



Le 4 février 2017

Anne-Marie Lepage, sous-ministre adjoint de l'Éducation,  
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Mme. Lepage and Mr. Rousseau,

I have the distinct pleasure of serving as Chairperson of the **LCEEQ** (Leadership Committee for English Education in Québec), an action-oriented organization that is committed to the strategic growth and sustainable success of the English Educational Community in the province of Québec. Our membership represents all levels of education from youth through University, including Adult and Vocational Education, in both the public and private sectors. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the invitation to participate in the session designed to gather feedback on the Secondary History programme held earlier this month. It is reassuring to know that **LCEEQ** is recognized as an important voice of the English-speaking community.

There are elements of the new History programme that we fully support. Clearly, the change to a chronological delivery over two years instead of a chronological one in Secondary III and a thematic one in Secondary IV removes the repetition, makes it easier for teachers to manage, and more interesting for students. This orientation also encourages a more narrative approach which supports students' understanding of the relationships between historical events.

In March 2016, the LCEEQ Committee had the opportunity to receive direct feedback from three teachers piloting the Secondary III curriculum during 2015-2016. Although they expressed that the new curriculum was not ideal, they stated that it was an improvement over what they had been expected to teach previously. Overall, their response was favourable.

There are issues that remain to be resolved to the satisfaction of the English-speaking community. The political references to the Québec nation and nationalism are still contentious. We recommend that to ensure that the concept of the nation is addressed in a more appropriate manner, the overall emphasis of this programme should be less political and more neutral. As well, and because we understand that some political issues cannot be ignored or avoided, it is further recommended that the views expressed by Anglophones be included so that the English-speaking population that helped build this province is recognized for the prominent role it played. Furthermore, the valuable contributions of diverse ethnic communities; the indigenous populations, Anglophones and changing immigrant groups over Quebec's history need to be recognized in the development of a strong Québec. We believe that the teaching of Quebec's many diverse and local communities should be more explicitly outlined so that these topics become a more integral part of the programme. We strongly endorse that the youth of Quebec be presented the total picture of the development and history of the province within the Canadian context.

LCEEQ recommends that the topic that divides the content of the programme between the two levels should be Confederation (1867). Not only is this the case in other provinces, it would reinforce the Canadian content which is often de-emphasized. Adding more Canadian content would provide students with a better understanding of the history of both Quebec and Canada. In summary, although there are many pedagogical improvements included in this revised History programme, the content should pay more attention to Canada, place less emphasis on Québec nationalism, and apply an approach that is more inclusive towards Québec's many culturally diverse communities.

Given that this correspondence examines the History programme within the larger context of a focus on Social Sciences, I must take this opportunity to express serious concern with the proposed implementation of a compulsory Financial Education course for Secondary V as part of a revised Social Sciences curriculum. Even though the Committee supports the need for students to have a better understanding of the consequences of their financial decisions, it is strongly believed that the proposed changes are being implemented far too quickly and without the necessary consultation. We propose that adequate time and further consideration be taken to reflect upon a more appropriate way to address this identified need in the overall course of study. We firmly believe that the proposed Financial Education programme be delayed for one year to provide an opportunity for a proper review of content, materials, and teacher preparation. Alternatively, we suggest that the program be subjected to piloting in the Anglophone sector, so all of the issues can be addressed.

The proposed Financial Education course is on a fast track without sufficient consideration to several essential factors. There has been no consultation with the professionals responsible for teaching the programme. It would seem that a decision has already been taken to modify the existing Contemporary World programme, a course very well regarded by educators. The new History curriculum in Secondary III and IV included a pilot phase permitting necessary adjustments based on the feedback of teachers specialized in the field. Why is it that the proposed compulsory Financial Education course not afforded the same consideration?

In an article published in the Montreal Gazette on Thursday January 19, 2017, Education Minister Proulx vowed that all the necessary teaching materials will be available in English in time to launch the programme in Fall 2017. Not only are English-speaking teachers not aware of the materials in question, they will be expected to use these without sufficient professional development, an essential for the successful implementation of any new course.

Given the demographics and the size of the English community, these changes will impose many demands on teacher workloads. It is not unrealistic to anticipate that the same individual will be expected to teach the new Secondary III and Secondary IV History programme, make local adjustments to the Contemporary World course, and now add the new financial literacy course to her/his workload. In addition, some will have course content to teach at other grade levels. The expectations placed on these teachers given the number of classes to prepare daily is simply unreasonable. This does not even consider the demands made on professionals helping teachers appropriate all these changes, as well as, non-teaching personnel supporting students. A negative impact on quality instruction and subsequent student success is inevitable. These arguments support LCEEQ's position to delay implementation. Instead, we propose that a pilot project be considered so that these important issues can be addressed.

As mentioned previously, the present Contemporary World programme is well regarded by educators and has proven effective and successful for students. Changing this course to be worth two credits will result in it being considered of lesser importance. In addition, by encouraging local decisions as to which two themes of the current five will be taught will result in inconsistency from one jurisdiction to another.

There are also very pragmatic issues to consider. School administrators and guidance professionals are presently working on scheduling and course selection for the coming school year. These formal processes involving many stakeholders are being attempted in an atmosphere of uncertainty as to what may or may not happen with a new Financial Education course. This cloud of uncertainty would be removed by delaying implementation.

Minister Proulx is presently reflecting on feedback resulting from a provincial consultation on the *Toward a Policy on Educational Success* initiative. LCEEQ maintains that providing more time to prepare for any new curriculum, particularly one that it agrees is needed, will more likely result in student success. It is our strong recommendation that the implementation of such a worthwhile course be delayed so that the proper reflection and preparation can be ensured.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cindy Finn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cindy Finn,  
LCEEQ Chairperson 2015-2017