



# Western Québec School Board

## Annual Report

2016-2017

Western Québec School Board  
January 31, 2018

Resolution #:

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## **PREAMBLE**

The Western Québec School Board's (WQSB) strategic plan, establishes a general framework under which decisions are made regarding our stated future outcomes, as well as how these outcomes will be achieved, measured, and evaluated. It states that our collective efforts and resources are focused on student achievement and professional development to foster an environment conducive to learning and striving for excellence. The strategic plan outlines directions for our organization in concert with the core strategies aimed at achieving our main objective—individual student achievement.

## **WESTERN QUÉBEC SCHOOL BOARD OVERVIEW**

The Western Québec School Board (WQSB) territory borders the province of Ontario, and serves 155 municipalities spread across an area of over 90,000 square kilometers (twice the size of Nova Scotia). It is the third largest of the nine English boards in terms of geographic size. There are 25 schools for youth sector students, three of which are located above the 43<sup>rd</sup> parallel in the northern region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The remainder of the youth sector schools are in the southern region of the Outaouais, which partially surrounds the National Capital Region of Ottawa-Gatineau.

The WQSB's youth sector population is approximately 6,900 students from Kindergarten through Secondary V. Over 90 percent of this enrolment is in the Outaouais region, with the remainder situated in three schools in the northern region. There are also five Adult Education and Vocational Training centres—one in the northern region, and four in the southern region. Enrollment in the adult and vocational sector is more than 550 full-time students.

The WQSB employs more than 1,000 people in several categories of employment, most of them working directly with students.

Programs and services offered by the WQSB vary from general English programs and enriched French academic programs, transition and induction programs, work oriented training programs, life skills programs, along with pre-kindergarten and daycare services. We also engage students by offering a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities in sports, cultural, character building, and community-oriented activities along with a variety of student-centred services offered in our schools and centres.

## CHALLENGES

In addition to its large and partly remote territory, the WQSB faces many challenges that include socio-economic disadvantaged students, a significant rate of students who are identified as special needs, budget adjustments, a high mobility rate between provinces, high declining enrolment in several of our sectors, and capacity issues in our urban core buildings. Although the school board has put in place strategies to minimize and overcome these obstacles, it is important that the strategies put in place focus first and foremost on student success.

### **Law 101 and enrolment**

The WQSB operates in a predominantly Francophone environment and the accessibility to English instruction is limited to the provisions of the Charter of the French language (Law 101). This can make it more difficult for children to access the public English school system in Québec. Only when a parent meets certain requirements can a child be educated in English. Consequently, the English school boards in the province, including the WQSB, are facing declining enrolment while French school boards are anticipating a significant increase in enrolment. Immigrants who move to our region and parents who received a French education in Québec or in another province can be denied access to English public schools.

### **Mobility rate**

Many WQSB schools border the province of Ontario. People often move back and forth between the two provinces in search of the best living conditions. This trend results in a high mobility rate for the student population. Consequently, the school board's dropout rate is inflated because some high school students move out of the province prior to receiving a Québec high school diploma or certification. Additionally, this has created a problem with retaining teaching staff.

### **Students with special needs**

One of the WQSB's objectives is to increase the retention and the success of students with special needs. While we are proud of the strides we have made over the past few years in supporting students with special needs and securing success rates significantly higher than provincial ones, we continue to face challenges in this area. Equitable educational services must be accessible to all students; therefore, students with special needs must have the same learning opportunities as others regardless of their geographic location. As the proportion of students with special needs is increasing, our main challenge is to continue to provide the same level of quality education in all the schools within our jurisdiction.

### **Socio-economic context**

In Québec, each school has been assigned a ranking number (1 to 10) based on the socio-economic factor. The socio-economic ranking is assigned based on mothers without high school diplomas and parents being inactive in the work force. A higher ranking means a higher socio-economic disadvantage, and this presents more challenges for students to achieve success. In schools with rankings of 8, 9, or 10, additional grants are allocated to support educational initiatives and programs.

**Retention and recruitment**

The Western Québec School Board employs approximately 1,000 full-time and part-time employees across its vast territory. Recruiting and retaining qualified personnel in rural areas remains a challenging reality, notably in the teaching and professional fields. Initiatives are in place to promote recruitment while new strategies are developed to retain qualified personnel.

Considering the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur's (MEES) Strategic Plan, the WQSB has undertaken the following:

### **Orientation 1 – Increase perseverance and school success**

- Strategies are supported and embedded in school, centre management, and educational success agreements.
- Promote teaching profession:
  - The New Teacher Induction Program offers mentoring for all new teachers to the board. This program provides support and contributes to the retention of staff.
  - Excellence in Teaching awards to recognize outstanding teachers.
  - Teaching and learning programs are in place to ensure continuous improvement in quality teaching and learning.

### **Orientation 2 – Respond to training needs of individuals as well as the labour market**

- The WQSB partners with other boards as well as with regional and provincial partners to ensure that needs are met.

### **Orientation 3 – Pertains to higher (college and university) education sector**

### **Orientation 4 – Maintain conditions that favour the pursuit of studies**

- The WQSB supports academic advising activities such as: career days, student for a day activities, mini-university, and annual reports for actions and strategies about this orientation.

### **Orientation 5 – Support an education system that meets the needs of communities**

- The WQSB has developed and offers a full vocational training program through e-learning and is using distance delivery (video conference) to provide programs between centres.
- The WQSB uses LEARN services to provide small groups of students in distant schools with secondary studies optional courses.
- The WQSB has integrated Indigenous Success projects to support aboriginal students in its schools and centres.
- The WQSB has five Community Learning centres.

## EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The WQSB has created professional learning communities in its core subjects: English Language Arts (ELA), French, and Math to which we refer to as our networks. Teachers and consultants work on various components such as curriculum delivery, student assessment and evaluation practices, differentiated teaching strategies, and accommodations for students identified with specific learning needs.

The board continues to support the orientation of its New Approaches New Solutions (NANS) schools. These schools operate collectively in several areas to ensure progress and success in reading, math, student aspirations, and school leadership.

The WQSB has also grown and reinforced its knowledge and delivery of indigenous pedagogy and culturally responsive curriculum. This includes more collaboration with First Nations knowledge holders and communities, including elders and traditional language speakers.

The WQSB pedagogical consultants for core subjects support learning communities in all schools during the year 2016-17. Mathematics, English, and French teacher networks are facilitated and supported by the pedagogical consultants in schools in support of their school success plans and school data teams.

Depending on the school's plan, support emphasized:

1. Instructional Strategies
2. Curriculum Development
3. Assessment and Evaluation for Learning and of Learning

A listing of some of the initiatives follows:

### English Language Arts

#### Teacher Level Groups

- ✚ Teacher Induction Program support
- ✚ Donna Sinclair ELA evaluation PD session SEC I/II,III/IV,V, and for Principals
- ✚ Networks
- ✚ Lucy Calkins Writing Professional Learning Group (PLG) Cycle 1 and Pilot Group
- ✚ Lucy Calkins Writing Transitions Pilot Group
- ✚ WQSB Common Formative Assessment
- ✚ Marking Centers

#### Professional Development Innovation Grants (PDIGs) & School Level Support

- ✚ Elementary Cycle 2.2 Formative assessment creation
- ✚ PD 5843: Elementary curriculum alignment Cycle 1,2,3
- ✚ In-School PD sessions: Sound Prints, Comprehension and craft, academic conversations
- ✚ Elementary and High Schools – individual teacher support and Cycle team support



## **Board Level Support and Commitments**

- ✚ Consultant Coaching and Mentoring Team (CCMT)
- ✚ Western Québec School Board debate competition
- ✚ Language Arts Network (LAN):
- ✚ Programme d'action communautaire sur le terrain de l'éducation (PACTE):
- ✚ Provincial committees

## **French Second Language**

### **Teacher Level Groups**

- ✚ Teacher Induction Program support
- ✚ French Immersion and French Second Language (FSL) workshops
- ✚ Secondary II Exam creation team in partnership with Gestion du Réseau Informatique des Commissions Scolaires (GRICS) for FSL BASE & ENRICHI Board wide exam
- ✚ Secondary V Exam anchor session

### **Professional Development Innovation Grants (PDIGs)**

- ✚ PDIG 13519 : *Les meilleures stratégies pour améliorer la compréhension de texte en français langue seconde*
- ✚ PDIG 13552 : *Les meilleures pratiques entourant les leçons d'écriture en français langue seconde immersion*

### **MEES – Projects 2017-2018**

- ✚ Programme de formation collective en didactique des langues secondes: *Formation sur les ressources SigNature en FLS de base – complément à l'enseignement de la lecture et de l'écriture*
- ✚ New Approaches New Solutions (NANS) – Rural schools meetings Cycle 1 – Focus on vocabulary enhancement and lesson activities

### **In School Level Support**

- ✚ Elementary and High Schools – individual teacher support and Cycle team support
- ✚ Elementary and High Schools – exam roll out session in each elementary school and secondary school upon request

### **Board Level Support and Commitments**

- ✚ Data focus groups examined current data collection practices aimed to improve the collection process.
- ✚ Consultant Coaching and Mentoring Team (CCMT): included all consultants and Teacher Induction team consultants – review and support
- ✚ Elementary and Secondary sector meeting support
- ✚ Language Network – Réseau des langues: meetings with provincial consultants
- ✚ Collective Project – Projet Collectif : working with provincial consultants on how to assess the readability of a text.
- ✚ Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur's (MEES) : meetings with provincial consultants as well as Ministry representatives
- ✚ Concours d'art oratoire – French public speaking: competition held at the elementary and secondary levels for FSL students as well as French Immersion students.
- ✚ FSL BASE & ENRICHI Provincial Exam validation

## Mathematics

### Teacher Level Groups

- ✚ NANS – Rural schools meetings Cycle 2 – Focus on teaching strategies and data
- ✚ Elementary Summer Math Institute, Leadership Committee of English Education of Québec (LCEEQ) Math initiative cohorts 1,2 and 3
- ✚ Board wide Math Exam Creation Teams
- ✚ Board wide Secondary Math/Science Exam Validation Teams
- ✚ Secondary Science Cycle 1 Team
- ✚ Secondary Math Task Force
- ✚ Secondary 5 CST Adjustments to the course Task Force

### MEES Success Projects in 2016/2017

- ✚ Success 308: Secondary 1 & 2 Science Exam Creation. (English and French)
- ✚ Success 312: Grade 5 Math June Exam Creation (Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> winter celebration)
- ✚ Success 314: LCEEQ Summer Math Institute follow-up 4 Day Workshop

### MaST / GRICS Exam Participation

- ✚ Creation of June Grade 9 Math Situational Problem (Party-On!)
- ✚ Creation of June Grade 10 SN Situational Problem (Renovating the cafeteria floor)
- ✚ Validation of June Science Grade 9 Applied Science and Technology Exam
- ✚ Validation of June Grade 8 C1 Math Situational Problem (The Hercules Race)

### In School Level Support

- ✚ Teacher Induction Program support
- ✚ Management of the Google Drive, an online platform for teacher resource sharing
- ✚ Meeting with Elementary and Secondary Math teachers for one-on-one discussions from NANS schools in September and May to determine needs and offer growth feedback
- ✚ Consultation for math binders, classroom manipulatives, workbooks, textbooks, evaluation tools and recording, and digital resources - IXL, prodigy, explore learning and reflex Math

### Board Level Support and Commitments

- ✚ Longitudinal analysis of June Elementary Math Exams Grades 2,4 and 6 data
- ✚ Jim Knight Kansas - Instructional Coaching
- ✚ Elementary and Secondary sector and Management Training Meeting (MTM) support
- ✚ Math Science and Technology committee member (MaST)
- ✚ DEEN sub-committee member (CARE)
- ✚ Evidence Based Practices member (EBP)
- ✚ Consultant Coaching and Mentoring Team member (CCMT)
- ✚ Jennifer Katz professional development (UDL)
- ✚ Summer Math Institute professional development (LCEEQ)

In addition, the pedagogical consultants review and plan by reviewing the school's professional development plans. The focus was to support the schools by aligning professional development to their individual educational projects. This helped facilitate the pedagogical consultant yearly plans for 2017-18.

## Partnership Agreement

Our 2013-2017 Partnership Agreement clearly indicates the school board's core objectives, targeted results, and methods of assessing the achievement of objectives. The five objectives outlined in the Partnership Agreement are:

- Increase graduation and qualification rates of students under the age of 20
- Improve the quality of French Second Language (FSL) and improve the quality of English Language Arts (ELA)
- Improve the retention and academic success of certain groups of students including students with handicaps, social maladjustments, or learning disabilities
- Improve the health and safety environment in schools
- Increase the number of students under the age of 20 in vocational training

Objectives	Target 2017	Result 2015/2016
<b>1. a. Increase the graduation rate and certification under the age 20.</b>		
<b>1. b. Decrease the number of school leavers.</b>		
Increase the graduation rate and certification under the age 20.	80,0%	(2008-2009 – 7-year cohort) – 74.3%
Girls	81,0%	(2008-2009 – 7-year cohort) – 77.9%
Boys	80,0%	(2008-2009 – 7-year cohort) – 71.1%
First Nations	80,0%	Not available at this time
Decrease the number of school leavers (from secondary 3 to 5)	147	107 (2007-2008 7-year cohort)
Rate of Sec. V students registered on September 30 who obtain Secondary Studies Diploma	85%	88,0%
Increase the success rate on uniform exams of Sec. 4 subjects mandatory for obtaining diploma		
History and Citizenship and Histoire	80,0%	67,2% - History 75,8% - Histoire Combined rate 69.0%
CST Math	80,0%	71.1%
Science Math	85,0%	66.7%*
General Science	85,0%	76.9.5% (very small cohort)
Applied Science	82,0%	79.1%
Increase the success rate of Cycle 3.2 primary (end of cycle exams)		
ELA (MEES)	80,0%	88,0%
FSL (CS)	80,0% FSL 95,0% IM	80,0% FSL 94,0% IM
Math (MEES)	75,0%	66,0%

Objectives	Target 2017	Result 2015/2016
<b>2. a. Improve the quality of French Second Language.</b>		
<b>2. b. Increase the mastery of English Language Arts.</b>		
Increase the success rate on the reading component of the Secondary 5 MEES French Second Language exam.	88,0%	72,2% (if we include Français Enrichi the rate is 73.0 %)
Increase the success rate on the written component of the Secondary 5 MEES French Second Language exam.	87,0%	74% (if we include Français Enrichi the rate is 85.3 %)
Increase the overall success rate of First Nations students on the Secondary V MEES French Second Language exam.	60,0%	93%
Increase the success rate on the Secondary V English Language Arts exam.	93,0%	95%
Increase the average mark on the reading and writing components of the secondary V ELA exam by 2% (from 71,0% to 73,0% and 70,7 to 72,7 respectively)	73% Reading  72.7 % Writing	72% Reading  74,3% Writing
Increase the success rate of First Nations students on the Secondary V English Language Arts exam.	80,0%	89%
<b>3.Improve the retention and academic success of certain groups of students including students with handicaps, social maladjustment or learning disabilities</b>		
Pre-Work Program (2011 cohort who received qualification at end of three-year program)	75,0%	92,8%
Semi-skilled Training	70,0%	48,6%
The rate of students who obtain a high school diploma (*percentage of students with special needs registered in secondary V on September 30, 2015, who acquired Secondary Studies Diploma)	75,0%	%
Increase the success rate of students with learning disabilities on uniform exams.	80%	Data to Come
<b>4.Improving the health and safety environment in schools</b>		
Decrease the rate of students who feel bullied.	<b>Decrease from 20% to 17%</b>	21% (Sec) 27%(Elem.)
Increase the rate of students who feel safe.	<b>Increase from 84% to 87%</b>	63% (Sec.) 56% (Elem.) Question re feeling safe has changed to include going to and from as well as in school
<b>5. Increase the number of students in Vocational Training Program under the age of 20.</b>	<b>40</b>	39

## Complementary Services

The WQSB Resource Teachers' Network (RNT) completed its second of a three-year plan with a focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a framework which has inclusion as its primary goal. Jennifer Katz, Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia further explored UDL with our Professional Learning Community (PLC), through her Three Block Model of UDL. The PLC involved seven schools and collaboration with the Director of Education and our pedagogical consultants. Social and Emotional Learning is fundamental to the first Block in the model and we moved into the second block which involved inclusive pedagogical practices. Lynn Sénécal also supported the RTN with a Response to Intervention (RTI) session on Purposeful Instruction, guiding teachers to select appropriate focus lessons to meet the needs of a diverse classroom. We will continue to expand on the idea of 'Responsive Thoughtful Instruction'.

The Competency Based Approach to Social Participation (CASP) program is a curriculum designed for students aged 6 to 15 who follow a life skills pathway. Although it was still a non-compulsory curriculum, our school board began implementation during the 2016-17 school year. This included training approximately sixty regular classroom teachers, resource teachers and specialized program teachers. The CASP working team was supported by the Centre of Excellence for Physically, Intellectual and Multi-Challenged and continued to collaborate to further explore and develop tools to support teachers.

Three schools participated with one of our pedagogical consultants in a Collaborative Inquiry project. This project was initiated and funded by a provincial grant. The Collaborative Inquiry model emphasizes active professional learning and dialogue, while evaluating the implementation of evidence-based strategies and practices. The schools all selected inquiries based on a student need so as to further develop their professional learning and practices in their literacy classrooms. The group as a whole, explored the model and evaluated their efforts in collaborative teaching practices (resource teacher and homeroom teacher) in Daily 5 and Writer's Workshop. We have completed a second year of tele-practice therapy by the Montreal Oral School for the Deaf for two students in our schools. This has allowed for regular therapy, collaboration with school staff to further support the therapy goals, and active participation within team discussions, planning and meetings with parents.

We purchased thirty licenses for a software app that is used to teach new skills to students on the Autism Spectrum, using ABA techniques. This initiative began with training teachers and attendants during the spring and will continue to evolve.

We introduced new assistive communication devices for 2 pre-communicative students, with great success. These students are now able to communicate spontaneously with their peers and adults in the school, using both technology and through their attempts to use speech.

Grade 11 leadership students in a rural secondary school (St. Michael's) were trained to co-facilitate drug awareness presentations in grade 7 and 8 classes as well as participate in presentations for grade 6 students at the elementary schools in the area. The same leadership students collaborated with an elder in residence in Maniwaki to co-facilitate grade 7 Healthy Lifestyles presentations.

## Adult Education and Vocational Training Services (AEVT)

The WQSB Adult Education and Vocational Training Services provided education and training to approximately 1000 learners in 2016-2017. The five centres continue to remain a key resource to adult learners in region 07 and 08.

In Adult General Education, the centres continue to see a change in the number of part-time versus full-time students, with more learners opting for part-time schedules. The impact is a decrease in the generation of Full-Time Equivalent student funding but a need to continue to offer service to meet the needs in our five centres. The centres and clientele are benefitting from Ministry of Education grants that target additional support for complementary services (personal support, academic support and partnerships with outside organizations).

In Vocational Training, we have maintained and expanded in our rural centres through the offering of Accounting Studies and Secretarial via video conferencing. Pontiac Centre is the hub for this delivery with Maniwaki Centre and Val D'Or being the satellites. This delivery mode has allowed for small numbers of students to participate in the programs. We continue to offer a full complement of Health care programs although we are monitoring the changing labour market needs in this area and therefore will be adjusting our delivery to stay aligned.

In 2016-2017, AEVT continued to welcome international students to the Western Québec Career Centre. In 2016-17, approximately 70 international students undertook studies in Industrial Drafting, Residential and Commercial Drafting, and Health Assistance and Nursing. In 2016-17, the Pontiac Continuing Education Centre welcomed several international students in its Health care programs. This initiative has allowed us to expand our offer of service to our local clientele.

## Human Resources

The primary role of the Human Resources department is to hire, promote, and develop qualified and professional staff to ensure that our students achieve their potential. The department offers direction and guidance to management personnel for issues involving staffing and labour relations. In addition, we provide all our employees with services and advice related to career aspirations, compensation, benefits, and disability management.

During the school year, Mr. Terry Kharyati joined the team in February 2016 and replaced Mr. Mike Dubeau as Director of Human Resources. Mike and the department implemented a training strategy to ensure a smooth transition for Terry.

The Human Resources Department continues to play a central role in developing and providing ongoing advice and guidance to managers and principals pertaining to the new local and new provincial contracts.

The Human Resources Department also has the responsibility for the New Teacher Induction Program. The aim of the induction program is three-fold:

1. To ensure that we support and grow good teachers through collaboration and coaching;
2. To establish a professional standard of high quality teaching for retention in every region of the Western Québec School Board; and,
3. To provide meaningful feedback to teachers and administrators that encourages professional conversations.

During the school year, the Western Québec School Board hired a total of 64 new teachers to add to the 39 teachers in year-two of the induction program. These teachers were supported by a team consisting of two part-time consultants (75% and 25%), and 60 Mentor-Coaches in 25 of our schools under the direction of the Director General. In all, the team conducted 102 classroom observations and evaluations of new teachers. The retention rate of year-one teachers was 59% (38), with 16% (10) not being reengaged for performance reasons, 23% (15) leaving the board for various reasons, and 2% (1) not being rehired due to the unavailability of an appropriate position. Of the 39 year-two teachers, 87% (34) were retained, while 5% (2) left the board for opportunities elsewhere and 8% (3) were not retained for performance reasons.

The Induction Team took part in a five-day training in Lawrence, Kansas with Jim Knight on instructional coaching. The team was then able to share their learning to support Mentor-Coaches and administrators within the board. The team also provided support through an induction day in August for first year teachers, a full-day PD session on instructional strategies and differentiation, Mentor-Coach PD, as well as for four days of Tribes training.

## **Finance and Taxation**

The finance department is responsible for building an annual budget in consultation and collaboration with the director general and senior administration, both central and school based. Its consultation extends to various partners as per the Education Act. The department also completes all of the reporting mandates to the Ministry of Education and the Auditor General as requested.

This year change in the senior administration of the Finance department came into effect as a result of the appointment of a new director general. Several support positions also changed for various reasons; maternity, sick leave and new horizons. Therefore, training and a focus on succession planning was among the priorities.

The necessary support to schools, centers, and departments happened, in part, due to the support model of central senior administrators. This model includes a collaborative knowledge base across all areas of operations to broaden management and educational support. The finance sector found this beneficial during the times of staff transitions where support to the school is at risk of being negatively impacted.

The areas of support regarding finance includes all budget matters including grants, daycares, fundraising activities, parent fees, capital, and any special projects to our schools, centers, and department.

### **School board taxes:**

School board tax rates are calculated by applying a formula set forth by the ministry in the provincial budget rules. This is to ensure equity in the operating budgets across all school boards in the province. A key component in the formula for calculating the taxation rate is the property evaluation. The trend of taxpayers transferring their taxation support to the Western Québec School Board continued, therefore elevating again the value of the taxation base for WQSB. By the annual deadline of April 1, the WQSB had received requests reaching comparable numbers to that of the previous year. This resulted in the 2016-2017 tax rate of \$0.17978 per \$100 of evaluation dropping by \$0.05 from the previous year. In June 2017, Council accepted the 2017-2018 taxation rate of \$0.13694.

Changes in the tax rate impact the individual taxpayer directly; however, it does not change the revenues of the annual budget. In region 07 and 08 the disparity between the French and English school boards continued to grow. Property-owners who have children attending a French school saw disparity with the tax rate of the WQSB as high as \$0.20. The Education Act requires property owners to support the school board where their child is enrolled. Recognizing the inequities, the Ministry actively studied the taxation components and engaged in searching for an equitable taxation framework to relieve this problem.

**More on school board taxation can be found on our website at <https://westernquebec.ca> under *School Taxation*.**

### **Financial statements 2016-2017**

On October 31, 2017, the Council of Commissioners adopted the school board's 2016-2017 financial statements. The surplus on operations of \$553 968 brings the accumulated surplus to \$15 011 206. A small percentage of the accumulated surplus may be made available to the school board in the subsequent year budget in accordance to the budget rules published by the M.E.E.S. annually.

The 2016-2017 Financial Statements and the School Board Budget 2016-2017 are available on the school board's website at <https://westernquebec.ca/>.

### Procurement Activities

The Procurement Officer continues to oversee all procurement activities of the school board and provide training to the departments and the schools on By-Law 30—*By-Law establishing delegations of Powers and Functions of the WQSB*. In addition, our current procedures for procurement of goods and services have been updated with the new directives and requirements by the Treasury Board. Included in the annual report are the total amounts of service fee contracts awarded to businesses of a value of \$25,000 and above.

The following are the WQSB service contracts concluded under \$25,000 (excluding construction, renovations, and transformation) for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

	Contracts with physical person	Contracts with a company/legal person	Total
Number of Contracts	7	10	17
Amount for Contracts	\$ 271,388	\$ 9,058,387	\$ 1,177,226

## **Buildings and Equipment**

The Buildings Department's main goal is to ensure that all students and staff benefit from a safe and healthy environment. Our caretakers and our maintenance team strive to offer clean and well-maintained schools.

In 2016-2017, we invested 3 530 135\$ in renovation project to either improve the status of the buildings, to increase their efficiency, or to offer new services. The following table lists the bigger projects completed in 2016-2017:

<b>School</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Budget \$</b>
South Hull	Replace of the Heating System – Phase 2	400 000 \$
South Hull	Exterior Doors Replacement	300 000 \$
Buckingham	Renovation of the main entrance	250 000 \$
Lord Aylmer Senior	Windows Replacement - Phase 1 Repointing of brick – Phase 1 Renovation and relocation of the Main Entrance Renovation of the hallway between the school and the library	1 129 057 \$
Namur	Exterior Finishing Renovation	100 000 \$
Hull Adult Education Centre	Repointing of Brick	100 000 \$
Noranda	Exterior Doors Replacement	200 000 \$
Golden Valley	Exterior Doors Replacement	200 000 \$
Wilbert Keon	Exterior Doors Replacement	140 000 \$
Wilbert Keon	Accessibility between two buildings	230 000 \$

## **Information, Communication, and Technology**

The Technology Department faces many challenges; the needs are numerous and various, and the resources are limited. Most of our efforts have been concentrated on solidifying and standardizing the infrastructure.

We installed a centralized Active Directory and begin the migration of the schools. This new Active Directory will simplify and solidify the security management and facilitate the technology evolution.

We implemented Office 365 giving emails, storage and web tools to every staff and students.

We planned the installation of System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) to optimize the computer management.

We planned the installation of Skype for business as a new phone system.

## School Organization and Transportation

### School Organization

The Department of School Organization & Transportation regrouped portfolios to best serve the organization and reduce costs.

The department's primary mandate is to develop and implement efficient tools and mechanisms that will ensure the ongoing support of both students and school administrators. The department's purpose is also, to deliver technical and administrative support to the organization and contribution to the overall planning of resources that benefit the educational system as a whole. The Department of School Organization also collaborates with other departments thus ensuring optimal support and guidance to all schools while continuing to keep students as our primary common focus.

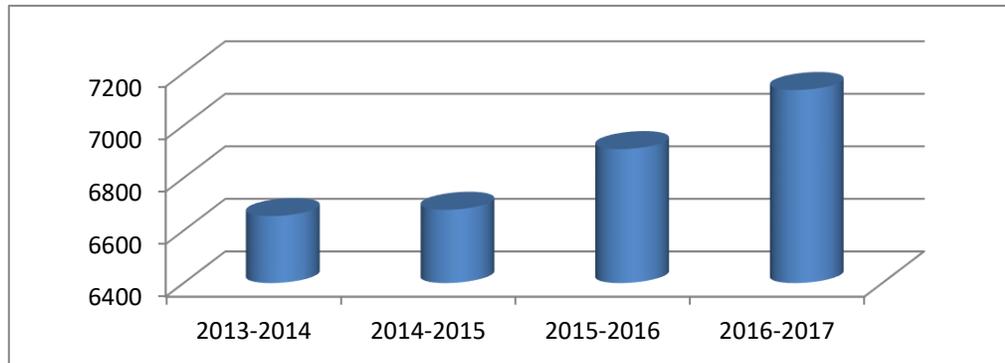
This year, we have unexpectedly reaped the benefit of having a solid 'contingency plan' in place with the cross-training plan that was developed and implemented in previous years. This plan created cohesion among team members and assisted in the sharing of corporate knowledge across the team rather than any one individual being the keeper of critical information.

Listed are the different dossiers supported by our department:

- Student registrations and procedures;
- Student file audit
- Bill 101 requirements and certifications;
- Student enrolment;
- Student certification;
- Support schools with pedagogical software;
- Report cards;
- Timetables and scheduling;
- Academic result transmission;
- Data management;
- Management and distribution of exams;
- Cross-boundary requests and approval;
- Transportation

## Enrolment – student population

The student demographic projection indicated an increase in the population which we are currently experiencing. The school board’s student population has positively shifted again. For the 2016-2017 year, the board saw an increase in enrolment for a total of 7135 students. This is the third consecutive year that the enrolment has increased.



## Transportation

The Transportation Department continued with its commitment to ensure efficient, reliable and safe transportation for all its students. We continued to strive to improve customer service responding to the ever changing needs of our community.

With an 8 million budget, for the 2016-2017 school year, 118 buses travelled over 10 million kilometers daily for a total of more than 1 860 930 kilometers for the year. While most of our students travelled by regular yellow school bus, some students required alternative modes of transportation designed to meet their specific needs, and were transported using seven-passenger vehicles. In total, 11 vans were in service travelling 403 kilometers daily.

Among our student population, 85 percent of them were transported to school on a daily basis, which proved to be challenging considering the size of our school board territory. While few accidents are attributed to school bus transportation, nothing can be taken for granted. Once again our department, in collaboration with our carriers, organized an annual safety campaign to promote the continued safety and security of our students. The ultimate goal of the safety campaign is to educate preschool and primary level students on the importance of adopting safe behaviors while being on or around school buses. Professional trainers met with elementary students and made safety presentations where they reviewed the danger zones, safe behaviors, and bus evacuation procedures. Schools also participated in a safety contest where banners, videos and slide show projects were submitted. The selected winners were awarded a free charter offered by the different bus companies.

## SECRETARY GENERAL

The Western Québec School Board's Secretary General coordinates, oversees, and ensures the efficient functioning of the activities and meetings of the Council of Commissioners and of the Executive Committee. The Secretary General oversees the board's policies, by-laws, official records, access to information and protection of personal information, copyrights, electoral process and legal services. The Secretary General provides advice and expertise to the Director General and to all administrators of the school board concerning legal and corporate matters.

During the 2016-2017 school year, the Council of Commissioners held a total of eight regular meetings and one special meeting. The Board's Executive Committee held eight regular meetings and one special meeting.

## LAW 17 – ACT RESPECTING WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

The following table outlines the total number of remunerated hours per employee groups for the period of January to December 2014, and April 2016 to March 2017. In comparing the two columns, the total number of remunerated hours for the Western Québec School Board has increased by 133 598.57 hours.

Category of	Jan. to Dec. 2014	April 2016 to March 2017
Management	91 738.80	88 075.59
Professionals-Consultants	43 639.13	53 232.34
Teachers	774 020.66	847 118.77
Support Staff	405 255.53	446 060.88
Maintenance	92 318.58	106 083.67
TOTAL	1 406 972.69	1 540 571.26

The increase in remunerated hours is due to:

- a) The youth sector student population increased from 6679 to 7134, (**a net gain of 455 students**) causing an increase in remunerated hours covering all areas of employment, except in the management category.
- b) Our school board benefited from the MESS' new early intervention strategy by adding four new 4 year old kindergarten classes. (These student numbers are included in the net gain of 455 students.) Other than the new K-4 program, the MEES has established several new spending measures that are directed towards educational interventions in schools.
- c) In the adult vocational sector, the school board has experience an influx of between 60 to 100 international students, and has created 5 new vocational training groups.
- d) Most of the increase in remunerated hours was in direct services to students (teaching and special education support).

- e) Increase in the professionals' category due to the following:
- engagement of a pedagogical consultant
  - New funding from MEES for targeted interventions in schools, i.e. early literacy
  - maternity and medical leave replacement
  - Part-time professional positions in guidance and new teacher program.

## **LAW 19 – COMPLAINTS CONCERNING BULLYING OR VIOLENCE REPORT**

In June of 2012, amendments to the Education Act were enacted with a view of preventing and stopping bullying and violence in schools. As a result of these amendments, every school was required to adopt and implement an anti-bullying and anti-violence plan. These school plans must include:

- an analysis of the situation prevailing at the school
- prevention measures
- measures to encourage parents to collaborate in preventing and stopping bullying and violence and in creating a healthy and secure learning environment
- procedures for reporting or registering a complaint
- the actions to be taken when a student, teacher, or other school staff member or any other person observes an act of bullying or violence
- measures to protect the confidentiality of any report or complaint
- supervisory or support measures for victims, for witnesses, and for the perpetrator
- specific disciplinary sanctions for acts of bullying or violence
- the required follow-up on any report or complaint

All WQSB schools have adopted their anti-bullying and anti-violence plans, which are reviewed on an annual basis with their Governing Board.

Because of amendments to the Education Act, school boards now have to report annually on the following: the nature of complaints reported to the Director General, the measures taken, and the number of complaints filed and received by the Student Ombudsman.

During the 2016-2017 school year, one complaint was received by the Director General of the school board.

## **CODE OF ETHICS REPORT**

All school board Commissioners are subject to the “Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for the Commissioners of the Western Québec School Board”. During the 2015-2016 school year, no breach of this code was reported.

During the 2015-2016 school year, all members of the Council of Commissioners respected their duties and obligations as set forth in the code. The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct applicable to our commissioners can be consulted on the school board’s website.

## Ombudsman Report

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**Letellier Gosselin Duclos**  
A V O C A T S - B A R R I S T E R S

Gatineau, November 9, 2017

**“WITHOUT PREJUDICE”**  
BY EMAIL

**Mr. Mike Dubeau**

Director General  
Western Québec School Board  
15 rue Katimavik  
Gatineau (Québec) J9J 0E9  
Email : [mdubeau@wqsb.qc.ca](mailto:mdubeau@wqsb.qc.ca)

**Object: Ombudsman report for the school year ending July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Our file: 17962-000 YL**

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Dear Mr Dubeau,

As requested by law, I am pleased to submit my report for the school year 2016-2017 ending on June 30, 2017.

I closed at the end of school year 2016-2017, a total of fifteen files from previous years and as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, I have only one outstanding file from previous years. As you may be aware, for reasons of confidentiality, I am unable to divulge the names of the people involved.

As for the school year ending the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2017, I opened three new files of which one is finished and closed. None were for bullying.

I am looking forward to continue working with the students and parents of the Western Québec School Board and I am available to meet with Council if required.

Yours truly,

**LETELLIER GOSSELIN**

Per:



**YVES LETELLIER, Lawyer and Ombudsman**

YL/nm