

Highlights

Council of Commissioners' meeting of
Tuesday, August 22nd 2023



Recognition of Excellence

The Eastern Townships School Board welcomed Ms. Kandy Mackey as the new Director General who delivered a poignant report welcoming everyone back for a fresh start to the school year.

Mentions included the investment to improve our schools and infrastructure, the value of our dedicated staff and how the ETSB will soon adopt a new Commitment to Success Plan for 2023-2027. The Board is committed to once again raising the bar and has set a new goal for a graduation and certification rate of 82.5%, up from the previous 77.5%.

Dates to Remember...

August 24, 25 & 28 th	Pedagogical Day / Planning Days
August 29 th	1 st day of school – Youth sector
Sept. 4 th	Holiday – Labour Day
Sept. 22 nd	Pedagogical Day / Planning Day

Resolutions

- Commission scolaire Eastern Townships (CSET) – Cadre MC;
- Certificat d'attestation de fonctions et de signatures;
- Drummondville Elementary School – Signing Officers;
- Centre d'acquisitions gouvernementales (CAG) Mandate – Classroom Furniture;
- Ayer's Cliff Elementary School – Gym Ceiling and Back Entrance Renovation;
- Sunnyside Elementary School – Emergency Repair (Flood);
- 2023-2024 Notarized registration of fiber optics;
- Extension of delegation of powers to the Director General.

See attached report from the Chairman, Mr. Michael Murray & Director General, Ms. Kandy Mackey

AUGUST 22, 2023

Reflections

From Michael Murray, Chairman

I am delighted to welcome everyone back to a new school year. This year we have many developments to stimulate and challenge us. Every new school year is exciting as students reconnect with friends after a summer of separation, colleagues exchange stories of their vacation and new staff members tentatively find their place in each school's social network. We are beginning this year with a new yet familiar Director General who is an outstanding pedagogue. Kandy Mackey was DG until about four years ago but had to take leave for personal reasons. She has been serving as assistant Director General for the past couple of years and has already had an impact on our focus and orientations.

We also welcome several new principals and vice principals and wish them immediate and ongoing success in their positions. There were 151 teaching positions including full and part time to be filled this year due to retirements and other causes of departure. That number is not extraordinary, compared to 154 positions the previous year. Of that number 10 positions remain to be filled ranging from 40% to full time contracts. All our full time tenured positions are filled. Interviews are ongoing as we speak, and we expect to have a full complement of teachers to start the school year.

Media frequently mention illegal teachers, so I want to reassure everyone that we do not employ, nor do other boards employ, illegal teachers. Some however, are granted provisional teaching certificates by the Ministry of Education based on their university degrees and commitment to follow additional pedagogical training. We have engaged 8 such individuals so far, amounting to about 2% of our teaching staff.

Recruiting for support staff is ongoing. Our support staff postings often happen through the summer rather than earlier and we still have 50 positions to fill out of a total of 249. We are still seeking 6 Daycare staff ranging between around 4 hours per week to around 25 hours a week. Vacancies remaining include 15 Handicapped Student Attendants and 29 Special Education Technicians so clearly these are the positions we are finding it most difficult to fill. Finally, we are still seeking 2 regular bus drivers with interviews of candidates underway. We would like to recruit several replacement drivers as well. Those occasional drivers often work 50% of the year so it can be a substantial supplementary income for someone who doesn't wish to commit to a full-time position.

We will shortly be launching a new Commitment to Success Plan. Consultations have been underway for nearly a year culminating with an intensive round of presentations in each school late in the last academic year. This plan is truly the result of a collaborative effort by staff at all levels, administrators, and commissioners. Our aim is to build on the success of the previous five-year plan while implementing a range of fresh or renewed strategies for student success. We are

confident that the implementation of this ambitious plan will take our board to a new level of performance as demonstrated through student success.

Another widely anticipated development is the publication of a judgement on our challenge of Bill 40. I probably do not need to remind anyone here of the sweeping structural changes legislated in that bill, almost none of them aimed at improving student success. Justice Lussier of Quebec Superior Court delivered a comprehensive rejection of virtually all the key organizational changes of the bill based on protection for minority communities enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms at clause 23. As a result, the English community retains its school boards, election of commissioners by universal suffrage of members of our community and management and control of our education system. We are still within the period in which the government can appeal the judgement to a higher court, and that may occur, but during any such appeal the status quo remains in place. The situation during the past 30 months since Bill 40 was adopted clearly demonstrates that two parallel systems can exist without undue stress. We sincerely hope that the government will accept the judgement and proceed with collaborative efforts to improve student outcomes for all.

Once again, allow me to welcome everyone to our new year. I wish you all a fulfilling and challenging year of personal and professional growth. I also welcome new students and their families, urging them to take full advantage of the many satisfying opportunities to become involved in our schools, our programs and our communities. Have a great year.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael Murray".

Michael Murray, Chairman



August 22, 2023

The ETSB's mission is to provide its communities with a learning environment that promotes academic and personal development leading to the attainment of graduation or certification and opportunities to flourish and succeed.

Our Four Pillars:

- **Attachment-based developmental approach**
- **Pedagogical Leadership**
- **Professional Learning Community**
- **Student Engagement**

Director General's Report...

As we stand on the threshold of a new school year, we extend our warmest welcome to all of you. We hope you have had a restful summer and are ready to embark on a journey of growth, excellence, and achievement.

In the upcoming month, we are eagerly looking forward to adopting our 2023-2027 Commitment-to-Success Plan, a plan that our Ministry of Education commented "*Je vous félicite pour la qualité de votre plan qui saura susciter l'engagement et la mobilisation de l'ensemble des établissements d'enseignement sous la responsabilité de votre organisation scolaire*". This plan builds upon our existing strengths while driving us towards even greater heights. Our core pillars of student intellectual engagement, developmental approach, professional learning communities and pedagogical leadership remain at the heart of our efforts. We are determined to increase our 7-year cohort graduation and certification rate from its current 77.5% to an ambitious 82.5%. This commitment reflects our unwavering dedication to ensuring that each student thrives. Our journey is guided by the values of integrity, well-being, and growth. These values are not just words but principles that we embody in every decision, action, and interaction. These will permeate our organization as we focus on the well-being of our students and staff, on the vulnerability of our preschoolers, on bilingualism, and on valorizing alternate pathways and transitions that empower every student's unique journey.

This year, our Educational Services Team is dedicated to supporting schools/centres in the realization of the objectives that they have set in their Educational Projects. They will continue to provide comprehensive Developmental Approach training for both staff and parents, as well as investigate strategies that will enhance Student Intellectual Engagement. Furthermore, promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is integral to our mission and, as a result, there will be continued professional development on Education for Reconciliation and our International Student Program (ISP) will continue to be a platform for sharing cultures, fostering understanding, and celebrating diversity. We are creating an inclusive environment where every voice is valued.

From our Buildings & Grounds Team, we are excited to share the progress in infrastructure enhancements. A total of \$14.1 million has been allocated for the renovation of schools in the coming year. Year 3 of our eco-energetic project phase 1 is underway, with the goal of reducing our carbon footprint by upgrading mechanical ventilation and heating systems. By June 2024, we anticipate substantial CO₂ savings and improved indoor environments for our students and staff. By then, we will have 12 schools in full mechanical ventilation with A/C and two with partial ones...who would have imagined that one day schools would have A/C.

From our Finance Department, know that 72% of our budget is dedicated to salaries – a testament to the pivotal role our employees play in helping our students succeed. They are the heart of the Eastern Townships School Board. Their dedication is invaluable, and our Human Resources Team is here to collaborate with them, ensuring a nurturing work environment where talents are recognized and valued.

In closing, as we step into this new academic year, it is truly a privilege to be your Director General and with our team of support staff, professionals, teachers, administrators, directors of services, commissioners and supportive parents and community members, ETSB will soar! Let's remember to be positive and value education – not just the piece of paper called a diploma but rather all that surrounds education – the student, the staff, the learning. Let's work together to create an environment where every student can flourish and every staff member can thrive.

Welcome back, and may this year be one of accomplishment, collaboration, and growth!

Your Director General,