

QPARSE Statement on Bill 40

Sent to Parliamentary Commission Hearings

November 4, 2019

The Quebec Provincial Association of Retired School Educators (QPARSE) is an association representing approximately 1200 retired educators (teachers, administrators, support staff and non-teaching professionals) from all across the province. At a recent Board of Directors' meeting of QPARSE, it was decided that the association should prepare a statement expressing our main concerns with Bill 40, a complex model we believe is not necessary for the English school system.

We hope that the Commission will consider our perspective on the following points.

Election Process and Electoral Lists –

We want an Election Process that is manageable and democratic. Bill 40 outlines in detail who can run for the Board of Directors of the service centers as well as outlining the qualifications for those who serve on Governing Boards.

To be truly democratic, the election system must allow:

- Everyone who pays school taxes to a service centre should have the opportunity to vote, even if they are French speaking but with eligibility for English education or that they have chosen to pay taxes to the English system.
- Elections should be twinned with municipal elections and should provide different means to accommodate electors: on-line ballots, mail-in ballots, phone-in ballots etc.
- Nominations for the Community representatives should allow for any taxpayer to submit his/her candidature. Presently the bill limits who is eligible to run for the position of Community representative. In particular, members of the community who may have a background in education as a teacher, administrator or other related educational background are not eligible and we feel this removes the possibility for some very well -suited candidates to step forward.
- Since the Community Representatives are to be elected by universal suffrage, it is not clear on who the electors are and how the electoral lists are to be set up, maintained and updated.

Community Representation and Involvement-

This is an integral part of the culture of the English-speaking community. The schools are at the center of community life and our current system allows for much parental involvement and community representation at all levels of governance. The make-up of the proposed Board of Directors needs improvement

- There needs to be parity between the Parents and Community Representatives and Staff Representatives. The French sector configuration specifies parents from primary, secondary, and vocational schools, yet in the English version, it does not. There are only 4 Community Representatives and finding them to represent the community at large, especially from such large geographic areas in the Quebec Region is unsatisfactory and not workable.
- The English school system prides itself on its collaborative approach to governance which values parental and community participation in decision making but which also recognizes the

professional responsibility of teachers and administrators to make informed decisions that always have the best interests of students and learning at heart. The proposed changes risks jeopardizing this dynamic and, in our opinion, threatens the continued success of our English school system.

- We question whether there are enough well-intended parents available and willing to sit on both the Governing Boards of schools and the Board of Directors of the Service centres.

Remuneration for Directors –

All allowance for remuneration other than \$100 to attend a monthly meeting and cover travel expenses is removed by Bill 40. There is no incentive for parents to engage in committee work, especially if it is on top of work they are already doing for their Governing Board back in their schools. One could question the value being placed on the time commitment of the people who step forward to do this work. The success of our school systems will depend on the work of these volunteers and they surely should be properly compensated.

Student Success –

This restructuring of governance is very complicated and offers no justification or proof that it will enhance and improve student success, apart from the creation of a Commitment to Student Success Committee. The English system already has a high rate of student success along with a well- developed system of parental and community involvement. We do not see any reason to make the changes that are proposed in Bill 40. We think that if there are improvements to the existing system, they should be addressed within that system.

We are an Association of retired educators who have worked in all areas of the English school system. Although we have retired from active duty, we continue to be very concerned about our education system. After all, the students of today will be forming the society of tomorrow of which we will be members. We must continue to take an active interest and voice our opinions.

Thank you for considering our input,

Jan Langelier, President of QPARSE