

Association des comités de parents anglophones English Parents' Committee Association



May 1, 2020

Dear Parents,

The English Parents' Committee Association of Quebec expresses its disappointment with the position taken by the Quebec English School Boards Association today.

The group representing councils of nine English boards has declared that no English schools will open until individual boards have decided for themselves, notwithstanding the government and Ministry of Education's decision.

As the official voice of parents of students in Quebec's English public schools, EPCA understands and is best placed to relay the preoccupations of parents, and is surprised that others have chosen to speak on our – on your – behalf, and taken such a public position without properly consulting Quebec's English school parents community.

Until today, parents were beginning to plan their child's return to school, or not, according to the choices made available to them in the past week, and with the view that this would necessarily evolve over the next two to three weeks. That has now been taken away from them.

EPCA has been surveying parents and their intentions and found that 12 percent of parents were prepared to send their child back to school, and 23 percent of parents surveyed were undecided. In fact, 61 percent of all parents responded that it was *necessary* or *absolutely necessary* to have an option available parents of elementary-school-aged children.

It is indeed the duty of school boards and staff to ensure that facilities and procedures are prepared to welcome students and personnel in the safest possible environments. Our position has always been that this can and must be achieved following Quebec public health authority guidelines and employing the established and recognized professionalism of school board staff.

What parents do not need however, is an aggressive position effectively attempting to put the brakes on any process that has begun, in addition to adding a layer of confusion for already anxious parents and demonstrating to them that this decision has been taken out of their hands.

The English Parents' Committee Association only represents *parents*. It is your interests and your best judgement over what is best for *your* children that guides all our actions and forms our positions.

We hope that all Quebec educational partners, if also truly committed to the best interests of students who are most impacted by any decision, will find common ground to move forward when it comes to reopening schools and the resumption of studies, if any. It is also our position, and has always been, that it should be done in collaborative and transparent fashion for the good of Quebec students and their parents.