

ASBA - Fall General Meeting

November 2015 - Edmonton, Alberta

SCHOOL BOARDS:

To Vote or Not To Vote

The Québec Situation

Québec English School Boards Association

Jennifer Maccarone, President

Marcus Tabachnick, Executive Director

Québec School Boards – Current Situation

- Commissioners (Trustees) elected by universal suffrage
 - Board Chairs elected by universal suffrage
 - Board composition:
 - 1 Chair
 - 9 – 12 Commissioners
 - 3 – 4 Parents (elected at a general assembly of parents)
 - 2 – Reserved for co-opted community members
 - 2 – Some boards have added student representatives
- TOTAL: 13 – 21 Council members
- Chair and elected Commissioners have voting rights



English School Boards – Some Stats

Enrolment: 1975 - +/- 250,000

Enrolment: 2014 - +/- 98,000

School Boards: 1975 - 18

School Boards: 2015 - 9

School Buildings: 1975 - 350

School Buildings: 2015 - 300

Commissioners: 1975 - 172

Commissioners: 2014 - 104

Success Rate: 2015 – 85%

Administrative Cost: 2014 – 4%



To paraphrase Prime Minister Justin Trudeau:

In Canada good enough is not enough. This is Canada, and better is always possible!

We know that our Boards' 85% success rate is good but we are committed to success for all. We are prepared to work on meaningful change that leads to greater student success.



Québec School Boards – What's the problem?

- 1) Chronically low success rates in some boards
- 2) Cost of running elections
- 3) Low voter turnout
- 4) Negative public attitude towards school boards
- 5) Dysfunction of certain boards



The attitude
of the current
Minister of
Education



**“My team has created a very innovative solution,
but we’re still looking for a problem to go with it.”**





Line Beauchamp – 2010/12



Michele Courchesne – 2012



Marie Malavoy – 2012/14

Quebec's idea
of stability in
education
2010 - 2015



Yves Bolduc – 2014/15



François Blais – 2015/??



School Board Elections 2014

- 2014 Voter participation rate 5.54%
French Boards: 4.87% - English Boards: 16.88% (50% registered)
- # of Chairmen: 69
French Boards: 60 (28 acclaimed) – English Boards: 9 (3 acclaimed)
- # of Candidates for Board Chair: 123
French Boards: 106 – English Boards: 17
- # of Commissioners: 712
French Boards: 617 – English Boards: 95 (49% acclaimed)
- # of Candidates for Commissioner: 1360
French Boards: 1193 – English Boards: 167

Québec School Boards – Quality & Competence

- ❖ The Minister claims that one of the reasons for making change is to ensure that leaders of “quality and competence” are in place to govern \$11-billion of taxpayers’ money.

What did we do?

QESBA took a proactive approach

- ❖ QESBA surveyed all Chairs and Commissioners to determine education, work, community commitment, and other factors that will allow a data-backed detail of the people who make up the elected Councils.



Québec School Boards – Quality & Competence

Results of Commissioner survey:

- 47% Female 53% Male
- 40% aged 30 – 49yrs. 28% aged 50 – 59 yrs.
- 92% College or university-level education
- 55% Management or Professional careers
- 48% with children currently in system
- 45% First election 40% 2 – 15 yrs. Experience
- 75% Parent Committee experience
- 60% Spend 20 – 60 hrs. per month



School Boards – Questions framing the issue

- ✓ Do we measure democracy by cost?
- ✓ Do we measure democracy by voter turnout?
- ✓ Do we measure democracy by number of acclamations?
- ✓ Do we measure democracy or do we value democracy?
- ✓ Are minority language communities protected by the Canadian Constitution?
- ✓ Who determines the interpretation of constitutional rights?



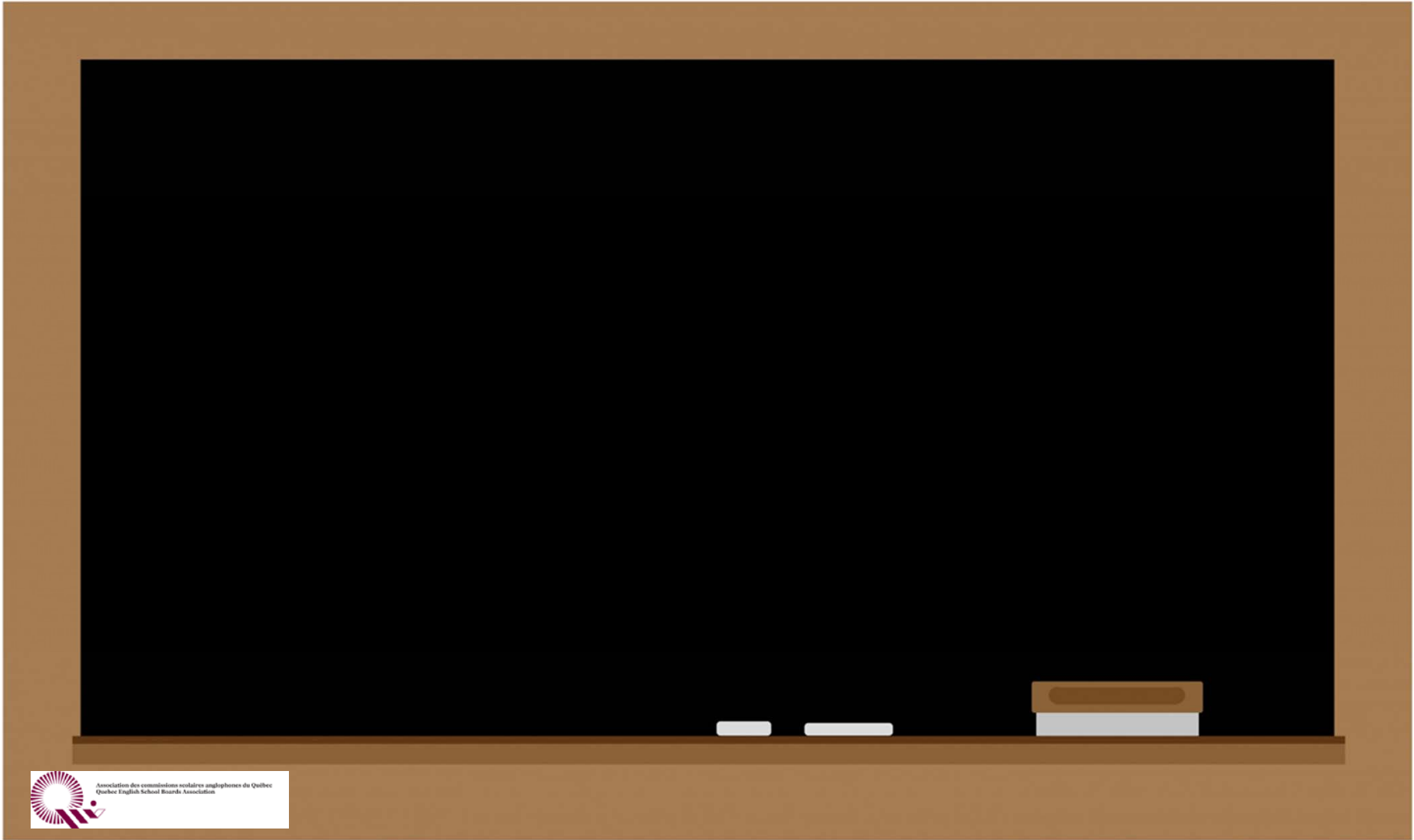
Québec Government – What's the solution?

- 1) Eliminate representative governance through universal suffrage
- 2) Create a new Board of Directors of 15 persons
- 3) 5 seats reserved for parents – elected by parent committees (electoral college)
- 4) 6 seats reserved for in-school administrators and teachers
- 5) 4 seats reserved for socioeconomic representatives (municipal, economic, etc.)



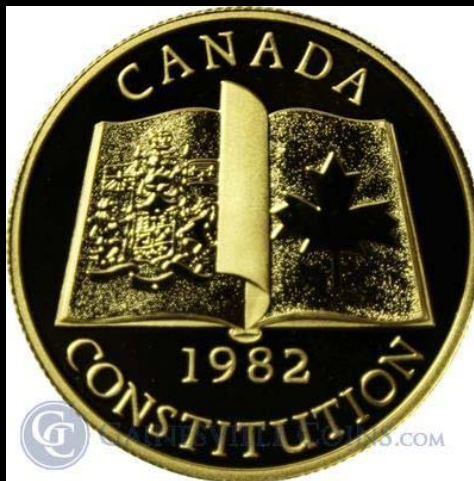
Québec Government – Draft Law Bill ___?





Association des commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec
Quebec English School Boards Association

What's the problem for the government?



Government proposal – What can we do?



Government proposal – What will we do?

Proactive
~~Reactive~~



What's missing from discussion?



What else is missing from discussion?

The one overriding and critical factor related to Trustees (Commissioners):

MOTIVATION

The desire to ensure that all students get the best education possible and that each student has the opportunity to succeed to their full potential.



EQUITY

Ensuring that every student has the chance for success



Why should you be concerned?

- Education Ministers talk to each other (CMEC, etc.)
- Trend is for one province to try something new
- Who has rights – the minority language community
- What are the rights – Supreme Court jurisprudence



What are the lessons and what needs to be done?

- This can happen in any Province
- Need to define what Trustees do and what is their value added to education system
- Need to find new ways to reach out to community
- Need to stop being modest about school board accomplishments



Contacts

Québec English School Boards Association
Montreal, QC – (514) 849 5900

- Jennifer Maccarone, President
jmaccarone@qesba.qc.ca / (438) 824 4378
- Marcus Tabachnick, Executive Director
mtabachnick@qesba.qc.ca / (514) 705 5900