



November 16, 2017

## **Institute for Excellence in Education A Response**

**The Leadership Committee for English Education in Québec (LCEEQ)** is a collaborative organization 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 organizations which they represent:

- The Directors General of the English School Boards (ADGESBQ/ADGCSAQ)
- Representatives of the nine public English School Boards
- Special Status School Board representatives (Cree, Littoral)
- Independent School Associations' Table (ISAT)
- 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 (Cégep)
- English Universities of Québec

Being an action-oriented organization that is committed to the strategic growth and sustainable success of the English Educational Community in the province of Québec through ongoing communication, the identification of opportunities and challenges, and the mobilization of people and resources, the LCEEQ appreciates the opportunity to provide its perspective on the establishment of a Provincial Institute for Excellence in Education. The English sector's impressive graduation rates referenced in the consultation document clearly indicate that the English Educational Community has a voice that should be heard.

## **The Provincial Institute for Excellence in Education: OBJECTIVES**

The working group has established three objectives for the Institute. We believe that an organization dedicated to the identification of best educational practices, transferring said knowledge and supporting the application on a practical level defines a useful branch of education that would support student success. Although well founded, further consideration is required by clarifying both the depth and the breadth of each objective.

Firstly, the Institute should be charged with a systematic review and summary of educational issues, driven by the needs of Quebec's various communities, including those of the minority language group. Within the English community, we have established that one size does not fit all, and it would therefore be imperative that the Institute recognizes this for all communities throughout Quebec. Explicitly, the English education system proves to have successful practices, so drawing upon our needs would build upon successes and serve our community. If the Institute is to be effective, it must recognize and ensure that its initiatives serve Quebec's many English-speaking communities.

Further to this, there must be a strong recognition that systematic reviews and subsequent summaries draw upon a global base of research, and consider the context in which research is conducted. English educational organizations including LCEEQ, the Advisory Board on English Education (ABEE), and individual institutions, including our globally recognized English Universities, actively participate in research initiatives. The English community's successful application of research-based practices and the use of evidence-based practices are apparent in our graduation rates in the youth sector. As well, the LCEEQ feels that research should be broader than instructional practices as contributions to educational excellence can be attributed to many factors such as the scope of parent and community involvement, support from health and social services, daily structures and routines, and a school's physical environment, to name a few.

The Institute must consider the inclusion of pluralism in research, and the diverse contextual nature of schools. We know that based on the influx of both qualitative and quantitative research in education, that a broader spectrum of what counts as quality research is needed to meet diverse contexts of school communities, teachers and students. Furthermore, what counts as excellence depends on the paradigm by which the specific research is measured. A critical consideration, therefore, is the model of excellence that will guide the Institute.

In terms of the transfer of any findings from the research base and the provision of training and support for the stakeholders, we believe that these mechanisms are already in place. Therefore, emphasis would need to be placed on assuring that tools of transfer be appropriate and effective for the educational communities.

Increasingly, university-funded research requires more collaboration with community partners and educational institutions, and transfer is an essential component. Le centre de transfert pour la réussite éducative du Québec (CTREQ) and the Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance are examples of established organizations which transfer research findings into practical applications within our community. It would be important to continue to capitalize upon these existing organizations and ensure that they are part of the process of alignment.

Most importantly, the English community has undertaken the provision of training and support in best educational practices for its members. Specifically, the LCEEQ supports the English Educational Community by funding models of professional learning. From grassroots projects at the local level, to English-speaking conferences drawing upon all levels and all sectors of the English community, proven models are promoted to build capacity over time. As the vast majority of ministerial training is only offered in French, we have developed our own application of professional development. For the third objective to be applicable to the English community, the Institute would be well advised to provide financial support to our already established, ongoing professional development practices.

## **The Provincial Institute for Excellence in Education: STRUCTURE**

First and foremost, it is imperative that the structure of the Institute of Excellence in Education maintain an objective stance, independent of political influence and have **representation from the Anglophone community at all levels**. The Ministry would communicate its needs analysis based on its Action Plan directly to the Institute's Board of Directors. In turn, said Board would be charged with setting up various tables that would oversee the subsequent research projects.

The working group may wish to consider an organizational structure comprised of three departments: The Research Department, the Department of Transfer of Research Findings, and the Application of Research Department.

**The Research Department** should be established with inter-university representation, both Francophone and Anglophone, and an appointed Board of Directors with English representation. Dissemination of results should be the priority of this department, specifically to the Institute's Department of Transfer of Research Findings, but not to exclude the broader community in order to influence policy. LCEEQ is an organization that would benefit from regular communication with such a department.

**The Department of Transfer of Research Findings** should be divided into sub-divisions that respect the various communities. Each sub-division would be tasked to consider the community into which it would be transferring the findings, and at the same time while communicating with each other so that each community learns from its challenges and successes. The establishment of lab schools in the English community that reflect the work of the Institute would be a viable model of transfer.

**The Application of Research Department** should also be divided by community. The English community currently operates with successful training practices, and would therefore benefit from customized direction for further support. Flexibility for application of the Institute's findings in the form of funding opportunities would be one option. Our training successes are well established, and we would wish to continue in order to reach more members of our community.

## **The Provincial Institute for Excellence in Education: STATUS & GOVERNANCE**

As previously stated, the Institute should be a non-political body that would withstand any change of government and be independent of political influence. The Ministry should oversee direction, but as a result of evidence of the state of practice, and not political zeitgeists. It is imperative that the Institute's governance ensures that the three objectives are aligned; that research be used to identify ideas and practices that promote learning, that these ideas and practices be communicated to the community with an opportunity to reflect upon application, and that support, financial and linguistic, be provided.

## **The Provincial Institute for Excellence in Education: DISTANCE AND DIGITAL EDUCATION**

As part of the Institute for Excellence in Education, distance and digital education should play a role. The Institute should recognize that this is an area of research focus, but again, directions should be prioritized as indicated through evidence. Distance and digital education are tools of transfer similar to textbooks, videos, guides and many other educational tools. They can be used to transfer findings, and there are opportunities to deliver training using such tools. Current practices are not ideal, and the various departments should be focused on matching the appropriate tool with the appropriate need.

Those living in remote areas of the province may use distance education as a means of professional learning for educators in Quebec schools, but infrastructure and pedagogy should be examined for continual improvement.