



English Parents' Committee Association

BACK TO SCHOOL



IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

New School Year - Time for
Connection & Collaboration

ARTICLES About EPCA

Parent Governance:
Annual General Assemblies (AGAs)

Volunteering at My Child's School –
A Parent's Perspective

ARTICLES

Back to School
- Tips for Neurodiverse Student

Back to School
- Tips for Neurotypical Students

Beyond the Ban: Helping Kids Cope
Without Phones at School

Alloprof: Your Partner for a Successful
School Year

PARENT RESOURCES



Katherine Korakakis is the President of the English Parents Committee Association (EPCA) and Head of Entrepreneurship at ProMontreal Entrepreneurs (PME), an early-stage VC fund. She has spent over a decade fostering entrepreneurial initiatives in Quebec, particularly through the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. Katherine also serves as Vice-President of PME MTL Centre-Ouest, participates on key investment committees, and has co-authored guidebooks on entrepreneurship education, contributing her expertise to various corporate boards.

President's message

New School Year - Time for Connection & Collaboration

Dear parents,

As the new school year begins, I want to take a moment to welcome you back and to thank you for the trust, energy, and commitment you bring to your children's education. A new school year is always a chance for fresh starts, renewed connections, and stronger collaboration between families, schools, and communities.

This year, there are important changes and challenges ahead of us, each one an opportunity to reflect, adapt, and work together for the benefit of our students.

Cell Phone Ban

The provincial government's recent announcement on cell phone restrictions has generated headlines, but let us be clear: cell phones were already not allowed in classrooms. What students truly need is not more punitive measures, but meaningful education around technology. Children must be taught how to be good digital citizens, how to spot fake news, understand the addictive design of digital devices, and how to develop responsible online habits. Simply banning devices does not prepare our children for the digital world they live in; teaching them to navigate it wisely does. EPCA continues to call for training for both parents and students so that technology becomes a tool for learning and growth, rather than a source of contention.

Annual General Assembly

This fall also brings the Annual General Assembly at each school, where parents have the opportunity to step into leadership roles on Governing Boards and Parents' Committees. These assemblies are a cornerstone of parent voice in education. Your presence and participation ensure that our schools remain responsive to the needs of the community they serve and that parent perspectives help guide decision-making. I encourage every parent to take part, whether by attending, voting, or volunteering. Your involvement truly makes a difference.





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President's message

New School Year - Time for Connection & Collaboration cont.

Education Budget Cuts

At the same time, we cannot ignore the reality of provincial budget reductions in education. These cuts will have an impact across our school system. As the English Parents' Committee Association, we are standing firm in our advocacy: every child deserves equitable access to quality education, and parents' voices must be heard in protecting resources for classrooms, services, and supports. While challenges lie ahead, we are stronger when we speak together and I am proud to say we are united in ensuring that no child is left behind.

As we step into this school year, let us remember that education is more than policies and numbers, it is about the success, joy, and growth of our children. With your continued involvement, your encouragement at home, and your willingness to advocate, I am confident we can transform challenges into opportunities.

On behalf of the EPCA, I wish all students, parents, and educators a successful and inspiring school year. Let's make it one filled with learning, connection, and resilience.

Warmly,

Katherine Korakakis
President, English Parents' Committee Association



About EPCA



**English Parents'
Committee Association**

WHO IS EPCA?

The English Parents' Committees Association is a coalition of parents' committees from English school boards in Quebec, representing 100,000 students of the English-speaking youth sector. EPCA is a non-profit association funded by the Ministry of Education. We advocate for public English education in Quebec and campaign on issues of concern to member parent committees. Whenever there is an education issue, we are the voice of parents. EPCA represents the parents of English-language school boards in Quebec and is a strong and trusted partner for parents throughout their child's educational journey from elementary through high school. There is strength in numbers and EPCA works to bring everyone together!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ell'.

WHAT WE DO

EPCA offers support, training services, and workshops to parents involved in Education by answering questions they may have, directing them to relevant resources, and providing valid and verified information that is public and accessible to all.

EPCA also offers a personalized consulting service for which the identity of parents and their children as well as the exchanges they have with EPCA remain confidential, guaranteeing the trust that parents can have in their Association.

EPCA helps parents find the information needed to support children, help them be successful, support their well-being, or to get involved in the school's parent governance structure. Parents can learn about how to apply for English-language education eligibility, enrol in kindergarten, transition to high school and much more.



Parent Governance: Annual General Assemblies (AGAs)

It is that time of year again, as your child returns to classes. To say that each new school year brings fresh challenges and opportunities is an understatement.

More than ever, the English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) is here to represent you to government and our educational partners. But that's only part of the job. The rest depends on you.

You will soon receive or may already have received an email from your principal regarding your school's Annual General Assembly (AGA). We strongly urge you to attend.

Whether led by the Chair of your Governing Board or included in the welcome assembly by your school principal, this meeting is the gateway to parent participation, a chance to directly influence your child's educational experience.

At the AGA, members of your Governing Board will be elected, along with delegates to Parent Committees. This is your opportunity to be part of the decision-making process on budgets, programs, initiatives, and more. Serving on a Governing Board gives you a front-row seat to collaborate with teachers, administrators, and other parents, bringing your unique perspective into an official forum.

Why your participation matters

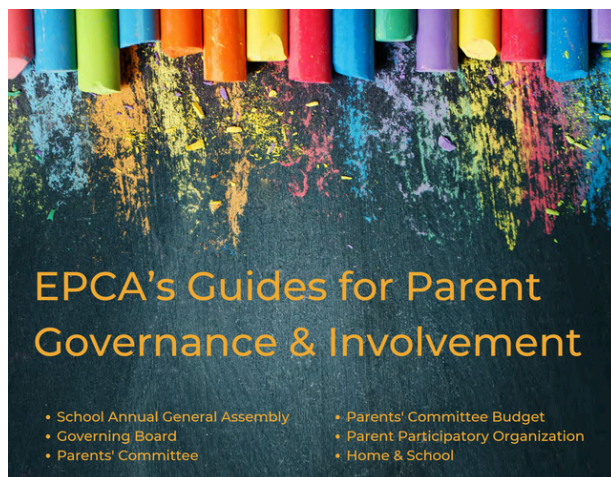
Volunteers are the lifeblood of our schools and communities. Your involvement helps drive student success, and your time and input are deeply valued. We cannot emphasize this enough: Parents have power in their schools, power to influence, advocate, and shape outcomes. EPCA can only represent you effectively if you exercise that power locally.

A word of thanks

To all Governing Board members returning this year, thank you for your dedication. Your experience will help guide and support new members as we work together, in solidarity, to meet the challenges ahead. As always, EPCA stands with you and behind you, representing the voices of parents at every table.

If you would like more information on Parental Governance, please see EPCA's Guides for Parent Governance & Involvement at the link to the right:

We wish you and your family a safe, healthy, and enriching school year.



Volunteering at My Child's School

– A Parent's Perspective

The first time I volunteered at my son's school, it was for a simple in-class activity. I happened to have a free hour during a workday and wanted a peek inside his world. For that one hour, I sat with kids as they built mosaics out of chopped vegetables and, of course, ate them afterward. It was fun, a little chaotic, and completely enlightening. I got to watch how the kids interacted with me, with each other, and with the task at hand. Some children dove into the veggies enthusiastically, while others wanted nothing to do with them. The whole experience was a reminder of how unique kids are and how much goes on inside a classroom that parents rarely get to see.

But the very best part was simply being in that space that belongs to my child. School is a world where I don't usually have a role, and one I only get glimpses of through stories or photos. That morning gave me something different: a chance to share a moment in his everyday life. From there, I found myself saying "yes" more often. I joined the school's governing board, at first quietly listening and learning. By the end of the year, I was contributing my thoughts, and the following year, I was elected chair. I have since taken on other parent governance roles, which eventually led me to join EPCA. But I also joined our school's PPO (Parent Participation Organization), where I helped with fun days, winter wonderlands, spring markets, and even wrapping over a hundred books to make sure every student received one for Christmas.

I will admit, I am not naturally outgoing. I don't always find it easy to make friends in new settings. But volunteering has helped me connect with teachers, administrators, and other parents, and it has given me a better understanding of how the school community works.

Volunteering does not have to mean chairing a committee or speaking at meetings. Some of the best volunteers are parents who just show up with a smile, ready to help wherever they are needed. Whether it is running a game at a fun day or setting up tables for an event, every bit counts.

And it is not just the school that benefits. Kids notice when their parents are involved. My son loves spotting me at school, whether I am helping at an event or quietly assisting behind the scenes. For him, it is proof that I care about his day, his learning, and the people he spends his time with. For me, it is a chance to create a foundation of trust now, while he still thinks having me around is the best thing ever, that will hopefully last through the teenage years when kids naturally begin to pull away.

I will not say volunteering is always easy. It takes planning, sometimes time off work, and it can feel overwhelming. But it is always worth it. Even the smallest effort, like wrapping books in the evening while watching TV, can mean the world to a teacher and, ultimately, to the students.

So if you have ever thought about getting involved, I encourage you to start saying "yes". Attend your school's AGA. Join the governing board or volunteer with the PPO. Ask if there are committees that match your interests. Or simply ask your child's teacher: "*What can I do to help?*"

You don't need to do everything. But sometimes doing something, even something small, makes all the difference.

Back to School

Tips for Neurodiverse Students

Back-to-School, One Step at a Time

For many families of neurodivergent kids, back-to-school doesn't always mean sliding easily into a routine. With staffing changes, service delays, and the usual September chaos, it can feel overwhelming.

The system isn't perfect, and services don't always come quickly. But by sharing what works, supporting one another, and keeping communication open with teachers—in short, working together—parents, teachers, and students can still create a school experience where our kids feel supported and understood.

Transitions, whether it's the school bus, busy hallways, or after-school activities, as we all know, take extra energy. Giving a little buffer time and preparing them for what comes next really helps. And every small win counts: a bag packed the night before, arriving on time, or using words to ask for a break before getting overwhelmed.

Other things that might help is keeping things simple include a short morning checklist, a visual schedule, or a “who to ask for help” card in the backpack. These things can go a long way. We suggest sharing a quick one-pager with teachers about your child's strengths and strategies—this can make those first weeks smoother. It makes a difference when the school team knows what helps before the stress builds up.

Additional tips to support neurodiverse students

- **Sensory-friendly tools:** Noise-canceling headphones, fidget items, or access to a quiet space can help students self-regulate during overwhelming moments.
- **Clear and consistent routines:** Predictability reduces anxiety. Posting a daily schedule in the classroom and giving advance notice of changes can make transitions easier.
- **Chunking tasks:** Breaking assignments into smaller, manageable steps with visual cues or timers can help with focus and reduce frustration.
- **Positive reinforcement:** Celebrate effort and progress, not just outcomes. A sticker chart, verbal praise, or a note home can boost confidence.
- **Peer buddies:** Pairing students with empathetic peers during group activities or recess can foster inclusion and reduce social stress.
- **Flexible seating:** Allowing students to choose where they sit—beanbags, standing desks, or near the door—can support comfort and focus.
- **Teacher check-ins:** A quick daily check-in with a trusted adult can help students feel grounded and give them a chance to share concerns early.

EPCA wishes everyone a calmer, smoother September. Step by step, our kids will get there.

Back to School

Tips for Neurotypical Students

Another school year is now upon us. We say goodbye to late nights and lazy days, returning to regular bedtimes, regular homework times, regular mealtimes, and regular relaxation times. This all adds to a stable atmosphere in the home. Routines are important for children as they lend consistency to busy days. They also allow for a mapping of days that includes school, family, and extracurricular activities.

Using an agenda is a powerful way to help children manage the demands of school and extracurricular activities. It allows them to visualize deadlines, spot scheduling conflicts, and plan ahead—reducing stress and avoiding last-minute cramming. Weekly and monthly views work together to support both short- and long-term planning, helping students balance academic tasks with other commitments.

As children return to school, re-establishing routines is essential. Parents can support this transition by:

- **Gradually adjusting sleep schedules** a week before school starts to align with early wake-up times.
- **Creating a consistent daily routine** that includes time for homework, meals, physical activity, and relaxation.
- **Using the agenda together** to set daily goals and track progress, helping children build time-management skills.
- **Encouraging regular agenda check-ins**, both in the morning and evening, to reinforce accountability and planning habits.
- **Modelling organization** by sharing how you manage your own schedule and responsibilities.
- **Celebrating small wins**, like completing assignments ahead of time, to build confidence and motivation.

Regular check-ins with your child can help identify what's working and where adjustments are needed, making the agenda not just a tool for planning, but a foundation for lifelong organizational skills.



Beyond the Ban: Helping Kids Cope Without Phones at School

As the school year begins, parents are asking what some of the ways are that they can support their child in adjusting to the Ban on Cell Phones and electronic devices during the school day. Measures implemented by the Ministry of Education to reduce distractions and improve focus. This can be especially challenging for those with special needs, mental health challenges, or medical conditions who may rely on phones for safety, communication, or emotional regulation.



EPCA understands these challenges and has put together some helpful tips for parents to navigate while supporting both your child and the new measures objectives. First and foremost is empathy: It is super important to acknowledge your child's feelings and recognize that their phone might be more than just a device for entertainment. It will be a bigger process for some students more than others and it is important to recognize that.

Secondly, you as the parent must understand the school's policy. Note that the policy should be posted on the school's website. Review the school's policy carefully and stay on top of any changes that may come about. This includes understanding the exceptions or accommodations available through an IEP and/or medical documentation. EPCA recommends working closely with the school to establish a communication plan that reassures your child they can still be reached in emergencies.

There are alternatives. For students who use phones to manage anxiety or health conditions, explore alternatives like fidget tools, noise-cancelling headphones, quiet spaces, or counsellor access, and ensure these supports are integrated into your child's IEP. It is equally important to teach your kids to self-advocate. Teaching your child to self-advocate empowers them to express their needs respectfully and is particularly important for students with special needs as this helps them to ensure their needs are met.

Another important action that you can take as parents is to set consistent, healthy phone habits at home, which can ease the transition. Modelling mindful tech use reinforces the message. Keep a close eye on your child's adjustment by maintaining open conversations with both your child and school staff, watching for signs of anxiety or with draws. PAUSE Your Screen is a great resource for those who face the challenge of better managing their screen use. PAUSE offers resources to better manage screen time. You also can find a self- evaluation tool with links to resources and tools to help take action for that little bit of extra support when needed.

Although we did not have cell phones and modern-day electronic devices when we were in school, the world is evolving and there is positive use to these devices. A well-balanced use of screen time can be fun and educational. It will be challenging during this adjustment period, so go easy on yourself and your child. Celebrate every step forward and encourage confidence and resilience. Remember, while cell phone bans benefit many students, individualized flexibility is key to ensuring all children feel supported and safe. By partnering collaboratively with the school and advocating thoughtfully, you can help your child thrive in this new environment without losing the tools they need to succeed.

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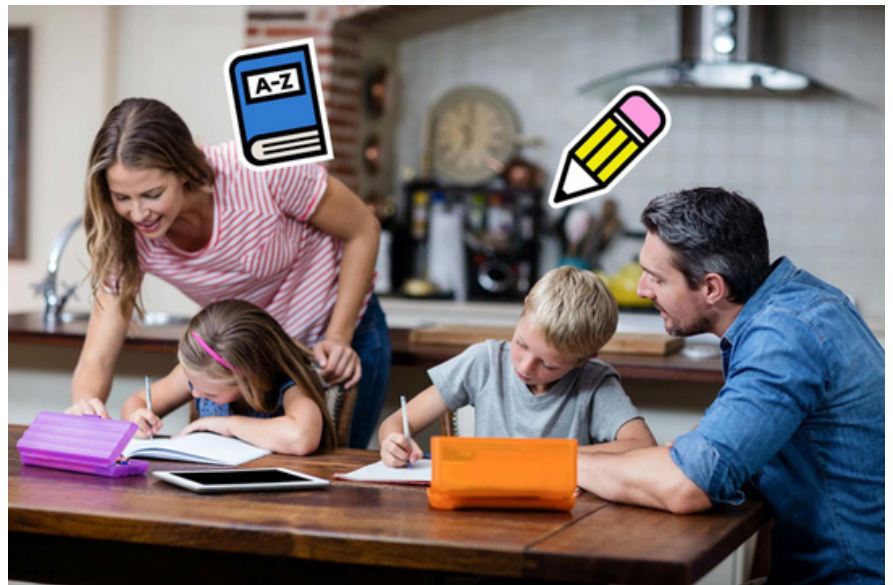


Alloprof: Your Partner for a Successful School Year

Mission: Alloprof helps students in Quebec to transform academic challenges into successes, thanks to its free, professional, and stimulating services.



As summer winds down and the school year approaches, many families are thinking about how to make this year the best one yet. Whether your child is starting a new grade or making the big leap from elementary to high school, the challenges can sometimes feel overwhelming. At Alloprof, we understand these moments well, and we're here to support you and your child through every step of the school journey.



What Is Alloprof?

Alloprof is a free, Quebec-based nonprofit dedicated to helping students from Grade 1 to Secondary V succeed academically. Our bilingual online platform offers a variety of tools designed to make learning easier and more enjoyable, including:

- Easy-to-follow concept sheets
- Educational videos that explain tricky topics
- Interactive exercises and fun pedagogical games
- A motivational study timer to help build good habits
- Live homework help through our Ask a Teacher service
- A Help Zone where students get answers and guidance from peers and teachers

Whether students need a quick refresher before a test or ongoing support throughout the year, Alloprof is there to make school feel a little more manageable, and even a bit more fun.

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Having a Successful School Year

cont.

Helping Parents Help Their Kids

Balancing school routines, homework, and family life isn't easy. Many parents tell us about the daily challenges of keeping kids motivated and organized. That's why Alloprof offers dedicated support for parents too by offering them their very own platform: [Alloprof Parents](#).

Our website includes hundreds of [helpful articles and practical tips](#) on everything from managing homework stress to preparing for exams. A great place to start is our Motivational Timer tool, which helps kids set study goals and earn rewards for their efforts.

Interested in offering a workshop for parents through your school or school board? Contact Kassandra Berardelli at kberardelli@alloprof.qc.ca to learn how we can support your community.

Navigating the Transition from Elementary to High School

[Moving up to high school](#) is a big step for students and families. New schedules, more teachers, and greater independence can bring both excitement and uncertainty.

Alloprof has created special resources to help families navigate these changes. We provide guidance on how to talk about the transition, build time-management skills, and get comfortable with new expectations. Check out our School Transition section online for practical advice and helpful tools: alloprof.qc.ca/school-transition.



Ready to Support You This School Year

No matter where your child is on their learning journey, Alloprof is ready to help. Explore our resources, encourage your child to reach out to our teachers for help, and know that you're not alone in this. To get regular updates, tips, and new resources delivered to your inbox, sign up for our [parent newsletter](#) today.

Here's to a confident and successful school year for your family!

Parent Resources



The Quebec Federation of Parents' Committees, with support from various partners – including EPCA's President Katherine Korakakis, has put together a guide to assist parents whose children are facing violence or bullying issues at school – click [here](#).

Tutoring



Homework Help



ENGLISH ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATES

Explainer: What Quebec parents and students need to know about English eligibility certificates: At this [LINK](#) are details on how to apply for a certificate and who is eligible to attend English schools in Quebec.

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.