

BRIEFS SUBMITTED TO THE MINISTER
OF EDUCATION, RECREATION AND SPORTS
2011



Gouvernement du Québec
Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport,
ISBN : 978-2-550-65748-4
ISBN PDF : 978-2-550-65749-1
Legal deposit - Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2012
Legal Deposit – Library and Archives Canada, 2011

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ADVISORY BOARD
ON ENGLISH EDUCATION

Response to the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sport's
Request for Advice on Implementation of Intensive English Instruction
for Francophone Students in Grade 6

REPORT TO THE MINISTER
OF EDUCATION, RECREATION AND SPORTS

JUNE 2011

Response to the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports Request for Advice on Implementation of Intensive English Instruction for Francophone Students in Grade 6

The Advisory Board on English Education welcomes the Minister's request for advice on how to offer more English-learning opportunities to francophone students. The Board understands that this initiative to institute Intensive English at Grade 6 in French-language schools will be mandated by the ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS), it will conform to the requirements of the Charter of the French Language, and it will not be centred on a content-based model of English immersion. Nevertheless, the Board believes that the generally successful experience the English-speaking community has had in French-language instruction over the past 50 years may be useful in informing the discussion on improving the English-language ability of Francophone students. For this reason, this brief will go beyond the requested information on student exchanges, an excellent idea that the Board soon realized was fraught with difficulties, and then share some of the experiences of the English sector in second-language teaching.

Experience in student exchanges

The Minister expressed an interest in the possibility of student exchanges. There are many examples of exchange programs at the CEGEP level, not only between colleges in Québec, but also with other provinces and other countries. There are fewer examples of exchanges between schools, but the Board was able to identify some such programs. They have been shown to be beneficial not only in the acquisition of a second language, but also in exposing students to another culture and in improving relationships between children who do not speak each other's language.

Option Étude is an experimental project between the New Frontiers School Board and its neighbouring French board, the Commission scolaire des Grandes Seigneuries. It offers an exchange of Secondary 1 students between two neighbouring schools in which they follow a program based on sports and athletic activities. The program has been evaluated as a success on both the linguistic and social levels, but the Board questioned whether it could be applied throughout the province. Some features of *Option Étude* that contributed to its success include the following:

- Focus on sports activities: *What will be the focus of any large-scale exchanges?*
- Small groups: *What would be the effect of large-scale extrapolation of successful small-scale models?*
- Interest from parents: *Parents of eligible students were polled to determine their interest. Is there general support from parents, both Francophone and Anglophone, in all regions of Québec?*
- Hand-picked volunteer teachers who were willing to be flexible: *Will this flexibility be sustainable on a large scale when teachers will be required to participate?*
- Enthusiastic support from the schools, administrators and Governing Boards involved: *Will all schools and administrators face the problems with as much enthusiasm? Will all Governing Boards give permission for changes to the subject/time allocation and for students to leave the school, as they must do under Article 86 of the Education Act?*
- Support from the relevant unions: *Have the teachers' unions been consulted? What is their reaction?*

- The presence of a coordinator: *Will the funding support the kind of intensive coordination needed?*
- Emphasis on social integration as a means of language learning: *If the integration is not voluntary, will it be as successful?*

Questions such as these suggest the potential problems that would occur if a program like *Option Étude* were to be implemented on a large scale. These problems might include the following:

- teachers are hired and paid by one board, but following the timetable and union rules of another
- there are transportation costs for children going to another school and on the field trips that are an integral part of the program
- there needs to be a compression of the subject/time allocation because of the requirements of the *Basic school regulation*
- teachers are released from supervision duties, yet they are still short of planning time
- teacher turnover means that new teachers need professional development
- all these issues mean that the program is expensive

PÉLIQ-AN (*Programme d'échanges linguistiques intra-Québec – approche nouvelle*)

This language-exchange program between Québec's English and French schools has already experimented with different types of exchange models for Grade 6 students. By providing grants and resources to elementary and secondary teachers in both public and private schools, it aims primarily to encourage both face-to-face and distant communication between groups of participating students in order to improve their second-language skills and to increase familiarity with each other's culture. Jointly funded through MELS and the *Canada-Québec Agreement for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction*, these exchanges may take a wide variety of forms, according to the teachers' preferences.¹

SEVEC (Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada). Some 5000 Canadian secondary school students participate in one-week home-stay visits so that they may experience another language and culture. SEVEC has been operating for 75 years. It is funded by Heritage Canada and has improved students' disposition to learning a second language, as well as developing leadership skills and friendships.²

Exchanges Canada is another exchange program for teenagers sponsored by Heritage Canada. Its Web site also lists a variety of national and international exchanges available to teens.³

¹ <http://www.peliq-an.ca/>

² <http://www.sevec.ca/>

³ <http://exchanges.gc.ca/index.php/eng/p200902191153.html>

Issues to be considered in student exchanges for Grade 6 students

1. The Board recognized that a major difficulty with the idea of exchanges between French and English schools is the disparity in numbers between the two sectors, roughly 10 French-speaking students for every English-speaking student and very different numbers of schools in each sector (see Table 1). Exchanges between schools in Québec can benefit only about 10% of French-speaking students; otherwise the disruption to the English school would be insurmountable. *Will the Minister consider exchanges with other provinces, especially in regions near Ontario and New Brunswick?*
2. In metropolitan areas, there may well be two neighbouring schools where students might participate in an exchange, while in rural areas the distance between schools may be greater. In both cases, there will undoubtedly be transportation costs.
3. There are already many eligible Francophone students in English schools, especially in the regions. For example, although only 2.6% of Francophone students are in English schools, in most regions outside Montréal, there are more French mother-tongue students in English schools than English mother-tongue students, by a factor of 10 to 1 in Central Québec.⁴ This makes the idea of an exchange not only improbable but also unnecessary. *What language will be spoken if a class of students from a French-language school is exchanged with one of these classes?*
4. In English-language schools, the general model is to integrate students with special needs to a greater extent than the model in French-language schools and they learn the second language, albeit at a different rate. *Will this have an impact on exchanges? From another perspective, how will Francophone students, who are struggling academically, complete a year's program in five months if they already have difficulty in succeeding in a year?*
5. A different sort of diversity exists in many metropolitan French-language schools where French is a second language for immigrant children and English may be their third language. *What help will these children be given to learn a third language?*
6. Lightbown and Spada's (1994) report⁵ on their 17-year study of *bain linguistique* say that it was "a great success" for 22 000 students in more than 30 school boards and credit the voluntary nature of the program with part of its success. Extended French Second Language (EFSL) programs and exchange programs in English schools have depended on the goodwill and support of teachers, administrators and parents. *If an exchange program were to be imposed, rather than voluntary, can their support be guaranteed?*
7. EFSL programs have always been based on the expressed needs of parents – the original impetus for French immersion programs in the 1960s came from parents – and this voluntary aspect has been one key to their success. Strong parent support for language teaching is essential. *Will the proposed intensive English programs be compulsory or will parents be allowed to choose the programs their children follow?* Given that the proposed exchanges will involve French-speaking parents and teachers and English-speaking parents and teachers, the support of all these parties becomes essential. *Has the existence of this support been established?*

⁴ "More than 90 per cent of our students study English as a second language." (Translation)
http://www.cqsb.qc.ca/Documents/Francais/Commission_scolaire/Secretariat_general/Politiques/STRATEGIC_PLAN_2006-2009.pdf p.10

⁵ Lightbown, Patsy M. and Spada, Nina. An Innovative Program for Primary ESL Students in Quebec. TESOL Quarterly, Vol. 28, No. 3, Special-Topic Issue: K-12 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 563-579.

Recommendations

The Board identified many difficulties with an exchange program, but if the decision to implement such a program for elementary students is to be taken, the Board has the following recommendations:

1. Grade 6 does not seem to be the best placement for an exchange of schools or students. In Grade 6, final examinations take up a large amount of time at the end of the year and are a cause of worry for students, parents, and teachers. In practical terms, the Board members wondered when the examinations would be written. Would it be after the first five months of the school year? Or at the end of the school year after a gap of five months away from the curriculum? Many Grade 6 students are anxious about the transition to secondary school, and adding another change during the year would increase their stress. If the program is to be based in the later years of elementary school, we recommend implementing it at Grade 5, rather than at Grade 6.
2. No single model should be imposed on schools. Establish a variety of pilot projects throughout the province, with input from parents as well as teachers in their design and evaluation. Learn from these projects, rather than immediately mandating a province wide project. Among the possible projects might be a *bain linguistique* at Grade 5, small group student exchanges for one or two terms, as well as other initiatives already explored in the English sector and described later in this brief.
3. For one year, provide financial incentives to schools offering more English at the targeted grade level. Assess the results of the various projects after one year before deciding whether to implement a province wide curriculum change.
4. After the pilot programs have been evaluated, rather than prescribing one monolithic program, encourage a variety of programs and circulate information about the successful ones.
5. A locally determined focus (such as sports, music, art, drama) will be more successful than a single program. In an activity-based program, language becomes the vehicle for the activity, not the focus of instruction.
6. The goal of learning a second language is to communicate more broadly with others, so it is not an academic exercise, divorced from the reality of everyday living. Teaching language devoid of content is pedagogically unsound. Teachers should be allowed to develop content based on previously acquired knowledge to suit the needs of their class.

If the Minister is open to alternative strategies for improving the English-language skills of Francophone students, the Board is pleased to offer some suggestions based on the experience of the English school system.

Experience of the English sector in second-language teaching

The English sector has a wealth of experience in second-language teaching – models include core French, extended core French, early immersion, middle immersion, late immersion, bilingual programs, *langue maternelle*, and a one year *bain linguistique*, which the Board refers to generally as Extended French Second Language (EFSL) programs. These models are constantly being upgraded or changed to take into account new research, local realities, the changing curriculum, teacher availability or parental expectations.

English schools have created or adapted models of language instruction according to the needs of their community. In a successful 2011 pilot project at Hillcrest Academy (Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board), the students alternated between one week of French and one week of English.

Students are keeping up with the expectations of the curriculum and no learning delays have occurred, even though certain subjects (such as mathematics) are taught only every second week. There have been fewer behaviour problems and fewer interruptions. This model appears to be less stressful for the students, and teachers are pleased with it.

Another model of bilingual education is to teach alternate days in French and in English. Friday may be half in French and half in English, or may be in French or English on alternate weeks. Subjects are always taught in the same language.

Two projects in the Western Québec region showed promise. A 30-minute extension was built into the school day for students to improve their fluency in French. French-speaking monitors (non-teachers) paid by the school board ran activities that included drama and games in French in order to increase fluency.

No union problems were reported because all school personnel believed in the initiative. The experience of a French *bain linguistique* for Anglophone students showed immediate success for able students, but inconclusive long-term results. It was considered inappropriate for weak students, resulting in streamed classes, and was terminated.

FACE school teaches Music and the Visual Arts only in French to students from both the French and English sectors, although in the early grades some English is used to help the students follow instructions. The social interaction generated is very positive. It is noteworthy that the English students in the earlier grades make the effort to speak in French and at the secondary level, the French students make the effort to speak in English.

In all cases, children in EFSL programs learn more subject matter in the same amount of time as is designated for non-immersion programs. This has not affected their success in school and does not threaten the quality of the mother tongue, nor does it affect their sense of their cultural identity. Both student retention and graduation rates are robust in English schools. Across Canada, studies that rate the performance of immersion and non-immersion students show that immersion students perform better in reading.

While research has shown that all these models have merit, depending on local circumstances, many studies show the benefit of early exposure to a second language, and there is evidence that sustained exposure is as effective as intensive exposure. *On what evidence is the proposed model aimed at students in the sixth grade? Could research on the “bain linguistique” initiative of the 1980s inform the current discussion? Is there any possibility that alternative models might be considered?*

Availability of English second-language teachers

Whatever method is adopted for increasing the amount of English available to Francophone students, there will be a need for well-prepared teachers. It already appears to be difficult to find qualified English second-language (ESL) teachers to work in French school boards, and this will be exacerbated if the projected need for more than 1200 ESL teachers in the next five years is accurate. Yet programs will not succeed unless they are staffed by high quality teachers. Board members deemed the requirement that English second-language teachers have the same level of French-language mastery as French-language teachers was unnecessary, and that a functional knowledge of French, adequate for communicating with colleagues and parents, was all that was needed. *Will the Minister consider reexamining this policy to encourage more English second-language teachers to apply to French-language school boards?*

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been too much emphasis on an ESL teacher's mastery of French and not enough on his or her fluency in English. Teachers have also described being made to feel unwelcome in schools, having too many different classes of children to teach, and having to teach in more than one school, which entails travel time. All these factors make ESL teaching an unattractive career choice. *Will these situations continue, improve or worsen in the proposed program?*

Québec's three English universities have Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) programs consisting mostly of native English speakers, with admissions governed by ministerial quotas that are too small to fill anticipated needs. *Will the Minister consider adjusting the quotas for admission to TESL programs?*

The Board emphasizes the need for native speakers of English as ESL teachers, but also the need for teachers qualified in teaching the elementary school curriculum. In the fall of 2007, McGill University initiated a 15-credit graduate certificate in TESL for practicing teachers, based on a combination of on-line and face-to-face courses, and partly funded by a MELS bursary for candidates to help retrain elementary school teachers with proven ability in English.⁶ It has admitted 176 students so far. *Will the Minister encourage and extend innovations to increase the number of TESL teachers by dedicating some of the funds proposed for the intensive English initiative to this type of training program?*

There will be a need for professional development for practicing and for teaching materials for intensive English instruction. The Board stresses the need for investment in both these components if the program is to succeed. Pedagogical consultants must be available to play a role in developing materials and in encouraging teachers to share best practices.

Children who graduate from intensive English programs in elementary school will place more demands on their ESL teachers when they transition to high school. *Will professional development and retraining also be available to secondary-level ESL teachers?*

An alternative strategy that would reduce the number of teachers needed would be possible if extra-curricular activities were used as a means for teaching English. In this case, monitors with particular skills in drama, art, various sports and athletic activities would be hired and paid appropriately. In this way, community resources would support the activities of classroom teachers, and the Community Learning Centres might provide a venue and resources for these enrichment activities.

Benefits to the English sector

The Minister would like to know how the resources of the English sector could be used to offer services to the French sector by developing partnerships between schools and school boards. But the key feature of a partnership is mutual benefit. *What are the benefits of such a partnership for the English sector?*

Existing models of FSL teaching work well in many English schools. *What are the benefits for these schools? What compromises would these schools need to make? What will they need to negotiate? How will the exchange programs be coordinated?*

⁶ <http://www.mcgill.ca/edu-dise/prospective/graduate/#GCTESL>.

Recommendations:

1. Increase university quotas for the preparation of TESL teachers.
2. Modify university programs to prepare TESL teachers as generalists.
3. Fund local initiatives that use community resources to provide extra-curricular activities staffed by personnel who are not qualified as teachers.
4. Provide financial support for pedagogical consultants to provide materials and in-service training for both elementary and secondary ESL teachers.

Conclusion

Given the desire of the Québec government and the business sector to be competitive in the global knowledge economy, the desire to improve the English-language skills of children in French-language schools is commendable. As the saying goes: *“Parler deux langues, c’est penser avec deux têtes.”* The Board hopes that the funding promised for this initiative will be invested judiciously and with attention to the great amount of experience already available in second-language learning in the English sector.

The Board thanks the following people who provided helpful information in the preparation of this brief:

- Mr. Mike Helm, Principal of Howard S. Billings Regional High School, New Frontiers School Board
- Dr. Marlise Horst, Professor, TESL and Applied Linguistics, Department of Education, Concordia University
- Ms. Éline Roy, Education Specialist, MELS - Secteur des services à la communauté anglophone, des affaires autochtones et du Plan Nord

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The mandate of the Advisory Board on English Education is to advise the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports on all matters affecting the educational services in English elementary and secondary schools. The Minister may also ask the Board for advice on a specific topic.

The Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports names the members to the Advisory Board. The term of office is normally three years. Candidates are nominated by the various English education associations and organizations that represent, among others, teachers, parents, school administrators and school board commissioners, as well as individuals involved in postsecondary education. Nominations can be received at any time.

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Table 1: Number of elementary schools by region 2008-2009

Region		French	English	Ratio French to English
01	Bas-Saint-Laurent	70	1	70
02	Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	87	1	87
03	Capitale Nationale	121	9	13.4
04	Mauricie	58	3	19
05	Estrie	93	20	4.2
06	Montréal	238	83	2.9
07	Outaouais	65	19	3.4
08	Abitibi-Témiscamingue	56	3	18.7
11	Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	51	14	3.6
12	Chaudière-Appalaches	134	1	134
13	Laval	84	11	7.6
14	Lanaudière	108	4	27
15	Laurentides	116	11	10.5
16	Montérégie	310	31	10
17	Centre-du-Québec	80	1	80

Source: MELS, DGPRPS, DRSI, Charlemagne data processing system, consulted November 27, 2010.

ADVISORY BOARD
ON ENGLISH EDUCATION

Bridging the Gap Between Training and Employment
to Meet Labour Market Needs :
Issues Affecting the Anglophone Sector

REPORT TO THE MINISTER
OF EDUCATION, RECREATION AND SPORTS

JUNE 2011

Bridging the Gap Between Training and Employment to Meet Labour Market Needs : Issues Affecting the Anglophone Sector

In this memorandum, the Advisory Board on English Education will focus on issues relevant to the English sector in the provision of vocational and technical training (VTT) and will address the questions posed during the regional consultations on bridging the gap between training and the labour market.

The English sector faces many difficulties in offering VTT for, as in many other aspects of education, the size and distribution of the English-speaking population across Quebec introduces problems of access and choice regarding VTT programs of study. If English-speaking students are to contribute towards Québec's economic growth and the vitality of its regions, it is imperative that the Minister address these difficulties in light of the growing unemployment rate among Anglophones across the province. We believe that, given their right to be educated in their own language, English-speaking students should have a greater choice of VTT programs of study allowing them access to the new opportunities in the labour market. This will give them more reason to stay in the province, to become more integrated, and at the same time, to contribute as fully participating members of Québec society to its economic development which is the cornerstone of Québec's future.

The Board would also like to convey its concern with recent policy decisions that reflect a shift towards the more functional aspects of training, serving industry's immediate needs, rather than contributing towards the development of the individual, notably the prioritization of vocational and technical training needs by the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT)*. While the Board fully understands that it is logical to provide training appropriate to the needs of the economy, it feels strongly that the programs and services offered to students should not be completely driven by short term economic needs, but also by the needs of the diverse groups that make up Québec society.

In the view of the Board, employability is not merely a list of skills and attributes: it extends to include personal factors, which affect an individual's ability to integrate effectively into the labour market, as well as personal circumstances, which affect things such as job seeking, job search support and even access to transport. The Board would like to see future training policies that take into consideration the multidimensional aspects of employability.

The specific needs of industries should be met by school boards and colleges through *Services aux entreprises (SAE)* and these appear to be useful and popular. But English school boards and colleges need to establish the organizational structures to be able to offer these services. Staff is needed to create and maintain relations with business and industry, to identify client needs, to identify human and physical resources, to develop course offerings, to follow-up on delivery of courses, and to evaluate client satisfaction.

The Board will outline a number of actions that would improve the provision of VTT to Anglophone students and help bridge the gap between training and employment needs, incorporating the sense of the three discussion questions⁷ used to frame the discussion at the *Rencontre des partenaires* provincial meeting (June 13 and 14, 2011) on *Adéquation formation-emploi*.

It is imperative that English-speaking students have a greater choice of and improved access to programs of study across all training sectors.

Increased Choice

Maybe because of the cost of expensive equipment often associated with traditionally masculine vocations, such as ore-extraction or high-pressure welding, the offerings in the English sector have become “feminized,” with a focus on programs such as office work. More options attractive to males are needed and provision of such courses would help improve retention among our male students. English school boards are certainly interested in offering more options that are attractive to male students and it would also correspond with the MELS initiative (*Chapeau les filles*) to attract young women to “non-traditional” occupations.

The Board notes the emphasis on traditional trades in the offerings of vocational and technical programs, the small number of newer trades, and the lack of offerings in Arts-based trades. For example, given the increase in computer-generated graphic films and video game production in Montreal, Quebec is well-positioned to lead in training workers for these jobs, but such programs of study should be more readily available.

The need for such programs of study is particularly acute in the English-speaking sector, giving the huge potential market for English-language materials worldwide. Further, there are predictions of shortages in the technology, communications, environment, and human services sectors and a need for increased offerings in these areas, while the pharmaceutical industry, once a major employer in Québec, is not as important as it has been. For bilingual Anglophone students, the *Plan Nord* offers many opportunities for employment should the training options for needed trades in the North be made available to them through the English School Boards.

Improved Accessibility

The offer of service for vocational training in the English sector presently covers 18 of the 21 economic sectors. The 26 English vocational centres are located in only 11 of the 17 administrative regions of Québec, and only 84 of the approximately 275 available programs of study are offered in English.

For technical training, three out of the five colleges are located in Greater Montréal area and offer 45 programs of study in 12 of 20 sectors leading to a Diploma of College Studies and 50 programs of study leading to an Attestation of College Studies.

⁷ How could your region help bridge the gap between training and employment in order to meet current labour market needs and keep up with rapid changes? How could your region better identify high value-added jobs and help attract students in these sectors in order to bolster Québec’s economic development? What innovative models of continuing education and training could you jointly develop to meet the needs of businesses and individuals in your region?

Whereas the Board understands that certain areas, particularly those which are geographically remote, may not necessarily benefit, for example, from the establishment of a vocational centre per se, it urges the MELS and the Anglophone school boards to work together to seek equitable solutions to overcome the access barriers. The Board fears, that in an era of potential job market growth, certain groups of people will be left out and become increasingly socially disadvantaged because of the lack of training opportunities. The Board believes that the potential of the Community Learning Centres (CLC) must be explored in this regard, as well as the use of distance education and instructional technologies. As an example, the joint project of Champlain College and New Frontiers School Board using a CLC and distance education should be investigated for theoretical components of programs.

In the regions, college students are underserved because there are no available points of service. Again, there is an opportunity to offer forward-looking programs, such as alternative energy methods, resource exploration and alternative forms of agriculture. With regard to delivery in the regions, self-directed learning opportunities, such as the opportunity to improve language proficiency and upgrading of skills for promotion, might be a valuable strategy. Noting the difference between having a program and having access to a program, Board members had several suggestions for facilitating access to programs through innovative means.

- Videoconferencing, whether at CLCs or on home-based computers has been proposed for distance education through on-line modules, but VTT generally needs opportunities for hands-on activities, and vocational educational students are often not autonomous learners, so distance education is only a partial solution to the problem of availability, not a panacea. It could profitably be supplemented by financially supporting students in visits to worksites for practical training, in connecting with employers and other professionals and by offering incentives to industry partners willing to accept students into their workplaces.
- Partnerships with French school boards to use the equipment and facilities once an authorization has been acquired in English is a possible solution, as long as the facilities are available at convenient times, and not during the night, as appears to be the case experienced in some programs where such partnerships exist. Registration, requests for financial aid, and other management issues should be provided through the English school board.
- Given the cost of establishing a program in a region where there may not be enough demand for it – but where there may be some potential students – it would be less expensive to transport a small number of students to where a program is offered and to pay for their accommodation there.
- Multi-functional centres would allow programs to be delivered on a rotating basis as soon as a cohort of students is formed.
- Where there are no programs in a particular profession, there should be the opportunity for local initiatives based on apprenticeships, supervised and supported by a qualified teacher from a local school.

As national centres are designated by the MELS, the participation of English-speaking students must be implicit in their mandates. Setting up a course option for English-speaking students should no longer be an arduous, negotiated agreement or a pilot project. Given the shortage of programs in the English sector, it is especially important to ensure that there is no duplication of service between school boards and colleges, and that there is improved articulation between technical and vocational education.

Timely Authorizations

To respond to changes in the job market, flexibility must be a key feature of the authorization process and provisional authorization of new programs must be granted in a timely manner to better respond to the demands of the job market. The MELS should allow applications for authorization to be submitted throughout the year, not only in January and June, and grant approvals on an ongoing basis, as was done in the past. Speeding up of the approval process will allow vocational training centres to be able to capture a cohort of students who want to enroll in a program and who are unlikely to wait for a whole year until the program is approved and can be offered.

For the same reason, it should be easier for school boards to make agreements (ententes) to share authorizations that meet specific industry needs in their regions. Where necessary, the MELS could provisionally approve an entente for one cohort for one year. One of the proven strengths of the English-speaking educational sector is its ability to work together with its partners and cooperate to find creative solutions to bureaucratic obstacles. Allowing for more flexibility in the development of ententes would capitalize on this strength and meet industry's needs in a timely manner.

We urge the Minister to ensure that National Centres are fully promoting and regularly offering courses in English at convenient times. The Board suggests that the English authorization be given to an English school board on the understanding that the courses will be offered in the National Centre's facilities. The Board believes that this will result in better services and support to English-speaking students.

Enhanced Promotion and Advertising

The Board has already pronounced on the need to promote and advocate for vocational education among children, their parents, and their teachers ("Educating Today's Quebec Anglophone." (ABEE, 2010) and "Fostering Student success in Québec's English schools: Implications for policy and practice." (ABEE, 2011) and this continues to be important, although the Work-Oriented Training Path (WOTP), the Personal Orientation Project (POP), and the Guidance Oriented Approach to Learning (GOAL) programs show great potential.

For example, a student interested in science might be attracted to a college program in Analytical Chemistry, where there are many job opportunities and low enrollment, rather than a pre-university program in Pure and Applied Sciences. This will not occur without guidance from all those involved in the student's education. The current annual campaign for vocational education is an excellent step in the right direction, but more and different types of initiatives are needed, such as the Symposium on Vocational Training for the teachers, administrators and counselors in the youth sector.

Thanks to the work being done in schools, backed up by media-based promotional campaigns, awareness is increasing, but schools and parents not only need information and promotional resources, but must also be able to offer students resources and experiences that promote the opportunities offered by VTT. Students at the beginning of Secondary 4 should be given a package that promotes vocational and technical education by sector and provides them with informational links, using the Internet as a resource. The "Exploration Lab" project of the Sir Wilfrid-Laurier School Board is an excellent example of this. Larger, regional career fairs where

students can explore a variety of options provide yet another valuable resource, provided accommodations are made to welcome English-speaking students.

Guidance counselors are key players in promoting career alternatives, but they are too few and too occupied with crisis intervention to be able to spend enough time on career counseling. Guidance counselors can also follow up when interest is shown and coordinate with colleagues in other schools and school boards to establish a cohort of potential students for vocational program offerings. Plans to increase the numbers of guidance counselors should be maintained.

It is imperative that representatives from Anglophone school boards be included on the various vocational and technical education decision-making provincial and regional tables:

Given that the territory of Anglophone school boards often covers more than one administrative region, the regional model in place, while pertinent for the Francophone boards, represents yet another hurdle for the English boards. Anglophones have to be active participants in the socio-economic development of their regions, and yet, to be fully integrated into the regional model, some English boards need to participate at several regional tables (Tables régionales interordres (TIO).) In the vocational sector, as in all levels of education, The English-language school boards whose territory covers more than 2 regions are represented at the various tables of all the regions they cover. However, the expertise and time required to fully participate in and manage the information from these tables becomes increasingly challenging as the number of regions served by the school board increases. One of the solutions has been the establishment of an Anglophone provincial table (*Table interordre provinciale du secteur Anglophone*) whose mandate is to review, in light of labour market needs, the provision of vocational and technical training for youth and adults and to ensure greater accessibility for the English-speaking population across the province. After some initial difficulties, this Table now seems to be working well and is appreciated by its constituents.

The Board believes that this kind of differentiated approach is one of the keys to solving some of the other problems. The realities of the English sector must be taken into consideration in regional development and the Board hopes that place will be guaranteed for English representation at the proposed *Groupe de Travail sur la persévérance en formation technique*.

It is imperative that English-speaking students have access to qualified English-speaking vocational teachers:

Under the current regulations, vocational teachers must have expertise in a trade, as well as a teacher education degree. This entails completion of a 120-credit program, of which a maximum of 90 credits of prior experience can be recognized. No English-language university in Québec offers this training, and some, but not all, classes are offered in English by the Université de Sherbrooke. This puts potential vocational teachers in the English sector at a disadvantage. Even though assignments can be submitted in English, potential teachers, who are do not consider themselves fluent enough in French, are deterred from entering the program. Solutions must be initiated to make all course options fully accessible in English for those professionals already qualified in a trade and who wish to teach. Further, the Board proposes that the Minister reconsider the decision that VTT teachers must have a 120-credit B Ed to be eligible for full-time contracts. There needs to be some kind of flexibility in the hiring requirements so that those with industry expertise can be attracted into the teaching profession.

The Board notes that recruitment and retention of qualified college faculty members is very difficult, as is maintaining their expertise.

For certain programs, such as the construction trades and the health options, it is difficult to recruit teachers. Among the reasons offered are the reduction in salary, the lack of job security if teachers are hired on a contractual basis and the need to qualify for a teacher education degree to be hired on a full-time basis. There needs to be some kind of promotional campaign to recruit quality candidates and to reconsider the obligation to obtain further academic qualifications.

Consideration must be given to the provision of professional development for contract workers. Since they are paid for the hours they work, they are under no obligation to attend professional development sessions, yet these are the teachers most in need of assistance in pedagogy, andragogy, lesson planning, and other aspects of teaching covered in a Bachelor's program.

It is imperative that English-speaking students have access to complementary educational services:

Complementary educational services are virtually non-existent for both adults and youths enrolled in VTT. The Board believes that access to such services will help to enhance the retention rates and increase the employability of VTT graduates. For example, some students may have special needs such as learning disabilities or sensory impairments while others may be facing challenging personal or family situations that may compromise their ability to attend classes or complete their studies.

Complementary educational services in English would certainly contribute to retention and subsequent success in VTT programs. While school boards have a responsibility to organize and provide some complementary educational services (e.g. psychology, guidance, remediation), it is also critical that the essence of the MELS-MSSS agreement on the complementarity of services be respected. Supports typically available in the youth sector as provided by the health sector (e.g., social worker, nursing) should also be available to adults and youth enrolled in VTT programs. The Minister has already acknowledged to the Board that the overall availability of complementary services in the English sector is one that she would like to address, and the Board sees the spirit of coordination between the two MELS-MESS Ministers as a positive step in provision and coordination of services.

One concrete example of a problem that could be solved by improved complementary services is the recognition of acquired competencies: it is the student's responsibility to obtain recognition for the training received because the qualifications obtained by students following SAE courses are not automatically recognized by the MELS. Support from a school board professional would remove this block from the student's path.

It is imperative that English-speaking students, like immigrants, have access to opportunities to learn or to improve their ability in French

The lack of provision of services to allow English-speaking students to improve their French skills is an ongoing problem that needs to be speedily resolved if they are to integrate fully into the economy and the society at large. It is certainly one of the key factors in the rising unemployment rate among Anglophones. The English sector receives no funding from the MELS, for VTT students to improve their French language skills. It is important for workers to learn the language of the trade, to communicate with co-workers and to gain mobility within their chosen profession.

Conclusion

Potential students can be encouraged to enroll in vocational education through the guidance offered in schools, and through services such as those provided by SARCA⁸, but it will need more offerings in English and more complementary services to provide equitable access for the English language sector and to continue to increase the enrollment of English-speaking students in vocational education programs through all the regions of Québec.

The Board would counsel the Minister that, given that the regional approach to addressing local needs does not always work well for English language school boards, a more flexible response to its different needs is more appropriate, will serve the Anglophone community better, and better contribute to the economic success of Québec.

In summary, the following 12 points summarize the Board's perspective on the needs of the Anglophone sector in vocational and technical training:

1. More resources directed to SARCA to help extend its work
2. More systematic recognition of acquired competencies
3. Greater choice for Anglophone students
4. Improved access for Anglophone students using imaginative strategies
5. A faster process for authorization of programs and agreements
6. Better promotion of vocational opportunities in English to students
7. More English content in regional career fairs
8. More guidance counselors available to promote vocational career choices
9. Inclusion of Anglophones at all decision-making tables
10. Access to qualified English-speaking vocational teachers
11. Access to complementary services
12. Opportunity to improve French language skills appropriate to the needs of the job.

⁸ Service d'accueil, de référence, de conseil et d'accompagnement

The Board would like to thank the following people for their sharing their expertise and time with the Board:

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The mandate of the Advisory Board on English Education is to advise the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports on all matters affecting the educational services in English elementary and secondary schools. The Minister may also ask the Board for advice on a specific topic.

The Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports names the members to the Advisory Board. The term of office is normally three years. Candidates are nominated by the various English education associations and organizations that represent, among others, teachers, parents, school administrators and school board commissioners, as well as individuals involved in postsecondary education. Nominations can be received at any time.

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