



English Parents' Committee Association



IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For Parents - Information &
Important Survey

ARTICLES

Bill 1 - EPCA Presentation

How Parents can Talk to their
Children about Report Cards

Unlocking Potential: Why
Extracurriculars Matter

ARTICLES

Five Ways to Battle the Winter Blues

How Parents Can Support Stressed Teens:
Calm Starts at Home

- Audrey Elkeslassy (BT Counselling)

Alloprof: Reading at Home: Small Moments
That Make a Big Difference

PARENT RESOURCES

National Survey

Upcoming Workshops



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

For Parents - Information & Important Survey

Dear parents,

February can feel like the long stretch of winter, short days, heavy routines, and a bit of “winter blues” for parents and students alike. If that’s your household right now, you’re not alone. This is the moment to lean into what helps: steady sleep routines, small outdoor breaks (even 10 minutes), and gentle check-ins that keep stress from piling up.

It’s also the time of year when school expectations ramp up. A quick reminder for families: Term 3 is worth 60% of the final mark. That can sound intimidating, but it’s also good news. There’s significant time and weighting left to improve, stabilize, and finish strong. If your child is struggling, don’t wait to reach out to the school – ask what supports are available, and request clear next steps.

On the advocacy side, many of you are following Bill 1 and what it could mean for rights, governance, and the day-to-day realities of English-language education in Quebec. This week, EPCA will be presenting at the National Assembly of Quebec on February 4 at 4:00 p.m. We’ll share highlights afterward, so parents understand what was raised and what comes next.

We’re also preparing for the launch of a revamped EPCA website. It will make it easier to find parent resources, training dates, governance guides, and key updates in one place. Consider this your teaser; we’ll share the link soon, and we can’t wait for you to use it.





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President's message

For Parents - Information & Important Survey

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How are you doing? And how are your children? Are there issues affecting your family's well-being? That's exactly what we want to better understand through the Quebec Families' Well-Being Survey. For the third year in a row, EPCA and The FCPQ are inviting parents to take ten minutes to complete this survey, under the supervision of Dr. Mélissa Généreux, a public health physician and professor in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the Université de Sherbrooke. The survey can be found [here](#).



Why does your participation matter? Our society is changing quickly, and we need a real, up-to-date picture of what families with school-aged children are living—so we can represent parents' realities more effectively and support families in practical ways. The first two editions of the survey directly led to a pilot project to help families navigate screen use at home. When we have a clear portrait of what families are facing, it becomes possible to implement concrete actions that truly help parents in their day-to-day lives.

Can we once again surpass 10,000 participants this year? Please share the survey in your community so that as many parents as possible have the opportunity to take part.

Finally, Hooked on School Days will be held from February 16 to 20, 2026. I encourage all parents to get involved in local activities. Let's remember the power we have to help our children to keep going.

Through all of this, policy debates, report cards, and motivation dips, one truth doesn't change: parents are an essential part of the success equation. Thank you for showing up, even when it's hard.

Warmly,

Katherine Korakakis
President, English Parents' Committee Association

Bill 1

EPCA Presentation

FROM EPCA'S BRIEF ON BILL 1

Bill 1 proposes a sweeping constitutional overhaul in Quebec. Although presented as an affirmation of Quebec's national identity, this Bill significantly strengthens state power, curtails minority protections, narrows legal recourse, and threatens English-speaking Quebec's institutions and rights. The Bill:

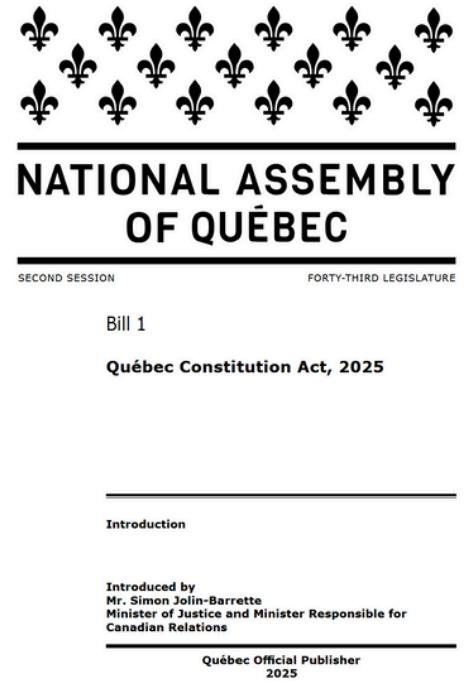
- Was produced through a closed, non-consultative process (contradicting democratic values in Article 17 of the constitution of Quebec and process standards in Article 18 of the constitution of Quebec).
- Embeds a singular national identity (Articles 4, 5, 30 of the constitution of Quebec) and marginalizes minority communities.
- Reduces the scope of judicial review and legal protection (Articles 16 of the constitution of Quebec, Act respecting the constitutional autonomy, s.9).
- Restricts the ability of school boards and public bodies to defend their rights or challenge unjust laws (Act respecting the constitutional autonomy, s.5, 27).

EPCA concludes that Bill 1 is not a constitution for all Quebecers. It is a mechanism for centralizing authority, weakening democratic balance, and narrowing the space in which the English-speaking community can participate fully and fairly in Quebec society.

This is not a constitutional “modernization.” It is a centralization of authority, a diminishment of rights, and a direct threat to minority language education and civic participation.

EPCA therefore recommends that Bill 1 be withdrawn entirely.

Read the entire Bill 1 Brief [here](#).



EPCA presented to the Nation Assembly on February 4, 2026.

Watch EPCA presentation:

<https://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/video-audio/en-direct-webdiffusion.html>

How Parents can Talk to their Children about Report Cards

When your children bring home their report cards, they may be concerned about how you will react. And you might not always know what to say. The truth is that there is no one correct response. Nonetheless, it is critical to look beyond grades.

Here are five common report card scenarios and discussion points.

1. Grades improved, but not as much as you expected.

"I was anticipating better grades than this," you might say. Instead, say something like, "Nice! "How do you believe those grades improved?"

Why: Higher grades indicate that your child is progressing. And even a small amount can require a significant amount of effort. Keeping this in mind allows you to discuss what is functioning effectively. It also opens the door to discussing what might help improve the rest of your child's grades.

2. Grades and behaviour "need to be improved."

"You're grounded until your conduct and grades improve," you could remark. Instead, try saying: "I need to take some time to think about this. We'll discuss it tomorrow."

Why: When the news isn't good, you could be tempted to resort to retribution. Nevertheless, punishment rarely motivates children to perform better the next time. Take some time to consider what "progress" would entail for your child. Be practical and discuss it with your child. Then devise a strategy to help make it happen.



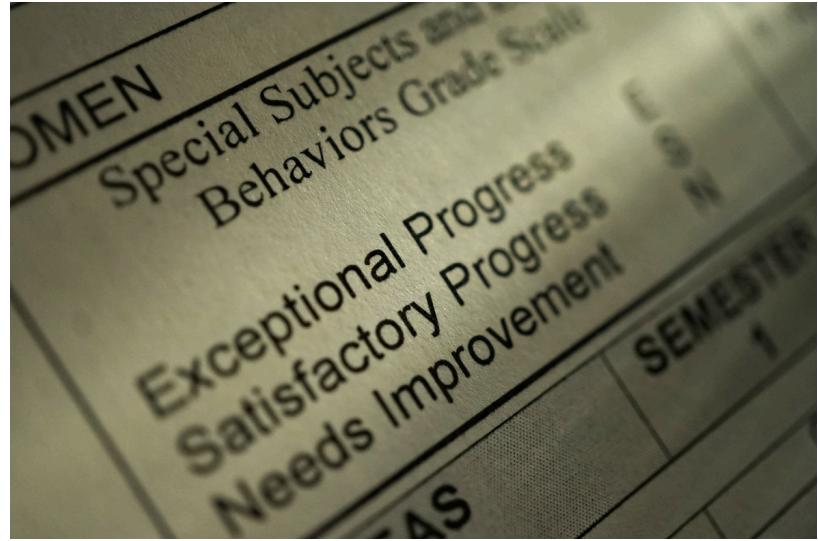
How Parents can Talk to their Children about Report Cards

cont.

3. Grades remained unchanged but conduct and effort improved.

"I'm delighted you're putting in more effort," you may say, "If only your grades were higher." However, try stating instead "It's nice to hear you're getting the hang of what you need to do to work hard and behave in class. Let's figure out how to improve our grades as well."

Why? Grades are frequently the first thing we notice when we glance at a child's report card. However, don't forget to read the instructor comments to learn about your child's other achievements. If your child is struggling in school, putting in additional effort is critical.



4. Some grades improved, while others declined.

"What happened with the rest of your classes?" you could ask. Instead, say, "Your math and science grades seem fantastic!" "How are the remainder of your classes going?"

Why: As children grow older, their learning expectations shift. It may be more difficult to meet them in other subjects. Discuss with your child the classes that had lower grades this time around. Inquire whether there is anything difficult about them and what might help. Discussions like those encourage children to advocate for what they require in order to improve.

5. Low grades in most classes, despite your child's hard work.

"You're failing everything?" you could remark. "But you're putting in so much effort!" Instead, say something like, "I'm genuinely astonished by these grades. I'm aware of how hard you're working. We're going to work it out."

Why: If children are trying hard but still struggling, they are likely to be depressed. Children in this position may be afraid that nothing they do will help. It can be a relief for children to hear that you know they're working hard. It lets them know you know they aren't "just being lazy." And demonstrating that you're committed to figuring out what's going on will enhance your confidence. It shows them you're all in this together.

Unlocking Potential: Why Extracurriculars Matter

Learning doesn't stop when the school bell rings. Extracurricular activities give kids the chance to explore new interests, build confidence, and grow in ways that simply can't happen at a desk. These experiences aren't just "extras" and their benefits add up quickly:

- Better time management and motivation (often leading to stronger grades)
- Improved teamwork, communication, and leadership skills
- Greater confidence from trying new things
- A stronger sense of belonging and well-being
- Opportunities to discover future passions or career paths

Sometimes, one activity is all it takes to spark something big.



If your child's interests go beyond the usual sports or arts programs, Québec offers plenty of creative options to explore:

- Robotics & Coding: [Obotz](#) and [Robotique FIRST Québec](#) offer hands-on STEM learning for curious problem-solvers.
- Entrepreneurship: [JA Québec](#)'s Entreprise Étudiant program lets students run their own mock businesses with real-world mentors.
- Model United Nations: Programs like [Secondary Schools United Nations Symposium \(SSUNS\)](#) help students build debate, diplomacy, and public speaking skills (contact sg@ssuns.org for details).
- Astronomy Clubs: Local groups and the [Royal Astronomy Society of Canada](#) host activities for budding stargazers.
- Outdoor & Nature Programs: SÉPAQ Discovery events, forest schools, and birdwatching groups build resilience and environmental awareness.
- Crafting: Check out [Les affutés](#) for all kinds of workshops on different needle and felting activities.
- Culinary Clubs: Fun, practical experiences that teach cooking skills and healthy habits.

There's truly something for every personality and passion.

Helpful Tip: Québec also offers a refundable tax credit to help cover the cost of children's extracurricular activities. Keep your receipts and check the [Revenu Québec](#) website for details when filing your return.



Five Ways to Battle the Winter Blues

Here are five ways that you can have fun with your family and get through the end of winter:

1. Get Outside

Yes, it is cold and snowy, but we live in Quebec. Instead of hiding inside let's embrace winter! Children's Mental Health Ontario suggests that "having a positive mindset about winter may encourage you and your family to think of new ways to get outside more." You don't have to be outside long to feel the physical and mental benefits. So, get out there, go for a walk, build a snowman, or dive in and make a snow angel.

2. Plan Activities

Make some plans to spend time as a family or connect with friends. The plans don't need to be elaborate but something for everyone to look forward too. You could plan for friends to come for dinner, or you could turn your house in a mini movie theater and watch a family movie. Find something for your family to look forward to and put it on the calendar.

3. Maintain Healthy Habits

During winter months it is important to maintain healthy habits for you and your children. Parents need to take care of themselves so that they can be a good example and support their children. Maintaining healthy habits, such as eating healthily, getting enough sleep, moving your body, and maintaining routines that serve your family can help get everyone through the winter months.

4. Practice Gratitude

During the winter we can all get a little down and focus on the negative but Children's Mental Health Ontario notes that if parents "take a few minutes to think of the things [they] are grateful for and encourage children to do the same" it will help refocus attention on what is going right. You can add it into the daily routine, like having everyone share while eating dinner, or check in with your child throughout the day. Every family is different, find what works for yours while focusing on the positive.

5. Slow Down

Winter is a great time to slow down as a family and create some new traditions. Maybe is that you decide to (safely) light candles in your house to create a warm and cozy environment then snuggle up with a book. Maybe you decide to have a special weekend dinner; at our house we do raclette every Saturday. It is up to you and your family what the tradition is, the point is to create an opportunity to slow down as a family and spend time together.



How Parents Can Support Stressed Teens: Calm Starts at Home

- Audrey Elkeslassy (BT Counselling)

Understand your teen's stress and discover practical, science-backed ways to help them regulate and recover.

Why Teens Get Overwhelmed

Adolescence is a time of big changes—emotionally, socially, and physically. Teens' brains are still developing, especially the parts that handle stress and self-control. This means your teen might react more strongly to pressure, seem moody, or have trouble calming down after a tough day.

What's Happening in Their Body?

When teens are stressed, their “fight or flight” system kicks in: heart rate rises, muscles tense, and it’s hard to think clearly. The good news? The body also has a built-in “reset” button—the parasympathetic nervous system—which helps restore calm. But teens often need help learning how to activate it.



A Shift That Really Matters: From Control to Collaboration

As teens grow, they no longer respond the way they did as children. Telling them what to do and expecting compliance often increases resistance and stress. What they need instead is partnership.

Teens regulate best when they feel respected and included. Working with your teen—problem-solving together, offering choices, and inviting their input—helps them feel safer and more capable. You’re not giving up authority; you’re building a team.

How You Can Help

- Be a Calm Anchor – Your own calm presence is powerful. When you stay steady, breathe slowly, and speak gently, your teen’s nervous system can “tune in” to yours—a process called co-regulation.

How Parents Can Support Stressed Teens: Calm Starts at Home

cont.

- Normalise Stress and Emotions - Let your teen know it's normal to feel anxious or overwhelmed sometimes. Avoid minimizing their feelings; instead, listen and validate: "That sounds tough. I'm here for you."
- Offer, Don't Force, Tools - Share simple strategies, but let your teen choose what feels right. For example:
 - "Would you like to try a breathing exercise together?"
 - "Some people find humming or gentle tapping helps. Want to give it a go?"
- Create a Supportive Environment - Some examples are:
 - Encourage regular routines: sleep, meals, downtime.
 - Make space for fun, movement, and connection—these are natural stress relievers.
 - Limit pressure and allow breaks from screens or schoolwork when needed.
- Know When to Seek Extra Help - If your teen's stress seems constant, affects their sleep, or leads to withdrawal, don't hesitate to reach out to a mental health professional.

Remember

You don't have to "fix" everything. Your steady support, patience, and willingness to listen are often the most important tools your teen needs to find their own calm.

If you're looking for support, we're here to help. At BreakThrough Counselling, we work with families to support children's well-being while also helping parents feel more grounded and confident.

You can learn more at btcounselling.com or reach out directly at info@btcounselling.com.

Audrey Elkeslassy, MSW, PSW
Founder and Clinical Director of
BreakThrough Counselling





Reading at Home: Small Moments That Make a Big Difference

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



Reading and writing are part of everyday life — from notes in backpacks to text messages, recipes, and homework instructions. Still, supporting literacy at home can sometimes feel tricky. Maybe your child loves books, or maybe reading feels like a daily negotiation. Maybe writing flows easily, or maybe it leads to frustration and tears.

As we move through the school year and approach report card season, it's normal for parents to wonder: Am I doing enough? The reassuring news is that building strong literacy skills doesn't require extra worksheets or long study sessions. Often, it grows best through small, everyday moments — and through feeling supported, not pressured.

Reading Doesn't Have to Look Like "Reading Time"

Reading together can take many forms, and it doesn't always mean sitting quietly with a book. Everyday routines offer natural opportunities to practise reading — from recipes and instructions to signs, messages, or game rules. Alloprof shares practical ideas in [5 daily opportunities to practise reading](#) and [Reimagining reading together: ideas and tips](#).

If your child isn't enthusiastic about books right now, that's okay! Interest often develops gradually. Articles like [My child doesn't like reading — what can I do?](#) and [Activities to help your child love books](#) offer gentle ways to spark curiosity without forcing it.





When Reading Feels Challenging

If your child avoids reading or seems to struggle, you're not alone. Many children go through this phase, and it doesn't reflect a lack of ability. Reducing pressure and focusing on confidence can make a real difference. [How to support a child with reading difficulties](#) offer reassuring strategies that focus on encouragement rather than comparison.

Ideas That Grow With Your Child

Literacy needs evolve over time. If your child is in elementary school, check out [Instill a love of reading](#) and our [elementary school reading list](#) for age-appropriate ideas.

For children in Grade 3 through Secondary 2, interactive tools can also support motivation. Alloprof's [Book of Spells](#) turns reading into a game-like experience, where children read to unlock spells and progress through challenges. Because it blends reading practice with play, it can be especially helpful for reluctant readers or for children who benefit from a more engaging approach.

For high school students, motivation often looks different. Choice, respect for interests, and meaningful conversations matter. The [high school book recommendations](#) and [How to encourage your teen to read at home](#) offer practical ideas that support autonomy while keeping literacy relevant.

When Questions Come Up, You Don't Have to Figure It Out Alone



Supporting reading and writing can raise questions for parents, too. On [Alloprof Parents](#), you'll find a full section dedicated to [encouraging reading and writing](#)! If you'd like personalized guidance, the [Talk to a professional](#) service connects you with an education specialist who can help you reflect on your child's needs and next steps.

Small moments truly add up. With patience, encouragement, and the right support, every child can continue building literacy skills — one step at a time.

Parent Resources - National Survey



NATIONAL SURVEY ON THE WELL-BEING OF QUEBEC FAMILIES

THIRD EDITION

HOW ARE YOU DOING?



Deteriorating mental health, increased medication use, managing screens in family life, polarization that complicates interpersonal relationships, discrimination: these are just some of the rapidly evolving issues that are impacting families' well-being.

That is why the English Parents Committee Association of Quebec (EPCA) the Fédération des comités de parents du Québec (FCPQ), and Dr. Mélissa Généreux survey parents every year to better understand their reality—and, in turn, better support them. Together with their partners, they are inviting parents of elementary and secondary students to take part, starting today, in the third edition of the National Survey on Family Well-Being.

Each year since 2024, more than 10,000 parents of elementary and secondary students have participated. This year again, the goal is to reach—or surpass—that benchmark in order to obtain a representative portrait of Québec families.

Under the supervision of Dr. Généreux, from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the Université de Sherbrooke, this new edition of the survey looks at the place of digital technology in children's lives, as well as the relationships they maintain with others. Closely related themes are also explored, such as everyday challenges and the strategies used to cope with them. As in previous years, attention is also given to students' quality of life and to the realities of children with special needs. Responses will be anonymous, and the data collected will remain confidential.

[Click here](#) to access the national family well-being survey questionnaire. The deadline to participate is February 13, 2026. [Click here](#) to consult the results of the second edition.

Parent Resources

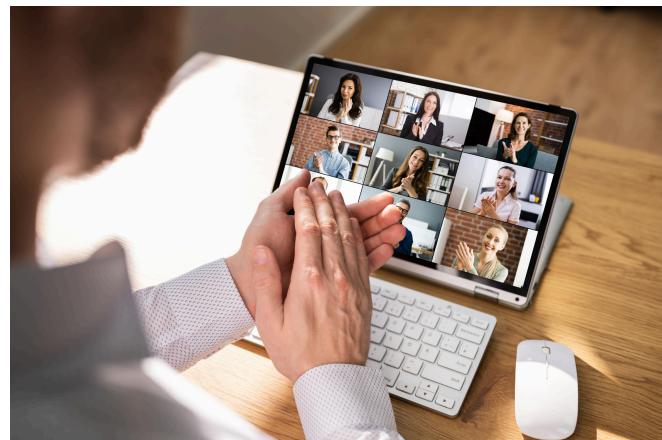
UPCOMING WORKSHOPS



We're launching a new series of practical, parent-focused workshops to support families at every stage, including a collaboration with ParenTeen Focus and Karen Delage.

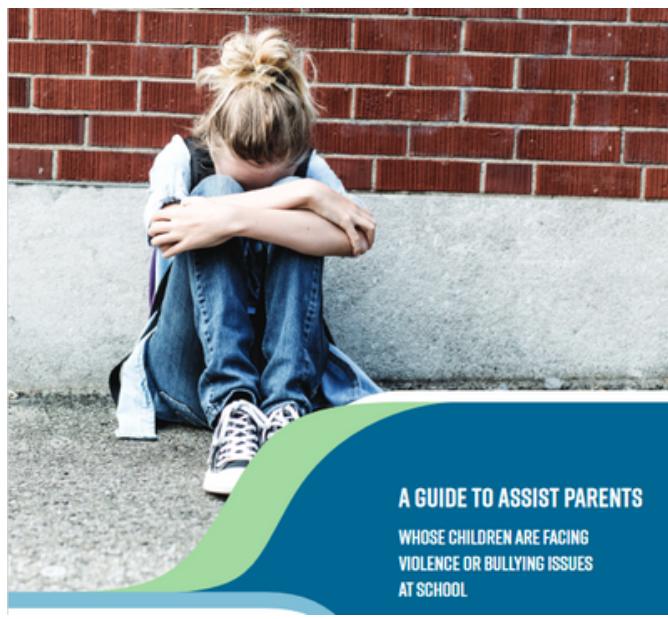
Topics will include:

- School Meetings – Preparing for Success
- A Parent's Role in Their Child's Friendships
- Raising a Resilient Child
- Transitions in Leaving Elementary School
- Transitions in Leaving High School
- Drugs and Vaping
- Self-Regulation in Children
- Internet Safety



Dates and registration details coming soon — stay tuned!

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 100,000 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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(514) 778-3722 - epcaquebec.org - 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.