

Western Québec School Board Annual Report

2021-2022

Resolution #:

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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 six 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, two adult general education centres 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 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). The additional challenges of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic include disrupted learning and, increased gaps in learning outcomes for some students. In addition, the labour shortages are evident in many categories of staffing, not just teaching.

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 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 several changes in delivery (on-site to online) in schools and centres in 2021-2022, therefore, complete data is not available to update the information below. Only those sections for which data is available have been updated.

| MEES 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 | 2014 cohort after 7 years – 77.9% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| 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 | 2014 cohort Boys: 76% Girls: 80.2% |
| | | | Reduce the gap between EHDAA and regular students by 7% | | Information not available |
| | | | Reduce the gap between the 8, 9 and 10 schools and the 1, 2, 3 schools by 10% | | Information not available |
| 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 age 13 or older at entry to secondary school | Information not available |
| 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 Grade 6 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 exams | Information not available |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|-----|
| 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.

| WQSB Objective | Actual Situation | Target - 2022 | Indicator | Outcome to date |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| Increase success rate in Cycle 2 Elementary English | Benchmark to be established June 2018 | 90% | Overall success and proficiency in subject | Not Available |
| Increase success rate in Cycle 2 Elementary Math | Benchmark to be established June 2018 | 90% | Overall success and proficiency in subject | Not Available |
| 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 |
| Increase success rate on Cycle 3 Elementary English exam | 88% | 90% | Overall success and proficiency on exam | Not Available |
| Increase success rate in Cycle 3 Elementary Math exam | 66% | 85% | Overall success and proficiency on exam | Not Available |

| | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|--|---|
| Increase success rate in Cycle 3 Elementary French second Language exam | 80% | 90% | Overall success and proficiency on exam | Not Available |
| Increase success rate on Secondary 4 History and Citizenship Uniform Exam | 67.2% | 80% | Success rate on Secondary 4 History and Citizenship Uniform Exam | No exam in 2021-2022 |
| 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 | CST – 65.3% Science – 88.8% |
| 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 | Applied – 69.4% General – cohort too small |
| Increase success rate on Secondary 5 English Language Arts Uniform Exam | Production – 95% 95% Reading - 89.7% | 95% 95% | Success rate on Secondary 5 English Language Arts Uniform Exam | Production – 96.2% Reading - 89% |
| Increase proficiency on Secondary 5 English Language Arts exam (average mark) | Production – 74.3% Reading – 72% | 78% 75% | Proficiency on English Language Arts Exam | Production – 74.2% Reading – 72.2% |
| 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 | Production -70.1% Comprehension – 55% Interaction – 87.3% |
| 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 |
| 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 |

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Western Quebec School Board pedagogical consultants continued to support the school learning communities during the year 2021-2022. Math, English and French teacher networks in all schools were facilitated and were supported by the pedagogical consultants in support of the school's educational projects.

This year's English Language Arts (ELA) programming was designed based on direct feedback from principals to best support the needs of teachers and schools. The year began with over 50% of Western Quebec's ELA teachers joining for Professional Development (PD) focused on Assessing Needs, Supporting, and Evaluating Reading. In addition, the outset of the year saw record numbers of teachers attending PD sessions exploring Oracy offered by the Ministry's English Programs department. Teachers new to Western Quebec were able to access ELA specific PD through a series of short, self-paced "grab-and-go" digital sessions, as well as a widely successful weekly online Office Hours hosted by the ELA consultant.

Teachers continued to take advantage of two virtual book clubs running over the course of each term. Three Literacy Leader Networks (grades 1-4, grades 5-8, and grades 9-11), consisting of a teacher representative from each school, met three times over the year to study the instruction of language conventions, the use of text-sets, and a final collaborative sharing session. Implementation of the learning from each session was supported by the literacy consultant and teachers were encouraged to share their learning with other teachers in their schools.

In collaboration with the Ministry's Constellation book resource project, three groups of teachers participated in five days each of lesson design routed in authentic texts. These groups focused on the link between literacy and mathematics as well as literacy in the new pre-school cycle program.

In collaboration with Quebec's Inclusive Schools Network (ISN), Pre-School Cycle teachers attended a one-day training focused on Emergent Literacy Resources. Pre-School Cycle teachers continue to receive support through the collaboration between WQ Literacy and WQ Complimentary Services Department.

Three schools (Queen Elizabeth, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and Lord Aylmer) participated in the Français Anglais Collaboration et Transfert (FACET) program in collaboration with Ministry.

FACET supports the collaboration between ELA and French Second Language teachers, providing targeted training and coaching of teacher pairs. Two WQ teachers were recognized for their ongoing success in the project and were honoured with the creation of an 18-minute docu-style video interview examining their experiences. This video will be available to the public and future FACET applicants across the province. Cycle 3.2 teachers participated in a modified version of the traditional marking centre held pre-pandemic. Teachers came together to anchor papers virtually, then proceeded to work in school-based groups to common mark in person. Secondary V teachers came together for five days of in-person marking in June. The ELA consultant participated virtually in the Directors of English Education Network (DEEN) Language Arts Network (LAN) and the Ministry of Education (MEES) *Programme d'action communautaire sur le terrain de l'éducation* (PACTE).

The Math Consultants focused on supporting school teams with their professional development plans and collaborating with teachers around their professional growth. Some of the more notable group projects included; supporting the Cycle 1 elementary math French network, the Cycle 2 and 3 South Hull fractions Professional Development Innovative Grant(PDIG), the ELA/Math Constellations project, the Thinking Classrooms book club and provincial webinars project, the Summer Math Institute webinars and workshops, the Secondary Science Design Thinking Project, the Secondary Science Alternative Assessment Project (SSAAP), Local math webinars, new teacher planning, instruction and evaluation workshops, and the GRICS provincial mini-situational problem projects which had WQSB teacher involvement at Grades 2/4/6 & 7. WQSB math teachers created and

adapted assessment tools from Grades 7-11 in mathematics and science classrooms to meet the changing needs of classrooms according to the prioritized learning with consultant support. This included a myriad of tools adjusted for June, January supplementals and virtual learning settings. Daily support for pedagogical tools and sharing ongoing best practices happened in small groups in person and virtually upon teacher and principal requests in lieu of in large in-person networks early in the year due to challenges finding supply teachers for large group release. In provincial initiatives, the WQSB math consultants participated in the Committee for Assessment Reporting and Evaluation (CARE), represented the Leadership Committee English Education Quebec LCEEQ Math Sub-Committee to develop virtual professional development workshops and chaired the MaST (Math and Science & Technology) sub-committee promoting province wide shifts in mathematics pedagogy.

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 FSL teachers were extremely diverse. A one-on-one formula was most efficient to support teachers both emotionally and professionally. Support was given to experienced, new and unqualified 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 25 schools, 13 elementary schools, 6 high schools and 6 k-11 schools, that they service. Their main goal was instilling teacher competency amongst year 1 qualified and unqualified teachers. The intent was for teachers to understand how to plan in class and virtually to benefit students' success. Their last focus was the implementation 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 MEES Evaluation validation committee.

COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES

As the year began, WQSB focused efforts on the MEES Return to School and Revitalization Plans for 21-22. As students returned to in person learning, Complementary Services reviewed and supported the needs of the school community. Complementary Services returned to full in-person delivery of services and maintained virtual options for distant schools and particular needs, such as home tuition. Telepractice has allowed students in more distant regions, to have consistent and regular intervention. Vulnerabilities and the impact of the pandemic were closely monitored to ensure that special needs students and students at risk of learning or social difficulties were supported with approaches and within learning opportunities that met their social and academic needs.

Our health and social services and community services partners aligned with our priorities around prevention and awareness campaigns, the promotion of healthy habits for mental and physical health and interventions that connected students with the services they required, either within or externally from the school setting.

The WQSB Resource Teachers' Network supported Remedial and Support Teachers in the delivery of remedial services and in keeping with one of the Ministry of Education's Areas of Intervention within the Revitalization Plan for 21-22: Educational Success and the Reduction of Learning Gaps, and Well-Being and Mental Health. Sessions included The Centre of Excellence PIM's session on the CASP-I Education Program and Individualized Education Plans, as well as Resource Teacher modules on resource delivery, learning profiles, Soundprints, Intro to Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Teaching

with Purpose (Inclusive Schools Network’s approach to supporting individual learning needs.) We incorporated more general RTN meetings during the year, to ensure teachers were provided with relevant and timely updates on Ministry of Education and partner initiatives, program developments, supports, trainings, and resources. Sessions were conducted virtually during the 21-22 school year.

Mental Health initiatives continued in the 2021-22 school year, with the purchase of Training modules to support school delivery of training related to the “Reclaiming Our Students” resource book. Resource books were purchased for every staff member working with students. A three-year license allows schools to access the modules and resources to support their professional learning in trauma informed, attachment-based approaches that will help staff build, nourish, and protect the relationships students have with the adults in our schools. Staff have access to video sessions which address a variety of topics that directly relate to the mental health and well-being of students. The Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Management also developed recorded sessions to support the training modules. Continued training was provided to our Guidance and Academic Professionals in the Solution Focused Brief Therapy.

A new approach to support secondary students with challenges in adaptive behaviours, social and emotional needs and integration within the context of the high school environment was adopted. Nurturing Support Centres were initiated in two of our secondary schools, Hadley Junior High/Philemon Wright Secondary Schools and Pontiac High School. The Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Management provided regular training and support for the staff assigned to the NSCs throughout the school year.

Other ongoing promotion, prevention and intervention services for students and schools included:

- Early intervention with social services officer, social worker, 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 2021-22 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.

ADULT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING SERVICES (AEVT)

The WQSB Adult Education and Vocational Training Services provided education and training to approximately 1000 learners in 2021-2022 although the delivery was adjusted at times for the conditions required under pandemic restrictions. Our staff and students adjusted successfully to a hybrid delivery of online and on-site learning. The six 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 six 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 2021-2022 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 continue to offer the complement of health care programs as well as our heavier infrastructure programs, automobile mechanics and welding and fitting. These continue to do well with good recruitment and retention. Our Commerce programs have been adapted (individualized, distance and blended delivery) to ensure continued viability.

We saw an increase in demand for training in our Services to Business and Recognition of Acquired Competencies offerings in 2021-2022 and expect the demand to continue to be a growth area.

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 2021-2022 school year, the Western Québec School Board hired 74 new teachers to add to the 44 teachers in year two of the induction program. Under the leadership of the Director General, these 118 teachers were supported by a team of three part-time consultants, and 69 Mentor-Coaches in 22 WQSB schools, as well as online teachers with LEARN and a teacher at Complexe Heritage.

Capitalizing on lessons learned during the first wave of COVID-19, and in response to ongoing pandemic measures, the TIP team used an online approach to professional learning for TIP teachers in the 2021-2022 school year. In collaboration with WQSB's pedagogical consultants, the TIP team developed and delivered a series of 13 afterschool virtual training sessions for all Year 1 TIP teachers that centered around the professional teaching competencies. Each session brought the competencies to life, highlighting instructional strategies that 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.

The TIP team supported administrators in 44 formal classroom observations of teachers in year two the TIP program, both in-person and virtually. The TIP 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.

Of the 74 year one teachers hired in the 2021-2022 school year:

- 51% (38) were retained
- 49% (36) left the board for opportunities elsewhere

Of the 44 year two teachers hired in the 2021-2022 school year:

- 91% (40) were retained
- 7% (3) left the board for opportunities elsewhere
- 2% (1) is spending a third year in the TIP to receive ongoing support

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Western Québec School Board employed 2242 full-time and part-time workers across its vast territory in 2021-2022. The Human Resources department is proud to offer compassionate direction and guidance to all WQSB employees and management personnel for issues involving payroll, benefits, labour relations, and all other human resource-related dossiers.

The 2021-2022 school year saw the Human Resources department manage Ministry and Santé Publique directives pertaining to COVID-19. This included issuing CNESST and Santé Publique COVID-19 safety guidelines and processes, which included training and protocols with regards to staff absence management, PPE usage, and ensuring CNESST workplace regulations.

The Human Resources department 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 department remains focused on the improvement of services to support our employees. Our goal is to continually improve and to maintain a high quality of services for all our employees.

The Human Resources department had two main goals in 2021-2022: 1) to protect and safe-guard all WQSB employees from psychological and physical harm due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.; 2) continued recruitment of competent and qualified staff for our schools, centres, and departments.

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 2015 to March 2022. In comparing three columns the total number of remunerated hours for the Western Québec School Board has increased by 314,009.83 hours.

| Category of Personnel | April 2016 to March 2017 | April 2018 to March 2019 | April 2019 to March 2020 | April 2020 to March 2021 | April 2021 to March 2022 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Management | 8,8075.59 | 93,185.90 | 102,709.40 | 109,729.99 | 110,735.60 |
| Professionals | 53,232.34 | 64,528.47 | 83,732.04 | 84,879.44 | 90,044.69 |
| Teachers | 847,118.77 | 888,202.16 | 893,982.47 | 918,623.19 | 979,425.74 |
| Support Staff | 446,060.88 | 516,627.62 | 564,353.77 | 557,017.84 | 565,676.47 |
| Maintenance | 106,083.67 | 105,092.45 | 107,369.43 | 115,433.04 | 108,698.60 |
| TOTAL | 1,540,571.26 | 1,667,636.60 | 1,752,147.10 | 1,785,683.50 | 1,854,581.09 |
| | | | | | |

The increase in remunerated hours is due to: a) The youth sector student population increased from 7369 students in 2020-2021 to 7705 students in 2021-2022, resulting in an increase in remunerated hours covering all areas of employment for 2021-2022; b) the MEES has established significant Grants/Measures that are directed towards educational interventions in schools, resulting in an increase in remunerated hours in direct services to students (teaching and special education support); c) the WQSB benefits from the MEES early intervention strategy in terms of our K4 classes; COVID-19 measures and directives resulted in the need for increased hours in all categories.

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 2021-2022 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.

2021-2022 budget was presented with a deficit considering the MEES regulations allows up to 15% of the available accumulated surplus to be accessed. The budget planned for 11.8% use, that being \$1,327,878 of the \$1,683,848.

Details of the 2021-2022 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 2021-2022 school year, tax rates were published by the MEES 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 board 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 2021-2022

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 October 31, 2022, the Council of Commissioners received the school board's 2021-2022 financial statements. The MEES repeated the 15% of the accumulated surplus regulation in 2021-2022.

The 2021-2022 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 continue our analysis of the air quality situation in our facilities applying the Ministry of Education strategy of using the CO₂ concentration as an indicator indicating if the fresh air supply in the classroom is sufficient. We continue our good practice in the installation of MERV13 filters and air ducts cleaning.

Water Quality: We continue the lead project by installing lead filtering system and by replacing water fountains.

Renovation: In 2021-2022, we received authorization from the Ministry of Education for the following investment in our buildings:

| Building | Project Description | Budget |
|--------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Hadley / Philemon Wright | Replacement of the generator and upgrade the emergency power distribution | \$678,026 |
| Lord Aylmer Junior | Replacement of stairs and reconfiguration of the stairwell (North entrance) | \$371,861 |
| Lord Aylmer Junior | Site leveling and water runoff management (North side) | \$325,378 |
| Lord Aylmer Junior | Renovation of the Gymnasium | \$511,309 |
| Buckingham | Interior renovation and upgrading of stairwells | \$627,515 |
| Greater Gatineau | Replacement of the elevator | \$441,585 |
| Pontiac Adult Education Centre | Washrooms | \$251,006 |
| Golden Valley | Interior Renovation | \$1,076,042 |
| Noranda | Exterior finishing, exterior ramps, stairs, and entrances | \$1,162,065 |

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.

Wi-Fi Projects: We continue the replacement of access points in Lord Aylmer, Queen Elizabeth, South Hull, Chelsea, and Dr. S. E. McDowell.

Pandemic: Important effort was put into the support of pedagogy during the pandemic. Over 2500 new devices were configured and installed and personalized support was provided for the use of Office 365.

Security: We continue the implementation of the minimal security measures to protect the confidential information.

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.

As in the previous year, the Transportation department has faced many challenges due to pandemic. Staff continued to work on solutions and communicate changes to affected parties promptly.

Driver shortage:

Since the beginning of the pandemic many drivers resigned from their position. This amplified the driver shortage which created service issues in certain sectors and route schedule reorganization.

Despite the driver shortage issues, we provided transportation services for 90% of eligible students.

On certain days where no drivers were available to cover their route, parents were very collaborative to get children to and from school by carpooling, walking, or making alternate arrangements.

We allowed route-doubling and route-splitting, so bus operators had the flexibility to cover short-term driver absences.

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.

We were able to successfully transport our students in a safe and healthy environment.

Contract negotiations:

Our five (5) year transportation contracts terminated on June 30, 2022, and our negotiation process started last spring with our different transporters. Due to the inflation and high operation costs, the transporters had high financial demands. Unfortunately, we were not able to conclude any renewal contract agreements before the end of the school year based on ministry budget parameters. Negotiations were carried over into the 2022-2023 school year.

With a 9.3 million budget, our 120 buses and 13 vans travelled over 12,701 kilometers daily for a total of more than 2,324,283 annual kilometers.

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 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 continued implementation of the Parent Portal, enabling parents from all WQSB schools the ability to access marks, report cards, student timetables, and other information. As well, considerable effort was put into the management and reporting of COVID-19 related absences to the Ministry of Education.

Dossiers that the Department of School Organization supported during the 2021-2022 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
- Mozaic Portal implementation (Parent, Student, Teacher)
- Archives
- File retention (board office and schools)

Enrolment: The Western Québec School Board enrolment increased significantly from a 2020-2021 total of 7369 students, to 7705 students for the 2021-2022 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 2021-2022 school year, the Council of Commissioners held a total of eight (8) regular meetings. The Board's Executive Committee held eight (8) regular meetings.

Elections were held for the Chair position, as well as the wards listed below (as a result of the previous commissioners leaving). The election results were as follows:

- Chair: Wayne Daly (acclaimed)
- Ward 1: Kenneth Brushey (acclaimed)
- Ward 5 Keri George (acclaimed)
- Ward 8 Kevin Shaar (acclaimed)
- Ward 10 Cathy Goldsbrough (elected)

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 2021-2022 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 125 bullying incidents and 102 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 2021-2022 school year, no breach of this code was reported.

During the 2021-2022 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 23rd, 2022

By email: mdubeau@wqsb.qc.ca

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

Référence : Ombudsman report 2021-2022

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 1st, 2021, and ending on the 30th of June 2022.

I was involved in 23 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 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.

As you may know, the Quebec Provincial Government passed a law establishing the creation of a provincial student ombudsman. I spoke at length with this gentleman who will be taking over my duties as of the first of July 2023.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity of serving as the Western Quebec School Board's student ombudsman for the past 13 years.

I am more than happy to continue as your Ethics Commissioner on a case-by-case basis.

Yours Truly,

Yves Letellier, **WQSB Student's ombudsman**

YL/gbl

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