

Highlights

Council of Commissioners' meeting of
Tuesday, November 28th 2023



Recognition of Excellence

This month the Council of Commissioners and Head Office Administrators highlighted the numerous celebrations and recognitions that took place since the last Council meeting, namely the open house events at our three high schools and Sunnyside Elementary becoming a Santé Globale school.

As well, the new Parent Commissioner at Large, namely Sarah Langlois, was sworn in and welcomed to the Council. Congratulations to Ms. Langlois who replaces former Commissioner, Daniel Zigby.

Dates to Remember...

Dec 8, 11, 12, 13, 14 th	Legal Strike Days – No School/Services
Dec. 25 th – Jan. 5 th	Holidays – Christmas Break
Jan. 8 th	Pedagogical Day / Planning Day

Resolutions

- Delegation of Powers to the Director General – Offensive Construction;
- Delegation of Powers to the Director General – Appointment of Administrators;
- Contestation of Bill 96 (Stay);
- 2023-2024 Confirmation of the Amended Head Office Administrative Structure;
- Butler Elementary School – Renovation of Sanitary Facilities and Replacement of Water Fountains;
- Parkview Elementary School – Replacement of the Water Distribution System;
- Pope Memorial Elementary School – Soccer Field Drainage and Fence Replacement;
- Annual Playground Improvement Project;
- 2024-2025 Criteria for Enrolment;
- Agreement for Integrated Educational Services from the Montreal Oral School for the Deaf;
- School Bus Bids 2023-2024 (Phase 1).

Please see attached report
from Chairman,
Mr. Michael Murray.

N O V E M B E R 2 8 , 2 0 2 3

Reflections

From Michael Murray, Chairman

The Good, The Bad and the Desperate

Allow me to begin by noting that this is our final public meeting of the calendar year. I am happy to have this opportunity to review recent developments of particular importance to the leadership of this school board, if only to set the stage for what is to follow. Amid all the furor and frustration of a common front strike, an unlimited strike, and a continuing assault by our provincial government on the language rights of minorities, I will try to organize recent developments in an understandable way. Before doing so let me say how happy I am to live in a country and province where rule of law prevails. That allows me to tell you that there is good news, less good news, and a sort of unfolding comic performance that may have serious repercussions.

The Good News comes first:

Locally, the vocational training department of ETSB has been awarded two cohorts of the accelerated courses in carpentry and one cohort in tinsmithing. These are the courses that come with a significant salary for students while they learn. I understand that in the carpentry courses the students will build a real house so it appears the instruction will be highly practical. The carpentry courses have been oversubscribed, but there are still spaces available in tinsmithing. These are trades desperately needed to address the current housing shortage. We are very happy that quick action by our administrators enabled us to obtain these authorizations.

Minister of Education Drainville has proactively introduced an amendment to Bill 23, currently making its way through committee study in the national assembly. You will recall that Bill 23 is an act to amend the Education Act that gives the power to the minister to appoint directors general to School Service Centres, to dismiss those directors general without explanation or recourse, and to reverse any decisions of the said directors general or their boards of governance that in the minister's judgement are incompatible with the government's objectives. In plain language, this bill completely politicizes education in Quebec.

The minister was warned in a letter from QESBA, followed by a press release, that if the bill were to be adopted as initially presented, the English School Boards would have no alternative but to seek legal recourse. The minister's advisors probably told him pretty much what our counsel was telling us: namely that the bill stood no chance of resisting a legal challenge. In a rare demonstration of common sense by the current government the minister has announced an amendment that would suspend application of the law to the nine English School Boards. In a private meeting with the minister's staff, it was made clear that this gesture was conditional on the minority language school boards not immediately challenging the law. As a result, we are spared the stress and the cost of taking one additional bill to the courts.

The Bad:

Of course, there are items that are less favorable or laudable as well. The most recent and most egregious is the announcement by Jean-Francois Roberge, Minister, among other things, of the French Language, Minister Responsible for Canadian Relations and Minister Responsible for Democratic Institutions (just reading the full list of his responsibilities is a hilarious joke) that henceforth immigrants will no longer be permitted to access adult education or vocational training in English whether at school boards or CEGEPs. This is widely regarded as another instinctive knee-jerk reaction to a single recent public opinion poll showing CAQ popularity in such free fall that the Parti Quebecois has passed it in voter intentions. That poll followed closely on the heels of another that indicated more Quebecers think Paul St-Pierre Plamondon (familarly known in media as PSPP) would make a better premier than Francois Legault.

Prior to that boondoggle, there was the attack on English Universities through raising fees. There is, as far as I have been able to determine, no demonstrable link between those universities educating students from outside Quebec and the need to protect the French language. My personal belief, likewise, based on absolutely no facts, is that the government leaders became irritated that the two best-ranked universities in Quebec were English ones, that those excellent institutions attracted a disproportionate share of students from elsewhere, and that despite the best efforts of other universities, there seemed to be no challenge to their superior performance.

Rather than suffer continuing humiliation from this perverse situation, rather than work to improve the performance of Quebec's best French language universities, the government leadership prefers any method of dragging the English institutions down to mediocrity. It is like their approach to English CEGEPs where they have restricted access and limited growth. The evident fact that this deprives Francophone Quebecers of opportunities and advantages seems to be perfectly acceptable as long as the English institutions do not excel in an embarrassing way. Sadly, our local English university, Bishop's, is collateral damage in this folly.

The Desperate or ridiculous, depending on how you see it:

Early last week we witnessed the pitiful performance of Sonia Labelle, Minister of the Treasury Board attempting to justify depriving small Quebec communities of funds intended to help build and maintain public activity facilities like hockey arenas, curling rinks, parks and playgrounds for the purpose of bribing the multi-millionaire owners of the Los Angeles Kings to the tune of seven million dollars to have their team play two exhibition games in the Quebec City Videotron Centre this fall. Her explanations among others were that this facility, built with more public money, was underutilized. Her defense was mocked by both media and striking public employees who had heard the government plead poverty in the face of salary demands for the past several months. None of the unions and few of the media will stop reminding the government and the public that only last spring it increased the pay of each of the 125 members of the national assembly by Thirty Thousand Dollars per year with extra increases for various other posts and perks.

Following Mme. Lebel's performance, we were able to enjoy the spectacle of Eric Girard, Minister of Finance for Quebec being sacrificed in the same manner, sent to face the media storm over the same ridiculous justifications. Minister Girard, usually one of the more coherent and sensible ministers was reduced to estimating that the chances of a return of the Quebec Nordiques was as little as ten percent but that he had to do something to keep that remote possibility alive. He too was roasted in the flames of ridicule and mockery.

Toward the end of last week, Premier Legault took to the stage in a further attempt to restore a little dignity to the farce. Facing strikes by tens of thousands in public service he began musing that he could find more money for salary increases if the unions could be more flexible on working conditions. Apparently, he had just discovered that inflexibility was the central issue, notwithstanding months of negotiations. Unions were quick to invite him back to the bargaining table where they have been waiting for weeks for the government to return with an improved offer. They reminded Premier Legault, who should have needed no reminder since he served as education minister in a Péquiste government some 20 or so years ago, that working conditions always are part of the collective negotiations and have been discussed extensively in the current round.

Before we enjoy too much Schadenfreude at the sight of the government demolishing itself before our eyes, let's remember that they still have three years in their present mandate, and that their current chief rival has as its ultimate objective the separation of Quebec from Canada. A cornered animal, we are taught, is at its most dangerous. Our cat, Dickens, an inveterate hunter of small rodents in our garden, is currently limping, we suspect because of an encounter with a large and particularly aggressive mole. He prevailed in the end and presented us with his trophy, but he is still limping. The CAQ, made desperate by their fall in popularity, is likely to pull out all the stops to recover. Their utter lack of imagination means this will probably take the form of continuing assaults on English as a language, the boogie man they have raised and nourished. Of course, the main target is and will remain English on the streets and in homes in Montreal, but we in the regions, or as I prefer to call it, the Quebec mainland, all suffer the fallout.

Stay strong, enjoy the elements of humor in the ongoing spectacle, and have a great Christmas season.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Murray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Murray, Chairman

Recognition of Excellence

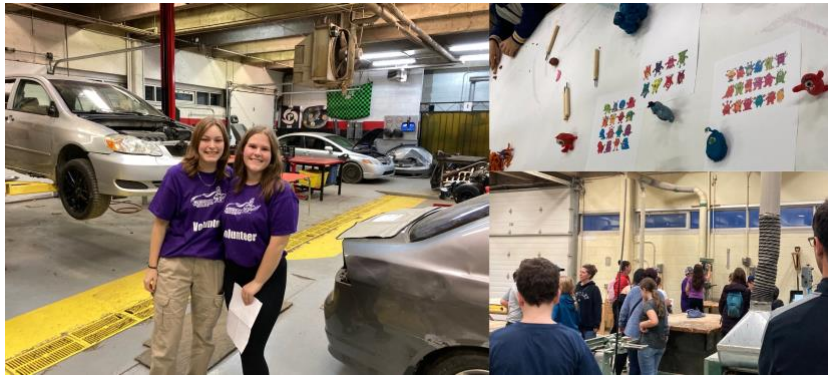
November 28th, 2023

This month the Council of Commissioners and Senior Administrators of the Eastern Townships School Board would like to signal the following:

OPEN HOUSES 2023



Alexander Galt - October 19th 2023



Richmond Regional - October 26th 2023



Massey-Vanier - November 20th 2023

All three of our high schools were pleased to host in-person open house events this year! They were festive, informative and highlighted the very best the schools had to offer. We thank the organizing teams at Alexander Galt, Richmond Regional and Massey-Vanier High School for their collaborative efforts and spirit, as it is truly a team effort to showcase the programs, facilities and activities available for students. A warm shout out goes to the student leaders as well who gave personalized tours of the buildings pointing out all the little details important to teenage life. Parents and their children showed up with smiles and great excitement as they visited their future schools. Congratulations to our high schools for representing the ETSB with such professionalism and flare!

Sunnyside Elementary Becomes a Santé Globale School!



Photos courtesy of Sunnyside's Facebook article and the Record

On October 27th 2023, Sunnyside Elementary officially became a Santé Globale school! The school gathered together in celebration to inaugurate this new affiliation which puts a focus on physical health and nutrition. Sunnyside students can look forward to exploring new outdoor activities, as a general school wide focus is placed on the global health of all.

To commemorate this new initiative, an afternoon photo scavenger hunt was held on the school grounds and on the Tomifobia Bike trail. What a great opportunity to get outside for some fresh air and fun.

You are invited to read the article featured in the Sherbrooke Record or check out the Santé Globale website for full details. Congratulations to Sunnyside Elementary for taking this healthy step forward!

[Record Article](#)

<https://www.fondationsanteglobale.com>