



# Western Québec School Board

## Annual Report

2014-2015

Western Québec School Board  
January 26, 2016

Resolution #: C 15/16-72

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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 towards student achievement and professional development in order 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**

The Western Québec School Board territory borders the province of Ontario, and serves 155 municipalities spread across an area of over 90,000 square kilometers (twice the size of Nova Scotia). It is the third largest of the nine English boards in terms of geographic size. There are 25 schools for youth sector students, three of which are located above the 43<sup>rd</sup> parallel in the northern region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The remainder of the youth sector schools are located in the southern region of the Outaouais, which partially surrounds the National Capital Region of Ottawa-Gatineau.

The Western Québec School Board's youth sector population is approximately 6,700 students from Kindergarten through Secondary V. Over 90 percent of this enrolment is located in the Outaouais region, with the remainder situated in three schools in the northern region. There are also five Adult Education and Vocational Training Centres, one in the northern region, and four in the southern region. Enrollment in the Adult sector is more than 400 full-time students.

The Western Québec School Board employs more than 1,000 people in several categories of employment, most of them working directly with students.

Programs and services offered by the Western Québec School Board vary from General English programs and Enriched French academic programs, transition and induction programming, Work Oriented Training programs, Lifeskills programs, along with pre-kindergarten and daycare services. We also engage students by offering a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities in sports, cultural, character building, and community-oriented activities along with a variety of student-centred services offered in our schools and centres.

## **CHALLENGES**

In addition to its large and partly remote territory, the Western Québec School Board faces many challenges that include socio-economic disadvantaged students, a significant rate of students who are identified as special needs, important ongoing budget cuts, a high mobility rate between provinces, high declining enrolment in several of our sectors, and building capacity issues in our urban core. Although the school board has put in place strategies to minimize and overcome these obstacles, it is important that the strategies put in place focus first and foremost on student success.

### **Law 101 and enrolment:**

The Western Québec School Board operates in a predominantly Francophone environment and the accessibility to English instruction is limited to the provisions of the Charter of the French language (Law 101). This can make it more difficult for children to access the public English school system in Québec. Only when a parent meets certain requirements can a child be educated in English. Consequently the English school boards in the province, including the Western Québec School Board, are facing declining enrolment while French school boards are anticipating a significant increase in enrolment. In particular, Law 101 impacts immigrants who move to our region and parents who received a French education in Québec or in another province can be denied access to English public schools.

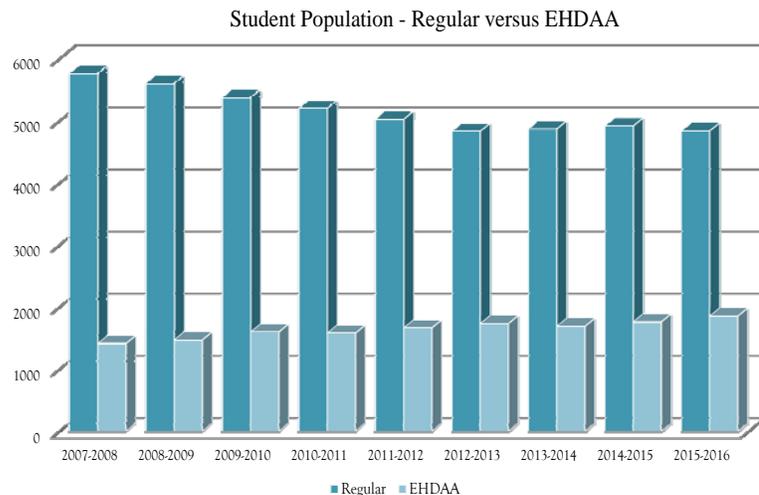
Since 2001 the Western Québec School Board's student enrolment has declined from 8,158 to 6,572, representing a net loss of 1,700 students. Although our schools have implemented different models of programs, and the board has developed marketing strategies to overcome declining enrolment, the birth rate in the province coupled with the requirements established by Law 101 to access English education, continue to be obstacles that limit the growth of enrolment. In spite of these obstacles, as of 2014-2015, we have witnessed a growth in enrolment from previous years, and enrolment is expected to increase slightly over the next five years to approximately 6,800 students.

### **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 as a result of high school students moving 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 of 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 based on mothers without high school diplomas and parents being inactive in the work force. The higher the ranking equates to a higher socio-economic disadvantage which presents more challenges for students to achieve success. In schools with rankings of 8, 9 and 10, additional grants are allocated to support educational initiatives and programs.

### Budget:

In a time of provincial budget cuts, notably in the education sector, the Western Québec School Board budget has experienced its share of cuts over the last few years. In fact, these cuts were largely attributed to the precarious state of public finance in the province. As previously stated, the decline in enrolment has accelerated the loss of financial resources. Despite these budget constraints, we have managed to minimize the impact on the delivery of education while balancing the 2015-2016 school board budget.

### 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 remains a challenging reality, notably in the teaching and professional fields. Initiatives are in place to promote recruitment while new strategies are developed to retain qualified personnel.

## **WQSB ALIGNMENT WITH MEESR STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2018**

With regard to the MEESR Strategic Plan, the Western Québec School Board has undertaken the following:

Orientation 1 – Increase perseverance and school success

- ✚ See partnership agreement annual report for actions and strategies with regard to perseverance and student success.

Promote teaching profession:

- ✚ WQSB has a New Teacher Induction Program in place which includes mentoring for all new teachers to the board. This program provides support and contributes to the retention of staff.
- ✚ WQSB has introduced Excellence in Teaching Awards to recognize outstanding teachers.
- ✚ WQSB has Teaching and Learning Programs in place to ensure continuous improvement in quality teaching and learning.

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

- ✚ See partnership agreement annual report for actions and strategies with regard to this orientation.
- ✚ WQSB partners with other boards and regional and provincial partners to ensure needs are met. Examples of this are a Carpentry program for the Algonquins of Barriere Lake, Homecare Program to five First Nations communities.

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

Orientation 4 – Maintain conditions that favour the pursuit of studies

- ✚ See partnership agreement annual report for actions and strategies with regard to this orientation.

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

- ✚ WQSB is an active partner in the Comité d'amélioration de la perseverance scolaire (CAPS).
- ✚ WQSB has developed and offers a full vocational training program through e-learning and using distance delivery (video conference) to deliver programs between centres.
- ✚ WQSB uses LEARN services to provide small groups of students in distant schools with secondary studies optional courses.
- ✚ WQSB has integrated Aboriginal Success projects to support aboriginal students in our schools and centres.
- ✚ WQSB has four Community Learning Centres.

## Educational Services Department

The WQSB has created professional learning communities in all of its core subjects (English, Language Arts, French, and Math) that we refer to as our networks. Teachers and consultants work on various components such as curriculum delivery, student assessment and evaluation practices, differentiated teaching strategies, accommodations for students identified with specific learning needs.

In **English Language Arts** the networks are:

- Kindergarten;
- Early – Cycle 1 & 2;
- Transitions – Cycle 3 & Cycle 1 Sec; and,
- Secondary – Cycle 2 ( Sec. V).

Within these professional learning communities (PLCs) at each cycle level, lead literacy teachers from each WQSB school participated in professional development training workshops to:

- Explore and enhance the use of language and vocabulary development;
- Explore new texts;
- Consider new literacy approaches;
- Collaboratively develop lesson plans;
- Share student work and build common student evaluation practices; and,
- Review Ministry expectations and standards for Ministry exams.

The lead literacy teachers within their respective schools:

- Increased knowledge and capacity;
- Ensured their teacher colleagues received information/resources;
- Shared authentic classroom work and assessment practices for consistency across schools; and,
- Supported new teachers.

The WQSB literacy board team also:

- attended ministry meetings;
- operated Government exam marking centers within WQSB;
- visited schools to provide on-site support;
- assisted in training teachers to carry out system-wide elementary reading assessments; and,
- provided after-school literacy professional development sessions for teachers.

## PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Our 2013-2017 Partnership Agreement indicates the school board's core objectives, targeted results, and methods of assessing the achievement of objectives. To view the Partnership Agreement Annual Report please consult the school board's website. The five objectives outlined in the Partnership Agreement are:

- ✚ Increase graduation and qualification rates of students under the age of 20
- ✚ Improve the quality of French Second Language and improve the quality of English Language Arts
- ✚ Improve the retention and academic success of certain groups of students including students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities
- ✚ Improve the health and safety environment in schools
- ✚ Increase the number of students under the age of 20 in vocational training

Objectives	Target 2017	Result 2014/2015
<b>1. a. Increase the graduation rate and certification under the age 20.</b>		
<b>1. b. Decrease the number of school leavers.</b>		
Increase the graduation rate and certification under the age 20.	80,0%	(2007-2008 - 7 year cohort) - 72.8%
Girls	81,0%	(2007-2008- 7 year cohort) - 79.4%
Boys	80,0%	(2007-2008- 7 year cohort) -67.1%
First Nations	80,0%	Not available
Decrease the number of school leavers (from secondary 3 to 5)	147	121 (2007-2008- 7 year cohort)
Rate of Sec. V students registered on September 30 who obtain Secondary Studies Diploma	85%	89.14%
Increase the success rate on uniform exams of secondary 4 subjects mandatory for obtaining diploma		
History and Citizenship (includes Histoire)	80,0%	64,6%
CST Math	80,0%	64,5%
Science Math	85,0%	87,4%*
General Science	85,0%	39,3% ( very small cohort)
Applied Science	82,0%	80,2%
Increase the success rate of Cycle 3.2 primary (end of cycle exams)		
ELA (MELS)	80,0%	83,0%
FSL (CS)	80,0% FSL 95,0% IM	76,0% FSL 94,0% IM
Math (MELS)	75,0%	70,0%

Objectives	Target 2017	Result 2014/2015
<b>2. a. Improve the quality of French Second Language.</b> <b>2. b. Increase the mastery of English Language Arts.</b>		
Increase the success rate on the reading component of the Secondary 5 MELS French Second Language exam.	88,0%	66,9% (if we include Français Enrichi the rate is 72.1%)
Increase the success rate on the written component of the Secondary 5 MELS French Second Language exam.	87,0%	83,6% (if we include Français Enrichi the rate is 86.2%)
Increase the overall success rate of First Nations students on the Secondary V MELS French Second Language exam.	60,0%	60,0%
Increase the success rate on the Secondary V English Language Arts exam.	93,0%	95,1%
Increase the average mark on the reading and writing components of the secondary V ELA exam by 2% ( from 71,0% to 73,0% and 70,7 to 72,7 respectively)	73,0% Reading 72,7% Writing	67,9 % Reading 71,1% Writing
Increase the success rate of First Nations students on the Secondary V English Language Arts exam.	80,0%	88,3%
<b>Improve the retention and academic success of certain groups of students including students with handicaps, social maladjustment or learning disabilities</b>		
Pre-Work Program (2011 cohort who received qualification at end of three year program)	75,0%	52,0%
Semi-skilled Training	70,0%	60,80%
The rate of students who obtain a high school diploma (*percentage of students with special needs registered in secondary V on September 30, 2013 who acquired Secondary Studies Diploma)	75,0%	100%
Increase the success rate of students with learning disabilities on uniform exams.	80%	Data to Come

Objectives	Target 2017	Result 2014/2015
<b>Improving the health and safety environment in schools</b>		
Decrease the rate of students who feel bullied.	<b>Decrease from 20% to 17%</b>	21% (Sec) 27%(Elem.)
Increase the rate of students who feel safe.	<b>Increase from 84% to 87%</b>	63% (Sec.) 56% (Elem.) Question re feeling safe has changed to include going to and from as well as in school
<b>Increase the number of students in Vocational Training Program under the age of 20.</b>	40	Not Available

## Complementary Services – Educational Services Department

The Complementary Services Department continued to work on long-standing initiatives designed to improve the teaching and learning of our students with special needs.

This year we introduced an electronic version of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) which was created in time for our teachers to use in the spring when they create the IEPs for the new school year. The format of the IEP remained essentially the same but the electronic version allows for easy access for teaching, administrative and professional staff working with our students with special needs.

We introduced a distance model for a book study of “Neurodiveristy in the Classroom: Strength-Based Strategies to Help Students with Special Needs Succeed in School and Life” by Thomas Armstrong. Classroom teachers at G. Theberge, Golden Valley, Noranda, and Hadley participated in the project. The group also included two FSL teachers from Wakefield. Each group presented a chapter of the book to their colleagues at the May Resource Teachers’ Network. This was so successful that they have also been asked to prepare a poster presentation for the up-coming ALDI conference in Montreal.

The Complementary Services Department initiated some exploratory work and study on the concept of **UDL** (Universal Design for Learning). Frederic Fovet, from the McGill Office for Students with Disabilities, introduced the basic concepts of UDL from a hands-on perspective to our Resource teachers. UDL is based on the Social Model of ability rather than the medical model of disability.

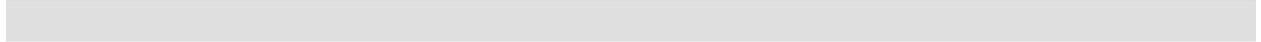
The Work Oriented Training Program (WOTP) and Outdoor Education programs collaborated again this year so that work placements at the Outdoor Education Centre were available for our students. WOTP teachers also worked together to create more resources: literacy materials and a guide to create a closer connection between students on work placement and the classroom teacher. The consultant also continued his work at the provincial level on the WOTP mentoring project and the creation of work placement evaluation documents.

Our guidance counsellors report spending an increasing amount of time responding to the mental health concerns of a number of our students. Psychologists from the Centre of Excellence for Mental Health joined forces with our Guidance Counsellors’ table to provide professional development on the subjects of depression and anxiety. The guidance counsellors, in turn, prepared professional development and information materials to share with the teaching staff in their own schools.

Our Suicide Intervention Team increased from six members to 12 when all of our remaining guidance counsellors and psychologists received SAM training (Suicide Action Montreal). We now have staff trained to intervene with secondary students who express suicidal ideation in most of our secondary schools and Adult Education Centres. We also have school board staff who can intervene at the elementary level.

The announcement by our partners in the health and social services sector of the reorganization of their services was the beginning of months of change that became official in April. All of the front line services of the CSSSs and the second line service providers in our regions have amalgamated into CISSS (Centre intégré de Santé et de services sociaux); one for region 07 and one in region 08. This extensive process and lengthy period of change has challenged us when trying to help students and families gain access to their services.

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## **Adult Education and Vocational Training Services (AEVT)**

The WQSB Adult Education and Vocational Training Services provided education and training to approximately 1000 learners in 2014-2015. The five centres continue to remain a key resource to adult learners in region 07 and 08.

In Adult General Education, the centres continue to see a change in the number of part-time versus full-time students, with more learners opting for part-time schedules. The impact is a decrease in the generation of Full-Time Equivalent student funding but a need to continue to offer service to meet needs in our five centres.

In Vocational training we have maintained and expanded in our rural centres through the offering of Accounting Studies and Secretarial via video conferencing. Pontiac Centre is the hub for this delivery with Maniwaki Centre and Val D'Or being the satellites. This delivery mode has allowed for small numbers of students to participate in the programs.

In 2014-2015, AEVT embarked upon an initiative to welcome international students to the Western Québec Career Centre. The initial groundwork was completed in the 2014-2015 year in preparation for students in the Commercial and Residential Drafting and Industrial Drafting Programs in the 2015-2016 year. The targeted number of students for 2015-2016 is 30. This initiative will allow us to expand our offer of service to our local clientele.

## Human Resources Department

The primary role of the Human Resources department is to hire, promote and develop qualified and professional staff to ensure that our students achieve their potential. They offer direction and guidance to management personnel for issues involving staffing and labour relations. In addition, we provide all of our employees with services and advice related to career aspirations, compensation, benefits and disability management.

The operational theme for the Human Resources Department in 2014-2015 was to improve its services to support its employees. The department offered various professional development and training sessions throughout the year. The school secretaries and the daycare technicians were given a comprehensive training session in August. These sessions were followed by a consultation to receive feedback on human resources practices within the school board. The department reviewed the feedback and formulated solutions to address the needs expressed by the support staff in our schools and centres. The school principals and centre directors attended workshops involving aspects of teacher evaluation and collective agreements. One workshop of note was held on November 24 when the author of “Having Hard Conversations”, Jennifer Abrams, led a workshop to the management team. Their goal is to continually improve and to maintain a high quality of services for all of our employees.

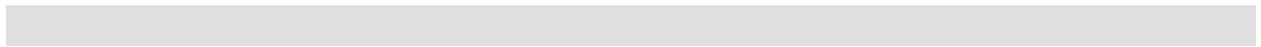
One of our main challenges during the 2014-2015 school year was that all unionized personnel contracts expired on March 31, 2015. As a result, the teachers’ union began a campaign of respectfully implementing various pressure tactics and awareness campaigns to enhance their negotiating position with the government. The Human Resources Department played a central role in developing a communications strategy for management personnel and provided on-going advice and guidance to managers and principals pertaining to the various pressure tactics.

The Human Resources Department also has the responsibility for the New Teacher Induction Program. The aim of the induction program is three fold:

- 1) To ensure that we support and grow good teachers through collaboration and coaching;
- 2) To establish a professional standard of high quality teaching for retention in every region of the Western Québec School Board; and,
- 3) To provide meaningful feedback to teachers and administrators that encourages professional conversations.

During the school year, the Western Québec School Board hired a total of 49 new teachers to add to the 35 teachers in year-two of the induction program. These teachers were supported by a team consisting of one teacher leader, one coaching and mentoring consultant, and 40 teacher coaches in 19 of our schools under the direction of the Director of Human Resources. In all, the team conducted 91 classroom observations and evaluations of new teachers. The retention rate for year-one teachers was 70% (34), with 12% (6) not being reengaged for performance reasons, 12% (6) leaving the board for various reasons, and 6% (3) not being rehired due to the unavailability of an appropriate position. Out of the 35 year-two teachers, 89% (31) were retained, while 11% (4) left the board for opportunities elsewhere.

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



## **Finance and Taxation Department**

The school board Finance Department continued to monitor the school board's annual budget while providing assistance to the departments, schools and centres. It continued to support the financial resources of the schools and centres towards meeting their targets set within their Management Educational Success Agreements, for which a manager provided support to their school budgets and grants. As well, schools and centres received assistance on all budget matters including daycares, fundraising activities, parent fees, capital and any special projects.

### **Procurement Activities**

The Procurement Officer continues to oversee all procurement activities of the school board and provide training to the various departments and schools with the purchasing policy and by-law on the delegation of powers. In addition, the new directives and requirements by the Treasury Board are updated in our current procedures for procurement of goods and services. Included in the annual report are the total amount of service fee contracts awarded to businesses of a value of \$25 000 and above.

### **Financial Statements 2014-2015**

In December 2015, the Council of Commissioners adopted the school board's 2014-2015 financial statements with a deficit of \$385 045. As of June 30, 2015 the school board's accumulated surplus is \$13 881 872. It should be noted that the "unreserved" accumulated surplus is equal to \$7 752 624 excluding land values, capital asset costs, sick leave, and vacation provisions in accordance to accounting practices (GAAP).

The 2014-2015 financial statements are available on the school board's website (<http://cswq.wqsb.qc.ca>).

## School board taxes:

Law 43 was introduced in 2007. Law 43 required (a) increases in new role deposits to be staggered over three years, equal to the duration of the role and (b) the application of a reduction to the tax rate to limit the school tax payable as a result of rising evaluations. The province granted school boards additional assistance to provide this reduction to the taxpayers so the school board's annual budget would not be affected. Essentially, the funds the government injected in equalization for education prior to 2006 continued despite the rising property evaluations.

The 2013-2014 provincial budget included the elimination of the segment of the equalization grant to school boards when Law 25 came into force. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the equalization grant remains in effect for school boards who cannot attain their maximum taxation revenues with school tax invoices, therefore relying on grants to optimize their revenues.

The Western Québec School Board's annual equalization grant was established at \$4.6 million in 2012-2013 and used as the base year for the elimination of equalization grant (see table 1):

Table 1

School Year	Percentage	Amount
2013-2014	50%	\$2.3 million
2014-2015	25%	\$1.15 million
2015-2016	25%	\$1.15 million

For 2014-2015, school taxes were increased (reduction of rate) by \$1.15 million in order to recuperate the equalization grant shortfall and that, excluding all increases in property assessment. Table 2 illustrates the total between the net school taxes and the equalization grant:

Table 2

School Taxation Revenue (billing 2014-2015)	\$ 15 860 396
Equalization Grant (reduction rate)	\$ 1 157 831
Maximum Taxation Revenue	\$ 17 018 227

School tax rate:

Since 2010-2011, the school board's taxation rate has decreased primarily as a result of an increase in municipal evaluation value.



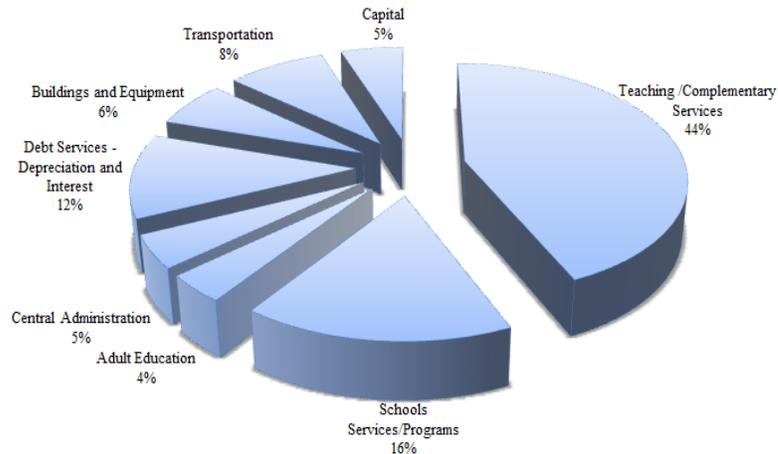
*Taxation rate in comparison to the Francophone school boards:*

Across the school board territory, the average tax rate increased by 4% and the base rate for \$100 of evaluation is set at \$0.24505. What is noticeable is the difference in tax rate between the Gatineau sector and the Hull/Aylmer sector where there is a 22% difference in tax rate because of the rise in assessed evaluation in the last sector. In Aylmer and Hull, the tax rate has decreased by 0.4% which is actually positive for taxpayers on the same territory. Conversely, that is not the case in Gatineau and other regions.

## School Board Budget 2015-2016

In June 2015, the school board's operation, investment, and debt budget, estimated at \$92 million, was adopted by the Council of Commissioners.

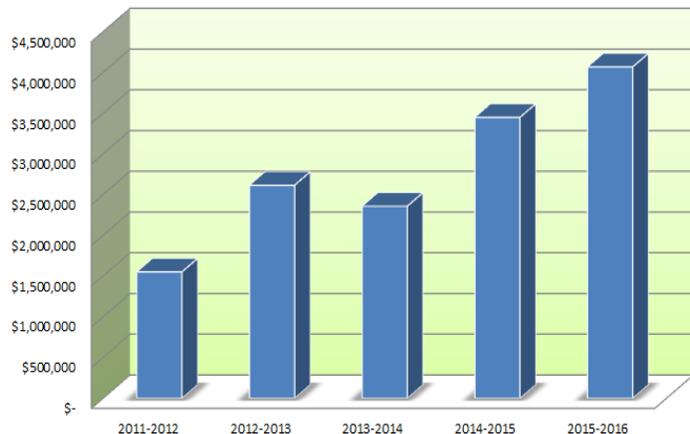
Budget Revenues 2015-2016



This was an exceptional year given the significant budget cuts imposed by the Ministry to all school boards. Since the amalgamation of school boards in 1998, the budget cuts have been and remain an integral part of our budget process. It should be noted that the budget cuts have been increasing in the last few years. More precisely, approximately \$720 K of new cuts was imposed in the operational budget.

Considering the cuts to budgets in various departments, schools, programs, and services, the school board presented a balance budget for the 2015-2016 school year.

Accumulative Budget Cuts 2011-2015

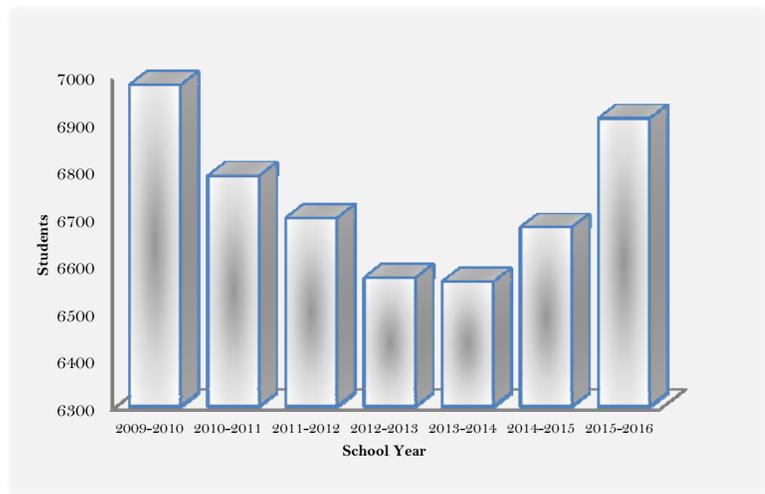


In June 2010, Bill 100 was adopted by the Québec National Assembly which calls upon school boards to reduce administrative expenditures by 10 per cent by the end of the June 30, 2014 fiscal year. In addition, school boards must reduce their management and administrative personnel through attrition at a rate of 2:1. To that end, the school board has met its target for 2013/2014 by decreasing its administrative expenses by 18 % from 2009/2010 (target was 10%) and its travel, publicity, and professional development expenses by 47% (target was 25%).

## Enrolment – student population

The school board's student population has positively shifted. This year, the board has seen an increase of 231 students for a total of 6910 students. This is the second consecutive year that the enrolment has increased.

The student demographic projection is showing that the population will increase to 6870 students in 2019-2020.



## Buildings and Equipment Department

The new Wakefield School saw its grand opening in 2014-2015. This building, with a capacity of 330 students, is fully heated and cooled by a geothermal system. The design of the school allows the staff and the students to get natural lighting while bringing that wow factor through its esthetically pleasing features.

The Buildings Department has made the Air Quality a priority. The firm WSP has been mandated to analyse and test all of our schools to detect any presence of asbestos and make recommendations to remove or properly encapsulate any asbestos-containing materials. The Buildings Department will follow their recommendations, and WSP will be mandated to do a second inspection of our schools within 2 years.

The portables were removed from Lord Aylmer, Pontiac High, and the Hull Adult Education Center to reduce the operational cost of maintaining these buildings. To that same end, the Val D'Or Adult Centre was relocated to Golden Valley School.

Investments were made to replace/repair the roofs at St-John's, Pontiac High, Chelsea, and Buckingham schools.

## **Buildings and Equipment Department**

The interior of Maniwaki Woodland and Maniwaki Adult Ed. were completely redone and an elevator was installed at Maniwaki Woodland.

The interior doors at Philemon Wright High School were replaced and the work on the redesigning of the science labs has started.

The gyms at Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Pontiac High, Dr. S.E. McDowell, and the Hull Adult Education Centre have been redone, and modifications have been made at Greater Gatineau and Eardley to add new classrooms.

## **Information, Communication, and Technology Department**

In 2014-2015, the Technology Department joined the Buildings Department. During this past year, the Technology Department worked mostly on planning projects for the following year; replace all the photocopiers by Xerox, get the school board orientation for Office 365, and plan the new support model that includes a helpdesk.

## **School Organization and Transportation Department**

The Department of School Organization & Transportation was created in October 2014 with a view toward grouping related portfolios together in such a way as to best serve the organization and to reduce costs. The initial challenge of the new department was to do an in-depth analysis of the different dossiers, tasks and responsibilities of all employees involved and to ensure each of the team member's roles were clearly defined.

The department's primary mandate was, and continues to be, the development and implementation of efficient tools and mechanisms that would ensure the ongoing support of both students and school administrators. The department's purpose was, and is also, to deliver technical and administrative support to the organization and contribution to the overall planning of resources that benefit the educational system as a whole.

The Department of School Organization was also given the responsibility of collaborating with all other departments thus ensuring optimal support and guidance to all schools while continuing to keep students as our primary common focus.

### **Defining Department Structure**

From the analysis mentioned above, tasks were examined and in some cases redefined, in order to allow for a more efficient and streamlined process. In addition, a cross-training plan was immediately developed and implemented to assist in specific areas where bottlenecking had become problematic. This plan created cohesion among team members and assisted in the sharing of corporate knowledge across the team rather than any one individual being the keeper of critical information.

### **Dossiers**

Listed are the different dossiers supported by our department:

- Student registrations and procedures;
- Bill 101 requirements and certifications;
- Student enrolment;
- Student certification;
- Support schools with pedagogical software;
- Report cards;
- Timetables and scheduling;
- Academic result transmission;
- Data management;
- Management and distribution of exams;
- Cross-boundary requests and approval;
- Employee training; and,
- Transportation.

## Transportation

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

For the 2014-2015 school year, 119 buses travelled over 10 800 kilometers daily for a total of more than 2 019 200 kilometers for the year. While most of our students travelled by regular yellow school bus, some students required alternative modes of transportation designed to meet their specific needs, and were transported using seven-passenger vehicles. In total, 15 vans were in service travelling 595 kilometers daily.

Among our student population, 89 percent of them were transported to school on a daily basis, which proved to be challenging considering the size of our school board territory. While fewer accidents are attributed to school bus transportation, nothing can be taken for granted. Once again our department, in collaboration with our carriers, organized an annual safety campaign to promote the continued safety and security of our students. The ultimate goal of the safety campaign is to educate preschool and primary level students on the importance of adopting safe behaviors while being on or around school buses. Professional trainers met with elementary students and made several safety presentations where they reviewed the danger zones, safe behaviors, and bus evacuation procedures.

A new transportation workshop titled “First Rider Program” was introduced to new students and their parents to educate them on school bus environment and safety. This program was intended for students who would be riding school buses for the first time in September. Its objective was to reduce both student and parent anxiety during the first few days of school. A school bus safety trainer reviewed the danger zones around the school bus and safety rules that were expected to be observed by students both inside and outside of the school bus. After the workshop, students and parents were taken for a short bus ride.

## Secretary General

The Western Québec School Board's Secretary General coordinates, oversees, and ensures the efficient functioning of the activities and meetings of the Council of Commissioners and of the Executive Committee. The Secretary General oversees the board's policies, by-laws, official records, access to information and protection of personal information, copyrights, electoral process and legal services. The Secretary General provides advice and expertise to the Director General and to all administrators of the school board concerning legal and corporate matters.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the Council of Commissioners held a total of 8 regular meetings and no special meetings. The Board's Executive Committee held 7 regular meetings.

As a result of changes to the School Elections Act, the territory of the Western Québec School Board was re-divided for the November 2014 school board elections. The number of electoral divisions decreased from 19 to 11. On November 2, 2014, the elections were held to elect commissioners and a chair. This year the chair of the board was elected by universal suffrage for the first time.

<i>Commissioners</i>	<i># of candidates</i>
<i>Chair of the school board</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Electoral Division #1</i>	<i>Acclamation</i>
<i>Electoral Division #2</i>	<i>Acclamation</i>
<i>Electoral Division #3</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Electoral Division #4</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Electoral Division #5</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Electoral Division #6</i>	<i>Acclamation</i>
<i>Electoral Division #7</i>	<i>Acclamation</i>
<i>Electoral Division #8</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Electoral Division #9</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Electoral Division #10</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Electoral Division #11</i>	<i>Acclamation</i>

After public consultation, three policies were revised and adopted:

- Policy on Students – Discipline Committee (C-5);
- Policy on the Continued Operation or Closure of Schools and on Other Changes Made to the Educational Services Provided in a School (C-25); and,
- Transportation Policy and Guidelines (G-1).

In addition, six policies were rescinded:

- Consultation Procedures to Support a Board Decision-Making Process(A-17);
- Signing Authority/Facsimile Signatures, Bank Accounts & Contracts(D-8);
- A.I.D.S. Policy(F-1);
- Years of Service Recognition Policy(F-5);
- Recognition and Awards – All Employees(F-12); and,
- Emergency Action Transportation (G-2).

The Western Québec School Board also revised its By-Law Establishing Delegations of Powers and Functions of the Western Québec School Board (By-Law 30).

## LAW 17 – ACT RESPECTING WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

The following table outlines the total number of remunerated hours per employee groups for the period of January to March 2014, and January to March 2015. In comparing the two columns, the total number of remunerated hours for the Western Québec School Board has increased by 11 835.58 hours among the first trimesters.

Category of Personnel	March 2014	March 2015
Management	22169.00	22562.26
Professionals-Consultants	9558.64	12819.24
Teachers	218046.24	220301.24
Support Staff	110420.27	111551.99
Maintenance	19001.04	23796.14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>379195.19</b>	<b>391030.77</b>

From January to March 2015 compared to the same period in 2014

The increase in remunerated hours is due to:

- a) The student population increased from 6655 to 6679 from the previous year, but more dramatically the students identified as EDHAA increased from 359 to 391. The net increase in staffing was an added **6.91 teacher equivalent posts**;
- b) There was an increase in adult and vocational education by **4 teacher posts**;
- c) Due to a grievance settlement with our support staff union, there was an increase of **10 maintenance positions** that were previously contract workers;
- d) Increase in the professionals category due to the following:
  - a. engagement of a procurement officer;
  - b. reclassification to a professional's category;
  - c. engagement of a special education consultant;
  - d. maternity and medical leave replacement;
  - e. part-time professional positions in guidance and new teacher program.

2. Service contracts over \$25 000 between January 1, 2015 to June 30, 2015 (excluding construction, renovations, and transformation).

	Contracts concluded with a physical person	Contracts concluded with a legal person/company	Total
Number of Contracts	4	8	12
Amount of Contracts	\$159 350	\$477 550	\$636 900

## LAW 19 – REPORTS ON COMPLAINTS CONCERNING BULLYING OR VIOLENCE

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 the prevention and stopping of 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; and,
- ✚ the required follow-up on any report or complaint.

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

As a result 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 2014–2015 school year, no complaints were received by the Director General of the school board nor the Student Ombudsman.

## **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 2014-2015 school year, no breach of this code was reported.

During the 2014-2015 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.

## REPORT ON LAW 100 – REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

With the adoption of Law 100 in 2010, the legislative purpose was to reinstate a provincial balanced budget by the year 2013/2014, by introducing new measures in government bodies. These new measures, notably in the education sector, targeted the reduction in various administrative expenses along with the abolishment of administrative positions. The latter would see the abolishment of one position for every two retirements or resignations.

Below were the targets set for school boards for 2013-2014:

- ✚ Reduction of administrative expenses by 10 % from the baseline 2009-2010;
- ✚ Reduction of costs associated with professional development, travel, and publicity by 25 % from the baseline 2009-2010;
- ✚ Abolishment of administrative positions for every two retirements/resignations;
- ✚ Suspension of bonuses for senior management;
- ✚ Production of an annual report to the MELS; and,

As of June 30, 2014,

- ✚ One (1) administrative position was abolished;
- ✚ Administrative expenses (travel, contracts, materials, professional development) were reduced by 18% since 2009/2010, exceeding the target by 8%;
- ✚ Professional development, travel, and publicity budget was reduced by 47% since 2009/2010, exceeding the target by 22%;
- ✚ Performance bonuses were suspended; and,
- ✚ An annual report on Law 100 was submitted to the MELS on October 31, 2014.

## OMBUDSMAN REPORT

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**Letellier Gosselin**  
**A V O C A T S - B A R R I S T E R S**

**Gatineau, December 3<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

BY E-MAIL: rvezina@wqsb.qc.ca

**Mr. Richard Vézina**  
**Director of Legal Services,**  
**Secretary General**  
Western Québec School Board  
15, Katimavik Street  
Gatineau (Quebec) J9J 0E9

**Objet: Western Québec School Board Student Ombudsman**  
Our file: 17962.000YL

Dear Sir,

As required by law, I am pleased to submit my yearly report 2014-2015 as the Western Québec School Board's student Ombudsman, for consideration by your Council of Commissioners.

I was involved in nine (9) cases requiring my input. All were dealt without having to file a report to the Council of commissioners.

Also, none of the complaints dealt with bullying or similar conduct.

As you may be aware, for reasons of confidentiality, I am unable to divulge the names of the people involved.

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

Yours truly,

**LETELLIER GOSSELIN**

Per:



**YVES LETELLIER, Lawyer and Ombudsman**