



# English Parents' Committee Association



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*Katherine Korakakis is the President of the English Parents Committee Association (EPCA). In addition to this vital role in the Quebec educational sector, Katherine has spent most of her life working alongside start-ups in various verticals. For 10 years, she was responsible for the development of entrepreneurial initiatives and projects under the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge, a Youth Secretariat program of the government of Quebec. Katherine is Head of Entrepreneurship at ProMontreal Entrepreneurs (PME), an early stage VC fund that has been around for 20 yrs, and is currently the vice-president of PME MTL Centre-Ouest and on the investment committees of PME MTL Centre and PME MTL Centre-Ouest. Katherine has also authored and co-authored guidebooks on entrepreneurship education and has served on the Boards of numerous corporations.*

# President's message

## Hello Summer — Oh how we've missed thee!!

It's been a long, hard year... but together, we accomplished some amazing feats. From the beginning of the pandemic, EPCA quickly realized our number one initiative would be to build our community, connect families, and attempt to reduce parent anxiety.

Just look at what EPCA - with the support of parents across the province - was able to accomplish this year:

- Built a stronger partnership with our sister parent organizations;
- Provided training to parents across the province on a variety of topics;
- Provided training to Parents' Committees across our network;
- Launched Parents.Quebec, a portal for all parents across Quebec to find the resources they need in their communities;
- Partnered with Ecole Branchee to produce guides for parents with tips on how to survive the pandemic and best use technology;
- Lobbied the government on a range of topics that touch our community and made sure our voices were heard; and
- Media contributions - see my latest interview on the back-to-school plan [here](#).

Summer is starting, but that doesn't mean our forward momentum will come to an end. We will be planning for next year and looking forward to bring parents more resources, training, and tools to help them with their most important job; being an engaged parent! Do not forget that EPCA resources are for everyone. We hope that engagement and enthusiasm grow.

This has truly been a year we won't soon forget. Rest, recover, and revel in the fact that we all did something extraordinary this year. I look forward to seeing you all in the fall.

# Happy Summer!!!





*Trina moved to Gatineau from Nova Scotia three years ago. She is the single mother of a 14-year-old daughter. This is Trina's first year on parent governance for the province of Quebec, but she was highly involved in both public and private parent governance in Nova Scotia for many years prior to relocating. Trina also volunteers as Co-Chair of the middle managers' network at DND.*

*Trina Hubley  
Associate Director, Department of National Defence  
Director, Western Quebec School Board*

## **EPCA BOD Editorial: Single Parent Perspective on Parent Governance**

Being a single parent brings with it many obstacles but also many joys. I believe that it is a pleasure watching your child grow and learn and a happy challenge to work with them everyday to succeed. In my case, I wanted to do whatever I could to participate in my daughter's educational journey so, after a period of a couple of years to settle into our new lives in Quebec after we moved from Nova Scotia, I rejoined parent governance this year.

There are many differences between parent governance in NS and here in Quebec. In NS, the parent governance is only at the local level with School Advisory Committees (SACs), which were comprised of school staff, parents, and community members. I was the President of my daughter's elementary school SAC for several years and also a community member for the feeder high school that she would have gone to had we remained in NS. This allowed me to both understand the educational system better as well as to have a voice in important matters related to schooling at the local level. SAC representatives were also asked to participate in School Board-level meetings, Principal interviews, and feedback sessions.

I have found parent governance in Quebec to be much the same, with some major differences. For starters, I am now on committees at three levels of parent governance: the Governing Board of my daughter's high school, the Parent's Committee for the Western Quebec School Board (WQSB), and the English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA). This has given me an amazing opportunity to understand the complexities of the educational system in Quebec and - moreso - the challenges for the English school community in the province. One thing isn't different here though... parent governance in both provinces has, at its heart, the desire to support our children and help our school system succeed!

As I reflect back upon this last year of parent governance for me, I am very proud to have taken part in all levels of governance. I have been able to see first-hand how parents, school...

...staff, and partners have been able to come together – despite the confusing and challenging home and school environments this past year due to the pandemic – and make strides to improve English schooling in Quebec. This has included providing supports for parents, enhancing communications at all levels, and ensuring that we hold those who make decisions accountable whenever and wherever possible.



At home, my participation in parent governance has allowed me to provide further support to my daughter while modelling social responsibility. It is true that my daughter may sometimes complain about the time that I put into the three levels of parent governance, but she understands now the importance of taking a stand and fighting for what you believe is right. She knows that I will always put her first, but that it is necessary to participate in and fight for change. I believe that this will benefit her greatly as she finishes her last years of high school.

For now, as we close out this demanding and difficult year, I am looking forward to spending time with my daughter NOT thinking about school – at least for a little bit. We will take the time to connect and just be together and will look forward to the further o

opening back up of "life as we used to know it... or close to it". But I will still take time to work on furthering the needs of English school parents in Quebec on behalf of both my daughter and all of the other daughters and sons in the province.

# Anti-Racism Toolkit: Anti-Asian Racism

## Elementary Students

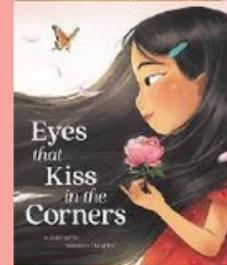
### ❖ The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi

- [Watch a reading](#)
- Borrow from your local library or purchase at a local bookstore
- Reflect with your child on what your names mean to you, if it's ever been mispronounced and how that makes you feel.



### ❖ Eyes That Kiss In The Corners by Joanna Ho

- [Watch a reading](#)
- Borrow from your local library or purchase at a local bookstore
- Draw self portraits together and see what similarities you can find



For more books to help combat anti-Asian racism, here's [a great site for more children's books about diversity and inclusivity!](#)

## High School Students

### ❖ This is what anti-Asian racism looks like in Canada from The National on CBC

- [Watch and listen](#) to Asian-Canadians talk about their experiences
- Discuss how these stories make you feel

### ❖ Kids share experiences of anti-Asian racism in the pandemic from CBC Kids

- [Read the article](#)
- Ask if your teen(s) have witnessed any anti-Asian racism over the past year

### ❖ I Laughed At The Jokes White People Made About Me. I'm No Longer Laughing. by Lisa Boyce

- [Read the op-ed](#)
- Reflect on times that you might have laughed, knowing a "joke" was offensive



# Anti-Racism Toolkit: Indigenous History

## Elementary Students

### ❖ **When We Were Alone** by David A. Robertson and Julie Flett

- [Watch a reading](#)
- Borrow from your local library or purchase at a local bookstore
- Discuss how the story made your child feel



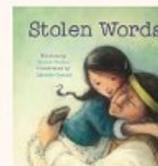
### ❖ **When I Was Eight** by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

- [Watch a reading](#)
- Borrow from your local library or purchase at a local bookstore
- Discuss Olemaun's experience



### ❖ **Stolen Words** by Melanie Florence and Gabrielle Grimard

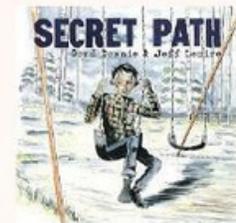
- [Watch a reading](#)
- Borrow from your local library or purchase at a local bookstore
- Discuss how you would feel if you were forced to forget your language



## High School Students

### ❖ **Secret Path** by Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire

- [Watch the movie](#) followed by The Road to Reconciliation panel discussion
- Purchase the graphic novel online (album download included)
- Check out [the website](#) and discuss the project together

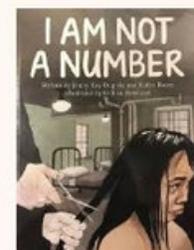


### ❖ **Namwayut: we are all one.** Chief Robert Joseph shares his experience as a residential school survivor and the importance of truth and reconciliation in Canada.

- [Watch the video](#)
- Discuss thoughts on reconciliation

### ❖ **I Am Not a Number** by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Cathy Kacer, illustrated by Gillian Newland

- [Watch the video](#)
- Sit with how this story makes you feel



# SCHOOL TRANSITIONS: A Teacher Perspective



**Juliet Oppong-Nuako** is a Special Needs Teacher in the Strengthening Educational and Emotional Development (SEED) Program with the English Montreal School Board, teaching students with severe emotional and behavioral needs.

## What can teachers do to help students end the year?

Everything is about relationship building and having a great connection between school and home. In my classroom, I end the year with a “Fun List” that I create with students; this is all about their ideas on how to best end the school year. We may not be able to do everything, but the point is to have students’ input on the activities. This year, we are doing biking and rollerblading (in the Phys Ed class), other outdoor activities, ice cream and pizza parties, water activities, and arts & crafts. This is all about ending the year on a positive, happy note. I also like to send out pictures to parents of these activities so they can feel a part of what we are doing. I recognize that this is very easy to do with a small class such as the one I have, but some of these ideas – especially involving students in end-of-year planning – can be used by other classrooms as well.



## How can teachers best celebrate the end of a school year?



As mentioned above, I like to involve my students in coming up with a Fun List and then completing activities off it. Also, I suggest that classes can do end-of-year projects that can build on or complete things that were learned throughout the year. I know that some teachers may have small parting gifts to give students in the last days of the year. These are just a few ideas that show the students that the teacher cares about them and allows the kids to be sent off happy and ready to enjoy the summer.

# SCHOOL TRANSITIONS: A Teacher Perspective

cont.

## What can teachers do to help students prepare for the start of a new year?

The top thing that I suggest for helping to prepare students for the start of the new school year is reading... reading... reading! We know that there is a bit of a lag or loss over the summer with respect to learning. This is fine, particularly if it is a result of an increase in family time. But I do suggest that the students keep up with English and French reading for 15-20 three or more times a week. Consistency is key! I also recommend that this reading time be comprised of reading aloud to parents (in addition to any quiet reading time alone for the children).

I also recommend that parents take cues from assessments or feedback provided by teachers for areas on which to focus for other activities throughout the summer, time permitting. For instance, parents can use academic books or other resources to provide continued support for areas of concern or improvement. Parents can also ask teachers before the start of the summer break for specific focus areas or reach out to other parents or school staff for new ideas and suggestions for other material.

**BUT!!!** Only a portion of the summertime should be spent on school-type activities! Kids also need a break in the summer to rest their brain, get ready for a new school year, and just be kids.



## What other advice would you like to give from your teacher perspective?

It is really important to make sure that your relationship with your kids is strong and thriving. Kids need to feel secure at home, even as it relates to their education and school career.

Parents can also reach out to the new-year teacher (if knows) or school staff to ask for tips and information. This is especially important if your child is nervous about the new year or if they are going to be transitioning into the next school year due to a house move, a change of school, or moving from elementary to secondary school.

A final point: teachers are deeply invested in the success of your children at school. We want to be a strong partner with parents to ensure that students are as successful as they can be. Never hesitate to reach out... together we can really change the world for our children/students.

# Reminders!

## TUTORING

If your child needs help, you can still hire a tutor if you think one would be helpful for your children. Children can practice over the summer **to learn** any essential skills that they might not have mastered in class. Remember, receiving one-on-one support from professionally trained educators is the best way to ensure that your children understand important concepts.



## CONTACT TEACHERS

If you have any concerns about your children's academic progress, email their teachers and ask resources that you can use to help support your child at home. Remember, working collaboratively with your child's teacher is one of the best ways to promote academic success.

## SUMMER ACTIVITIES

This summer, many summer camps will be open. Check out local spots and make sure to register soon! And remember, a real vacation, is important - focus on family time and outdoor activities like picnics, bike rides, hikes, and playing sports.



# EPCA MISSION STATEMENT

The English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) is a coalition of parents' committees of Quebec's English-language public school boards, representing more than 100,00 students in the youth sector.

EPCA advocates for a strong and sustainable English-language public education system to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for our children, while respecting the culture and language of anglophone Quebecers.

To do so, EPCA seeks to engage and motivate parents across Quebec to contribute to strong, representative and effective parent governance, to foster positive relationships with stakeholders across the educational spectrum, and to provide guidance and support to all member organizations.

What would you like to see in  
our upcoming editions?

[TELL US HERE](#)

5253, Blvd. Decarie, Suite 309, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 3C3  
(514) 778-3722 - [epcaquebec.org](http://epcaquebec.org) - [president@epcaquebec.org](mailto:president@epcaquebec.org)

# EPCA STRATEGIC PILLARS

## INFORM

Using all communications tools at our disposal, offer up-to-date information on public education initiatives, parent governance interests, best practices and issues management to ensure a healthy, well-engaged anglophone parent community.

## CONSULT

Ensure strong, high-quality and consistent feedback mechanisms with members and partners across the English-language public school network through both electronic and in-person methods.

## SUPPORT

Provide training and professional development at all levels of parent governance, optimize the sharing of best practices and provide multiple support services for parent committees, governing boards and parent delegates in need.

## ADVOCATE

Push for appropriate policy change and improvement through enhanced partnerships with like-minded organizations, Government working groups/tasks forces, and related organizations, through well-considered political positions on behalf of English- Language parents committees across Quebec, taking into account regional difference and the urban/rural divide.



Katherine Korakakis, President  
Tina Oppong-Lefebvre



David Fournier



Bart Jeuris

# WHO ARE WE?

*EPCA DIRECTORS*



Katherine Mackenzie  
Denise Martin



Ailsa Pehi, Vice President



Greg Piggins  
Doug Bentley



Trina Hubley  
Rebecca Genest