

A brief presented to the Parliamentary  
Committee of Culture and Education of the  
Québec National Assembly on:

**“Bill 86: An Act to modify the organization  
and governance of school boards to give  
schools a greater say in decision-making and  
ensure parents’ presence within each school  
boards’ decision making body”**

**Presented by**  
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**On behalf of**  
**Concerned Parents’ of Students with Special Needs**  
**of the Lester B. Pearson School Board**  
**(See attached list)**

**April 4, 2016**

## **Introduction**

We are a group of 126 (one hundred and twenty-six) parents of students with special needs from 33 Elementary Schools, 11 High Schools and 1 Vocational Education Center of the Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB) who have come together to provide input regarding the proposed Bill 86.

As parents of students with special needs, we are important stakeholders in the education system and are particularly concerned with issues regarding our children. While we support certain parts of the proposed Bill 86, there are sections that we believe require modification prior to the adoption of the Bill. Please keep in mind that the recommendations outlined in this brief are restricted to those dealing with special needs issues, and does not make comment on all of the pros and cons of Bill 86 in its entirety.

We offer the following input to the Ministère de l'Éducation, Sports et Loisirs (MELS) in regards to the proposed Bill 86:

## **Support for Increased Parent Representation**

As parents of students with special needs, we agree with the MELS's stated intentions that there is a need to increase the representation of parents at all levels in education. This increased parent representation must also include representation for our students with special needs. As the primary advocates of our children, the voice of parents must be clearly heard and strongly represented at each individual school, at all pertinent school board committees and at the School Board Council. Moreover, parent representation for students with special needs should be outlined specifically in Bill 86.

### ***1. We Request Increased Parent Representation for Special Needs at the School Board Council:***

While parents were pleased with the increase in the number of Parent Commissioners from 2 to 4 at the last election in November 2014, as well as with the establishment of a specific Parent Commissioner to represent the parents of students with special needs, we agree that the number and role of Parent Commissioners is still not sufficient. As such, we agree with Bill 86's proposal to increase the number of Parent Commissioners from 4 to 6 and to provide Parent Commissioners with the right to vote. However, we also recommend increasing the number of Parent Commissioners for Special Needs.

## **Suggested Amendments:**

We agree that the number of Parent Commissioners should be increased from 4 to 6, and that they be provided the right to vote. However we recommend that Bill 86 be amended so that there be 2 Parent Commissioners for Special Needs, rather than just 1. This better reflects the growing population of students with special needs in our education system. In addition, 2 people are required to provide adequate special needs representation at all of the school board committees.

**2. *We Request Increased Parent Representation for Special Needs on School Governing Boards:***

Currently there is no parent representation specific to the particular needs of our students with special needs on each school or center's Governing Board. In addition to providing a local voice at every school, a parent representative for special needs on governing board would be able to communicate the concerns and suggestions of the special needs community at every school and center with the school board level advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities.

**Suggested Amendments:**

We recommend that Bill 86 be amended to include a requirement for each governing board to elect a parent representative for special needs to be a member of the governing board of every school/center during the annual general meeting, from amongst the parents of students with special needs at that school/center.

**3. *We Request Increased Parent Representation for Special Needs on all Pertinent School Board Committees:***

As with increased parent representation for special needs students on school board council and governing boards, parent representatives of students with special needs should also be required to sit on certain school board committees. In particular, the Special Needs Parent Commissioner should be a member of the new "Resource Allocation Committee", as well as the current "Special Needs Central Parity Committee". Both of these important committees make recommendations about budget allocations and human resource allocations, and these are very important issues related to special needs support strategies.

Additionally, it is essential that special needs issues be represented at the level of the "Parents' Committee". Currently, all four Parent Commissioners are designated as "representing the parents' committee" as per Section 143 (2) of the Québec Education Act, and the other 3 Parent Commissioners are full voting members of the Parents' Committee. However, the Special Needs Parent Commissioner is not clearly designated as full voting member of the general Parents' Committee. Therefore, we recommend that the Special Needs Parent Commissioner also be provided with full participatory and voting rights at the Parents' Committee.

**Suggested Amendments:**

We recommend that Bill 86 be amended to include that a Parent Commissioner for Special Needs be required to be a member of the "Resource Allocation Committee", the "Special Needs Central Parity Committee", and the "Parents' Committee", all with full voting rights.

**4. We Request That the Election Process for Special Needs Parent Representatives be Modified so That They are Elected by Their Peers (other Parents of Students with Special Needs):**

As per the Québec Education Act., Section 185 (1), the parent members of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities are “designated by the parents’ committee”. Similarly, as per the Québec Education Act Section 145, the Special Needs Parent Commissioner is “elected from among the parents who are members of the advisory committee” by “the members of the parents committee”.

We do not agree that parent members of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments should be designated by the general parents’ committee as prescribed by the Education Act, since all members of the parents’ committee may not be familiar with the perspective and priorities of the special needs community. We feel strongly that the special needs parent members should be elected by their peers, and by those whom they actually represent: parents of students with special needs.

Moreover, the Special Needs Parent Commissioner, who represents the parents of students with special needs throughout the school board, should not be elected by the members of general parents’ committee. Rather, special needs parents should have the responsibility of electing their own representative to the School Board Council.

**Suggested Amendments:**

We recommend that Bill 86 be amended so that parent members of the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social maladjustments are elected by their peers (other parents of students with special needs). Additionally, we recommend that the Parent Commissioners for Special Needs be elected by and from among the parents who are members of the advisory committee, and represents all parents of said students throughout the school board.

**Conclusions**

In addition to the aforementioned suggestions related to Bill 86, in our role as parents of students with special needs, we would also like to express our concerns regarding the increasing budgetary compressions that are being enforced on School Boards throughout Québec. We request that the MELS increase funding to the English School Boards, specifically in the area of Special Needs. It is imperative that School Boards receive the full amount of funding that is required to support a successful model of integration, to ensure that students with special needs receive equal opportunity for a quality education as all students in Québec deserve, and have legal right to receive.

As parents, we look forward to working with the MELS in the spirit of partnership, and appreciate the opportunity to provide our feedback on the proposed Bill 86.

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

***126 (one hundred and twenty-six) concerned parents of students with special needs from 33 Elementary Schools, 11 High Schools and 1 Vocational Education Center of the Lester B. Pearson School Board.***

(NOTE: the list of parent names was sent to the Minister, but is not included here for confidentiality reasons. Only the list of schools is provided below).

We, 126 (one hundred and twenty-six) concerned parents of students with special needs, with children from 33 Elementary Schools, 11 High Schools and 1 Vocational Education Center of the Lester B. Pearson School Board hereby support the attached Brief regarding the proposed Bill 86.

Presented to the Parliamentary Committee of Culture and Education of the Québec National Assembly on Bill 86:

"An Act to modify the organization and governance of school boards to give schools a greater say in decision-making and ensure parents' presence within each school boards' decision making body"

### Elementary SCHOOLS

### High SCHOOLS

|                                    |                                       |                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <u>Allion Elementary</u>           | <u>Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elem.</u>   | <u>Beaconsfield High School</u>       |
| <u>Beacon Hill Elementary</u>      | <u>Riverview Elementary</u>           | <u>Beurling Academy High School</u>   |
| <u>Beechwood Elementary</u>        | <u>Sherwood Forest Elementary</u>     | <u>John Rennie High School</u>        |
| <u>Birchwood Elementary</u>        | <u>Springdale Elementary</u>          | <u>Lakeside Academy High School</u>   |
| <u>Children's World Elementary</u> | <u>St. Anthony Elementary</u>         | <u>Lasalle Community Comp.</u>        |
| <u>Christmas Park Elementary</u>   | <u>St. Charles Elementary</u>         | <u>Lindsay Place High School</u>      |
| <u>Clearpoint Elementary</u>       | <u>St. Edmund Elementary</u>          | <u>Macdonald High School</u>          |
| <u>Dorset Elementary</u>           | <u>St. John Fisher Jr Elementary</u>  | <u>Pierrefonds Comp. High School</u>  |
| <u>Dorval Elementary</u>           | <u>St. John Fisher Sr. Elementary</u> | <u>Riverdale High School</u>          |
| <u>Edgewater Elementary</u>        | <u>St. Patrick's Elementary</u>       | <u>St. Thomas High School</u>         |
| <u>Evergreen Elementary</u>        | <u>St. Paul Elementary</u>            | <u>Westwood Jr. High School</u>       |
| <u>Forrest Hill Jr Elementary</u>  | <u>Sunshine Academy Elementary</u>    |                                       |
| <u>Forrest Hill Sr Elementary</u>  | <u>Terry Fox Elementary</u>           |                                       |
| <u>Greendale Elementary</u>        | <u>Thorndale Elementary</u>           |                                       |
| <u>Maple Grove Elementary</u>      | <u>Wilder Penfield Elementary</u>     |                                       |
| <u>Margaret Manson Elementary</u>  | <u>Verdun Elementary</u>              | <b><u>Vocational Ed.</u></b>          |
| <u>Mount Pleasant Elementary</u>   |                                       | <u>Gordon Robertson Beauty Center</u> |