



EPCA

English Parents' Committee
Association of Quebec



IN THIS ISSUE

SPECIAL EDITION:

QUEBEC ELECTION - EPCA
Asks the Parties Questions
About Our Children's
Education



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President's message

Prepare to Vote!

Dear parents,

As Quebec heads toward election day, EPCA is pleased to share this special vote issue of our newsletter to help parents and families better understand where political parties stand on issues that matter to English public education.

EPCA put a series of questions to Quebec's political parties on behalf of parents across the province. In this issue, you will find the responses we received from two parties, Québec solidaire and the Parti libéral du Québec, presented so that families can review the information directly and consider it as they prepare to vote.

The Conservative Party of Quebec advised EPCA that it would not be able to complete our questionnaire. However, the party confirmed that it intends to put forward commitments related to education during the election campaign. The Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) and the Parti Québécois did not respond to EPCA's request for answers.

We believe it is important for parents to know not only what parties have said, but also which parties chose to participate in this opportunity to address the questions and concerns of families within Quebec's English public education system.

Our goal is not to tell anyone how to vote, but to make it easier for parents to be informed, ask questions, compare positions, and reflect on the future of our schools.

Thank you for taking the time to read, consider the information provided, and make your voice heard.

Katherine Korakakis
President, English Parents' Committee Association



Question 1

Pervasive teacher shortages. The pervasive lack of teachers in Québec is aggravated by several factors, including career incentives, comparatively low salaries relative to neighboring provinces (particularly in the Outaouais), and unattractive and unnculsive working conditions. This shortage is particularly acute in key subject areas such as French-language instruction, which is essential to student success and graduation requirements. Tell us how your party intends to address the driving factors for the dramatic shortage of teachers in Québec, including the recruitment and retention of qualified French teachers.

Québec solidaire

For students to thrive, they must be able to count on qualified teachers and fully staffed schools, supported by a minimum number of professional and support staff, including in child care services. That is why a Québec solidaire government, in support of school service centers, will implement a plan to improve working conditions in order to promote the hiring and retention of competent and sufficient staff, and to maintain high-quality schools.

Furthermore, a Québec solidaire government will pass a budget shield law protecting the education system from any austerity measures that would threaten the quality of services provided to the public.

Parti libéral du Québec

First and foremost, it is important to preserve the existing services and resources within the education system. That is why, despite the difficult budgetary context, our leader, Charles Milliard, has committed to ensuring that education will not bear the burden of returning to a balanced budget.

We recognize that the teacher shortage cannot be solved simply by recruiting more people. We also need to retain those who choose to teach. Heavy workloads, a lack of resources in classrooms, instability, the challenges faced during the first years of a teaching career, and a lack of recognition all contribute to the problem. We therefore need to focus just as much on retention as on recruitment.

This reality presents particular challenges in the English-language system, especially when it comes to recruiting qualified teachers who can provide high-quality French-language instruction. Our objective must be to ensure that students in the English-language system develop a proficiency in French and have every opportunity to pursue their studies and build their careers in Quebec.

That is why our Plan for the French Language includes a specific mandate for the Estates General on Education to examine French-language instruction and teacher qualifications. We want to use this process to address the root causes of the shortage with teachers, universities, school boards and the entire education network, while taking regional and linguistic realities into account rather than applying a one-size-fits-all solution across Quebec.

Question 2

Law 94 impacts the schools by restricting how school workers and parents serve the students in public schools. While not entering a discussion of the merits of Law 94, we would like to understand your position on enforcement. Would your party repeal the application of Law #94?

Québec solidaire

Regarding Law 94, a Québec solidaire government will remove the provisions on the ban on religious symbols that infringe on fundamental rights. According to us, religious symbols may be prohibited solely if they compromise safety, hinder a person's identification, or make it impossible for the person to perform their duties. This is not the case here. Furthermore, Law 94 absurdly generates job losses in a context where there is a shortage of teachers and support staff in schools.

Parti libéral du Québec

The Quebec Liberal Party voted against Bill 94. We have always defended the principle of secularism of the State and its institutions, but we opposed several of the means chosen by the government, including the preventive use of the notwithstanding clause.

Our position on secularism is clear. We support the principle that public services should be provided and received with faces uncovered. We also remain committed to the consensus that emerged from the Bouchard-Taylor Report. Restrictions on the wearing of religious symbols should apply to individuals exercising functions most directly associated with the coercive authority of the State. We therefore do not believe that teachers and other school staff should be prohibited from wearing religious symbols in the course of their duties.

Since Bill 94 came into force, we have also raised concerns about the concrete consequences of its application. When laws have the effect of removing staff from a system that is already facing shortages or of disrupting services provided to students, we need to be able to revisit them. In particular, we have called for the provision concerning acquired rights to be corrected in order to avoid disruptions in services.

We therefore believe that certain aspects of the implementation of Bill 94 will need to be reviewed in light of their concrete effects in schools. This reflection should be carried out with stakeholders across the education system, including English-language school boards, to ensure that the rules being applied are both consistent with Quebec's principles of secularism and compatible with the day-to-day realities of schools and the needs of students.

Question 3

What safeguards will your party include for students with disabilities or learning differences who may require flexibility in language of instruction to succeed, particularly in accessing CEGEP and University?

Québec solidaire

In order to provide fundamental solutions to the challenges facing Quebec's education system, a wide range of organizations and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds are calling for a comprehensive review of our school system. We need to collectively assess the current state of affairs and reflect together on what we want for our schools. To this end, a Québec solidaire government will convene a national forum on education and implement the key recommendations that emerge from it.

Parti libéral du Québec

For us, student success must be the guiding principle at the heart of our actions.

The current framework already recognizes certain specific situations, including the possibility of obtaining an exemption allowing instruction in English when a child has serious learning difficulties. However, the transition from high school to college, involving a move from one education system to another, can bring new challenges.

Particular attention therefore needs to be paid to these transitions so that a student does not suddenly lose support that is essential to their success.

We want this issue to be examined as part of the broader discussion on students with disabilities and learning difficulties during the Estates General on Education. Our objective will be to ensure that language rules, accommodation mechanisms and adapted services work together so that a disability or learning difficulty does not become an additional barrier to earning a diploma or pursuing higher education.

Question 4

Educational Success. With one of the statistically lowest achievement scores in North America, what measures would your party take to improve educational success for schools in Québec?

Québec solidaire

The three-tiered school system is one in which regular classes, selective special programs within public schools, and private schools compete with one another, which undermines equal opportunity and prevents too many students from reaching their full potential. To promote success for all, Québec solidaire intends to reestablish a common school system where social diversity and community living are the norm, and where access to specialized programs is free and not contingent on academic performance. Private schools that wish to do so may receive state subsidies if they agree to be non-selective and tuition-free. A Québec Solidaire government will introduce a bill to establish this unified school system within the first 100 days of its term.

Furthermore, to encourage our students to continue their education beyond high school, we must remove the barriers standing in their way. A Québec solidaire government will gradually implement fully free education from elementary school through college and university. This will put an end to related expenses (transportation, childcare, school supplies, daycare, etc.) and other expenses, improve access to education, and revitalize our CEGEPs and universities.

Finally, Québec solidaire will support access to free education for the entire population throughout their lives by expanding the public library network and promoting literacy and education initiatives.

Parti libéral du Québec

For the Quebec Liberal Party, student success must once again become the primary measure guiding our decisions in education. We need to intervene more quickly when a young person is struggling, provide the necessary professional and support services, and ensure that teachers have the time and resources they need to do their jobs.

But after years of piecemeal measures, we also believe that Quebec needs a collective and in-depth discussion about the future of its education system. The Estates General on Education, which will be launched within the first 100 days of a Liberal government, will bring together parents, students, school staff, administrators, experts and stakeholders from across the education system to assess current challenges and establish common priorities.

Discussions will include reading, writing and mathematics skills, perseverance and graduation, the success of vulnerable students and students with special needs, transitions between levels of education, as well as student well-being, motivation and sense of belonging.

Question 5

In the wake of recent budget cuts and amid ongoing social crises, many students, particularly those with learning difficulties or special needs, continue to face academic and social challenges. What is your party's plan to address these learning gaps, strengthen support services, and ensure vulnerable students are not left behind?

Québec solidaire

For Québec solidaire, the quality and availability of services for students with special needs depend on hiring the necessary staff. This is one of the considerations that will

be addressed in our plan to improve working conditions, which aims to ensure a qualified teaching staff and fully staffed school teams, including a minimum number of professional and support staff members.

Additionally, in Québec, one in four children faces food insecurity in our preschools, elementary schools, and high schools. One in four. To promote equal opportunity, a Québec solidaire government will create a flexible, universal school lunch program based on existing initiatives, the social economy, high-quality standards, and a focus on healthy, locally grown food.

Parti libéral du Québec

We recognize that the current arrangements are unsatisfactory and that the needs of many students are not being met. Too often, access to a professional, a special education technician or another support service depends on the resources available in a particular school rather than on the actual needs of the child. The cuts and instability of recent years have made this situation worse.

This reality can be particularly difficult in some English-speaking communities where specialized staff are already in short supply. A child's language of instruction or postal code should never determine the quality of the services they can access. We need to intervene earlier, ensure greater continuity of services and better align resources with students' actual needs.

Services for students with disabilities and learning difficulties, as well as Quebec's approach to inclusion, must therefore be an important part of the Estates General on Education. We want to hear from parents, staff, professionals, administrators and school boards in order to better understand needs on the ground and ensure that the resources, support and conditions required for every student to succeed are in place.

In implementing new obligations, we must also take into account the real capacity of schools to comply without weakening services to students. In a system already facing significant staffing needs, some provisions may require additional resources and support on the ground. We therefore need to ensure that schools have the means necessary to apply the rules while maintaining the quality and continuity of services offered to students.

Question 6

Children and young people are increasingly facing challenges linked to excessive screen use and problematic social media habits, with impacts on their mental health, attention, sleep, and social development. What is your party's strategy to address screen addiction in Québec schools and support students in developing healthier digital habits?

Québec solidaire

Québec solidaire abides by the 2025 CSESJ transpartisan report which, among its 56 recommendations, aims to prohibit the use of social media to children under 14 without parental consent. The CSESJ also recommends that schools refrain from using screens as a reward in the classroom, replacing them instead with physical activity, reading, or games with friends. It is also proposed to restrict the use of screens for educational purposes, in order to promote a balance between traditional and digital teaching methods.

Parti libéral du Québec

Quebec has already carried out important work on this issue through the Special Commission on the Impacts of Screens and Social Media on the Health and Development of Young People. Recommendations from this non-partisan process go well beyond the issue of cellphone use in schools and include measures related to prevention, awareness, digital education and the responsible use of technology.

We believe this non-partisan report must now be taken seriously and used more extensively to guide government action. A Liberal government would carefully examine its recommendations in order to better equip young people and parents, promote healthier digital habits and ensure that screen use in schools first and foremost serves genuine educational objectives. The issue cannot be reduced to banning certain devices: young people need to learn how to develop a healthy, responsible and critical relationship with digital technology.

This issue will also be part of the Estates General on Education. Digital technology is now an integral part of students' lives and of schools themselves, and we need a collective discussion about the role we want it to play in learning. The Estates General will allow parents, students, school staff and experts to consider how we can benefit from the opportunities offered by technology while protecting young people's development, attention and educational success.

We also want to go further by holding a special parliamentary commission on youth mental health. The effects of screens and social media must be considered as part of a broader picture of the challenges young people face. This commission would hear from young people, families, experts, and stakeholders from the education, health-care, and community sectors in order to strengthen prevention efforts and improve the support available to young people who need it.

Question 7

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into education and everyday life, concerns are growing about its impact on children's critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, creativity, and independent skill development. What is your party's strategy to ensure AI is used responsibly in Québec schools?

Québec solidaire

Our society is currently being transformed by the increased use of artificial intelligence. A Québec solidaire government will therefore establish a regulatory framework for these technologies, in order to keep human beings at the heart of the system despite the digital shift, including in schools. This framework will also promote the ethical use of AI, particularly to increase the efficiency of certain services, protect jobs in the field of education, and support the retraining of workers who wish to do so. These changes will be implemented while protecting the digital sovereignty of Quebecers, by ensuring that their personal data is protected and stored in Quebec.

Parti libéral du Québec

Artificial intelligence can offer real opportunities to improve teaching and learning. When used properly, it can support the preparation of educational materials, facilitate certain administrative tasks, help adapt exercises to students' needs and free up more time for human interaction and support. AI will also be part of the professional reality of the young people we are educating today, and schools must prepare them to use it intelligently.

We must, however, be clear-eyed about the risks. Poorly regulated use can undermine the development of critical thinking and other essential skills, facilitate plagiarism, weaken the protection of personal information and deepen inequalities in access to digital tools. Above all, AI must never replace professional judgment, teacher feedback or the intellectual effort that is essential to genuine learning.

That is why artificial intelligence and technological change will have an important place in the Estates General on Education. Together with parents, teachers, students, administrators and experts, we want to determine which uses should be encouraged, what limits should be established and what skills young people will need to develop. Our objective is to make AI a tool that supports learning, rather than allowing technology to dictate the future of education.

Question 8

How will you measure success: stronger French or fewer students in English institutions?

Québec solidaire

Stronger French. French is Québec's common language. According to Québec solidaire, it is our duty to give everyone the means to learn it and use it at work, in public services, and in daily life. People who choose to live in Quebec want to integrate fully into the community, and French is their main tool for doing so. And when it is the language of the workplace, French facilitates integration into the employment market and participation in Québec's community life. We believe it is possible to help everyone become fluent in French, independently of their capacity to speak other languages. To achieve this, we need to reach people where they are: at work, in public services, and in businesses. French will prevail if we make it a tool for integration, not a barrier.

Parti libéral du Québec

French is Quebec's official and common language, and we want all young Quebecers to be able to master it and use it with confidence. But we do not believe that protecting French should be placed in opposition to the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking community and its institutions. English-language schools are part of Quebec's education system and part of Quebec's history.

This is the approach behind our Plan for the French Language: investing in learning, transmission and student success rather than seeking to protect French solely through additional restrictions. Our plan also affirms the Quebec Liberal Party's intention to preserve the balance between the French- and English-language CEGEP systems while protecting adults' freedom of choice in higher education. Our ambition must be to ensure that more young people become fully comfortable in French, including those who choose to pursue their education in the English-language system.

Question 9

Do you support maintaining access to English adult education and vocational training for non-rights holders, or do you support Bill 8's restrictions?

Québec solidaire

Québec solidaire endorses the protection of French language in Quebec. However, Québec solidaire is skeptical about Bill 8's necessity and effectiveness on the protection of French language in Quebec and its usage in the workplace. There is a lack of available data to assess its effectiveness and even the Commissioner for the French Language remains skeptical. Furthermore, Bill 8 does not secure additional resources to ensure the fairness and the success of the transition of students from English to French schools that could occur. Finally, as it stands, Bill 8 does not provide sufficient protection for First Nations and Inuit communities.

Parti libéral du Québec

We believe that adult education and vocational training are first and foremost about providing second chances, qualifying workers and enabling people to participate fully in Quebec society and its economy. Learning and using French must play an important role but we do not believe that the best way to strengthen French is by closing off educational pathways that allow adults to gain qualifications.

Our approach is to maintain access to these educational pathways while strengthening French-language learning. We want a language policy that helps people improve their command of our common language and contribute to Quebec, rather than one that unnecessarily restricts their opportunities to obtain training. Any significant change in this area should also be developed through meaningful consultation with the English-language education system.

Question 10

The government's use of the IMSE (Indice de milieu socio-économique) to allocate funding raises important concerns about equity and predictability for schools. How will your party ensure this model more accurately reflects the realities and needs of school communities, and that vulnerable students do not lose access to essential supports (food programs, academic assistance, and social services) because of changes in how poverty is measured and funded?

Québec solidaire

Québec solidaire is very critical of the actual use of IMSE. The IMSE determines financial support for schools based on two indicators: whether the mothers of children attending the same school hold a high school diploma, and the employment status of both parents. These indicators are disconnected from the actual needs of students in the schools. Furthermore, the IMSE funds schools based on their relative ranking, which creates an unstable school funding system and leads to unpredictable service cuts. A

Québec solidaire government will revise the IMSE formula to include more variables that truly reflect the level of poverty in communities and the actual needs of students and schools.

Parti libéral du Québec

The IMSE remains a useful tool for guiding the allocation of certain resources, but we believe it is time to review how the index is designed and used so that it better reflects the current realities of schools and communities. This review must also take into account the particular realities of English-language schools, which may serve very different communities and, in some cases, populations spread over large geographic areas.

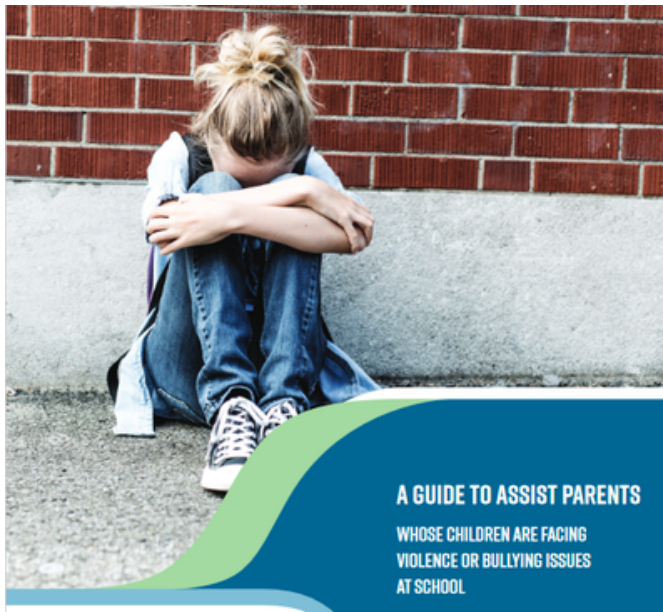
An index of this importance must be based on the most up-to-date picture possible. We want to be much more effective in analyzing and integrating new census data, so that demographic or socioeconomic changes do not take several years to be properly reflected in a school's funding.

Finally, a methodological change should not have the immediate consequence of removing essential services from vulnerable children. Food programs, academic support and services for young people must first and foremost respond to real needs. Our objective will therefore be to modernize the IMSE without creating disruptions in services for the students who depend on them.

Note: Statement from Parti conservateur du Québec

Unfortunately, we will not be able to complete (the questionnaire). However, I can confirm that we will make commitments regarding education during the campaign.

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.