



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE SIR-WILFRID-LAURIER
SIR WILFRID LAURIER SCHOOL BOARD

Public Consultation on Educational Success

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Speech (TRANSLATED)

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On behalf of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board, we would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to present our recommendations for improving the educational success of our students, in the youth and adult sectors.

- First and foremost, we are proud to promote **bilingualism** in all our schools as well as the **francization** of new immigrants. It comes as no surprise that our slogan is “An English Education, a Bilingual Future.”

Studies show that there are many benefits to **being bilingual**, both on a cognitive and on a social level, and school boards play an important role by giving students the tools to develop their language skills in English AND in French.

The government must invest in literacy and numeracy at all levels, from preschool to the adult sector.

- **Educational measures as of early childhood:** Here is a way of helping our youth to succeed and achieve their potential. School boards must be quick to diagnose the most vulnerable children. We need additional funds to promote preschool literacy programs and social integration, and offer services for identifying children with special needs at an early stage. In addition, as pre-kindergarten facilitates the transition to kindergarten and the social and emotional integration of students, we must make full-time pre-kindergarten accessible.



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- Another area of great concern is the **integration of handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities, as it is underfunded**. Our professionals invest much time and considerable resources on validation procedures instead of directly supporting our teachers, school teams and students with learning disabilities.

We foster a **culture and practice an approach focused on integration, as we integrate 94% of our students with special needs**. Even if this approach is more costly from a financial perspective, it has been proven very beneficial for all our students, as our 85% success rate will attest. We would therefore like the Ministère to grant us the financial support that would enable us to apply our inclusive approach to all our students on the Laval territory.

We have a **GREAT** need for resources — human, financial, material and technological — to support our progress in the area of integration. These resources would allow us to continue developing our recognized expertise in the area of services to handicapped students and students with social maladjustments or learning disabilities.

- **Vocational Training** is also extremely important for us to meet the needs of our students. Greater access to these programs in English is vital. Unfortunately, the English sector is too often forgotten when it comes to vocational programs. We need to have a better alignment of l'Adéquation-Formation-Emploi to avoid the risk of student dropout. The general pathway should not be the only option for our students.



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It is time that the Diploma of Vocational Studies receive the same recognition as the Secondary School Diploma. We should set a high value on vocational training and make it more accessible to our young students by offering them programs that meet their needs. The Ministère must show flexibility by granting, within a shorter timeframe, our requests for temporary or permanent cards for vocational training programs or by supporting possible partnerships with the community.

- We must be there to guide our students all along their learning paths and support them during periods of **transition**, as these may prove difficult. It is essential to **set up multidisciplinary teams** responsible for determining the level of support to give to students, if required. We must also better coordinate our activities with the health and social services network.
- We've talked at length about our students, but what about our **teachers**? The quality of teaching has a direct impact on student learning. Though we all know this, a teacher's starting salary is \$40,000, which is unacceptable! Teachers play a vital role in the education of our youth and we need to recognize the profession at its true value.

We also need to help universities better prepare teachers for the 21st century classroom. School boards should be part of the solution-oriented approach that you are trying to put in place, as we can provide feedback that will directly impact our student success and our curriculum. Teachers are leaving the profession too soon because they are not prepared and undervalued. We must give the teaching profession the recognition it deserves.



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- Furthermore, we must see to it that professionals such as **guidance counsellors, psychologists and speech-language pathologists** can take the exams of their professional corporations in the language of their choice. The Office québécois de la langue française requires members of professional corporations to pass their exam in French, and this requirement prevents us from having access to Anglophone professionals who can provide quality services to our clients. Our students also have the right to these services.
- Mr. Couillard said, and I quote: “La façon dont les commissions scolaires anglophones dirigent leurs commissions scolaires et leurs écoles est LA direction à suivre pour TOUS les Québécois.” Our 85% graduation rate is proof of this. If we are a model to follow, then why are we not an integral part of the solution? The Anglophone school system has innovative and compelling solutions to propose to the government.
- Finally, **the demographic decline on our very wide territory is another source of concern for the Anglophone sector.** The province’s English school boards must cope with regional characteristics that represent major challenges, such as equal access, across our territory, to educational services for our varied clientele.



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We must work together with our partners, the Ministry of Education, health services, municipalities, chambers of commerce and community organizations in order to make sure that our clients, throughout all our regions, benefit from the same services as francophone clients. Why not join forces with our partners in order to offer bilingual services and continue to improve the success rate of all our Anglophone students?

- I've said this many times before and I repeat it: **Education belongs to the community** and we are proud to be part of this community. And you are also part of this community, monsieur le Ministre, so let's work together.

Thank you.