

# Western Québec School Board Annual Report

**2020-2021**

**Resolution #: C-21/22-58**

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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 7700 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 the MEQ), 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 MEQ's 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 14 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 10 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.**

MEQ Objective 2030		Target - 2022	Indicator	Outcome to date
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	2013 cohort after 7 years – 80.1%

Reduce the achievement gap between certain groups of students			Reduce the gap between boys and girls by 5%	Graduation and Qualification rate after 7 years of secondary school	2013 cohort Boys: 79.7% Girls: 80.6%
			Reduce the gap between EDHAA and regular students by 7%		2013 cohort EHDAA: 63.6% Regular 90.7%
			Reduce the gap between the 8, 9 and 10 schools and the 1, 2, 3 schools by 10%		2013 cohort Ranking 1 to 7: 82.0% Ranking 8 to 10: 71.1%
Reduce to 10% the proportion of students entering secondary school at age 13 or older			Reduce the proportion of students entering secondary schools at age 13 or older to 8.8%	The proportion of students aged 13 or older at entry to secondary school	Data not available
90% success rate on the writing component of Ministry Grade 4 language of instruction exam, public sector	Currently there is no MEQ 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	Success rate on the writing component of the Grade 6 Ministry exams	Not Available – COVID-19

		language arts exam		
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 MEQ's 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 the MEQ 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 Language Uniform Exam	Production - 74% Comprehension – 72.2% Interaction – 94.3%	80% 78% 96%	Success rate in Secondary 5 French Second Language Uniform	Not Available – COVID-19

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 2020-21. English, French, and Math teacher networks in all schools were facilitated by the pedagogical consultants in support of educational projects.

English Language Arts (ELA) teachers were welcomed to a new school year with a series of Professional Development (PD) workshops held virtually after-school on the topics of anti-racism, formative assessment, digital resources, and social-emotional learning. New teachers, including non-qualified, were supported in the areas of ELA basics, curriculum, and evaluation. A virtual ELA Café was held mid-year to address new teacher questions and share information. Microsoft Teams was used to facilitate PD and provide support networks across schools. A common formative assessment was held board wide, using an MEQ produced prototype examination, along with a virtual marking centre at the Elementary Cycle 2.2 level. In June resources were compiled and provided for teachers during National Indigenous History Month. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, there were no centralized examination or marking centres held. The ELA consultant participated virtually in the Directors of English Education Network (DEEN) Language Arts Network (LAN) and the Ministry of Education (MEQ) *Programme d'action communautaire sur le terrain de l'éducation* (PACTE).

Math consultants focused on supporting teachers individually and in small groups this year with planning, instruction, and assessment. There were several changes in needs in mathematics education due to the virtual and hybrid environments. The consultants, with teachers developed several editions of the Cube Newsletter, providing rich tasks and pertinent resources to over (200+) teachers. Particular support was given to new and non-qualified teachers over the academic year, generally through Zoom and Teams. Consultants coordinated online professional development with external partners at the provincial level and offered several virtual workshops to meet teacher requests. Modules were created to support teachers understanding the Competency 1 solves a situational problem through the DEEN Bold Project along with locally developed self-pace PD modules for best practices in online teaching strategies. WQSB math teachers co-developed the Grade 9 C2, Grade 10 Science in the Environment and Grade 11CST Situational Problem used in English speaking Quebec for June. A myriad of tools was developed with teachers to assess

competency for January supplementals and end of year summative assessments based on school-to-school needs. Daily support for online pedagogical tools and sharing ongoing best practices happened in small groups in person and virtually upon teacher and principal requests in lieu of in person networks. In provincial initiatives, the WQSB math consultant participated in the Committee for Assessment Reporting and Evaluation (CARE) and represented the Leadership Committee English Education Quebec LCEEQ Math Sub-Committee to develop virtual professional development for the prioritized learning, planning and instructional needs new and experienced teachers alike.

French Second Language (FSL) consultants focused on supporting teachers individually and in small groups in planning, instruction, and assessment. There were several changes in needs in FSL education due to the virtual and hybrid environments. Consultants roles shifted dramatically as the needs of our French teachers were extremely diverse. A one-on-one formula was most efficient to support teachers both emotionally and professionally. Support was given to new and non-qualified teachers over the academic year, generally through MS Teams. The emphasis was to establish and strengthen programming to improve student achievement in FSL. Consultants curated and offered an array of resources that spoke to the various challenges that COVID-19 posed to teachers. They supported educators by re shifting their mindsets and refocusing on essential learning. There was lot of one-on-one accompaniment within the 23 schools that we service. Their main concern and goal was instilling teacher competency amongst year 1 qualified and nonqualified teachers. The intent was for teachers to understand how to plan in class and virtually to benefit students' success. The last focus was the implementing of effective practices for planning, teaching, and assessment in schools through a series of workshops offered to all. MS Teams was used to facilitate Professional Development and provide support to networks across many 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

As we have continued within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, our department has aimed to maintain direct services as much as possible, while ensuring distance services were provided. New delivery models were more fully embraced, with tele-practice and virtual meetings or sessions taking on a more universal approach. Students who were eligible for exemption from in-person learning, were supported remotely and virtual learning materials were prepared in collaboration with schools to ensure students had opportunities that met their individual needs.

The WQSB Resource Teachers' Network continued for a third year with a focus on Wellness, ensuring our understanding and our practices are contributing to a positive, and safe learning environment. We began the year with two online webinars from the Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Management: 'Supporting students returning to school in a time of Pandemic' and 'Understanding the Emotional World of Children in COVID times.' We continued our support for New Resource Teachers with a focus on best practices and resources for academic skills and learning. Other sessions were held on technology tools (Google Read and Write), supports for virtual learners with the Inclusive Virtual Toolkit (ALDI), as well as IEPs for all students. The Centres of Excellence have provided numerous opportunities that have been accessed by Resource Teachers as well as other staff in the school communities.

The MEQ's Sexuality Education learning content is in its third year of implementation. During the ongoing pandemic, the MEQ maintained the mandatory content of Sexuality Education. Teachers had the flexibility to determine the elements to prioritize, keeping within the context of Sexuality Education's contributing role in the well-being of students. Schools were supported with the

creation of a new resource website for staff, resources, and materials as well as a variety of webinar opportunities related to elementary, secondary, and special needs programming. WQSB obtained online training opportunities and programming related to the Quebec content, which allowed for the virtual training of staff and will be available for future benefit.

Complementary Services facilitated ongoing opportunities in the mental health through certified training in Solution Focused Brief Therapy for guidance counsellors and other professionals working directly with students, as well as general Solution Focused Approach training for individual school teams and the provision of resources to support future book studies with Jennifer Katz's resource [Ensouling Our Schools: A Universally Designed Framework for Mental Health, Well-Being, and Reconciliation](#).

Other ongoing services for students and schools included:

- Early intervention with social services officers, re-adaptation and speech and language services
- Transition support for children entering the preschool program – transition agent services
- Speech and Language services with continued Speech and hearing correction officer support
- Psychological testing and services
- Social worker services
- Pedagogical and special needs consultant services
- Itinerant services from Montreal Oral School for the Deaf (MOSD)
- Drug Awareness Resource team services
- Sexuality Education resource and PD support
- Re-Adaptation services and support for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- CPI training and support (Crisis Prevention and Intervention)
- Guidance Counsellor support
- Suicide Intervention Team

Within the context of our At-Risk and Special Needs student population, within the 2020-21 school year, approximately 28% of students in the Western Quebec School Board have Individualized Education Plans that outline the goals, strategies, adaptations, and modifications that support individual academic and social needs. Ongoing support to school teams in the development and implementation of IEPs is imbedded in the services provided by Complementary Services team members.

Partnerships with outside organizations and the Health and Social Services networks (CISSSO and CISSSAT) are strengthening as more direct involvement in the regional and local tables has facilitated increased dialogue surrounding the needs of our school communities.

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

The WQSB Adult Education and Vocational Training Services provided education and training to approximately 1000 learners in 2020-2021 although the delivery was adjusted for the conditions required under pandemic restrictions. Our staff and students adjusted successfully to a hybrid delivery of online and on-site learning. 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 2020-2021 we were able to offer support services in the areas of social work, academic and career guidance as well as consistent referral to partner agencies.

In Vocational Training, our staff and students also adjusted to teaching and learning in a hybrid model due to pandemic restrictions. We offered the short program in health care that saw thousands of new ward aids trained across the province to support the labour shortage in long term care facilities. In addition, we continue to offer the complement of health care programs. 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.

## 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 2020-2021 school year, the Western Québec School Board hired 78 new teachers to add to the 44 teachers in year two of the induction program. Under the leadership of Director General Mike Dubeau, these 122 teachers were supported by a team of three part-time consultants (70% Amy Curry, 50% Jeff Harvey and 50% Sylvie Pouliotte), and 67 Mentor-Coaches in 24 of our schools. Administrative support for the TIP is provided by Rachel Vincent.

While the Covid-19 pandemic limited the scope of 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 meaningful support was available and provided, virtually or in-person as protocols allowed.

The TIP team supported administrators in 44 formal classroom observations of teachers in year two of the TIP program, both in-person and virtually. The consultants took on a supportive stance with Mentor-Coaches and year one teachers, visiting schools and meeting virtually 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 Year 1 cohort in the 2020-2021 school year presented an unprecedented challenge to the TIP program in the hiring of 29 non-qualified (NQ) teachers. This high number of NQ teachers working in WQSB schools necessitated a new approach to support to ensure that the NQ cohort was well

supported and provided with training to ensure that high expectations and standards for teaching and learning were in place for all. The TIP team, in collaboration with WQSB's pedagogical consultants developed and delivered a series of 14 afterschool virtual training sessions for NQ teachers that centred around the professional teaching competencies. Each session brought the competencies to life, highlighting instructional strategies that NQ teachers could put into practice immediately. Reflective questions tied to each session were shared with principals and mentor-coaches to encourage follow up and on-going support. This responsive and innovative approach to professional learning was proactive and effective. Participants shared their successes, principals appreciated the added layer of support for non-qualified teachers, and several NQ teachers have been rehired and are working towards obtaining teaching qualifications. The TIP team was proud to document the process of supporting non-qualified teachers in detail on [Sir George Berwick's website](#).

Of the 78 year one teachers hired in the 2020-2021 school year:

- 59% (46) were retained
- 41% (32) left the board for opportunities elsewhere

Of the 44 year two teachers hired in the 2020-2021 school year:

- 93% (41) were retained
- 7% (3) left the board for opportunities elsewhere

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### HR Department Role and Goals

The Western Québec School Board employed approximately 2010 full-time and part-time people across its vast territory and in 2020-2021. 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 during a very challenging year. We are proud to offer compassionate direction and guidance to all WQSB employees and management personnel for issues involving payroll, benefits, labour relations, and all HR dossiers. In addition, we have provided all WQSB employees with CNESST and Santé Publique COVID-19 safety guidelines and processes, which include training and protocols with regards to staff absence management, PPE usage, and ensuring CNESST workplace regulations. HR has also continued to provide WQSB 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 our employees.

The HR department had two main key goals in 2020-2021:

- 1) A main goal is to protect and safe-guard all WQSB employees from psychological and physical harm due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The HR department will review the feedback and formulate solutions for the of best our employees in our schools, centres, and departments.
- 2) 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 during COVID-19 has been a main stress on school principals, department managers and has had a major impact on schools and departments since March 2020. Initiatives are in place to promote recruitment while new strategies are developed to retain qualified personnel.

Since 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 ensure 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 2021. In comparing three columns the total number of remunerated hours for the Western Québec School Board has increased by 345,175 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>	<b>April 2020 to March 2021</b>
Management	91,738.80	88,075.59	93,185.90	102,709.40	109,729.99
Professionals	43,639.13	53,232.34	64,528.47	83,732.04	84,879.44
Teachers	774,020.66	847,118.77	888,202.16	893,982.47	918,623.19
Support Staff	405,255.53	446,060.88	516,627.62	564,353.77	557,017.84
Maintenance	92,318.58	106,083.67	105,092.45	107,369.43	115,433.04
<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>	<b>1,785,683.50</b>

The increase in remunerated hours is due to:

- a) The youth sector student population increased from 6,679 (2014) to 7,134 (2017) to 7,259 (2018) to 7,502 (2019) to 7,369 (2020) to 7,701 (2021) causing an increase in remunerated hours covering all areas of employment for 2020-2021.
- b) The MEQ has established significant Grants/Measures that are directed towards educational interventions in schools. The majority of the increase in remunerated hours was in direct services to students (teaching and special education support).
- c) Our school board benefits from the MEQ early intervention strategy in terms of our K4 classes. These student numbers are included.

### **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.

### **Budget Development**

The budget process for 2020-2021 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. A safe and healthy environment for students and staff is recognized as imperative to teaching and learning.

2020-2021 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 11.7% use, that being \$1,221,436 of the \$1,562,931.

Details of the 2020-2021 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 2020-2021 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 2020-2021**

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 November 30, 2021, the Council of Commissioners received the school board's 2020-2021 financial statements. The MEQ repeated the 15% of the accumulated surplus regulation in 2020-2021.

**The 2020-2021 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 buildings.

**Air Quality:** We proceed with deepest analysis of the air quality situation in our facilities applying the Ministry of Education strategy of using the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration as an indicator indicating if the fresh air supply in the classroom is sufficient. Our result and actions are as follows:

Concentration	Percentage of Classrooms within that concentration	Actions Completed	
		Non-mechanically ventilated	Mechanically ventilated
Suitable	69%	Continue basic window opening practices	No specific action
Acceptable	30%		
Limit	1%	Continue basic window opening practices and open all windows and doors at breaks	Modification of the ventilation system configuration
Over Threshold	<1%	Installation of air exchangers	

**Water Quality:** We administered water tests on all water points in all WQSB buildings. Water points were tested as follows:

- Test reading following immediate release of water from water point
- Test reading following water being run for 30 seconds

Following testing and recording of results, the following actions were taken:

Test reading following immediate release of water from water point	Test reading following water being run for 30 seconds	% of water points	Actions
Below or equal to acceptable lead level	Below or equal to acceptable lead level	52%	Completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Installation of a sign indicating that the water point had been tested and the results are below the maximum concentration</li> </ul>
Higher than acceptable lead level	Below or equal to acceptable lead level	39%	Completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Installation of a sign indicating that the water point had been tested and that the water must be run for 1 minute before drinking.</li> </ul> Future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Replacement of the water point item (i.e., water fountain)</li> <li>- Reconduct the test</li> </ul>
Any result	Higher than acceptable lead level	9%	Completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Close the water point.</li> <li>- Supply bottles of water.</li> </ul> Future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Installation of lead filtration systems / Replace plumbing.</li> <li>- Reconduct the test.</li> </ul>

In 2020-2021, we received authorization from the Ministry of Education for the following investment in our buildings:

<b>Building</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Hull Adult Education Centre <i>Gatineau</i>	Interior Renovation	\$875,000
South Hull <i>Gatineau</i>		\$675,000
Greater Gatineau <i>Gatineau</i>	Gymnasium roof and Gymnasium Entrance	\$400,000
Dr. S.E. McDowell <i>Shawville</i>	Renovation of the exterior finish	\$453,034
Queen Elizabeth <i>Kazabazua</i>	Renovation of the floor	\$135,000
Poltimore <i>Val-Des-Monts</i>	Replacement of the septic system	\$475,000
St. Michael's <i>Low</i>	Replacement of the septic system	\$750,000
Onslow <i>Quyon</i>	Renovation of the roof	\$525,000
Hadley/Philemon Wright <i>Gatineau</i>	Replacement of the generator	\$475,000
Hadley/Philemon Wright <i>Gatineau</i>	Parking and Bus Lane	\$4,450,000
Hadley/Philemon Wright <i>Gatineau</i>	Renovation of the roof – Phase 1	\$2,000,000
Symmes / D'Arcy McGee <i>Gatineau</i>	Replacement of the Kyttec plumbing	\$150,000

## **INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS 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 2020-2021, it was the year two of our Information Resources Master Plan and the year three of the Ministry Numeric Plan. The pandemic offered us the opportunity to accelerate the implementation of technological tools and to deepen the notions of the digital citizenship.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The Transportation Department continued with its commitment to ensure efficient, reliable, and safe transportation for all its students. We continued to strive by ensuring a quality service to our students and community responding to the ever-changing needs especially during this pandemic.

The organization of transportation for the 2020-2021 school year has been very challenging due to the many guidelines that had to be set in place for the duration of the pandemic. To ensure a safe and healthy environment in our vehicles, below is a list of the ongoing operation management done during this pandemic.

### **Social distancing in buses:**

To respect the 2-meter distance between students, several bus routes had to be reorganized in order to reduce the student capacity as requested by the government.

### **Sanitization of the vehicles:**

All vehicles were sanitized at the end of each day and the frequently touched surfaces such as seat cushions, top of seats, handrails, driver controls were also disinfected between each bus route.

### **Protective Equipment (PPE):**

All bus drivers were supplied on a regular basis with hand sanitizer and procedure masks for students. As a precaution, some carriers installed a clear plastic curtain to protect their drivers.

### **Seating Plans:**

Seating plans for students has been mandatory, enforced by the drivers and monitored by the transportation department ensuring they were respected and updated regularly. Several seating plans had to be supplied to principals when a student was declared positive to COVID-19.

### **Driver shortage:**

Many drivers are retirees and several of them are over the age of 60. Many drivers were concerned of the high risk of contracting the coronavirus and resigned from their position. This amplified the driver shortage which created service issues in certain sectors and route schedule reorganization.

Despite this difficult pandemic period, we were able to meet every challenge and successfully transport our students in a safe and healthy environment. With an 8.9 million budget our 119 buses and 13 vans travelled over 11,978 kilometers daily for a total of more than 2,191,974 annual kilometers.

All elementary schools participated in our virtual 2021 Safety Campaign as our trainer held all the safety sessions with students via Teams.

## **SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

The Department of School Organization 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 deliver technical and administrative support efficiently and effectively 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 to maintain students as the primary common focus. Of particular note, the Department of School Organization continued implementation of the Parent Portal, enabling parents from all WQSB schools the ability to access

marks, report cards, student timetables, and other information. Training was provided to support staff, and to parents at individual schools. The Department of School Organization introduced both the Student Portal and Teacher Portal; training is ongoing for both.

Dossiers that the Department of School Organization supported during the 2020-2021 school year:

- Student registrations and procedures
- Student file audit
- Bill 101 requirements and certifications
- Student enrolment
- Student certification
- Pedagogical software support for schools
- Report cards
- Timetables and scheduling
- Academic result transmission
- Management and distribution of exams
- Cross-boundary requests and approval
- Mozaïc Portal implementation (Parent, Student, Teacher)
- Archives
- File retention (board office and schools)

Enrolment: The Western Québec School Board saw a slight decrease in enrolment from a 2019-2020 total of 7,492 to 7,369 students for the 2020-2021 school year.

## **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 2020-2021 school year, the Council of Commissioners held a total of eight (8) regular meetings. The Board's Executive Committee held eight (8) regular meetings.

Considerable focus was placed on the organization of school board elections, as a new Council of Commissioners took office in February 2021. The election results were as follows:

- Chair: Alain Guy (acclaimed)
- Ward 1: Norm Young (acclaimed)
- Ward 2: Michael McCrank (acclaimed)
- Ward 3: Greg Graham (acclaimed)
- Ward 4: Stephanie Lyrette-Brennan (acclaimed)
- Ward 5: Vacant
- Ward 6: Rhonda Boucher (acclaimed)
- Ward 7: Andrew Cornforth (acclaimed)
- Ward 8: Vacant





November 29th, 2021

Western Quebec School Board  
15, Katimavik Street  
Gatineau (Quebec), J9J 0E9

Object: Annual report from the Western Quebec School Board's Student Ombudsman

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To whom it may concern,

Please receive my annual report as the Western Quebec School Board's Student Ombudsman (hereafter "WQSB"), for the school year ending on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021.

As you are aware, my role does include an obligation of secrecy as to my meetings with students and /or parents. This explains why no names are mentioned in my report.

I was involved in 18 cases this past school year in which only one of them concerned the issue of bullying. This case has been resolved to the parents' satisfaction and mine.

Five of the remaining cases dealt with special needs requirements.

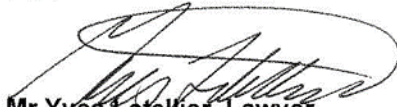
The balance was a mix of different issues, from personal conflicts between teachers and students and choice of school admission to the WQSB's school system. I had a few issues with some of your adult students also.

None of the above-mentioned cases required my ultimate involvement and all the cases were resolved at the WQSB's management level.

I wish to commend the WQSB for settling all the issues I brought to them in a satisfactory manner, leaving no outstanding issue, to the best of my knowledge.

Yours truly,

Per:



Mr Yves Letellier, Lawyer  
WQSB Student's Ombudsman