

EASTERN TOWNSHIPS SCHOOL BOARD	<i>Title:</i> LINGUISTIC POLICY	
<i>Source:</i> Director, Pedagogical Services	Resolution no. ETSB14-08-03 Effective: August 26, 2014	<i>Reference Number:</i> P-037

CONTEXT

The Eastern Townships School Board is one of nine English language school boards in the province of Quebec. Its territory covers a geographic area roughly the size of Belgium in the southeastern part of the province of Quebec. Within its territory, there are eight municipal regional counties (MRCs), 20 elementary schools, three high schools, one high school offering an alternative program, two adult education centers and two vocational training centers. The student population in each school varies in terms of numbers and language spoken at home, ranging from 21 students in the smallest of our elementary schools to 904 students in our largest secondary school (September 2013 data). Seven of its 20 elementary schools have been designated as schools that can benefit from the New Approaches, New Solutions (NANS) Intervention Strategy for schools in economically disadvantaged areas.

CHALLENGE

Although English is the mother tongue for a majority of the students, there exists a growing number of students who meet the requirements for access to English school and have French as their mother tongue. This creates a bilingual learning environment in our schools and centers that lends itself to the fostering of both languages, thereby reinforcing our desire to have our students graduate with competency in both English and French. The challenge is meeting the needs of students from both linguistic backgrounds, mother tongue English and French, offering quality instruction so that they have a mastery of English as well as a high level of competency in French language instruction. The goal is to graduate bi-literate students who will flourish in both languages and thereby be successful and productive members of society.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Eastern Townships School Board bases its Linguistic Policy on the mission of Quebec schools, which is to instruct, socialize and qualify. It is supported, among others, by the following legal framework:

- The Charter of the French Language that recognizes the desire of Quebecers to ensure the quality and the prominence of the French language;
- The Education Act, particularly paragraphs 5 and 6 of Article 22, that states it is the responsibility of the teacher:
 - to take the necessary measures to promote the quality of written and spoken language;

- to take the appropriate measures to attain and maintain a high level of professionalism;
- The provisions of the three Basic School/Centre Regulations that schools and centres shall “take the necessary measures to ensure that all teachers in all subjects and all school/centre staff pay special attention to the quality of written and spoken language in learning and in all school/centre activities” (Basic School Regulation for Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Education, article 35; Basic Adult General Education Regulation, article 34; Basic Vocational Training Regulation, article 28);
- The Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports’ (MELS) Action Plan for the improvement of the teaching of the French language at the elementary and high school levels provides that the School Board must have a Linguistic Policy, in particular for the teaching of the French language (although not required by the MELS, emphasis on the teaching of the English language will be incorporated for the purpose of this policy);
- Goal # 2 from the Partnership Agreement signed between the School Board and the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports, “Improved Command of the French Language (and English Language for English School Boards)”.

DIRECTING PRINCIPLES

The School Board recognizes the importance of:

- the mastery of French as a conduit of integration and participation in the active life of Quebec society while maintaining high quality standards for the mastery of the English language;
- the role its members play as responsible citizens in the community with regards to the promotion, enhancement and mastery of the linguistic competencies of both languages;
- all its staff endorsing the two principles mentioned above so as to promote the concept of biliteracy.

OBJECTIVES

In accordance with the Directing Principles and the key role of liaison between the linguistic communities, the Eastern Townships School Board is committed:

- to valorize and promote the use of quality language in all of its communications, be it in English and/or French;
- to offer a rich bilingual environment in which all of its students achieve autonomy and fluency in English and French so that they can be active citizens integrating harmoniously within our society;
- to be a model of respect and openness towards different languages;
- to establish a selection process for hiring staff that will assure:

- that new personnel of the School Board acknowledge and are in agreement with the linguistic principles of the School Board;
- quality of spoken and written languages;
- to offer professional development for all staff members to improve their linguistic competency.

ACTIONS & MONITORING

The Eastern Townships School Board will ensure:

- that its Linguistic Policy be known to the entire community by using various means of communication;
- that the production of all its documentation and communications be of exemplary quality, be it in English or in French;
- that a variety of quality courses be offered to all its students, as well as the opportunity to experience authentic life situations to enhance the teaching of language;
- the promotion of the advantages of being “bi-literate” in Quebec culture and the world;
- the establishment of hiring criteria for personnel to ensure quality teaching of the language of instruction;
- the availability of quality linguistic professional development for personnel, in French as well as in English.

An annual follow-up of the policy will be made by members of the Directors’ Committee.

The General Directorate is responsible for the application of the Linguistic Policy.

SCOPE

The Linguistic Policy applies to all students and staff of the Eastern Townships School Board.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The herein Linguistic Policy came into effect on August 26, 2014, the date of its adoption by the Council of Commissioners of the Eastern Townships School Board.