

# Association des comités de parents anglophones English Parents' Committee Association



October 2, 2020

## ***Acclamations Deprive Parents, Public of Debate EPCA to Invest in Democracy***

As many of you know, elections for English-Language School Board Councils are set for November 1.

Unfortunately, this year many of us will *not* vote as most positions have been acclaimed.

While some are rejoicing that councils are set to return, it bodes ill for democracy and is quite problematic that a stunning 86.3 percent of positions have been acclaimed – more so, given that our community has spent the better part of the last two years arguing how important elections and the vote are to the survival of our schools and our community's future.

The English Parents' Committees Association wishes those taking seats at councils throughout the province great success as they take on this precious trust on behalf of students, parents and taxpayers through the next mandate. Parents and the wider community however, have been deprived of true debate and discussion of ideas during an election campaign.

If anything, this should prompt councils to further heed parent input, and we will ask commissioners for their commitment to expand parent engagement in schools, increasing the Parent Committee's role in school board governance, and to respect the independence of PCs in all their deliberations.

So many improvements are needed in our school system, for our children and teachers, and to better engage parents in daily school operations. With no clear agendas set out, or debates to be had, this is a huge disservice to our community and democracy.

### **Only nine individual races**

Understandably, the pandemic shifted our priorities and calendars, but this did not have to unfold this way. The fact that only nine individual races are being contested across the entire English school system questions our community's commitment to participation, as encouraging candidacies and educating the community about the process was largely left to a few groups and individuals, EPCA included.

EPCA will invest in democracy to ensure that whatever elections *do* take place, *work*.

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We will act in collaboration with our dedicated Parent Committees, to host and promote virtual debates between candidates, flesh out ideas and promote dialogue on important issues surrounding our education system, parent engagement and more. Town Hall discussions with commissioners will facilitate healthy exchanges of ideas and allow the public the opportunity denied to them by the lack of elections, to ask questions pertinent to them.

As the official voice of parents in Quebec's English public school system, the English Parents' Committees Association will continue to faithfully represent parent interests, and *only* parents' interests. With transparency and diligence, EPCA will continue bringing that unwavering commitment to representations with all levels of government and our educational partners.

Stay safe, and we wish you and your children continued success in the school year.

English Parents' Committees Association