

Le 15 septembre 2016

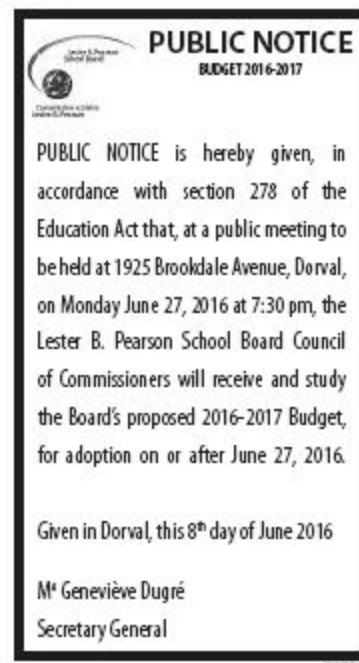
Mémoire déposé

à la Commission parlementaire de la culture et de l'éducation de l'Assemblée nationale du Québec sur le :

Projet de loi no 105 : Loi modifiant la *Loi sur l'instruction publique*

Présenté par Chris Eustace: anglophone, 71 ans, contribuable payant la taxe scolaire

L'IMPORTANCE DE L'ARTICLE 459.6 DU PROJET DE LOI 105 POUR LES CITOYENS QUÉBÉCOIS, LES CONTRIBUABLES ET LES PARENTS



Veuillez prendre connaissance du cas d'étude suivant:

INTIMIDATION ET L'IMPUISANCE

Central Parents' Committee: “intimidation and helplessness”

Le Comité central de parents de la Commission scolaire Lester-B.-Pearson a posé la question écrite suivante aux trois candidats qui rivalisaient pour la présidence de la CSLBP en octobre 2014 :

"What will you do to reduce the intimidation and helplessness that many parents feel when they question the school board and its policies?"

[Traduction libre] « Que ferez-vous pour faire en sorte que les parents ne se sentent plus intimidés et désemparés lorsqu'ils posent des questions concernant les politiques de la commission scolaire? »

(Les candidats étaient: le président, le vice-président et moi)

Fédération des comités de parents du Québec, (FCPQ) Le Soleil, 6 avril 2016

« d'intimidation et de harcèlement »

Pour Mme Payne, le *statu quo* n'a plus sa place, car plusieurs parents sont victimes « d'intimidation et de harcèlement » au sein des commissions scolaires

La Loi sur l'instruction publique et la période des questions

Contrairement à ce que prévoit l'article 168 de la *Loi sur l'instruction publique*, on m'empêche de participer aux conseils des commissaires depuis maintenant **34 mois**, ce que je faisais pourtant depuis 1998.

Article 168 de la *Loi sur l'instruction publique* :

« [...] une période doit être prévue, à chaque séance publique, pour permettre aux personnes présentes de poser des questions orales aux commissaires. »

"...a question period must be provided at each public meeting during which the persons present may put oral questions to the commissioners."

Contrairement à ce que prévoit l'article 278 de la *Loi sur l'instruction publique*, je n'ai pas pu poser de questions lors des conseils des commissaires portant sur le budget et ce, depuis maintenant **5 ans** (de 2012 à 2016).

Article 278 de la *Loi sur l'instruction publique* :

« Avant d'adopter son budget, la commission scolaire donne un avis public d'au moins 15 jours qui indique la date, l'heure et le lieu de la séance du conseil des commissaires à laquelle il sera examiné. »

"Before adopting its budget, every school board shall give a public notice of at least 15 days of the date, time and place of the sitting of the council of commissioners at which its budget is to be studied."

À propos des finances des commissions scolaires...

Revenons aux questions écrites posées aux trois candidats à la présidence de la CSLBP par le Comité central de parent lors des élections de novembre 2014 (ces derniers étant le président actuel de la CSLBP, le vice-président en poste depuis 6 ans, et moi).

L'une d'entre elles portait sur le budget. La réponse écrite du vice-président fut la suivante :

"As it stands now, the school board budget is not even that transparent to the commissioners!"

[Traduction libre] « Dans l'état actuel des choses, le budget de la commission scolaire n'est pas assez clair et transparent, même pour les commissaires! »

Ainsi, pour participer de nouveau aux conseils des commissaires, on me demande de rencontrer l'avocat de la commission scolaire et de signer des conditions. L'une d'entre elles est de ne pas parler des organisations externes, soit l'Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec (ACSAQ) et le Comité de gestion la taxe scolaire de l'Île de Montréal (CGTSIM).

Le président de la CSLBP est le vice-président de l'ACSAQ et membre délégué du CGTSIM. Les deux postes offrent une rémunération.

Lorsque j'ai posé ma candidature à la présidence de la CSLBP en 2014, je proposais d'annuler notre adhésion à l'ACSAQ (comme l'a fait l'a Commission scolaires Marguerite-Bourgeoys, Marie Victorin, et Grandes-Seigneuries – avec la Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec).

Cela fait également des années que je réclame que les commissions scolaires n'aient plus un rôle à jouer dans la collecte de la taxe scolaire.

La période des questions encourage la responsabilité publique et constitue une des marques de la démocratie. C'est un droit, non un privilège.

Un examen de la situation actuelle - une perspective

Les deux textes argumentatifs suivants, un article et une lettre au rédacteur en chef, replacent les enjeux dans une perspective chronologique et dressent un bilan du système d'éducation publique québécois.

Député David Birnbaum - Montreal Gazette, 16 décembre 2015

"Bill 86's school board reforms are no threat to the anglophone community"

« Le projet de loi 86 sur la réforme des commissions scolaires n'est pas une menace pour la communauté Anglophone » [traduction libre]

<http://montrealgazette.com/opinion/columnists/opinion-bill-86s-school-board-reforms-are-no-threat-to-the-anglophone-community>



Quebec school board reforms are no threat to the ...

montrealgazette.com

Opinion: Bill 86's school board reforms are no threat to the anglophone community

Les associations anglophones, avec l'ACSAQ en tête, ont appelé à « jeter le projet de loi 86 à la poubelle ».

Journal de Montréal, 27 août, 2016

Mario Dumont : **« Les commissions scolaires nuisent »**

<http://www.journaldemontreal.com/2016/08/27/les-commissions-scolaires-nuisent>

West Island Suburban, 31 août, 2016

Robert Frank : « **LBPSB passes \$11 million budget hike** »

http://www.thesuburban.com/news/lbpsb-passes-million-budget-hike/article_b85fb7e6-d648-5209-a797-711364208926.html

Your Local Journal, 1^{er} septembre 2016

Chris Eustace : « **Dear Editor** »

<http://www.yourlocaljournal.ca/#!Letter-to-the-editor-3-September-1-2016/ip5hx/57c86289c750093bcd4a71>

(Hard copies of the last two links above are on pages **33** and **35**)

LBPSB Council - October 2008



PRINCIPALE RECOMMANDATION

Ne reculez pas en ce qui concerne l'article 459.6 et ne vous pliez pas aux désirs de l'ACSAQ, une association qui ne sert que ses propres intérêts.

"459.6. Within the scope of the Minister's responsibilities, the Minister may issue directives to a school board concerning its administration, organization, operation and actions. Such directives may also complement or clarify the budgetary rules during a school year."

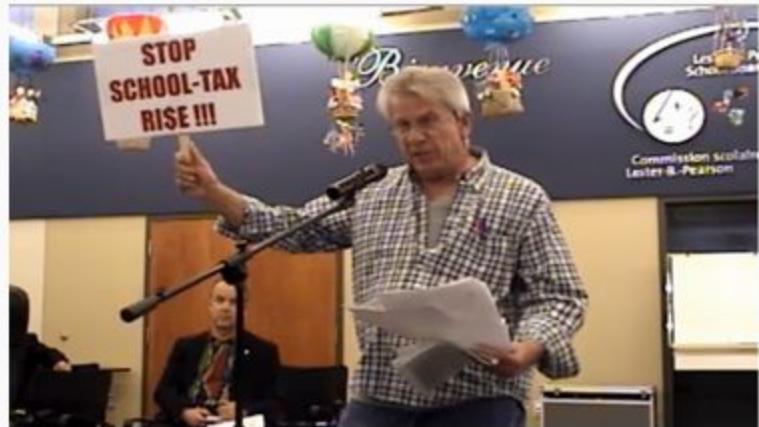
"Lastly, the Minister is given the power to issue directives to school boards."

« 459.6. Le ministre peut, dans le cadre des responsabilités qui lui sont confierées, émettre des directives à une commission scolaire portant sur l'administration, l'organisation, le fonctionnement ou les actions de celle-ci. Ces directives peuvent en outre avoir pour effet de compléter ou de préciser les règles budgétaires en cours d'année scolaire.»

« Enfin, il attribue au ministre un pouvoir d'émettre des directives à l'égard des commissions scolaires. »

L'article 459.6 protège les contribuables et les parents contre les commissions scolaires.

LBPSB Council - May 2013



AUTRES RECOMMANDATIONS

Le gouvernement doit aussi réévaluer :

- **LE BUDGET** : L'état des choses actuel permet aux présidents des conseils et des comités exécutifs de dépenser plus de 5 000 \$ en frais de voyage pour participer à des congrès d'une fin de semaine (48 heures). C'est inacceptable. Le gouvernement doit surveiller étroitement les dépenses des commissions scolaires.

Rappelez-vous de ce qu'avez dit l'ancienne vice-présidente de la CSLBP, qui s'était portée candidate à la présidence lors des élections scolaires de novembre 2014. Elle a écrit :

"As it stands now, the school board budget is not even that transparent to the commissioners!"

« Dans l'état actuel des choses, le budget de la commission scolaire n'est pas assez clair et transparent, même pour les commissaires! » [Traduction libre]

- COMMISSAIRES À L'ÉTHIQUE :

Les commissaires à l'éthique devraient être nommés par le ministre.

Présentement, le commissaire à l'éthique est un employé de la commission scolaire, ce qui crée des conflits d'intérêts, surtout lorsque les plaintes sont déposées à l'encontre du président. Le commissaire à l'éthique ne devrait pas dépendre des commissions scolaires, ce qui pose contraintes à leurs actions.

C'est au gouvernement d'assumer le rôle d'employeur des commissaires à l'éthique. Il devrait d'ailleurs envisager de créer une banque de commissaire à l'éthique « errants » répartis dans toute la province selon les besoins.

Une telle mesure rendrait les commissaires plus efficaces et limiterait les recours en justice"

{J'ai déjà soulevé cet enjeu dans mon mémoire sur le projet de loi 86 (recommandation n° 11) et dans une lettre adressée à M. Couillard et aux all députés de l'Assemblée nationale (« Mort du projet de loi 86 et naissance d'un nouveau plan d'éducation », 27 mai 2016, recommandation n° 3.)}

- GROUPE DE PRESSION : L'ACSAQ a engagé un groupe de pression dont le mandat va à l'encontre des intérêts des citoyens et qui ne sert que les visées économiques des commissaires scolaires. L'emploi de ce groupe prend fin le 1^{er} mars 2017. Il est absurde que l'argent de la taxe scolaire soit employé à l'encontre de l'intention du gouvernement qui est d'améliorer le système d'éducation.

- LES ÉLECTIONS : Le vote pour les élections scolaires devrait se faire en personne et non en ligne. Il existe des gens prêts à tout... Le piratage est devenue monnaie courante de nos jours.

- TAXE SCOLAIRE et FRAIS DE SCOLARITÉ : Le système actuel est injuste pour les propriétaires (en ce qui concerne la taxe scolaire) et pour les élèves issus de milieux défavorisés (frais de scolarité).

Suggestion : Augmenter la taxe de vente de 1 ou 2 %. On pourrait parler ici de taxe du Québec pour l'éducation (page 26)

- Viser la **RÉUSSITE** des élèves avec des besoins particuliers : réduire le nombre d'élèves par classe (p. 31)

Rencontre avec le ministre de l'Éducation, M. Sébastien Proulx

Le 15 mai 2016, à l'occasion d'un court entretien avec le ministre de l'Éducation Sébastien Proulx, j'ai insisté sur les points suivants :

1. L'ACSAQ ne représente pas l'ensemble de la communauté anglophone. C'est une organisation qui ne sert que ses propres intérêts. Elle prétend être la voix du système d'éducation anglophone, or elle n'est qu'une voix parmi tant d'autres.

Il n'y a rien qui prouve que l'ACSAQ soit utile à la communauté ou au système d'éducation anglophone. En revanche, il est certain que cette association ne contribue pas à la réussite des élèves.

En matière d'éducation, les anciens ministres de l'Éducation Pauline Marois, François Legault, Michelle Courchesne et Line Beauchamp ont davantage aidé la communauté anglophone que ne l'a fait l'ACSAQ

(je pense notamment à l'épisode des manuels scolaires, aux frais de scolarité, à la gouvernance et au projet de loi 88).

2. Les commissaires scolaires élus ne contribuent pas au succès des élèves. Elles ne représentent qu'un pallier de bureaucratie supplémentaire qui ne se sent pas l'obligation de rendre des comptes.

3. J'ai dit à M. Proulx : « **YOU ARE THE BOSS!** »

LBPSB Executive Committee - May 2016

QUEBEC'S LARGEST ENGLISH WEEKLY NEWSPAP



LBPSB chair Suanne Stein Day refused to let elected school commissioners talk to reporters about silencing education critic Chris Eustace.

Education Minister meets Eustace

LBPSB still shuns Eustace, muzzles commissioners

(full story: page **18**)

Demande spéciale : Malgré mes capacités limitées en français, je serais très heureux de participer aux audiences du CCE qui auront lieu plus tard ce mois-ci.

Respectueusement,

Chris Eustace

Arrière grand-père, enseignant à la retraite, candidat à la présidence CSLBP de novembre 2014

Mon mémoire sur le projet de loi 86:

[Eustace, Chris \(PDF, 14 MB\)](#)

Traduction de l'anglais au français :

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AN ANNEX

On September 13, 2016 , the Quebec English School Boards Association put out a press release claiming "certain sections of Bill 105 infringe on minority community rights to manage and control its educational institutions as guaranteed in Section 23 of the Canadian constitution."

Nonsense. Bill 105 goes above and beyond and gives the English community all the rights it had before, and strengthens the role parents and principals will play to boost academic achievement in a revitalized public education system.

The bill protects taxpayers and parents by curbing the power of abusive elected school boards.

West Island Suburban - April 30, 2014

QUEBEC'S LARGEST ENGLISH WEEKLY NEWSPAPER



"Somebody should call the police," LBPSB chair Suanne Stein Day told school board director general Robert T. Mills, to eject her political opponent Chris Eustace (right) and Cindy Mac Donald (left) from the school board headquarters building, April 28.

LBPSB boots parent, commissioner and opposition candidate

By Robert Frank
The Suburban

Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB) Chair Suanne Stein Day called for police to remove two members of the

public during an unusually fraught school commissioners' meeting, April 28.

Stein Day bristled after Chris Eustace, her political opponent in the upcoming Nov. 2 school board election murmured a

comment from the back of the room to another member of the public, Jason Doan.

"Mr. Eustace, you are not allowed to speak at council

See LBPSB, page 8

Consider the value of parents: In 2001, "**Real report cards are back thanks to parents giving 100 %** , and this year they saved schools that English commissioners closed "**Parents clearly fit to manage schools .**" (June 30, 2016) (pages 22 & 23

Let's reel back a bit

THE EQUITY Letter April 20, 2016

Open letter to Philippe Couillard, Quebec Premier

Dear Sir,

As a steadfast supporter of draft Bill 86, the school board reform plan that you initiated, I would like to express my disappointment in the way the matter is unfolding.

The bill, simply put, modernizes an antiquated public school system by dropping school board elections and commissioners, and instead, grants leadership roles to parents, teachers, principals and support staff.

After a few weeks of hearings on the draft law, it now appears that there will be elections in one form or another.

This about-face by the government is primarily the result of a masterful disingenuous campaign, based on fear-mongering and threats, by the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) to go to the Supreme Court to challenge the law.

Consider: The QESBA President Jennifer Maccarone who claimed at a town hall meeting on Feb. 21, at a school of Riverside School Board, the bill, according to the constitution, “tramples on minority-language education rights” and said, “my kids are not guinea pigs.”

Vice-president Suanne Stein Day, said “students will suffer,” if the bill passes (Gazette, March 16, 2016).

Meanwhile, one of Canada’s foremost constitutional lawyers, Julius Grey, had said, “I don’t believe that school boards, as such, are constitutionally protected, on the other hand, the right to English education is.” (Global Montreal, Oct. 3, 2013)

Moreover, there is not one shred of evidence to show the QESBA, in its entire history, has been of any pedagogical, cultural and economic value to any English school, classroom or student.

In fact, former Education Ministers Pauline Marois, François Legault, Line Beauchamp and Michelle Courchesne have been more helpful to the Anglo community than the QESBA ever was.

The QESBA even hired a lobby group, JGA Strategic Communications, “to secure community support” to fight the government and its school board overhaul plan. This cost the school taxpayer \$10,000.

Why are there no government funds for advertising for those supporting the bill, as I asked in recommendation #14 of my brief submitted to the committee studying Bill 86?

That said, this campaign against Bill 86 is really about unnecessary jobs that pay some professional school board politicians with loud voices, anywhere from \$50,000 to over \$100,000 a year.

At any rate, this little group, in my view, has done a disservice to the Anglophone community and created discord between the Anglophone, Francophone and Allophone population groups.

Even so, there is one aspect in the proposed law that should not be touched.

Presently, Quebec's elected school board system lends itself to all manners of abuse of power. This could take form by withholding requested budget information from governing boards and parent committees, to not allowing people to speak at public council meetings.

That said, the loudest complaint made by the English and French school board associations is that Bill 86 grants new powers to the Minister of Education.

Specifically they refer to amendment 459.6, which states: "... the minister may issue directives to a school board concerning its administration, organization, operation and actions."

This is good because the public needs protection from the boards.

With this rule in place, the public would be much better served because the government would be the place to go, to appeal poor school board decisions and to report the abuse of power.

Chris Eustace, Montreal, Que.

LE DEVOIR

L'abandon du projet de loi 86 réjouit les commissions scolaires

17 mai 2016 | Chris Eustace Montréal, le 15 mai 2016 | Éducation

Les commissions scolaires crient victoire : leur combat contre la modernisation de notre système d'éducation publique, incarnée par le projet de loi 86, a mené le gouvernement à abandonner ce dernier. Cet abandon total est une défaite et une véritable douche froide pour les parents de la province («[L'abandon du projet de loi 86 réjouit les commissions scolaires](#)», *Le Devoir*, 14 mai).

Le projet de loi 86 avait pour objectif d'assurer la réussite des élèves, notamment par l'abolition de coûteuses élections scolaires qui génèrent des taux de participation dérisoires. Le but était également de placer le pouvoir décisionnel dans les mains des écoles, en le confiant à ceux qui sont les plus proches des élèves, soit les parents, les professeurs, les directeurs et le personnel de soutien.

En mettant au rancart ce projet de loi avant-gardiste et très prometteur, le ministre de l'Éducation, Sébastien Proulx, a ignoré les aspirations des parents et des contribuables et a renvoyé le système d'éducation plusieurs années en arrière.

Pire, cette « victoire » **donne maintenant carte blanche aux commissions scolaires** pour faire tout ce qu'elles veulent. Nous pouvons désormais oublier la transparence et la responsabilité des commissions scolaires.

Quand on pense que notre monde est aujourd'hui dominé par les technologies de la communication modernes, cette soudaine volte-face du gouvernement Couillard n'a aucun sens, tant du **point de vue intellectuel et financier que — et surtout — du point de vue pédagogique.**



May 21, 2016

Let's fix problems of school boards

Re: "Province to scrap education reform bill" (Montreal Gazette, May 14)

Disappointment does not begin to describe my view of the government's decision to scrap a plan that would modernize school-board governance in Quebec.

With today's high-tech communication tools, this sudden turnaround by the Couillard government makes no intellectual, financial and - most important - pedagogical sense.

Matters dealing with accountability and openness have plagued elected school boards for years.

I hope the government does something about these issues in its new plan to be revealed in early June.

Chris Eustace, Pierrefonds

WEST ISLAND SUBURBAN - June 1, 2016

Education Minister meets Eustace

Minister of Education Sébastien Proulx granted education critic Chris Eustace a one-on-one audience at the Quebec Liberal party convention, May 15.

Two days after Proulx announced that he would scrap the overhaul to provisions Quebec education system, Bill 86, Eustace travelled to Drummondville to send a message that many of the province's non-francophones had supported the erstwhile initiative.

Quebec's Minister of Education, Sébastien Proulx recognized Eustace's effort by granting him a 25-minute meeting, during which he took note of Eustace's recommendations.

Eustace commended Proulx' willingness to listen and hopes that the Minister will include some of his suggestions when he tables a new set of education reforms, June 10.

"I highlighted abuses of power, intimidation, financial probity and other ethical issues," Eustace told *The Suburban*. "Electing commissioners to school boards has nothing to do with student achievement."

Eustace recommended that the province take over responsibility for adjudicating school issues. He noted that Quebec already operates a municipal commission that rules on ethical lapses in the province's cities.

He said that he wants restrictions to prevent outgoing elected commissioners from doing business with their former school boards, more transparency to prevent collusion and corruption in the hundreds of millions of dollars of school outsourcing contracts and a ban on school tax money being spent on lobbyists.

Nine days later, when Eustace tried to convey the same message to Lester B. Pearson School Board's (LBPSB) executive committee, the outcome was staggeringly different.

This time, as Eustace held aloft the same signs that earned him a hearing in Drummondville, LBPSB council emptied, as chairman Martin Sherman repeatedly ordered "Mr. Eustace please take a seat."

Eustace, who taught at Pierrefonds Comprehensive High School for more than 30 years and who in the 2014 school board election ran a close second to Suanne Stein Day in his bid to chair LBPSB, has attended council meetings for years. Yet, for two-and-a-half years Stein Day has barred him from speaking there.

Stein Day told *The Suburban* in an interview that the ban has the "unanimous support of the council. We've discussed it in caucus many times." However, some school commissioners had told *The Suburban* that they were shocked when Stein Day reimposed the ban immediately after the election, stating that it was her own personal decision.

Last week, *The Suburban* canvassed all elected LBPSB commissioners by electronic mail whether they supported the ban. None were willing to go on record. During the subsequent council meeting, May 30, Stein Day refused to put the question to them publicly. “The education act states that the school board chair is the spokesperson for the school board,” she insisted.

Stein Day alleged that Eustace was “not able to follow the rules of our council meetings.” She added that Eustace must speak respectfully, observe time limits and refrain from personal attacks.

“He continues to break the rules like he did on Tuesday night, disrupting our meeting with little unexplainable signs that say ‘Anglo’,” Stein Day complained. “If he wants to come and ask about things relevant to our school board that’s one thing. But if he wants to ask about other organizations, even if I sit on the board of the other organization, my council meeting is not the forum to answer questions on that. He just can’t abide by the rules.”

The Education Act permits any member of the public to pose questions at school board meetings. Eustace said that during his meeting with the Minister he cited the efforts to silence him as an example of how elected school board officials suppress opposing viewpoints.

http://www.thesuburban.com/news/west_island_news/minister-meets-eustace/article_f531fe0c-ea76-546d-aef4-30b6f194e92f.html

Fighting for our English schools

As the 2015-2016 school year comes to an end, it's worth noting what lies ahead for our English public education system. Let's recap.

Deservedly, there has been a lot of media coverage regarding the good news of two Montreal Island English schools that will remain open because the Lester B. Pearson School Board reversed a decision taken last December to close the schools.

No question, this turnaround follows a seven month hard-fought campaign by parents and community leaders, which, simply put, demonstrated the board made a poor ruling in the first place.

Parents were armed with a petition with about "11,500 signatures" ; they lobbied municipal, provincial , and federal politicians, and came up with a "200-page document" with ideas, such as creating "community learning centres."

The parents fight is instructive as there appears to be another battle looming regarding the operation and management of English schools.

The government has proposed draft Bill 105, which deals with school board reform.

It replaces Bill 86, which was bashed no end by the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) because there would be no school board elections. The Association claimed the bill did not respect constitutionally protected minority language education rights.

Regardless, parent-friendly Bill 105 states there will be school board elections ; parent commissioners will have the right to vote ; Resource Allocation Committees will be primarily manned by school principals, who will allocate monies where

needed. This is pedagogically-sound as it will serve our 'special-needs' children very well.

In addition, there will be **greater decision-making power at the school level**, rather than board level, and the Minister will have more power to issue directives to school boards.

Most important, schools will have a bigger say how our school tax dollars will be spent. It was recently announced that schools will receive \$195 million to use next school year

However, the QESBA is not happy with the new bill and it plans to take "necessary steps over the summer to ensure the bill meets our community's rights..."

Meanwhile, the **Quebec's French Parents Fédération des comités des parents du Québec**, stated the status quo is no longer possible, and implored all parties and partners to see to it that Bill 105 is implemented by Sept. 30th

On June 10, The Sherbrooke Record reported a comment made by Chairman Michael Murray of the Eastern Townships School Board. From the article: "Education Act amendment offers more power to parents and principals," he said:

"I'd be content if this (Bill 105) would be adopted."

The bill is fine ; it is on our side. There is no need for the QESBA, which is always seeking relevance, to get involved.

Moreover, if there is anything amiss, it is evident, parents and the community are capable with today's high-tech communication tools, to fix things.

Chris Eustace



Parents clearly fit to manage schools

Letter

Jun 30 2016

Re: "Lakeside Academy, Riverview Elementary to remain open" (Montreal Gazette, June 28)

Besides proving the Pearson school board's decision last December to close two schools was not in the best interest of the English community, parents have clearly demonstrated with their hard-fought campaign that they are the ones most suited to manage and control our schools.

Well done, Lakeside and Riverview. Ten on ten!

Chris Eustace

Pierrefonds

School boards pushing agenda

On July 8, the Quebec English School Boards Association presented a workshop at the annual Canadian School Boards Association Congress being held this year in Winnipeg.

It was titled: "The Battle for Democracy & Minority Community Control in the Education System: A Lesson in Courageous Leadership."

The workshop discussed how "leadership" traits were translated into a "cohesive, well-organized, motivating campaign against Quebec government proposed legislation."

This was in reference to draft Bill 86, aimed at promoting greater student success and welfare by enhancing the role of parents, teachers, professionals and principals in decision-making and by placing the school itself at the centre of the public education network.

School board elections, which cost about \$20 million to run, would be ditched, and by extension so would trustee salaries and expenses for conferences under the pseudo-guise of professional development. The money saved would be redirected to schools.

The opposition by the Quebec association was massive. The association hired a lobby group, held meetings across Quebec, travelled across Canada soliciting support from the provinces and the school boards congress by claiming the bill was unconstitutional and a threat to minority language (English) education rights.

Absolute nonsense. There still would be English schools, managed and controlled by the English community. At any rate, the government caved in and

scrapped the bill by replacing it with a bill that would have school board elections.

However, the Quebec association and associated boards are still whining because they claim the government has reduced their power and insist they can do a better job of managing our schools.

They can't.

The association has been characterized by arrogance, negligence and extravagance, and has never been of any economic, cultural or pedagogical value for any English school, classroom or student.

The majority Quebec government must not collapse again. For the common good, it should pass parent-friendly draft Bill 105 soon.

Chris Eustace , Montreal

http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/letters_to_the_editor/letters-and-comments-july-9-386103391.html

LE DEVOIR

TAXES SCOLAIRES

Moderniser le financement des écoles

26 juillet 2016 | Chris Eustace - *Montréal* | Québec



Photo: iStockIl faut délaisser l'idée de financer l'éducation par les taxes foncières, estime Chris Eustace.

Le dernier avis d'imposition de nombreux propriétaires du Québec ne fait que renforcer l'idée que les commissions scolaires ne doivent plus participer à la gestion de la collecte de la taxe scolaire.

Voici pourquoi.

Bien que tout le monde s'entende pour dire qu'un système d'éducation publique bien financé est nécessaire pour le bien-être de la société, au

Québec, la majorité des citoyens semblent penser que la façon dont la taxe scolaire est prélevée et perçue est injuste.

Deux facteurs sont pris en considération dans la perception de la taxe scolaire : la commission scolaire (francophone ou anglophone) auprès de laquelle est enregistré le propriétaire et le lieu de résidence, à savoir s'il se trouve sur l'île de Montréal ou en dehors de cette dernière.

La méthode est si confuse que certains propriétaires qui résident à l'extérieur de l'île de Montréal et qui n'ont pas d'enfant à l'école peuvent choisir de verser leur taxe scolaire soit à la commission scolaire francophone, soit à la commission scolaire anglophone de leur localité. Évidemment, ils choisissent invariablement la moins chère.

Certaines commissions scolaires du Québec appellent le gouvernement à instaurer un taux d'imposition forfaitaire, comme cela se fait sur l'île de Montréal. La taxe est fixée par le Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal (CGTSIM), qui est administré par les commissaires des cinq commissions scolaires de l'île de Montréal.

Cette année, la taxe scolaire versée par les propriétaires s'élèvera à environ 482 millions de dollars, et une part importante de cette somme sera consacrée aux dépenses administratives des commissions scolaires.

Le CGTSIM est une institution bureaucratique coûteuse, inutile et dépassée. De plus, rappelons qu'il a fait de mauvais choix d'investissements qui lui ont fait perdre des millions de dollars destinés aux élèves dans le besoin ([*« Crise financière – Québec appelé en renfort pour aider les élèves défavorisés », Le Devoir, 4 avril 2009*](#)).

Il est temps de moderniser la façon dont nous finançons notre système public d'éducation. Il faut mettre sur pied un système plus juste et alléger le

fardeau fiscal des contribuables. Le gouvernement devrait délaisser l'idée de financer les écoles au moyen des taxes foncières. Québec devrait d'ailleurs exercer un rôle plus direct dans la gestion du financement des opérations des écoles.

Rappelez-vous, l'ex-ministre de l'Éducation François Blais avait envisagé l'an dernier de déléguer à l'État la responsabilité de financer les écoles. Il avait proposé un « *taux de taxe unique* » pour tout le Québec qui « *renflouerait les coffres de l'État de plus de 2 milliards de dollars en taxe scolaire* ».

En septembre, Québec allouera 195 millions de dollars aux écoles et les commissions scolaires n'auront aucun contrôle sur cette somme. Il s'agit d'une première.

Ce qui constituerait également une première, c'est que le gouvernement libéral hausse la taxe de vente provinciale d'environ 1 % et divise équitablement les fonds amassés. Parce qu'il en va du bien commun, et considérant les avantages sociaux et économiques de l'éducation, nous pourrions l'appeler « l'impôt pour l'éducation ».

LE DEVOIR

LETTRE

L'école est gratuite, dit la Loi. Elle devrait l'être. Vraiment.

11 août 2016 | Chris Eustace *Montréal, le 9 août 2016* | Éducation

Les parents québécois devront bientôt s'acquitter de toutes sortes de dépenses pour l'éducation de leurs enfants. Du matériel scolaire aux différents services éducatifs, ces frais sont en constante augmentation.

Malheureusement, la hausse annuelle de ces frais a dépassé le taux de l'inflation. D'ailleurs, ces derniers varient grandement d'un endroit à l'autre de la province, car ils sont prélevés par les commissions scolaires et les écoles. Les dépenses scolaires représentent un fardeau inutile sur le budget de plusieurs familles, puisque l'éducation publique devrait être gratuite de la maternelle à la cinquième année du secondaire, comme le prescrit la Loi sur l'instruction publique.

Rappelons que, quelques années plus tôt, des parents québécois souhaitaient intenter une action collective contre les commissions scolaires de la province en raison des dépenses annuelles liées à l'achat de matériel éducatif.

Ils soutenaient que ces frais (pour des instruments de musique, des dictionnaires ou des calculatrices) allaient à l'encontre de la loi provinciale qui garantit la gratuité de l'école primaire et secondaire. Notons à ce propos les commentaires de la Fédération des comités de parents du Québec rapportés dans l'article « *Quand les factures s'additionnent* », *Le Devoir*, 22 août 2015.

C'est une question d'équité. Certains parents ne peuvent pas payer certains services pour leurs enfants, comme une activité sportive parascolaire ou une sortie éducative.

Aucun enfant ne devrait être privé d'une activité éducative en raison de facteurs socioéconomiques. Bien que la réussite scolaire soit importante dans un système éducatif sain, la participation à des activités parascolaires l'est tout autant.

À l'école secondaire, que ce soit par leur engagement dans le club de l'environnement, le comité de rédaction de l'album annuel ou le conseil étudiant, les élèves apprennent à contribuer au bien-être de la société.

Le gouvernement du Québec s'est courageusement lancé dans une réforme majeure des commissions scolaires en vue de moderniser notre système d'éducation publique. Le mois prochain, le gouvernement libéral tiendra des audiences publiques sur le projet de loi 105 qui a la « réussite scolaire » pour principal objectif.

Étant donné que, malheureusement, le Québec a un taux de décrochage scolaire très élevé, le premier ministre, Philippe Couillard, et le ministre de l'Éducation, Sébastien Proulx, devraient scruter à la loupe les dépenses relatives à l'administration et à la gestion des commissions scolaires, et éliminer les frais de scolarité.

LE DEVOIR

LETTRE

Ces élèves qui ont des besoins particuliers

27 août 2016 | Chris Eustace, professeur à la retraite *Montréal, le 26 août 2016* | Éducation

Concernant les services aux enfants québécois avec des besoins particuliers, le ministre de l'Éducation, Sébastien Proulx, a raison quand il déclare : « *On peut faire mieux [Le Devoir, 20 août 2016]*. »

Il a aussi tout à fait raison lorsqu'il soutient qu'un taux de diplomation de 45 % pour les élèves avec des besoins particuliers « *n'est pas acceptable* ».

Cela dit, les méthodes pour repérer les enfants avec des troubles d'apprentissage se sont affinées. Par conséquent, on dénombre de plus en plus d'élèves qui ont besoin d'une aide particulière — et celle-ci coûte cher.

Mis à part la « *réforme du financement* » et le sujet de « *l'intervention précoce* », qui feront l'objet d'un sommet en automne, il faudrait se pencher sur une autre idée qui aiderait grandement : réduire la taille des classes.

Depuis plusieurs années, le système d'éducation public du Québec est aux prises avec un nombre important d'élèves par classe. Des centaines de milliers de dollars

sont dépensées annuellement en salaire de professeurs pour des salles de classe saturées. Il s'agit d'une situation pour le moins troublante.

Les professeurs réclament des classes de taille raisonnable, car il existe une corrélation entre le nombre d'élèves par classe et la réussite scolaire.

Les études démontrent que des classes plus petites sont synonymes de baisse du taux d'absentéisme et de décrochage scolaire. On remarque également que dans de telles conditions, les enfants issus de milieux moins aisés réussissent aussi bien que leurs camarades plus fortunés.

Le Québec devrait investir dans un plan de réduction de la taille des classes. À long terme, une telle mesure serait bénéfique pour la société québécoise.

THE SUBURBAN

August 31, 2016

LBPSB passes \$11 million budget hike

School commissioners approved a \$287.8 million budget at Lester B. Pearson School Board's council meeting, Aug. 29.

Despite declining enrolment, the school board's allocation for 2016-2017 is up by more than four percent from its \$276 million budget for the previous fiscal year. The approximately \$11 million increase is about four times the Canadian inflation rate. Consumer prices rose only 1.13 percent last year.

"It's a balanced budget. The school board received some good news with a \$3 million increase in capital funding through the provincial government reinvestment in infrastructure," said LBPSB chair Suanne Stein Day. "Unfortunately part of this was financed through a \$1 million cutback in technology grants."

The provincial technology grant amounted to \$1.5 million last year, added LBPSB assistant director-general Carol Heffernan, in response to a question from school commissioner Joshua Arless.

Stein Day said that LBPSB plans to use some of the fresh infusion of cash to renovate bathrooms, replace windows and doors, and add new elevators that will afford handicapped access to some LBPSB facilities.

LBPSB passed its budget to public apathy. According to Stein Day, the school board received no questions from the public.

However, she did not reply to written questions submitted in advance of the meeting by education activist Chris Eustace told *The Suburban*.

Stein Day has banned Eustace—who ran second against her during the LBPSB election in 2014—from speaking at the school board’s public meetings.

“Please note that this is the fifth year that I was not permitted to ask questions about LBPSB’s budget,” Eustace said. “Stein Day’s statement ‘there being none’ was therefore false.”

The *Quebec Education Act* specifies that any person may pose a question during question periods at public meetings held by the province’s democratically elected school boards.

The Quebec government recently tabled legislation to overhaul governance of the province’s education system in response to single-digit turnout at the polls in successive school board elections. Although more voters cast their ballot English school districts than in their French counterparts, about 85 percent of eligible electors didn’t bother to exercise their democratic franchise.

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http://www.thesuburban.com/news/lbpsb-passes-million-budget-hike/article_b85fb7e6-d648-5209-a797-711364208926.html

Your Local **Journal**

September 1, 2016

Dear Editor :

On August 29, 2016, the Lester B. Pearson School Board Council of Commissioners adopted its '2016-2017 Budget' of about \$288 million.

Even though there were two Public Question Periods, not one question was asked by anyone, and questions I submitted, in writing, a week earlier, were ignored.

Contrary to Article 168 of the Education Act, Lester B. still will not allow me to participate, by either asking questions or making comments, at Question Period time

This ban is now three months shy of three (3) years, and the Aug. 29 meeting was the fifth (5th) consecutive year, I was not permitted to ask questions on the annual budget.

That said, there is some good news.

Last June, Education Minister Sébastien Proulx proposed legislation which amends the Education Act - draft Bill 105, a most-welcome overhaul of our public school system.

Briefly, it curbs the power of school boards by granting greater decision-making power at the school-level.

Academic achievement is the focus of Bill 105 ; for emphasis, it is stated 45 times in the 17-page amendment.

The bill is forward-looking and includes a promising pedagogically-sound initiative.

Moreover, the bill gives the Education Minister more power to direct school boards regarding matters dealing with administration organization, operation - and budget.

It is in this spirit, the government will be by-passing school boards, and allocating \$195 million directly to schools to be used by those closest to the student: parents, teachers , principals and support personnel.

Moving on: In its report to Council, representatives of the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA) , made it clear, the Association is not happy with the school-board reform bill. The QESBA will fight it at the upcoming hearings. Of course, this will cost taxpayers a lot of money.

Meanwhile, the federation of (French) school principals want Bill 105 passed as soon as possible. So does the Fédération des comités de parents du Québec.

Lastly, my written questions basically dealt with the value of the QESBA, and the expenses associated with this \$1 million tax-funded organization.

The Association claims it is "the voice of English public education in Quebec."

It is not the only voice.

Chris Eustace

Pierrefonds

<http://www.yourlocaljournal.ca/single-post/2016/09/01/Letter-to-the-editor-3-September-1-2016>

EDUCATION DEMOCRACY NEEDS FREEDOM

By Robert Frank



- Photo Yves Charlebois

Education Minister Sébastien Proulx (right) had no problem listening to Chris Eustace's suggestions. School boards need follow his lead.

Education Minister Sébastien Proux has proved his political mettle as a superlative listener. He heard the clamour against abolishing elections for the province's school boards and withdrew wildly unpopular legislation, Bill 86.

Quebec schools still need reform though. Proulx has said as much, and is expected to unveil a new, alternate set of reforms on Friday, June 10.

Top of the wish list is to hold school board elections at the same time as municipal elections in every town throughout the province, currently slated to be held on Nov. 5, 2017.

To do so will take legislation to trim school commissioners' current mandate which runs until 2018.

More reform than merely tinkering with elections is needed to ensure that education democracy remains effective though. Democracy means more than going to the polls to cast your vote every four years.

As *The Suburban* reported last week, Lester B. Pearson School Board chair Suanne Stein Day has, for the past two-and-a-half years banned her strongest political rival from speaking at public meetings.

She stated that the ban has the unanimous support of LBPSB's elected commissioners. Yet when the newspaper asked that they each be canvassed on the ban for the public record, Stein Day invoked [Section 155 of the Education Act](#), which states that "the chair is the official spokesman for the school board." She had previously told the newspaper that reporters are "not allowed" to talk to the elected commissioners. "It's the law," she stated.

However, the same law also stipulates in [Section 168](#) that “a question period must be provided at each public meeting during which the persons present may put oral questions to the commissioners.”

You can't have it both ways. True democracy requires free speech, and the elected must remain individually accountable for their political decisions. The alternative is democracy-for-show whilst the school board chair calls all the shots. That puts too much unchecked power in one person's hands.

[Some of the suggestions that Eustace offered Proulx when he met the Minister](#) seem sound. The best idea is to form the education equivalent of Quebec's Municipal Commission, an independent body where anyone can file a complaint.

School boards spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year—nearly \$300 million at LBPSB alone. Right now, they run their own elections and hire their own ombudsman and ethics commissioners. Putting these offices at arms length is essential.

Likewise, Eustace is right to ask the province to set forth clear rules to prevent elected officials from selling to education institutions after they leave office.

Above all, when he announces his reforms on Friday, the Minister of Education needs to clarify Section 168, to prevent it from being used to gag the people's elected representatives.

Stein Day was incorrect when she referred to “my council meeting”, when she spoke to *The Suburban*'s Chloë Ranaldi last week. She is not its owner. Rather, it is the citizens' chamber, and she its temporary steward. frank@thesuburban.com

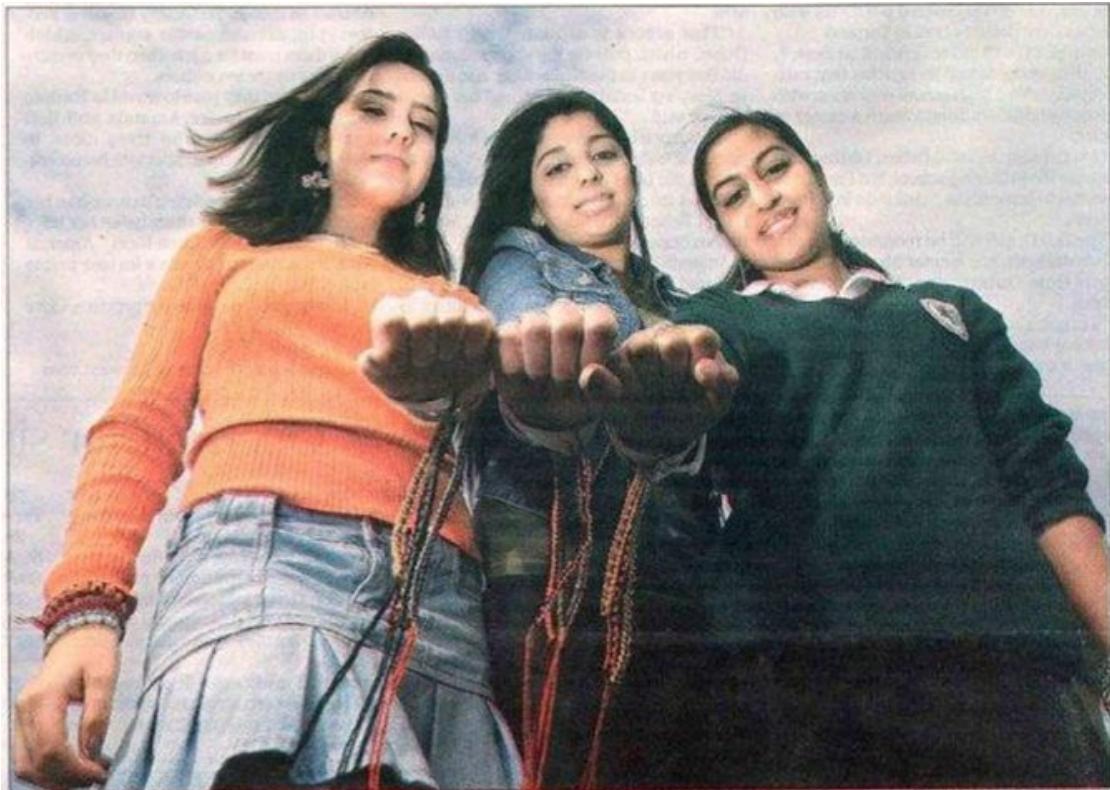
<http://pages.cdn.pagesuite.com/f/f/ff5d7745-8a58-4493-bb90-f9b7185b1240/page.pdf>

West Island Gazette, Montreal, Thursday, September 1, 2005

Thanks to the persistent efforts of a teacher and a politician, Quebec students who participate in World Vision's 30-hour Famine fundraising project will no longer be excluded from the event's rewards program.

Rewarding experience for Quebecers

ANNE SUTHERLAND



Riverdale students Kyla Bertram (left), Komal Ahmed and Chandni Bhatnagar got bracelets for their participation in the 30-hour fast

Thanks to the perseverance of a teacher, the participation of a local MNA and some digging into details, the World Vision famine fundraising project will no longer exclude Quebec students from its rewards program.

Back in April, an estimated 160,000 students across Canada spent 30 hours fasting drinking only water and some clear juice, to raise awareness and money for children around the world who go hungry.

In May, 91 students from Riverdale High School in Pierrefonds did the same thing.

Because of complicated provincial rules and regulations regarding contests and lotteries, the Ontario-based charity had been under the impression that Quebec students who participate in the 30-hour famine every spring were ineligible to receive the participation gifts offered for different levels of fundraising.

Enter Riverdale High School teacher Chris Eustace, who thought the exclusion was unfairly singling out Quebec students who participate in the fast.

"The students and I were surprised and wondered why this law exists," Eustace said of his three-month-long search for answers.

"I didn't think it was fair, it takes away from the spirit," said participant Komal Ahmed, 15.

"It's not about the prizes, it was the fact that we were not allowed to participate," the student said.

In the end, it turns out World Vision had been misinformed and a few calls to Nelligan MNA Yolanda James and her political attache Christos Kritsidimas cleared up the matter.

Two weeks ago, Eustace was mailed a box of hand-woven bracelets from Nicaragua, which will be given to students who surpassed set levels of fundraising.

The notice of ineligibility of Quebec students has been removed from World Vision's website.

"This is really a good thing for the students," Ahmed said.

Overall, Riverdale students from Secondary 3, 4 and 5 raised \$7,025 for World Vision.

The annual fast, which is meant to hammer home the message that millions of children in the world go hungry every day, was started by some Calgary teens 34 years ago.

It has spread to the U.S., Japan, Australia and Britain.

For information, visit www.famine.ca.

Bill 105 has many positive features. One is that it grants more power to school principals than the elected school board officials. **This is GOOD !**

The majority Couillard government should pass Bill 105 with Article 459.6 intact, as soon as possible . END

