



Bill 103 Brief

**Central Parents' Committee
Of the
Lester B. Pearson School Board**

August 2010

The Central Parents' Committee of the Lester B. Pearson School Board (from here on in referred to as LBPSB) is comprised of 13 parents who have been voted by parents from their school communities to represent them at the School Board level. We felt that it was essential and our duty as elected individuals to answer this Provincial Consultation on Bill 103.

Below you will find our thoughts and suggestions concerning this Bill.

Summary

The newly introduced Bill 103 further restricts access to public English education within the Province. Quebec citizens who do not have English schooling eligibility and wish to send their children to public English schooling must first send their children to an expensive unsubsidized English Private school and then apply for access to the public sector without a guarantee of receiving the eligibility. This Bill jeopardizes the future of all Quebec citizens, not just the future of the English community. It has no intention of any non-eligible individual to gain access to English public schools period.

General Presentation

English Heritage

As we know, the politicians of the Province of Quebec have a mandate to protect the French language within this province however; there is a crisis on the horizon. Many of the Anglophone and Allophone communities who reside in this Province and who have resided in this Province for generations are feeling threatened that the English language is not being protected and this heritage is in danger. The mandate of Quebec politicians is to represent ALL citizens of Quebec regardless of their race, religion or the language that they speak. It is the duty of Quebec politicians to protect the English heritage in this Province. As English schools are the cornerstone of the English community in Quebec, passing Bill 103 will cut the lifeline of this heritage in years to come..

English public schools are the anchors to English communities within Quebec. They are also supporters, not rivals, of the French language as more than two-thirds of LBPSB schools offer intensive French immersion and the other third offer an equal balance of English and French instruction.

Future of English Schools

Since the introduction of Bill 104 the enrolment of students within LBPSB has decreased by 3500 within the past 12 years and 12 schools have been closed. However, LBPSB Graduation rates have surpassed Provincial targets and it has been required to be increased for the latest Strategic Plan which has been introduced by the Government and furthermore by the School

Board themselves. LBPSB is producing intelligent, marketable and high achievers. Why would any Government not allow their citizens to enroll in these obviously productive establishments for the benefit of their children? Bill 103 has depleted any chance of an increase in enrolment for the future as not ONE single student will enroll within a English public school if this Bill is passed. The repercussions of Bill 103 WILL result in continued deterioration of English schools in the years to come and more so for outlying areas of Quebec.

Should Quebec Citizens pay

This Bill is for wealthy families only. Should any citizen regardless of status as native-born or immigrant to have an equal opportunity to provide the best education for their child, individuals without a certificate of eligibility would require quite an investment to **even have a chance** to send their child to a public English education institution.

All citizens should have the right regardless of race, religion or culture according to Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education ...shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Is the Province of Quebec following the laws of Human Rights? Perhaps it is time to ask the citizens of this Province what they think the best education for their child is.

Future of Quebec citizens

Does this Bill give our children, citizens of Quebec, the equal opportunity to be marketable throughout the World? We agree that public French schools are providing superior French language skills to students however; education in the English system gives students superior English and French language skills. Below are some key elements of our school board:

- More than half of LBPSB elementary schools offer intensive early French immersion (more than 80% instruction in French) and the rest regular French immersion (50% instruction in French). LBPSB does not offer English only instruction at the elementary level.
- A policy has been adopted to increase French language instruction to minimum 50% content in Secondary 1 & 2
- Since the inception in 1998, LBPSB graduation rates are 83%+ - second or third highest in Quebec – and it is done in two languages
- 98.2% of special needs students are integrated and succeed in 2 languages
- A new program, Francais Plus has been added to extend intensive early French Immersion to Grades 3 & 4
- Students succeed at Local, Provincial and National competitions in French.

Most children who graduate from LBPSB institutions have the capability to choose their post secondary education within any CEGEP establishment in the Province of Quebec due to the fine language skills they have acquired throughout their elementary and high school education.

Recommendations

The Central Parents' Committee of the Lester B. Pearson School Board understands that the French language needs to be protected in Quebec however so does the English language. English education institutions are the cornerstone of the English community in Quebec. However, limiting access to Quebec citizens due to their socio-economic situation is unjust.

The goal should be to prepare young people to live, work, succeed and stay in Quebec. They are the future of our community. English schools of 2010 are not the English schools of the 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's.

English School Boards should be allowed access to immigrants whose first or second language is English but be required to prove that they are properly preparing them for life in Quebec.

In closing, we thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our concerns and should the situation present itself, a representative of our Central Parents' Committee would be available to speak at your public hearing.

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