administrators of the school board concerning legal and corporate matters. During the 2019-2020 school year, the Council of Commissioners held a total of eight (8) regular meetings and two (2) special meetings. The Board's Executive Committee held eight (8) regular meetings.

Considerable focus was given to Bill 40, a proposal to re-organize the manner in which school boards function in the province of Quebec. Training was provided for governing boards and school administrators. Note that in the fall of 2020, the Superior Court of Quebec ruled to suspend the implementation of Bill 40 for Anglophone school boards.

## **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 2019-2020 school year, no complaints were received by the Director General of the school board concerning bullying (as per Procedures for the Examination of Complaints: By-Law 18), however schools and centres reported 124 bullying incidents and 127 incidents involving violence that led to a major intervention or suspension from school.

## **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 2019-2020 school year, no breach of this code was reported.

During the 2019-2020 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.



**Me YVES LETELLIER**

*Arbitre, médiateur et avocat conseil*

November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020

By email:

[mdubeau@wqsb.qc.ca](mailto:mdubeau@wqsb.qc.ca)

Me Mike Dubeau  
Directeur Général  
Commission scolaire Western Quebec  
15 Rue Katimavik  
Gatineau (Quebec) J9J 0E9

**Référence : Ombudsman report 2019-2020**

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Dear Sir,

I am pleased to inform you of my report as the Western Quebec School Board's student Ombudsman, for the period starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 and ending on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2020.

I was involved in 12 cases requiring my exchanging written documentation to the concerned parents. I was also called to give verbal advice to other parents which did not require confirming this is in writing.

None of the files which I opened are still outstanding as of today and I have not heard back either from the School Board or the parents. Out of all these files, only one concerned bullying. The parents were satisfied with the school board's response.

Thank you for your cooperation through out the year in helping me resolve all of the issues.

I remain.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Yves Letellier", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Yves Letellier, **WQSB ethics commissioner**

YL/gbl

C.c.: [rvincent@wqsb.qc.ca](mailto:rvincent@wqsb.qc.ca)

