



# English Parents' Committee Association



## BACK TO SCHOOL

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*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

## A New Chapter for Education in Quebec

Dear parents,

As we begin this new chapter with a new Minister of Education, we at the English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) are both hopeful and vigilant. A new minister brings with it a fresh opportunity to reset priorities, listen to parents' voices, and ensure that education policy is responsive to the real needs of students across Quebec.

### Where We Stand Today

Education in Quebec remains at a crossroads. Families continue to face obstacles in accessing timely services for their children, compounded by the constant stream of government reforms. Parents recognize the dedication of educators and administrators, who work tirelessly under difficult conditions, but the system itself is falling short. Student well-being and success must come first in every decision, and we must ensure resources are protected so all students get the support they need to succeed.

### Our Accomplishments & Challenges

Over the past year, EPCA has amplified parents' voices in multiple ways:

- We successfully mobilized parents around key policy issues, including budget cuts, road safety, and equitable access to services.
- We worked with partners to deliver workshops and resources that empowered parents in their role as active participants in governance.
- We maintained a steady presence in consultations, ensuring that decision-makers heard directly from parents on matters ranging from digital tools in classrooms to support for vulnerable students.

At the same time, we faced challenges. Budget reductions placed added pressure on school services. Parents reported frustration with uneven communication and the ongoing strain on teacher recruitment and retention. These are not small issues; they are systemic challenges that require bold solutions.







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# President's message

## A New Chapter for Education in Quebec

**cont.**

### Our Priorities for the Year Ahead

Looking ahead, EPCA will remain focused on what matters most to families:

- **Student Success & Well-Being:** Advocating for stronger supports for all students, with particular attention to those with learning or mental health needs
- **Parent Empowerment:** Expanding training, resources, and tools so parents feel confident and equipped to contribute.
- **Accountability in Policy:** Holding decision-makers accountable to ensure reforms and funding decisions strengthen, not weaken, our education system.

Parents play a vital role in education. Whether or not you sit on a committee, simply being present, encouraging learning, and working with schools makes a real difference. We know challenges exist, and communication is not always easy, but openness and collaboration are the key. EPCA will continue to put dialogue and student well-being at the centre of all its advocacy.

Wishing you a good Fall,

Katherine Korakakis

President, English Parents' Committee Association



# Navigating the Transition from Elementary to High School

The move from elementary school to high school marks a significant milestone in a student's academic journey. This transition brings new academic expectations, complex social dynamics, and a shift in the learning environment that can be both exciting and daunting for students and their families.

## New Academic and Organizational Challenges

High school introduces students to a larger, more varied environment. Unlike elementary school, where students typically have one or two teachers for core subjects, high school students encounter multiple teachers for different subjects such as science, math, English, and electives like art and physical education. Each teacher may have unique classroom expectations, which can be particularly challenging for students who struggle to understand social cues or adapt to new routines.

Students must also navigate changing classrooms between periods, manage their time, and organize their belongings—often retrieving items from lockers between classes. For those with executive function challenges or visual processing issues, these new organizational demands can be overwhelming. Parents can help by encouraging their child to develop a locker organization system, use shelves or dividers, and plan locker stops in their daily schedule.

## Increased Academic Expectations

High school students are expected to be more self-reliant in their learning. Homework and assignments become more frequent and complex, requiring students to gather information from reliable sources and express it in their own words. Note-taking becomes essential, and students with ADHD, dyslexia, or processing difficulties may benefit from specific strategies or digital tools. Graphic organizers and audiobooks can support those who struggle with written expression, while breaking large projects into smaller tasks can help build critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

## Evolving Social Dynamics

Social development accelerates in high school. Students move from being the oldest in elementary school to the youngest in high school, facing new independence expectations and navigating cliques, bullies, and feelings of isolation. The larger school environment offers opportunities to expand social circles and explore interests through clubs and extracurricular activities. Role-playing social scenarios and discussing boundaries can help students who struggle with social cues build confidence and resilience.



# Navigating the Transition from Elementary to High School

cont.

## Supporting Your Child Through the Transition

Parents play a crucial role in supporting their child's adjustment to high school. Scheduling meetings with guidance counselors before the school year starts, especially for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), can help establish connections with staff who understand their needs. Introducing your child to teachers or collaborating on a back-to-school letter can foster understanding and support.

It's important to maintain open communication, listen to your child's concerns, and respond with empathy. If adjustment issues persist beyond the first month, arranging meetings with teachers may be beneficial. Parents should also be aware that high school staff may not engage with families as actively as in elementary school, and policies around tardiness and absences may be enforced more strictly.

## Building Success Through Engagement

Encouraging academic and social involvement, fostering positive relationships with peers and staff, and providing strong home support can boost motivation, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Parents should familiarize themselves with available resources—academic, social/emotional, and career pathways—to better support their child's journey.

For more information on secondary and postsecondary pathways, explore resources such as webinars and informational videos provided by your school district, including the following:

- To explore more information on secondary and postsecondary pathways [Click here](#) to view a short nine minute video!
- <https://sites.google.com/lbpearson.ca/transition-network-secondary/home?authuser=0>
- [Webinar on pathways.mp4](#) - Google Drive
- [Transition Webinar 2023](#) - Google Slides





# Information about CEGEP

Helping your child plan for their future is challenging. With so many options, the various programs, and information everywhere, often parents are overwhelmed. At EPCA we thrive to provide information to Parents to facilitate the process so they can focus on helping their children choose the best path forward.

Not only is picking the best CEGEP that fits your child's needs important but, also visiting their campus to get a sense of what you can expect, feeling the overall vibe is essential. Some CEGEPS require registration, others are free to roam during scheduled Open Houses. Below, we provide the list of English CEGEP Colleges, with their Open House Dates, and information to contact the campus. Don't wait until the last minute to get the information that you need! Open Houses start as early as October this fall.

| Region             | CEGEP                                    | Date and time  | Contact  |
|--------------------|--|--|--|
| Capitale-Nationale | <u>Cégep Champlain – Saint-Lawrence</u>  | Monday, November 3, 2025<br>- evening<br>Wednesday, February 4, 2025<br>- evening (hybrid)   | <a href="mailto:welcometoslc@crcmail.net">welcometoslc@crcmail.net</a><br><u>Admission   Cégep Champlain - St. Lawrence</u>  |
| Estrie             | <u>Champlain College – Lennoxville</u>   | Saturday, October 18, 2025<br>10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  | <u>Open House - Champlain Lennoxville</u><br><u>Registration for Open House - required</u>   |
| Montréal           | <u>Champlain College – Saint-Lambert</u> | Sunday November 2, 2025<br>1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  | <a href="mailto:admissions@crcmail.net">admissions@crcmail.net</a><br><u>Open House - Champlain College - Saint Lambert</u>  |
| Montréal           | <u>John Abbott College</u>               | Saturday, October 18, 2025<br>12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  | <a href="mailto:admissions@johnabbott.qc.ca">admissions@johnabbott.qc.ca</a><br><u>Open House - John Abbott College</u>  |
| Montréal           | <u>Dawson College</u>                    | Tuesday, October 14, 2025: Science, Medical Studies & Engineering Sector:<br>4:00pm – 8:00pm<br>Thursday, October 16, 2025 Creative & Applied Arts and Social Science & Business Technologies Sectors:<br>4:00pm- 8:00pm | <u>Open House</u><br>Sign up to receive scheduled info sessions, the floor plan, and important admissions information.   |
| Montréal           | <u>Vanier College</u>                    | Saturday, November 1, 2025<br>12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  | <u>Vanier College's Open House - Vanier</u><br>Registration recommended, link - <u>Open House Visitor Sign up form</u>   |
| Outaouais          | <u>Héritage College</u>                  | Date to come   | <a href="https://www.cegep-heritage.qc.ca/future-students/visit">https://www.cegep-heritage.qc.ca/future-students/visit</a><br>Follow the page for updates and the official dates. |

# Information about CEGEP

cont.

EPCA has also gathered information, below, to share with parents. This includes what to consider when considering with their child which CEGEP would be best for them.

## What type of program are you looking for?

- Pre-University – 2 yrs preparation for University.
- Technical/Career – 3 yrs option to go straight to workforce or university.
- What are your child's strengths and interests?
- Consider programs that align with what motivates your child, not just what is "safe".
- Speak with a Career Counsellor or guidance counsellor at your child's school.

## What is the school's reputation and specialties:

- Some CEGEPS are known for their strengths, for example:
  - Dawson – Strong in health sciences and art.
  - Vanier – science and athletics.
  - Champlain St. Lambert – Strong in social sciences, business, and computer science.
  - John Abbot – strong in pre-university and nursing.
- There are a variety of specialties, so it is important to know what you want to learn.

## Where is the school located?

- Will your child have to commute? If so are they comfortable commuting, will it make sense for them to commute, or is distance learning a better option?
- Having a long journey can take up a lot of time and burn out a student out too. See if there are student housing options.

## Student support:

- What type of student support services are available to your child? If your child has special needs is there the right type of support available for your child?

## Path forward:

- What is the path forward when you graduate? Where do most students go after they've completed the program?

## Cost:

- Finally, what does it cost for your child to attend? Is there financial aid available that your child is applicable for?

While these are just a few things to consider when exploring CEGEPs, we encourage you to also visit the school, take a tour, get a sense of the vibe, and come prepared with your list of questions to assess if that school is best suited for your child.

# Supporting Your Child's IEP: A Guide for Parents

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is designed to address the unique needs of students with disabilities, social maladjustments, or learning difficulties. As a parent, you play a vital role in ensuring your child's success through the IEP process. By working closely with the school, you help create a supportive environment where your child can thrive academically and socially. The IEP is not just a document—it's a partnership between you and the school to chart your child's developmental journey.

## 1. Be an Active Team Member

- The IEP is developed by a team that includes the principal, teachers, and other professionals. Parents are essential members of this team. Your insights into your child's social, developmental, physical, and academic history are invaluable.
- Attend IEP meetings and share observations about your child's strengths, challenges, and interests.

## 2. Advocate for Your Child

- You know your child best. Speak up about what works and what doesn't. Ask questions if you don't understand something in the IEP.
- If you feel your child needs specific supports or interventions, communicate these needs clearly to the school team.

## 3. Understand Adaptations vs. Modifications

- Adaptations allow your child to meet standard curriculum outcomes with supports like preferential seating or adapted materials.
- Modifications adjust the curriculum objectives to your child's level (e.g., learning to count to ten instead of mastering grade-level math).
- Discuss which approach is best for your child and how you can reinforce strategies at home.

## 4. Monitor Progress and Collaborate

- The IEP is a flexible, working document. Regularly review your child's progress with teachers and staff.
- Help set short- and long-term goals and participate in evaluating the effectiveness of interventions.
- Share feedback on what you observe at home and ask for updates on your child's development at school.

## 5. Foster Communication

- Keep open lines of communication with teachers, aides, and other professionals involved in your child's education.
- If external agencies are involved, coordinate with them and the school to ensure everyone is working toward common goals.

## 6. Celebrate Success and Adjust as Needed

- Success looks different for every child. Celebrate achievements, big and small.
- If something isn't working, collaborate with the team to adjust strategies and goals.



# Supporting Your Child with Sex Education at School

Sex education in Québec schools is part of the official curriculum and is taught from elementary through secondary levels. Topics include everything from body changes and emotions in the early years to consent, healthy relationships, and preventing sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections in adolescence ([Government of Québec](#)). While this information is important, not every child finds it easy to understand or comfortable to talk about.

## What is true in Québec schools:

- Sexuality education is mandatory in Québec schools.
- It's integrated into broader programs (like "Culture and Citizenship in Québec") so that the topics aren't taught in just one "sex-ed class" but woven through what students learn.
- The content is age-appropriate: younger grades cover body image, growth, feelings, etc., while secondary levels add things like STBBIs (sexually transmissible & blood-borne infections), consent, and pregnancy.
- There are supports for students with disabilities or learning differences; the curriculum requires schools to adapt teaching methods to meet diverse needs.

Your child might still get confused or overwhelmed. Try listening to them first, letting them know their feelings are valid, and then gently offering a clearer explanation. Creating that space of patience and reassurance can make it easier for them to open up.

Instead of rushing to provide answers, start by asking which parts of the lesson stood out or felt unclear. Some children, especially those who are neurodivergent, may need information broken into smaller pieces or presented with visual supports. The [Alloprof parent portal](#) offers a clear overview of what children learn at each stage, which can help you prepare for conversations at home.

The Québec Ministry of Health also provides a practical guide for families, [The Capsule](#), which suggests simple ways to support your child's questions without judgment. If you'd like to see the same materials that teachers use, the [LEARN/RECIT website](#) shares teaching resources for both elementary and secondary levels.

For parents of autistic or otherwise neurodivergent children, national organizations also provide tailored tools. [AIDE Canada](#) hosts resources for discussing relationships and sexuality with autistic youth, while [SIECCAN](#) offers a toolkit specifically designed for autistic and disabled young people.

## A Conversation Starter

*"I know they talked about some things at school today that are not always easy to hear or understand. If you want, we can go over parts of it together, slowly, and I can help answer any questions. And it's okay if it isn't all clear right now. You can tell me which parts didn't make sense, or felt weird, or that you'd like more time with. We'll take it bit by bit, okay?"*

# Back to School: Road Safety Matters More Than Ever

As children head back to school, many are also gaining new independence: walking with friends instead of parents, biking further on their own, or taking the bus for the first time. These milestones are exciting, but they are also a reminder that safety has to be taught, practiced, and reinforced.

## Tips for Parents to Share and Model

- Screens and distractions: Phones, earbuds, and even games can make kids “invisible” to their surroundings. Teach your child to stop their music and put devices away while crossing streets. Drivers and cyclists cannot anticipate someone who steps out without looking.
- Stop signs are not guarantees: Remind children to stop and look even when they have the right of way. Some drivers roll through stop signs. A quick double-check to the left and right, and making eye contact with drivers, can prevent tragedy.
- School bus rules: When a bus flashes its red lights and extends its stop arm, all traffic in both directions must stop. Kids should wait until the bus is fully stopped, use the handrail, and always cross in front of the bus where the driver can see them.
- Be seen to be safe: Dark jackets and backpacks make children hard to spot, especially on cloudy mornings. Add reflective stripes or clip-on reflectors so drivers can see them from a distance.
- Practice the route: Before the first day, walk or bike the route together. Point out tricky intersections, hidden driveways, or shortcuts to avoid. A practiced path is a safer path.

## For Drivers and the Community

- Zero tolerance for distractions: Texting or adjusting the GPS may seem harmless, but a split second of inattention can mean missing a child in the crosswalk.
- Slow down in school zones: Reduced speeds give drivers more time to react to unpredictable kids.
- Respect crossing guards: Their stop sign carries the same weight as a traffic light.
- Morning and afternoon hot spots: Extra traffic around schools raises stress. Plan more time so you are not tempted to speed, block bus zones, or double park.



# Back to School: Road Safety Matters More Than Ever

cont.

## Building Long-Term Habits

The best way to teach kids safe road behaviours is to model them yourself. Cross only at corners, wait patiently at lights, and show that no text or shortcut is worth the risk. Children copy what they see far more than what they hear.

As families, schools, and drivers, we all share responsibility for making back-to-school season safe. Reinforcing these habits now helps children carry them into adulthood, protecting their lives and the lives of everyone on the road.

## Quick Checklist for Parents

- Add reflective strips to jackets and bags
- Do a practice walk or bike ride before letting a kid do it alone
- Remind kids: “Stop, look, listen even if the car has a stop sign”
- Talk about bus rules: wait, hold the rail, cross in front
- Lead by example: do not jaywalk, do not text and drive





# alloprof



## Alloprof: Turning Homework into Habits: Tools for a Strong Start

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



The first weeks of school are behind us, and many families are settling into new routines. Homework is back on the agenda, and evenings may be filled with reminders, questions, or last-minute scrambles. If your family is still finding its rhythm, you're not alone. September is a time of adjustment, and it often takes several weeks before routines feel natural. With patience, encouragement, and the right tools, homework can quickly shift from a source of stress to a moment of progress and pride.

At Alloprof, we're here to support families not just at the start of the year, but every step of the way.

### Tools That Make Homework Easier

When children feel equipped, they approach homework with more confidence. Alloprof offers free, bilingual tools that make study time more manageable and, yes, even a little fun:

- Motivational Timer: Keeps kids focused with short work sessions and built-in breaks, while giving them a sense of accomplishment.
- Interactive exercises & games: Make review engaging with tools like Speedy Rabbit for math operations or Book of Spells for reading comprehension.
- Concept sheets: Provide clear, easy-to-read explanations when a refresher is needed.
- Ask a Teacher: Offers free evening homework help from real teachers, now enhanced with an interactive whiteboard for clearer explanations.
- Reading and writing activity sequences: Help establish simple routines — just 15 minutes, three times a week — designed for families facing learning challenges. The Learning Together project was created in partnership with the Learning Disabilities Institute (Institut TA).

Even five minutes of focused work with the right resource can make homework feel more doable and help kids experience success.



# alloprof



## Turning Homework into Habits

cont.

### How Parents Can Help

You don't need to be an expert in every subject to support your child; your role is to set the stage for success. A calm, consistent environment and steady encouragement are often what make the biggest difference.

Here are a few ideas that can help smooth out homework time:

- Pick a regular spot and time for homework, so kids know what to expect.
- Break assignments into smaller steps with short breaks in between.
- Notice and celebrate effort, not just results. Small wins add up quickly.
- Keep track of assignments, activities, and school events to help lighten the load. Alloprof offers a family calendar checklist to help organize everything in one place.

On Alloprof Parents, you'll find resources tailored for families, such as strategies to avoid rushing through homework time, ways to make to increase confidence and motivation, and tips for planning and organization.

### Building Habits That Last

Homework is more than just getting through tonight's assignment. It's practice for skills that will serve students far beyond the classroom: independence, perseverance, and time management. By helping kids build healthy routines now, you're giving them tools for success that will last a lifetime.

Want ongoing tips and support delivered right to your inbox? Subscribe to the Alloprof Parents newsletter for seasonal advice, fresh resources, and encouragement all year long.

Here's to homework habits that bring calm, confidence, and steady progress for your family this school year.

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



# 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](#)

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.