



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

Back to School

Welcome to the new school year! As we get ready for another academic year there are still many challenges ahead. I know that we are all still experiencing a variety of emotions as we return in-person to school. Please know that we at EPCA are listening and communicating your concerns to our government partners.



Although this year will again look a bit different, it makes me so happy to see our children returning to school... that is in fact where they belong. The past year and half have shown how supportive, resilient, and resourceful our community can be. As we begin the 2021-2022 school year, the EPCA Board remains focused on supporting our parents and students in every way we can!

Welcome Back!



Adam Gordon grew up in Montreal and moved to the North Shore in 2005, currently living in Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-lac. He has a 13-year-old daughter and a 15-year-old son. Adam has been highly involved in parental governance over the last three years and is currently the Chair of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board Parents' Committee. Outside of school governance, Adam is on the Canada Day committee for the MRC of Deux montagnes, which is a year round task. He also sits on the Board of Directors for 4 Korner, which serves the English population of Laurentides/Lanaudiere.

*Adam Gordon
Chair, SWLSB PC
EPCA Director, SWLSB*

EPCA BOD Editorial: Looking Forward to a Great School Year

I grew up in Montreal and was educated in the private system. As a teenager I was highly involved in a worldwide youth organization from the age of 13 through 17. I then returned as a volunteer staff member and board member at the age of 20. During my years as a youth, I was given access to a tremendous amount of leadership training and spent many of those years helping to train other youth. I was also fortunate to be taught the value and importance of being involved in the community.

Both of my children started their educations with Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board; my son is still with the board, now starting grade 10 at Lake of Two Mountains High School. My daughter is now an EMSB student at Laurenhill Academy (High School). I admit I did not get involved in school life while my kids were in Elementary school as I failed to understand the importance and value.

During my son's Grade 6 year, I had an unfortunate experience which caused me to question process and how situations are handled. As a result, I became more informed and met an outstanding Governing Board (GB) Chair at the school who helped educate me and navigate processed. It really opened my eyes to see the importance of stepping up and participating in parental governance.

When my son started Grade 7, I decided to run for his school's GB, figuring I could help make the school better. During the GB's Annual General Assembly, they asked for someone to be on the Parent's Committee (PC) at the School Board level. Though I had no clue what that was, I still put my hand up and was elected! I attended my first PC meeting as a delegate, having never been to either a PC or GB meeting, with little to no understanding how to participate or what was expected. But I knew I wanted to help.

Looking Forward to a Great School Year

cont.

The outgoing Chair nominated me for PC Treasurer, and I was elected at my very first meeting. That, for me, was where it all started! Though just three short years ago, I quickly learned what a beautiful parental governance community we have and how important it is to be involved in education and to support our kids. I have since made it a point to get involved in every aspect possible.

As a Council Vice-Chair, Secondary Parent Commissioner and PC Chair, I thoroughly enjoy visiting our schools and seeing them in action. Unfortunately, last year that was impossible... so, this year I want to make up for lost time. I have been able to meaningfully visit seven schools within the first six days of class. I've encountered tons of dedicated staff and principals who are working hard to give our kids the best possible experiences! This is personally so fulfilling to me.

I would encourage all parents to attend their school AGA and, if they can spare the time, get involved! Support the GB (and PC) and/or PPO/Home and School. Don't feel shy if you don't feel experienced, there are trainings and resources to help you learn. The existing teams can also help you. Never be afraid to ask questions... in fact, I encourage everyone to ask questions! It's the only way to learn and become informed.

When I think about what makes a good school year, I believe that a positive attitude and openness to learning always goes a long way! When a student starts the year with an open mind and ready to learn and participate in school life, success follows. As parents, I believe we need to focus on positivity with our kids, now more than ever in the context of the pandemic. If we show negativity towards things like masks, safety protocols, etc. our kids will absorb those thoughts and repeat them. They are kids... let's let them focus on being kids and their academics. I also believe that it is very important to take an active interest in their schoolwork and classes. Parents should attend curriculum night if they can to get to know who will be teaching your kids for the year.

I know that I am not alone in saying that I am personally rewarded by seeing my kids pride when they succeed.

Let's help our children and our schools have an amazing year!



School & COVID-19: A Memory Aid

Memory Aid

Clarification regarding students who may not be able to attend school in the upcoming months due to Covid-19.

*As per a communication from the Quebec Ministry of Education dated August 18, 2021

Withdrawal of a student or several students for less than 48 hours.

No educational service

Withdrawal of a student or several students for more than 48 hours.

A minimum level of support must be provided to help the student(s) maintain their academic success. Each student must receive services on a daily basis, allowing them to continue learning, despite their absence from the school.

Withdrawal of a entire group or closure of the school at PRESCHOOL & ELEMENTARY level

In 48 hours, distance educational services must be offered to students according to the minimum thresholds, per week, provided for in decree no. 885-2020 (see next slide)

School & COVID-19: A Memory Aid

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Pre-School (4 and 5 years old)

11.5 hours of group learning and developmental activities

11.5 hours of personalized learning and developmental activities

Cycle 1 of elementary school (grade 1 and 2)

10.5 hours of instruction.

Cycle 2 of elementary school (grade 3 and 4)

13 hours of instruction

Cycle 3 of elementary school (grades 5 and 6)

13 hours of instruction

Withdrawal of a whole class or closure of the school at HIGH SCHOOL level

Within 48 hours, remote educational services must be offered to students in sec 1 through 5, ACCORDING TO THE STUDENTS REGULAR SCHEDULE.

Note

*Distance education services must also be provided, according to minimum thresholds, for preschool, elementary, and high school students who submit a current doctor's letter recommending that they not attend school because of the risk of serious complications if they contract covid-19.

Parent Tips & Tricks for a Successful School Year

High School

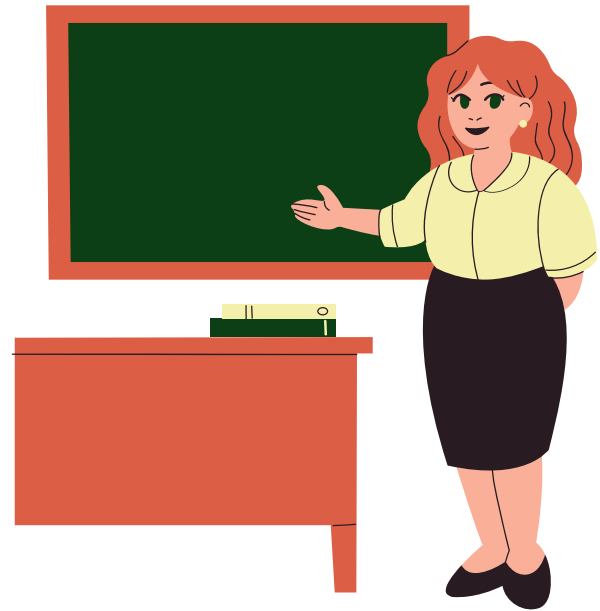


The School

- Take a **tour of the school** to familiarize your child with the layout, school services, and what is around the school as well.
- Practice using a combination** – this is likely your child's first time using a locker and a combination lock. If so, learning to use a combination lock on the first day of school while nervously trying to get to the next class can be very stressful!
- Join or follow the **school or school parent groups on social media**.

Your Child(ren)'s Classes

- Make copies and **review your child's schedule** with them so they know what classes/subjects they have each day. This will help give your child a good, organized start to the year. If they know their schedule well, they will know what course materials they need to have on hand each day. Using less time to find what they need and **more time to learn!**
- Get to know their teachers**, the organizational structure, the complimentary services, and the resource services offered by the school by visiting your school's and/or School Board's website.
- Request a meeting with a **guidance counselor** if needed.
- Reach out to your child's teacher** and introduce yourself, either through Teams or by email or telephone. It is so important to **stay in contact with teachers** and keep lines of communication open as it sets a solid foundation that works for the benefit of your child. If your child gets behind in any subject, or needs to be in a more advanced class, you can have these discussions with the teacher on the best course of actions to take. When parents and teachers work together, it **enhances the student's overall success!**
- We all know that the way some subjects are taught today is not exactly how many of us learned when we were in school... and that is okay! Do not beat yourselves over this. In fact, be glad that there are tons of resources that your child can use to get the support that they need. There are **online tutoring resources** that your child can use if needed such as LEARN Quebec, AlloProf (soon to be available in English as well), as well as **students in the school that offer their time to tutoring**.



Parent Tips & Tricks

High School

cont.

Parental Involvement

- Get involved and **Be-in-the-Know!**
- The best way to **advocate for your child** and those of others is to get involved. You can join the Governing Board or, if you cannot commit to that level of involvement, simply attend meetings when you can. Meetings are public and are posted monthly on the school's and/or School Board's calendar. This is a fantastic way to **ensure that your child is getting the best education available** within the public school system.
- There are **other ways to get involved as a parent** as well, including the school's Parent Participation Organization (PPO) or Home & School committee.



Student Life

- It is important to **create a dedicated and consistent time for study**. This can be a major challenge considering the fast-paced lives we all live today. Trying to balance school, work and family life can be a big challenge but dedicating study time can make your life that much easier. Statistics show that students that have a consistent study time, and stick to it, have an overall better success rate. It does not need to be 2-3 hours either; perhaps 45 minutes to an hour is sufficient. Each child is different but **giving them that routine will help tremendously** in the long run.
- Talk to your child!** When your child gets to high school, they may not be mentally or emotionally prepared to handle everything they will experience. Don't be afraid to **have tough discussions**. From peer pressure, academic pressure, managing school and home-life balance, it is a lot to take on for kids. By talking with your child about these things and routinely checking in, your child is more likely to be open with you about the challenges they face so that you can **help them overcome and be successful**.



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- Value sleep and healthy eating.** Both are essential to the needs of your child, and yourself as well.

- Lastly, do not forget to **encourage your child in all that they do** and remind them that although everything seems new and different, this time goes by fast and there is a lot of learning and a lot of fun to have. So, **enjoy these times and make the best of it!**

Parent Tips & Tricks for a Successful School Year

Elementary School



·It's exceedingly important to **talk to your children each day after school**. Throughout the day at school, your child(ren) may hear things, true or not, that may upset them. Reassure them that not everything they hear at school is true and that **following safety measures** is the best way to fight the pandemic.

·**Monitor your child's feelings and emotional well-being**. If you sense your child is struggling, try to find out why they are feeling a certain way. Younger children can sometimes **not be able to verbalize** how and why they are feeling down. It is important to empathize with your child(ren). Telling them, "I know you miss your friends, that must be really hard" will help them **manage their emotions better**. You can also **share** how you are feeling as a parent.

·**Stay in contact with family and friends** using technology or according to regulations from Sante Public. Kids need the social contact.

·**Reassure** your children that doctors and scientist are working hard to find ways to end the pandemic.

Be patient with your child(ren)'s school. Know that they are doing everything they can to keep everyone safe as they navigate through government and Sante Public's directives.

Reminders!

TUTORING

If your child needs help, you can hire a tutor if you think one would be helpful for your children. 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.

UPCOMING EPCA NEWSLETTER TOPICS

- Resources for special needs
- Best practices across school boards
- Advocating for your child
- Resources for helping kids do better in school
- Insights into administrative processes

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](#)

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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.