

QUEBEC FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

Where is the community consultation?

May 13, 2019- The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc. (QFHSA) defends the right of access to English education in Quebec, be it in small isolated rural schools in the regions, or small urban schools on the Island of Montreal.

The QFHSA is, therefore, alarmed at the speed and heavy handedness which the current Minister of Education and Higher Education has used to forgo community consultation in favour of expediency.

Only last year, the Ministry was proud to announce its education reform as a plan to give the community more direct say:

“More than ever, we believe that schools must belong to their neighbourhoods. The members of a community are the people best equipped to determine the needs of their schools and defend the interests of the students in those schools.”
– School Governance plan, CAQ website 2018, p. 4

Now, the process is more one of “informing parents”, not consulting with them, as was indicated in the recent letter sent by Jean-Francois Roberge, Minister of Education and Higher Education, to EMSB Chair Angela Mancini, regarding the unilateral transfer of three EMSB schools: Gerald McShane Elementary School, General Vanier Elementary School and John Paul I High School in the east end of Montreal to Commission scolaire de la Pointe-de-l’Île in Riviere-des-Prairies so soon after the transfer of Riverdale High School to [Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys](#).

What happened to the promise of community consultation?

This does not bode well for the proposed school service centers as institutions mandated to respect and respond to the needs of the English community as these school closures are not a solution the school board itself nor the parents would have chosen. The Minister is forcing the EMSB to bypass its own parent consultation timeline to satisfy the problem of over-crowding in the French sector, in time for the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. The elimination of three schools and the relocation of those students in such a short period of time are reckless actions and do not honour the government’s commitment to allow communities to defend the interests of students in their communities.

The government has been listening to the needs of the French school boards to the detriment of the English school boards.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations and other English education organizations must be invited to sit down with the government and be closely involved in the process going forward if we are to have any faith that the government will respect our community’s right to control and manage our education institutions.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, promoting the involvement of parents in education for 75 years, offers the benefit of its experience and historical perspective to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to advise the Minister on how to truly involve parents in the process. The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc., is a federation of over 80 local Home and School Associations and is comprised of over 4,000 member families.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc., is an independent, incorporated, not for profit volunteer organization dedicated to enhancing the education and general well-being of children and youth.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc., promotes the involvement of parents, students, educators and the community at large in the advancement of learning and acts as a voice for parents.