



Position Paper on:

**The impact of recent budgetary compressions and recurring financial cutbacks on student success and on the survival of English schools in Québec**

further to the LCEEQ Round Table on “The Future of English Education”  
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Presented to:

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*The Leadership Committee for English Education in Québec (LCEEQ) is a collaborative professional learning community established for the purpose of promoting educational leadership in response to the needs of the English educational community of Québec.*

*The Committee is comprised of thirty-one members appointed by the organization that they represent:*

- *Directors General of the English School Boards of Québec (ADGESBQ/ADGCSAQ)*
- *Special status school board representatives (Cree, Kativik, Littoral)*
- *Independent School Associations' Table (ISAT)*
- *School board educational services representatives*
- *Administrators of Complementary Educational Services (ACES)*
- *Provincial Organization of Continuing Education Directors English (PROCEDE)*
- *Association of Administrators of English Schools of Québec (AAESQ/AAEAQ)*
- *Québec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT/APEQ)*
- *Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels de l'éducation du Québec (FPPE)*
- *English Colleges Steering Committee (CEGEP)*
- *English universities of Québec*
- *Representatives from MELS – SSAACC*
- *Leading English Education and Resource Network (LEARN)*

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this LCEEQ position paper is to highlight the concerns expressed by the English educational community regarding the impact of recent budgetary compressions and recurring financial cutbacks on student success. By demonstrating the distinctiveness of the English educational system in Québec and the consensus that exists at all levels of the English educational community, the LCEEQ requests that the recommendations presented in this paper be taken into serious consideration during the development of the 2013-2014 budgetary rules.

### **Concerns about the Impact of Financial Constraints on Student Success**

Over the last year, the Leadership Committee for English Education in Québec (LCEEQ) has spent many months discussing the pedagogical strategies required for student success in the English educational milieu. During these discussions, concerns were continuously expressed about the impact of limited financial resources and recent budgetary compressions on student achievement. The English educational community is proud of the overall success and retention results among its students. Most English school boards have already reached the 2020 provincial target of 80% established by the MELS. We nevertheless recognize the need to preserve and continue to improve upon these results. The 2013-2014 budget, which was adopted by the National Assembly on November 20, 2012, has only reinforced the concerns of the English educational community about its ability to do this.

### **Distinctiveness of the English Educational Community**

Given our minority language status, there is strong community support for English public school boards governing English schools. The English educational community has developed a significantly different approach to the delivery of educational services. In the March 2010 brief presented to Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports, the Advisory Board on English Education (ABEE) made the following statement – “Observation of French-language and English-language schools suggests that, in broad terms, they have different organizational cultures.”<sup>1</sup> While English schools adhere to the Québec Education Program and are subject to the same government exams, our small numbers, wide geographic dispersion, and smaller per capita base budgets are key elements that have led to our

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<sup>1</sup> Educating Today's Québec Anglophone. Advisory Board on English Education (ABEE), 2010

distinct approaches to pedagogical delivery. The high integration rate of students with special needs, and the English school systems' approaches to second language instruction with its goal of graduating bilingual students, are prime examples of choices that distinguish the English educational community.

The English educational community collaborates in sharing limited resources, particularly in the area of professional development and the sharing of English language pedagogical resources. The networks that have been created link all levels of English education for mutual support and help to maximize available resources to benefit students in all parts of the province.

### **An LCEEQ Round Table to Develop Consensus**

At the LCEEQ's strategic planning session held on April 12, 2012, funding issues faced by the English educational community and the potential for negative impact on classrooms were identified as a priority area of concern. This strategic planning session set in motion the creation of a mechanism for a broader community consultation. On November 29, 2012, the LCEEQ convened a round table involving 25 participating organizations (see Appendix A). Over 115 delegates, drawn from all regions of Québec participated. This consultation was a historic first for the LCEEQ and featured a broadly based, cross-representational round table of key individuals from the English educational community, coming together to share concerns, explore solutions and develop consensus on the needs and priorities that would continue to promote student success in the English educational community.

More specifically, the purpose of the round table event was to validate recommendations put forward by the LCEEQ through a consultative process with the wider English educational community. The round table focused on the impact of limited financial resources, recent budgetary constraints, deepening cuts to education and the survival of English schools in Québec. Several key issues were addressed and five emerged as having prime importance:

1. Minority language funding
2. The role of the *Secteur des services aux anglophones, aux autochtones et aux communautés culturelles* (SSAACC)
3. Student success, limited resources, and financial accountability
4. Partnerships / consortia / innovations
5. Vocational education options

Participants discussed these issues and potential solutions in open exchange in small groups. Consensus statements were developed by the groups and shared. Electronic polling technology was used with the whole assembly on specific proposals to determine, with immediate feedback, where there was strong consensus within the English educational community.

## **Key Issues and Common Ground**

### **1. The Importance of Entente Funding**

The English educational community receives funding from the Canada-Québec Entente that is made available through Heritage Canada to support minority language groups across Canada. A portion of this is currently administered by the *Secteur des services aux anglophones, aux autochtones et aux communautés culturelles* (SSAACC). The extent of adaptations needed to address the disadvantages of the minority language system demonstrates why Entente funding is a priority for continued student success in Québec's English educational institutions.

## Examples of How Entente Funding Has Provided Essential Adaptations

Minority Language System Needs of the English Educational Community	Adaptations
a) <b>Intensive and enriched French second language instruction</b>	To prepare students for the realities of Québec society, parents have opted overwhelmingly for French Immersion ( <i>Français enrichi</i> ) from Kindergarten through Secondary 5. The English sector must adapt existing French materials or produce resources appropriate to immersion programs. Curriculum delivery must be balanced so that other subject areas do not suffer due to extra time devoted to French instruction. Entente funding supports teacher-led research and development projects to find effective ways to enhance language acquisition in French immersion programs.
b) <b>Access to QEP course options by small numbers of students in remote areas</b>	Many small English schools in remote areas do not have student populations that are large enough to offer the full range of course options that are part of the Québec Education Program. Geographic dispersion over large distances does not permit regrouping. With Entente funding, the English educational community has created LEARN, a shared resource that provides online program delivery and resources to English students throughout the province.
c) <b>Textbooks and resource materials in the English language</b>	The lack of English textbooks and resource materials that align with the QEP has been a major problem for the English educational community. Entente funding was used to support the development and timely delivery of textbooks for key areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics and science. One of the services provided by LEARN and LCEEQ funded programs is the development of English resources and supplemental materials that support teaching and evaluation practices. Once developed, these resources are made available to all teachers and professionals.
d) <b>Professional Development in English</b>	The SSAACC has used Entente funding to adapt the provision of MELS PD sessions for use by the English educational community, particularly in light of the challenges that its population distribution represents. To ensure equal access to professional development opportunities in English, the LCEEQ was also provided with Entente funding to work with the central units of the MELS, to adapt training and information sessions, and to create a comprehensive PD plan for personnel working in English educational institutions.
e) <b>High rate of integration (82.7% in 2010-2011) of students with special needs (EHDA) in regular classrooms<sup>2</sup></b>	The English school boards have historically had a higher rate of integration than the provincial norm and have focused on inclusive approaches to special education. Entente funding has enabled the development of inclusive education training and support materials in English for regular classroom teachers and resource teams. Recent examples include the <i>Always Learning About Differentiated Instruction</i> (ALDI) initiative, which supported an inclusive resource team model, and the development of intervention resources in

<sup>2</sup> MELS, SPRS, DSID, Portail informationnel, système Charlemagne, données au 2012-01-27

	English for behavior difficulties.
f) <b>Equitable access to social and medical services in English</b>	With few exceptions, the English educational community has experienced significant difficulties off the Island of Montreal in accessing social and medical services in English for students and their families. Entente funding partially compensates for this disadvantage through Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in schools. A CLC serves as a hub for outside services and extended programs in school buildings. This creates an English institution serving the local community, optimizing access to a range of educational, health, social and recreational services by encouraging and enhancing partnerships that are focused on student success.
g) <b>Support mechanisms due to limited regional office support for the English school system</b>	Because our context and approaches are different, existing regional structures cannot fully respond to the needs of the English educational community. There is a need to share information, resources and mutual support within the English educational community. Entente funding has supported Anglophone pedagogical tables to share and coordinate English resources. As sub-committees of the Directors General table, ACES, DEEN, and PROCEDE collaborate regularly to develop adaptations for ongoing implementation of MELS action plans and application of MELS orientations within the English context.
h) <b>Availability of English tools to produce and manage student data</b>	The creation of English data teams and the use of the <i>Tell Them From Me</i> survey tool for Violence Prevention are two examples of system-wide adaptations developed by English school boards that relied on Entente funding to target student success and safety.
i) <b>Translation of administrative and parent support documents</b>	To ensure that all stakeholders have access to information on MELS policies, guidelines and orientations in the English language, many support documents are translated for school personnel, parents, and the general public. Two recent examples are the support documents required for the implementation of the provincial report card and Bill 56, which modified the Education Act.

The above examples illustrate how Entente funding has been used in the past. The use of these funds may require different adaptations in the future. It should be noted that without Entente funding directly allocated to the English educational community, MELS would need to allocate additional budgetary resources to provide the essential adaptations required to address the minority language needs of the English educational system.

### Round Table Consensus Statements

**Excerpts:**

*“MELS must ensure that the specific adaptations, needed to ensure equitable implementation of programs, policies and action plans, are identified at the inception stage and that the budgets required for implementation be planned for, and complemented by Entente funds when required. (Note: Adaptations go far beyond a simple translation of French documents.)”*

*“We believe the Canada-Quebec Entente funding is essential to address the needs of the English educational community...”*

**Recommendation: The Canada–Québec Entente funding resource must at least be maintained at its present level, administered by SSAACC, as it is an essential support for the needed adaptations in the English educational community and to meet emerging needs.**

## **2. The Need for a Distinct, Province-wide Administrative Structure for the English Educational System**

In addition to the need for continued access to Canada-Québec Entente funding, there is a fundamental need for a province-wide MELS administrative structure for the English educational system that is able to respond to its distinctive context and unique challenges. In the face of limited access to English resources and support services, the English educational community has adapted and developed different ways of working to implement the MELS action plans and target student success.

Although the English educational community values involvement and collaboration with regional offices, there was consensus that the current MELS regional offices are not always able to fully address the needs of the English educational community. For example, the territory of six of the nine English school boards places them in the jurisdiction of more than one MELS regional office, increasing the burden of administrative demands for some boards. Issues of travel, the requirement of multiple meetings for those in more than one administrative region, accessibility to bilingual personnel who can provide support or services in English, and lack of knowledge of the English educational community are frequently expressed concerns, and sometimes result in compromised services for English students.

The SSAACC has served the English educational community well due to its dedicated mandate to support quality education, its knowledge of the needs of the community, and its efforts to ensure that clear MELS directives, guidelines and orientations are conveyed to the English school system, while supporting their implementation within a unique context. A participant at the LCEEQ round table captured the sentiment of those present by describing the SSAACC as “a lifeline” that strengthens the link between the English educational community and the MELS.

### **Round Table Consensus Statements**

#### **Excerpts:**

*“SSAACC, the vital intermediary for the English educational community within the MELS, must continue to be the designated MELS authority for the distribution, administration, and accounting of the Canada-Québec Entente money.”*

*“We are asking MELS to be more implicated (directly) in responding to the needs of the English educational community, while SSAACC should continue its role as channel of communication and support for innovative solutions to community challenges.”*

**Recommendation: While the importance of regional collaboration is recognized, the English educational community must continue to be served by a distinct province-wide, administrative structure within the MELS to support its educational institutions and build student success.**

## **3. Student Success, Limited Resources, and Financial Accountability**

At the round table, some concern was expressed that strong advocacy efforts have been required to ensure that equivalent regional resources from the MELS are available to the English educational system. As well, a number of examples were given of bureaucratic challenges that hinder access to available funding.

Targeted allocations (*mesure* funding), an important source of funding to the English educational system, are an essential support to improve student success. There was agreement at the round table on three aspects of *mesure* funding:

- The English sector needs to be assured it receives its proportional share of the available funding
- The process for dispensing targeted funds needs to be examined
- The present approach for maintaining accountability and transparency in this area has serious drawbacks.

Three problems were identified:

<b>Problems identified by the English educational community</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>a) Amounts received versus paperwork involved</b>	Since <i>mesure</i> funds are allocated on a per capita basis, the amounts available to small English school boards, and in turn their schools, are sometimes quite small. It then becomes a choice for staff to decide if the time and paperwork to get the funding is cost efficient when compared to the amount the school would receive. As a result some of these small allocations remain unused and do not serve their intended purpose.
<b>b) Targets are too specific</b>	The criteria established for <i>mesure</i> funding are sometimes so specific and narrow that they fail to address the real needs of the school. A good example of this is <i>Mesure</i> 50681 for the purchase of interactive white boards for the classroom. The English school system was an early supporter of educational technology and has invested heavily in equipping classrooms with computers and white boards. Although many English schools already have white boards available in most of their classrooms, requests to use funds newly allocated for white board purchase for other clearly identified technology needs have been systematically refused.
<b>c) Process is too bureaucratic</b>	In addition to the difficulties created by extensive paperwork and inflexible funding parameters, a number of English school boards are situated within multiple administrative regions. A level of complexity is added when <i>mesures</i> , such as funding for <i>persévérance scolaire</i> , are administered by several ministries and agencies. This has resulted in increased bureaucracy due to additional granting procedures and the need for educational personnel to attend numerous meetings. It is another example of how smaller boards spread over large territories are disadvantaged by not having sufficient numbers of personnel to attend all the decision-making meetings and the multiple regional tables in other sectors.

The current *mesure* funding structures are problematic for the English educational community. More local autonomy and decreased bureaucratic demands are needed to optimize pedagogically driven decision-making. A new approach is needed that takes into account MELS concerns for transparency and accountability, while providing the English educational system with more leeway to respond to the needs of each of their local communities.

### Round Table Consensus Statements

#### Excerpts:

*“In order to better provide services and increase student success the English sector needs to directly receive their proportion of funding that is available.”*

*“Too much for too little. Amount of work is disproportionate to end results. The amount of investment in time and resources does not yield an equal return.”*

*“We are for local autonomy and flexibility (not one size fits all).”*

**Recommendation:** To ensure equitable treatment of all Québec students, the MELS must ensure that the English educational system receives its proportional and equitable share of all targeted allocations, and equivalent regional resources.

**Recommendation:** MELS must optimize *mesure* allocations in the English educational system by decreasing bureaucracy, and permitting more local flexibility and a degree of decision-making autonomy, while respecting the general intent of the targeted funding.

**Recommendation:** Resources to support educational goals, such as *persévérance scolaire*, should be managed by the MELS, not other ministries or agencies, with equitable access available to the English educational community.

#### 4. Partnerships / Consortia / Innovations

The English educational community wants to continue its approach of working collegially and doing things differently, within provided MELS frameworks, in order to best address the unique needs of the English school system and to target student success. The English educational community has a history of innovating and building partnerships in order to respond to local challenges while enhancing services for its students. Community Learning Centres working with community partners, our Centres of Excellence model for providing special needs support in order to build capacity throughout the province, and sharing of pedagogical resources and e-learning support through LEARN are but a few examples of innovative and effective ways the English educational community has used available resources.

School boards are examining the sharing of transportation, taxation, professional development, administrative services, and adult education and vocational services, in an effort to decrease costs. Although the exercise is yielding some interesting results, it is apparent that these strategies will not be feasible in some school boards and may not result in significant savings.

### Round Table Consensus Statements

#### Excerpts:

*“Continuing to develop a variety of partnerships is critical to the survival of the English school system rather than having mergers of services imposed on us.”*

*“Decisions should be based on thorough cost benefit analysis of alternatives (that take into account differentiation according to the specificities of the English network).”*

**Recommendation:** Rather than imposing provincial solutions for amalgamating services, the MELS should support the English educational system in developing partnerships (local, regional or provincial initiatives) to optimize resources.

## 5. Increasing English Vocational Education Program Options

There has been frequent discussion at the LCEEQ about particular challenges to the English vocational education and CEGEP technical training programs sectors. The current system, whereby the MELS often restricts authorizations of program options, limits regional educational opportunities for students in all parts of the province. With few and restricted authorizations, particularly for students under twenty years of age, school boards off the Island of Montreal face difficulties in offering English programs that match high employability opportunities in local communities. In addition, limited vocational or technical options in English CEGEPs in some regions force many students to re-locate to urban areas or decide to enter the labour force in lower paying positions. Changes to the current MELS system of granting vocational program options are needed to accommodate the educational needs of the English-speaking community and improve access and employment opportunities.<sup>3</sup> A more flexible range of board-based, regional, and provincial boundaries for options would meet the unique challenges of the province-wide English educational system with its minority language context. The map of the English vocational options must be revised and expanded. These changes would not only benefit students in our sector but would better allow the English public school network to contribute to the important task of addressing Québec's labour-market needs.

### Round Table Consensus Statements

#### Excerpts:

*"Within the parameters established by the Ministry the English school boards and colleges should have autonomy to identify program needs."*

*"Need for more courses available in English for voc-ed."*

**Recommendation: The MELS must revise and expand the program options and regional access opportunities in the English vocational education and CEGEP technical training sectors.**

## In Conclusion

As a table of pedagogical leaders broadly representative of the English educational community, the LCEEQ will continue to seek solutions for educational challenges faced by our English educational institutions. We look forward to conveying both concerns and ideas to the Ministers with a view to maintaining and improving student success.

The English educational community is strongly invested in preserving and improving upon the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. To do so will require equitable access to available financial resources, and more importantly, the support of Canada-Québec Entente funding to provide the essential adaptations needed by the English educational community. Without Entente funding, the minority language adaptations required by the English educational community would need to be financially supported by the MELS.

It must be stressed that the recommendations in this position paper are based on a strong consensus expressed by a widely representative group of participants from the English educational community. The committee requests that the Ministers give the LCEEQ proposals serious consideration during the development of the upcoming 2013-2014 budgetary rules.

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<sup>3</sup> Bridging the gap between training and employment to meet labour market needs: Issues affecting the Anglophone sector. Advisory Board on English Education (ABEE), 2011.

## **Summary of LCEEQ recommendations, based on consensus of the English educational community**

1. The Canada–Québec Entente funding resource must at least be maintained at its present level, administered by SSAACC, as it is an essential support for the needed adaptations in the English educational community and to meet emerging needs.
2. While the importance of regional collaboration is recognized, the English educational community must continue to be served by a distinct province-wide, administrative structure within the MELS to support its educational institutions and build student success.
3. To ensure equitable treatment of all Québec students, the MELS must ensure that the English educational system receives its proportional and equitable share of all targeted allocations, and equivalent regional resources.
4. The MELS must optimize *mesure* allocations in the English educational system by decreasing bureaucracy, and permitting more local flexibility and a degree of decision-making autonomy, while respecting the general intent of the targeted funding.
5. Resources to support educational goals, such as *persévérance scolaire*, should be managed by the MELS, not other ministries or agencies, with equitable access available to the English educational community.
6. Rather than imposing provincial solutions for amalgamating services, the MELS should support the English educational system in developing partnerships (local, regional or provincial initiatives) to optimize resources.
7. The MELS must revise and expand the program options and regional access opportunities in the English vocational education and CEGEP technical training sectors.

## APPENDIX A



### Participants at the LCEEQ November 29, 2012, Round Table:

- Administrators of Complementary Educational Services (ACES)
- Advisory Board on English Education (ABEE)
- Association of Administrators of English Schools of Québec (AAESQ)
- Association of Directors General of the English School Boards of Québec (ADGESBQ)
- Association of Jewish Day Schools (AJDS)
- Central Parents Committees from English school boards
- Directors of English Education Network (DEEN)
- Directors' General Sub-committees: Secretaries General, Human Resources, and Finance
- English Colleges Steering Committee (CEGEP)
- English Parents Committee Association (EPCA)
- English universities of Québec
- Fédération des comités de parents du Québec (FCPQ)
- Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels de l'éducation du Québec (FPPE)
- Independent Association of Support Staff (IASS)
- Independent School Associations' Table (ISAT)
- L'Association des cadres scolaires du Québec (ACSQ)
- Leading Education and Resource Network (LEARN)
- MELS-SSAACC (Observers)
- Provincial Organization of Continuing Education Directors English (PROCEDE)
- Québec Association of Independent Schools (QAIS)
- Québec Community Groups Network (QCGN)
- Québec English School Board Association (QESBA)
- Québec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT)
- School Board Educational Services Representatives (Nine English School Boards)
- Special status school board representatives (Littoral)
- Students representing the Youth sector, Adult-Vocational sector, CEGEPs, and Universities
- Syndicat des employées et employés professionnels-les et de bureau (SEPB)