

# Western Québec School Board Annual Report

**2022-2023**

**Resolution #: C-23/24-80**

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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 kilometres 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 four joint adult general education and vocational training centres, one adult general education centre and one vocational training centre. In addition, several of our schools now have full-time four-year-old Kindergartens.

The Western Québec School Board's youth sector population is approximately 7500 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.

The Western Québec School Board has four Community Learning Centres (CLC) that are integral to the following schools: St. Michael's High School, St. John's Elementary School, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School, and Eardley Elementary School. Each CLC has a community development agent

whose role is to facilitate community partnerships, service-based learning and contribute and enrich student life. Funding for the CLCs is provided through the Entente Canada-Québec.

## CHALLENGES

While it is true that we face many challenges as a school board, we strive to receive them as opportunities. The challenges listed below also appear in the WQSB Commitment to Success Plan (2023-2027) and serve as a focus for the strategies we employ as an educational organization towards achieving success.

### COVID Impacts

The COVID 19 pandemic brought major disruption and impact to the 2019 to 2021 school years. Educational services were disrupted for periods of time and student life was very different with social distancing, class “bubbles”, masks, online classes, virtual celebrations, and few extracurricular activities. School, centre, and board staff adapted quickly and adeptly to changing situations and learning delivery. They took on many different roles to ensure student needs were served under challenging conditions. While we have returned to a more normal year in 2022-2023, the impact of the pandemic on student learning, social-emotional and mental health is evident in our schools and centres. Despite staff shortages and limited access to outside services the focus of our schools and centres remains on the success and well-being of our students.

While not all directly influential on student achievement, other factors 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), socio-economic factors (impacts student achievement), recruitment and retention of qualified staff in our rural schools and centres (impacts the quality of teaching and learning, and service availability).

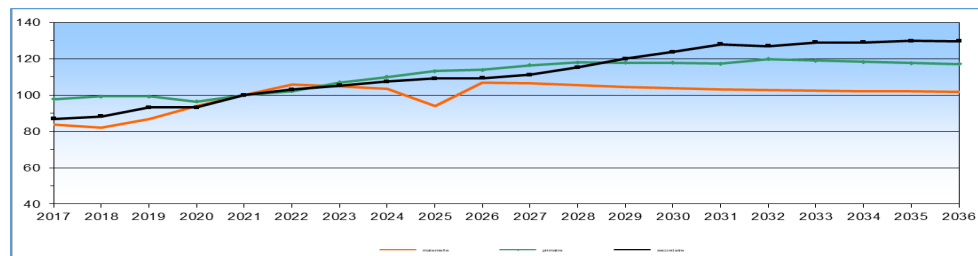
### Demographics

The Western Québec School Board youth sector demographics have continued in an upward trend moving from 7298 in 2017-2018 to 7816 in 2022-2023 (based on September 30 enrollment). If we include the four-year old kindergarten numbers our youth sector population in 2022-2023 is 8011. This increase is consistent across both rural and urban sectors of the board. Demographic projections indicate that Western Québec’s student population will increase from 2022-2023 to 2026-2027. Enrollment is stable or growing in most schools although in some of our rural schools’ challenges still exist in delivering the Basic School Regulation (BSR) offerings to students. Three of these schools have fewer than 80 students at the secondary level. In all cases, additional staffing is assigned to ensure the continued delivery of quality teaching and learning.

The growth in our urban area (primarily the Gatineau corridor) has created its own set of challenges, specifically overcrowding in some schools. This required a change in space use to accommodate the student numbers (library and cafeteria space converted into classrooms) and requests to the ministry for the construction of additional space.

Due to the nature of the offering (variable entry and exit), it is difficult to track demographic changes in Adult Education and Vocational Training but in general, there has been a decline in rural centres and stability in urban centres. The decline in the rural centres makes it challenging to offer viable programs, especially vocational training.

To continue to provide English-language adult and vocational training, resource allocation must be adjusted to accommodate smaller numbers.



Projected youth sector enrollment WQSB \_ Ministère de l'éducation (MEQ) data line 1 -preschool enrollment; data line 2 – elementary enrollment; data line 3 – secondary enrollment.

#### Socio-economic Factor

Western Québec has a significant portion (12 of 25) of its schools that are 8, 9 or 10 on the Ministère de l'éducation Indice de milieu socio-économique scale. It is important to note that on the scale a kindergarten to secondary V school is assigned a ranking for both primary and secondary separately. Schools are classified on a range of 1 to 10, with 1 being considered the least socio-economically disadvantaged and 10 being the most socioeconomically disadvantaged. Several factors contribute to the classification including family income and mother's level of education. These schools are designated as New Approaches New Solutions (NANS) schools and they focus on specific orientations to contribute to student success. These include three Kindergarten to Secondary V schools ranked 8, 9, or 10 and eight elementary schools ranked 8, 9, or 10, and one secondary school ranked 8, 9, or 10. In addition, one school designated as a 7. While the MEQ does not designate Adult Education centres on the socio-economic ranking scale, it is important to note that 3 of the centres are located in the same geographic areas as schools ranked as 8, 9 or 10. A significant portion of the population of learners in these centres are not in employment nor do they possess an initial diploma.

Schools ranked 7, 8, 9 or 10 benefit from the New Approaches, New Solutions (NANS) measure provided by the Ministry to increase student success. In addition, NANS schools now benefit from additional resources to provide support in early literacy and numeracy, support for students with special needs, and additional support in academic subjects at the high school level. Our NANS schools have made significant progress in student achievement. Although many of the cohorts are small, results on the MEQ and board objectives in our NANS schools continue to show improvement. This is evident in the success on the uniform exams at secondary IV and V levels. There is also progress, although slower, in the core subjects of French Second Language (FSL), English Language Arts (ELA), and Math at the elementary level. At the board level, we have focused on providing additional support in the core subject areas and programs targeted to improve teaching and learning quality. At

the school level, schools have developed and embedded strategies that focus on both prevention and intervention for identified groups of students.

#### Indigenous Learner Success

The Western Québec School Board has a significant Indigenous student population (approximately 12%). Much of the Western Québec School Board is on un-ceded Algonquin land and there are 10 Indigenous communities in the region in which Western Québec provides educational services through its schools and centres. Several Western Québec schools and centres have significant First Nation, Metis, and Inuit student populations (40 to 78%).

Canadian and Québec educational statistics indicate a significant gap in the success rates of Indigenous learners in comparison to non-Indigenous learners. This is an area of focus for the board and Western Québec continues to develop and deliver a culturally relevant curriculum and an Indigenous pedagogy approach where possible. The board has engaged several community members and elders to work in developing resources, provide staff training, and support to students. In addition, Western Québec has established key partnerships with Native Friendship Centres in both Val d'Or and Maniwaki and works closely with several Indigenous community partners.

WQSB has adopted a core approach for Indigenous learner success and support. Our approaches focus on three key areas:

1. Cultural awareness and visibility
2. Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Indigenous Pedagogy
3. Bridging cultures/knowledge

In addition, we have a centralized approach for use of the MEQ Indigenous success grant (15063) in our schools and centres with Indigenous students. The focus of additional assistance is language of instruction, French second language, certifying subjects in secondary, engagement and retention. Success and progress are tracked and monitored on a term basis in all schools and centres benefitting from the additional support. The board supports the receiving schools through a network that brings together school/centre teams 2 to 3 times a year. Each network session includes research-based professional development for staff (administrators, support staff and teachers).

The WQSB also has an AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS EDUCATION. This is a key partnership with Indigenous communities, parents, and educators.

The purpose of the ad hoc advisory committee is to provide opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and partnerships to support Indigenous learner success.

The role of the committee is to:

- Actively engage in relationship building, communication, collaboration, and action with Indigenous communities and organizations to raise cultural awareness and support student success,
- Actively engage in the process of reconciliation through the calls to action contained in both the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** and the **Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening,**

**reconciliation, and progress** and implement these where they intersect with the mandate (Instruct, Socialize and Qualify) of the Western Quebec School Board under the Education Act.

- Pursue opportunities to engage in practices that support reconciliation.

Several schools and centres also have partnerships and advisory groups composed of key individuals (Parents, elders, educators) focused on the different aspects of the WQSB core approach.

### Students with Special Needs

The population of students with special needs in Western Quebec Schools has continued to increase over the last years, with a slight decline during the 20-21 school year when online learning and COVID exemptions were a factor in enrollment rates. Currently, 29.7% of WQSB students have an active Individualized Education Plan. Most students with special needs are integrated into regular classrooms, with the exception of our specialized, enclosed settings: The Haven (McDowell), Aylmer Centre (Lord Aylmer), Transition Class (Eardley), Chelsea Centre (Chelsea Elementary), and South Hull Centre (South Hull). These enclosed settings meet the specialized needs of students with more complex developmental, intellectual, and/or physical needs.

The Centres are board-facilitated programs where students from a variety of schools receive access to these services. In addition to these enclosed settings, the Western Quebec School Board has three Nurturing Support Centres where social, emotional, behavioral, and adaptive support is the focus. NSCs are located at Buckingham Elementary, Hadley/Philemon Wright High School, and St. Michael's High School. The approach in these Centres is developmental, trauma-informed, and attachment-based. Our vast territory poses a challenge in the equitable delivery of service, however, recent use of telepractice and online platforms has permitted increased access to professional and consultative services. The recruitment of qualified staff continues to pose a particular challenge in access to English-speaking Professionals. Our rural and northern schools have difficulty in the recruitment and retention of qualified staff (Professionals, teachers, and support staff). With the changing trajectories, offers of delivery and access to outside health and social services, students and families encounter difficulties in access to bilingual and timely support and services outside of our school board, resulting in higher demands within the school board. Mental Health and well-being are a priority at Western Quebec School Board and has been a notable factor in the educational and social success of students. Our adult education and vocational centres continue to experience similar realities regarding special needs, mental health, well-being, and access to bilingual and timely services.

School year	Total population	EDAA	EHDAA	Total IEPs	% with IEPs
18-19	7336	1553 (21.2%)	507 (6.91%)	2060	28.1%
19-20	7488	1596 (21.3%)	497 (6.64%)	2093	28.0%
20-21	7369	1587 (21.5%)	490 (6.65%)	2077	28.2%
21-22	7705	1678 (21.8%)	516 (6.70%)	2194	28.4%
22-23	7816	1733 (22.2%)	592 (7.57%)	2325	29.7%

## Recruitment and Retention of Staff

The Western Québec School Board employs more than 1,500 people in several categories of employment, most of them working directly with students. Recruiting and retaining qualified personnel is a significant challenge, notably in the teaching and professional fields. The challenge we have in recruiting and retaining qualified teaching staff is across all subjects but is even more evident in specialized areas such as French, Math, Science and Special Education. The labour shortage in education and supporting professional services (health and social services) is a reality province wide that continues to have significant impact on our schools and centres. As part of the recruiting and retention strategy, specific strategies must be dedicated to the recruitment and retention of diverse staff.

## WQSB COMMITMENT TO SUCCESS PLAN

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

- Making Student Success a Priority in Québec Society
- Making Vocational Education Truly Attractive
- Making Schools and Centres Welcoming Spaces

The table below outlines the Ministry objectives, the WQSB school board data and targets set for the 2023-2027 Commitment to Success Plan:

### Ministry of Education Objectives

The tables below outline the Ministry of Education Objectives and indicators deployed to the school board and required to be reported on annually by the school board.

#### Orientation 1 – Make Student Success a Priority of Quebec Society

Objective 1 Increase the success of students	Actual Situation	Target			
		2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
1.1 Increase the graduation and qualification rate <i>Indicator: Graduation and Qualification rate after 7 years</i>	80.7% MEQ 84.1%	82% MEQ 84.7%	84% MEQ 85.4%	86% MEQ 86.1%	88% MEQ 86.8%
1.2 Increase the graduation and qualification rates of boys <i>Indicator: Graduation and Qualification rate after 7 years</i>	78.6% MEQ 80.1%	80% MEQ 80.7%	82% MEQ 81.3%	84% MEQ 81.9%	86% MEQ 82.5%
1.3 Increase the graduation and qualification rates of HDAA students. <i>Indicator: Graduation and Qualification rate after 7 years</i>	63.9% MEQ 62.2%	65% MEQ 62.6%	68% MEQ 63%	70% MEQ 63.4%	72% MEQ 63.8%
1.5 Success rate on the problem-solving competency of the grade 6 Mathematics MEQ exam <i>Indicator: Proportion of students who obtain between 70 %</i>	70% MEQ 66%	70% MEQ 68%	72% MEQ 70%	74% MEQ 72%	77% MEQ



and 100% on the problem-solving competency of the MEQ grade 6 Mathematics exam					75%
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### Orientation 2 – Make Vocational Training Truly Attractive

Objective 2 Modernize and Promote Vocational Training	Actual Situation	Target			
		2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
2.1 Increase the graduation rate in vocational training programs	66.9%	70%	72%	76%	78%
<i>Indicator: Graduation rate in vocational training programs after 3 years</i>	MEQ 80.9%	MEQ 81.9%	MEQ 82.9%	MEQ 83.9%	MEQ 84.9%

### Orientation 3 – Make Schools and Centres Welcoming Spaces

Objective 4 Develop new specific projects (Projets pédagogiques particuliers)	Actual Situation	Target			
		2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
<i>Indicator: The rate of secondary student participation in school specific projects</i>	5%	5%	5%	10%	15%
	MEQ 44.6%	MEQ 50%	MEQ 57%	MEQ 66%	MEQ 75%
Objective 5 Improve the climate of benevolence (Goodwill), well-being, safety of students	Actual Situation	Target			
		2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
<i>Indicator: Schools and centres having access to a guide/framework on student well-being</i>	50%	50%	70%	85%	100%
	MEQ 0%	MEQ 25%	MEQ 50%	MEQ 75%	MEQ 100%

### Western Québec School Board Directions and Orientations

The tables below outline the Western Quebec School Board objectives, indicators and strategies. Each objective will be managed by the appropriate department (s) and will have targets developed through year 1.

**Safety and Security: To provide a healthy and safe environment for students and staff to maximize student achievement.**

Objective 6 Improve the climate of benevolence (goodwill), well-being and safety of students	Strategies
6.1 Improved student well-being and belonging in all schools and centres	Survey Student Voice Creation of a Student Voice Committee Work with external partners
<i>Indicator: Number of schools and centres using student voice</i> <i>Indicator: Number of meetings scheduled involving team from MAC</i>	

<p><i>Indicator: School targets based on Student Voice survey feedback</i>  <i>Indicator: Number of students participating in extracurricular activities</i></p>	<p>Celebration and promotion of positive school/centre climate</p>
<p>6.2 Increased knowledge regarding mental health impacts in schools and centres</p> <p><i>Indicator: Number of employees that follow training on Professional Development on social-emotional and mental health for all categories of staff</i></p> <p><i>Indicator: Number of follow up with the EAP</i></p> <p><i>Indicator: Percentage of Salary insurance</i></p>	<p>Expanded use of internal supports (Lifeworks, Transitions agents)</p> <p>Support for socio-economic and health</p>
<p>6.3 Increase employees training opportunities regarding the anti-racism and anti-discrimination</p> <p><i>Indicator: Number of participants in the training opportunities</i></p>	<p>Anti-racism, Anti-discrimination Community Building Group (ARC)</p> <p>Board-wide professional development focused on anti-racism and anti-discrimination</p> <p>Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion table</p> <p>Advisory Committee on Indigenous Education</p>

**Professional Responsibility and Management Accountability: To Maximise the use of all resources to support teaching and learning.**

Objective 7	Strategies
<p>Implement Systemwide approaches, tools and resources for the effective management of schools/centres</p>	
<p>7.1 Increase the positive relationship between employer and employees.</p> <p><i>Indicator: Number of grievances</i>  <i>Indicator: Number of participation to the Dispute Prevention and Resolution training (DPR)</i></p>	<p>Implementation of the Dispute and Prevention Resolution Process</p> <p>Constant communication between employer and unions</p>
<p>7.2 Increase the number of teachers retained after year one and year two</p> <p><i>Indicator: Percentage of teachers retained at year one and two</i></p>	<p>Revised the retention strategies</p> <p>Teacher Induction Program</p> <p>Alignment of data management and Statistical analysis of student performance information</p> <p>Provide opportunities for growth</p>
<p>7.3 Increase the retention of staff</p> <p><i>Indicator: Number of staff who are still in place after three years; after five years</i></p>	<p>Revised the retention strategies</p> <p>Provide opportunities for growth</p>

**Focus on Pedagogy to Improve Teaching and Learning: To continually improve the quality of instruction so that students have the best possible opportunities to learn and achieve to their potential.**

Objective 8 Increase the success of students (graduation and certification of all student groups: overall, boys, HDAA students)	Strategies
8.1 Increase quality of teaching and learning among newly hired teachers <i>Indicator: Percentage of success after the first year of the TIP program and after two years</i>	Teacher Induction Program Ensuring quality teaching and learning through consistent support, development, and supervision Provide opportunities for growth
8.2 Increase student success rate in all schools <i>Indicator: Graduation and Qualification rate after 7 years</i>	Targeted support for literacy and numeracy in schools (consultant and teacher networks) Support for core subjects of English, Math, and French Second Language from elementary through secondary
8.3 Reduced disparity between school term and exam results <i>Indicator: Disparity between school term and exam results</i>	Consistent and relevant assessments and aligned curriculum in core subjects Support for core subjects of English, Math, and French Second Language from elementary through secondary
8.4 Ensure integration of Indigenous pedagogy and culturally responsive curriculum in classrooms. <i>Indicator: Quantity of indigenous pedagogy and culturally responsive content in the curriculum</i>	Support for delivery and implementation of Indigenous Pedagogy and culturally responsive curriculum Indigenous consultant Establish working relationship with our indigenous communities
8.5 Ensure quality of teaching and learning that reflects, supports and meets the diverse needs of HDAA students. <i>Indicator: graduation and qualification rate after 7 years for HDAA students</i>	Quality Professional Development – RTN, TLN, networks, provincial COEs, DG projects Focused support from Board professionals – Complementary Services Transition Planning – TEVA Program specific teaching and learning support from professionals – regular with adaptations, modified program, Prework, Semi-Skilled, CASP, Challenges, PII (Profound Intellectual Impairments) External partner support for exceptionalities

Objective 9	Strategies
Increase the graduation rate in vocational training programs	
9.1 Increased graduation rate in vocational training programs after 3 years <i>Indicator: Graduation rate in vocational training programs after 3 years</i>	Tutoring and retention support for students at risk of leaving SARCA services Ensuring quality teaching and learning through consistent support, development, and supervision

## EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

### Education Department Annual Report 2022-2023

The Western Quebec School Board pedagogical consultants continued to support professional learning communities throughout the 2022-2023 school year. Math, English and French teacher networks were facilitated and supported by the pedagogical consultants to advance the Educational Projects and Professional Development Plans of all schools in the youth sector.

#### Mathematics

The Math consultants were involved in developing and coordinating teacher teams in many capacities, with an aim to communicate clearly with school teams to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The consultant team helped to develop eleven Rich Task Units in Gr 2, 4 and 6 linked to curriculum outcomes that promote critical thinking and collaboration in the classroom. Specific support was offered to schools in Elementary Cycle 1 Mathematics teaching in French with a focus on Rich Tasks. Consultants created products with GRICS: a Gr 9 Applied Science and Technology exam, four new technology manipulatives, and validated two new Gr. 3 situational problem. two local Gr 10 Math CST and ten SN June situational problems and Physics exams were created in consultation with teachers. Consultants supported the creation and validation of evaluation tools for all Grade 7-11 courses. Home school students were also supported through the creation and distribution of math resources.

The consultants created and delivered a province wide workshop for teachers, principals, and guidance counselors on the concept of moderation in MEQ courses through the LCÉE and locally for several principals. They facilitated Math Summer Institute Common PD for Gr. 5-7 teachers and consultant teams, facilitated the Grade 6 June Épreuve roll-out and marking release, co-developed and ran several day long Design Thinking Workshops for Gr 9-11 teachers.

Optional province-wide webinars with world renowned presenters such as Juli Dixon, Marian Small and Peter Liljedahl were offered to teachers. The math consultant demonstrated a commitment to leadership as a CARE member and Chair of the DEEN Math and Science Committee (MaST) who underwent a change in internal structuring. This work was done while building consultant leadership

through several Provincial math initiatives. Consultants were also part of the Destination Imagination Community, supporting and promoting STEAM learning in WQSB schools.

### **English Language Arts**

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. 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 were able to take advantage of three virtual book clubs running over the course of the school year. Literacy Leader Networks (grades 1-4, grades 5-8, and grades 9-11), consisting of a teacher representative from each school, met over the year to explore themes of early literacy instruction, social justice and civic engagement. 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 resources are available to all teachers and provide rich and meaningful learning experiences for students.

Marking centres were held for the grade 6 and Secondary V English Language Arts exams. Grade 6 teachers worked in a hybrid fashion, anchoring papers virtually and marking together 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 (MEQ) *Programme d'action communautaire sur le terrain de l'éducation* (PACTE) and contributed to the focus group of provincial consultants studying trends in early literacy.

### **French Second Language**

FSL consultants played a crucial role in supporting new teachers in the planning and assessment of French as a Second Language (FSL) programs. For novice educators, these consultants provided guidance on curriculum development, lesson planning, and assessment strategies tailored to the unique challenges and objectives of teaching a second language. They worked closely with new teachers to help them design engaging and effective lessons that promote language acquisition and cultural understanding. FSL consultants also assisted in the creation of assessment tools that accurately measure students' language proficiency and progress, ensuring that the evaluation process aligns with the overall learning goals of the FSL program.

In addition to supporting new teachers, FSL consultants collaborated with experienced educators to enhance the delivery of FSL programs. They focused on refining teaching methodologies, incorporating innovative approaches to language instruction, and fostering oral communication skills through literacy and rich reading experiences. By leveraging their expertise, FSL consultants helped

experienced teachers create an immersive and dynamic learning environment that encourages students to develop strong language skills and a deep appreciation for French culture. This collaborative effort contributes to the continuous improvement of FSL instruction and ensures that experienced teachers stay current with effective pedagogical practices. Many of the 25 schools they serve, including 13 elementary schools, 6 high schools, and 6 K-11 schools, received extensive one-on-one virtual and in-person support and guidance.

Furthermore, workshops on SigNature were organized to assist Cycle 1 and 2 teachers in their planning processes. These workshops aimed to familiarize teachers with SigNature, an instructional tool, providing them with insights into its features and applications. Focused on addressing the specific needs of early elementary grades, these workshops offered practical strategies for integrating SigNature into lesson plans, enhancing classroom activities, and promoting a more seamless implementation of the curriculum. By offering targeted support through workshops, FSL consultants contributed to the professional development of teachers, ultimately enriching the educational experience for students in the primary grades.

During the latter part of the academic year, the focus was on providing assistance with the FSL Sec 5 exam, with a specific emphasis on the oral examination, conducted in two of our larger high schools.

The primary objective of the FSL consultants this year was to foster teacher competence among both qualified and unqualified Year 1 teachers. Alongside responsibilities tailored to WQSB, the consultants maintained their representation of our school board at the provincial level on the DEEN Language Network (LAN).

## **COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES**

The Complementary Services Department supports the delivery of learning support services, student life services, assistance services and promotion and prevention services. The Department provides direct professional services as well as supports the delivery of school level services.

The WQSB Resource Teachers' Network supports Remedial and Supporting Teachers in the delivery of remedial services. Resource Teacher Modules continue to be provided, which directly address the needs of teachers new to the Resource setting with a focus on testing, identification, confidentiality, learning profiles, exceptionalities, well-being, and particular Quebec education Programs. As well, RTN provides ongoing network support in current research, resources and practices used in working with students who experience or are at risk of academic or social difficulty. Sessions were conducted virtually and onsite during the 22-23 school year and included: Visual Tools, ASD, Transforming Trauma, Executive Functioning, Down Syndrome, Learning Profiles, Individualized Education Plans and Speech and Language Supports for the classroom.

A new initiative for professional development and training was established in 2022-23. The Technician Learning Network (TLN) will provide an opportunity for special education technicians to develop skills and broaden their understanding of various educational, social/emotional and developmental topics. For our initial year, technicians were included in a variety of RTN sessions, with the intention of adding more individualized sessions for the 23-24 school year.

Mental Health initiatives continued in the 2022-23 school year, with school teams attending a webinar related to Trauma Informed Schools. Continued training was provided to our Guidance and Academic

Professionals in the Solution Focused Brief Therapy.

Nurturing Support Centres continued to support students with behavioural and adaptive difficulties. Hadley Junior High/Philemon Wright Secondary Schools, Pontiac High School, Buckingham Elementary, Chelsea Elementary and Dr. S.E. McDowell all maintained NSCs with the Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Management providing regular training and support for the staff assigned. 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 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 2022-23 school year, approximately 30% 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 growth. Ongoing support to school teams in the development and implementation of IEPs is imbedded in the services provided by Complementary Services team members.

School year	EDAA	EHDA	Total IEPs	% with IEPs
18-19	1553 (21.2%)	507 (6.91%)	2060	28.1%
19-20	1596 (21.3%)	497 (6.64%)	2093	28.0%
20-21	1587 (21.5%)	490 (6.65%)	2077	28.2%
21-22	1678 (21.8%)	516 (6.70%)	2194	28.4%
22-23	1733 (22.2%)	592 (7.57%)	2325	29.7%

## ADULT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING SERVICES

The WQSB Adult Education and Vocational Training Services provided education and training to 1013 learners in 2022-2023. This includes 6 students who received instructional services in a remote indigenous community in region 07 and 158 students in our distance delivery service. The six centres continue to remain a key resource to adult learners in region 07 and 08.

Our staff and students successfully adjusted the return of full time in-person learning in all centres. However, our distance education service is growing, and the trend of part-time learners continues in our urban and rural Centres, 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 2022-2023 we offered support services in the areas of social work, academic and career guidance as well as consistent referral to partner agencies.

In Vocational Training, 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 experienced an increase in demand for training in our Services to Business and Recognition of Acquired Competencies (RAC) offerings in 2022-2023 and expect the demand to continue to be an area of growth. The Services to Business department added a project development officer to the team to further develop and explore opportunities in this area. Our RAC team provided services to 16 clients.

## 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 2022-2023 school year, the Western Québec School Board hired 68 new teachers to add to the 45 teachers in year two of the induction program. Under the leadership of the Coordinator of Induction and Professional Learning Programs, these 113 teachers were supported by a team of two part-time consultants, and 65 Mentor-Coaches in 22 WQSB schools.

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. Year 1 TIP teachers selected 5 sessions to attend. 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. Year 2 teachers had the option to



attend a two-day workshop that focused on developing instructional strategies and building community in the classroom.

The TIP team supported administrators in 45 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.

Mentor Coaches were also supported by a network of Coach-Facilitators. This group of 10 experienced Mentor-Coaches saw 20% of their workloads devoted to developing the skills of Mentor Coaches working in the TIP. A focus on coaching frameworks and questioning skills helped to improve the quality of support TIP teachers receive.

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 68 Year 1 teachers hired in the 2022-2023 school year:

- 67% (45) were retained
- 7% (5) were not reengaged
- 26% (18) left the board for opportunities elsewhere

Of the 45 Year 2 teachers hired in the 2022-2023 school year:

- 93% (42) were retained
- 7% (3) left the board for opportunities elsewhere

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Western Québec School Board employed 2189 full-time and part-time workers across its vast territory in 2022-2023. Of these, the following regular employees: 60 managers, 540 teachers, 46 professionals and 266 support staff. The Human Resources Department is proud to offer compassionate direction and guidance to all WQSB employees.

The Human Resources Department continued to provide services related to recruitment & staffing, talent management, health and safety, labour relations & compliance, and compensation & benefits. 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 2022-2023:

- 1) Improving HR services to all employees;
- 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 April 2018 to March 2023. Since April 2018, the total number of remunerated hours for the Western Québec School Board has increased by 223,511.92 hours.

Category of Personnel	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2020 to March 2021	April 2021 to March 2022	April 2022 to March 2023
Management	93,185.90	102,709.40	109,729.99	110,735.60	115,472.60
Professionals	64,528.47	83,732.04	84,879.44	90,044.69	91,772.86
Teachers	888,202.16	893,982.47	918,623.19	979,425.74	989,566.06
Support Staff	516,627.62	564,353.77	557,017.84	565,676.47	598,688.85
Maintenance	105,092.45	107,369.43	115,433.04	108,698.60	95,648.15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,667,636.60</b>	<b>1,752,147.10</b>	<b>1,785,683.50</b>	<b>1,854,581.09</b>	<b>1,891,148.52</b>

The increase in remunerated hours is due to:

- The youth sector student population increased from 7705 students in 2021-2022 to 7816 students in 2022-2023;
- the Ministry 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;
- the WQSB benefits from the Ministry early intervention strategy in terms of our K4 classes.

## 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 2022-2023 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.

The 2022-2023 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 18.3% use, that being \$353 362 of the \$1 926 590.

Details of the 2022-2023 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 taxes**

For the 2022-2023 school year, tax rates were published by the MEQ for the French service centres' territories and the Western Québec School Board, as with all English school boards, were required to use the same rate as the French school service centres on common territory. This continued to protect disparity between the French school service centres and the English school boards on the shared territory; however, as a result, the Western Québec School Board had ten (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 and school service centres in the province.

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

### **Financial statements 2022-2023**

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

On October 31, 2023, the Council of Commissioners received the school board's 2022-2023 financial statements. MEQ repeated the 15% of the accumulated surplus regulation in 2022-2023.

The 2022-2023 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.

We continue our best practices in air quality management (asbestos management, radon management, air duct cleaning, ventilation system filter management, air change practices, housekeeping, etc.), water management (lead management, quality testing, etc.) and safety management (inspection and maintenance of play structures, fire protection systems, emergency preparedness plan, etc.).

**Investment:** In 2022-2023, we received authorization from the Ministry of Education for the following investment in our buildings:

**Commented [AJM1]:** Noranda "exterior finition". "Finition" is not an English word and should read "finishes" or "finishings".

School	Project	Estimated Budget
Dr. S. E. McDowell / Pontiac Adult Ed	Renovation of 2 entrances (Adult Ed and Back of Elementary)	\$525,000
Dr. S. E. McDowell / Pontiac Adult Ed	Renovation of the Adult Ed Washrooms	\$ 270,000
Greater Gatineau	Replacement of the elevator	\$ 475,000
Lord Aylmer Junior	Replacement of the interior stairs (North)	\$ 400,000
Lord Aylmer Junior	Reviewing the levelling of the north yard	\$ 350,000
Noranda	Front entrance, exterior stairs, emergency exits and exterior finition (Masonry, Foundation, Metal)	\$ 1,250,000
Eardley	Renovation of the East entrance (Accessibility)	\$ 200,000
Hadley / Philemon Wright	Replacing the generator and upgrading the emergency electrical system	\$ 729,333
Chelsea	Removal of the oil heating system and installation of an electric/natural gas heating system	\$ 593,327
Onslow	Parking, Bus Lane, Levelling, Water retention, Accessibility (5 entrances)	\$ 1,250,000
Lord Aylmer Junior	Renovation of the Gymnasium	\$ 550,000
Hadley / Philemon Wright	Renovation of 1 washroom	\$ 130,000

## INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

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

**Investment:** In 2022-2023, the investment budget was assigned to the following projects:

Project	Estimated Budget
Replace Access Points (90)	\$ 45,000
Replace Core Switches (34)	\$ 85,000
Migration Skype to Teams	\$ 40,000
Replace UPS (17)	\$ 50,000
Business Continuity - Redundancy of the Fiber Optic - RISQ	\$ 130,000

## TRANSPORTATION

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

The Transportation Department faced a number of challenges in 2022-2023, as listed below:

### Driver shortage:

Recovery of drivers following the pandemic has been a challenge, as many have chosen not to return

to work. The impact of the shortage was felt especially in certain sectors and route schedule reorganization.

Despite driver shortage issues, transportation services were provided for 95% 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.

**Contract negotiations:**

The five (5) year transportation contracts terminated on June 30, 2022, and the negotiation process carried through the course of the 2022-2023 school year. Unfortunately, bus drivers exercised their right to strike, resulting in no transportation from late April to the end of the school year. The WQSB initiated a stipend plan for parents who drove their children to school; the plan was supported by the Ministry of Education.

With a 9.3 million budget, our 118 buses and 13 vans travelled over 12,404 kilometers daily for a total of more than 2,232,720 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 2022-2023 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 Quebec School Board enrolment increased slightly from a 2021-2022 total of 7705 students, to 7816 students for the 2022-2023 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 2022-2023 school year, the Council of Commissioners held a total of ten (10) regular meetings. The Board's Executive Committee held nine (9) regular meetings.

Commissioner Michael Kane was elected in Ward 6 (following the death of longtime Commissioner Rhonda Boucher). The following Parent-Commissioners were elected; Letitia Taylor, Elementary Commissioner, Asha Boucher-Sharma, Secondary Commissioner, Greg Brennan, K-11 Commissioner, Jessica Fortier, SEAC Commissioner. The Council voted to appoint two Co-opted Commissioners in 2022-2023. Commissioner Charlotte Commonda and Commissioner Linton Garner joined the Council of Commissioners as Co-opted Commissioners.

## **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 respective Governing Board.

Because of amendments to the Education Act, school boards are now required 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 2022-2023 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 552 bullying incidents and 1033 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 2022-2023 school year, two complaints were filed with the Code of Ethics Commissioner.

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct applicable to our commissioners can be consulted on the school board’s website.

**Final Report**  
**School year ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**  
**Student Ombudsman to the Council Commissioners**

This is and will be my final report as the Western Quebec School Board Student’s Ombudsman for the school year ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. I have been replaced by the Quebec Student Protector and, therefore, will not be acting on your behalf in the future.

The school year ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, was very quiet and I was required to take part in a total of 13 complaints, most of which dealt with a transportation issue (3), a request of change of school (2), a difference of opinion with specific teachers (6) and bullying incidents (2).

None of the above required sending to the Council of Commission unresolved issue. In each instance, I managed to settle them with, in some cases, the help of the administrative team.

As of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2023, there was only one outstanding file which required my transferring of this case to the new Quebec Student Protector.

I wish you the best of everything for the coming year.

Yours truly,



Yves Letellier  
Former Student Ombudsman