

ADVISORY BOARD ON
ENGLISH EDUCATION

**Profile of the Teacher
as Keystone
in Secondary Reform
Implementation**

REPORT TO THE MINISTER
OF EDUCATION

SEPTEMBER 2003

Mandate

The Advisory Board on English Education (ABEE) was established by the Minister of Education in January 1993, following a recommendation made the previous year by the Task Force on English Education. Its mandate is to advise the Minister on all matters affecting the educational services offered in English elementary and secondary schools. The Minister of Education may also ask the Board for advice on a specific topic.

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

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ADVISORY BOARD ON ENGLISH EDUCATION 2002-2003

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PROFILE OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER AS THE KEYSTONE IN REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

PART I

It would seem pertinent at this time to examine how well teachers are prepared, or perceive themselves to be prepared, to bring curriculum reform into their classrooms. The cross-disciplinary, competency-based pedagogy required to implement the reforms successfully was not part of teacher education curricula when the majority of the teachers currently working in the system were certified. The most experienced among them have had years to hone their skills, refine their teaching methods and develop their own teacher-student relationships. They are now being told they must share ownership of their classrooms and pedagogical control of the subject matter for which they used to be solely responsible. For many teachers the requirements of the new pedagogy are far from clear and can therefore appear both confusing and threatening.

The fact remains, however, that of all the elements on which the successful implementation of the reform of elementary and secondary education depends, teachers are the key agents in the process. Without their commitment to the principles underlying the new curriculum and the practices implicit in the development of its objectives, the reform will not produce the classroom practices required for substantive, student-centred change. The response of teachers to the challenges posed by the new curriculum and to the structural changes its implementation will require is crucial.

Implementation of the reforms has come more easily and naturally in the elementary school context where classroom structures and the teaching of subject matter have always been more open-ended and child-oriented, where learning competencies take precedence over the learning of hard facts and where the whole child's ability to learn can be measured and addressed. Where leadership has been strong and supportive, the reforms have provided the impetus for more effective teaching and learning.

The team-teaching and project-oriented thrust of "reformed" elementary education are facilitating early detection of learning disabilities that can have a serious effect on the child's academic career if they are not addressed in the most formative years. The division of elementary school into cycles rather than grades has given teachers the leeway to use the full range of their abilities as they share success and difficulties with their peers.

Implementation of the reforms has only just begun at the secondary school level. Every source consulted by the Advisory Board on English Education (ABEE) in the course of its examination of the role of teachers in the reform has shown that the majority of secondary school teachers — despite the efforts of school boards and of committees and conferences set up for the purpose — are not only ill prepared; they are also insufficiently informed about what is expected of them in the new scheme of teaching and learning practices. The fact that the final curriculum documents have not yet been published has further fuelled scepticism among secondary school teachers.

The reform challenge comes at a time when secondary school teachers feel particularly vulnerable. For most of the 2001-2002 academic year they were involved in a labour dispute. The employment of pressure tactics included a teacher boycott of participation in reform-oriented activities. This resulted in little open discussion on reform-related issues that are central to teachers' professional status, working conditions and career expectations. Moreover, it proved to be an additional impediment to teachers' reaching of a better understanding not only of how the reform would likely affect their profession but also of how teachers could take their rightful place in shaping the new educational project.

The difficult labour relations experienced by teachers led the ABEE to consult with a wide

range of individuals and groups responsible for or closely connected to the organization and delivery of education in the English-language school system. The general perception of those outside but closely associated with the teaching profession is that teachers themselves feel that their public image is shrouded in ambivalence and that they are considered executors rather than active agents in the education process. Due to a perceived lack of public and professional support, teachers in general do not have the sense of ownership required to take on the challenges of the reforms as managers of the process and its results.

This report addresses the key questions associated with the role of teachers in our schools, looking at the experience of teachers involved in pilot projects for the implementation of curriculum reform in secondary schools and what can be learned from the results of such experiments.

The following questions are those that come up most often in connection with how teachers themselves see their role in the education process and how that role is interpreted in public opinion and by school and school board administrations:

1. Who owns the learning process? Who has hands-on responsibility for results?
2. What is the basis for a perceived lack of appreciation of teachers and the sense that teachers are not seen as professionals?
3. Why do teachers, even those with the most experience, not seem to realize how good they are?
4. Why is their own evaluation viewed so negatively as a purely confrontational process?
5. New teachers have enthusiasm and a good deal of pedagogical knowledge. Is that enough to manage a classroom?
6. How can teachers be brought to recognize their essential contribution in a learning-oriented school system?

Ownership of the learning process

Some teachers claim to have difficulty with the classroom situation because they feel they do not have substantial control over the process, in

that much of that which determines what children can learn is decided elsewhere. Teachers know that they teach, but the students' retention and the utility of the subject matter is not really within the teacher's power and control. The ABEE heard a good deal of opinion about the extent to which teachers in general feel, or do not feel, they have an impact.

Negative attitudes about ownership issues often emanate from teachers themselves. They see little evidence of their empowerment. As the reform is reconfiguring the content and delivery of education, resituating the role of the teacher in the school's mission can be a way for teachers to gain rather than lose power.

Teachers appear to be increasingly concerned these days with results-based education; the success of a teacher is measured primarily on how well his or her students perform. Demands are being made on teachers for more interactive instruction and for more sophisticated classroom management techniques, neither of which necessarily suits the learning patterns of all students. Teachers are often frustrated by their own acknowledgement that while the best students may find the classroom environment appropriate for learning, students with problems will have much more difficulty.

Education is not a complete science. Much has been developed in the area of transmitting knowledge but comparatively little on the learning process. Teachers have to learn how their actions affect student learning. Since most of them are not researchers by training, they may not be aware of the effects on students of all that goes on in their classrooms.

Teacher educators in the Faculties and Departments of Education in the universities find that their students are generally quite optimistic, that they expect to have an impact. The main thrust of university education is not to give students recipes, but to help them to work out their own goals and the means for reaching them. Recent graduates are evidence of the emergence of a new breed of teachers who understand much better than their predecessors that they too are learners along with their students.

There are classic conflicting pressures on teachers: on the one hand, the teacher is expected to focus on a creative, sensitive approach to teaching and, on the other, to prepare students to deal with an external exam which may appear quite alien. Even the best, most enthusiastic teachers can get caught up in hackneyed approaches to meet exam objectives and may feel awkward responding to conflicting expectations when reform matters are being discussed, based on their belief that imaginative and sensitive teaching will hardly be appreciated, nor the school's culture valued, if the students rank poorly in external exams.

It is generally accepted that external accountability in the form of exams will always be with us. The general public is not necessarily reassured when teachers describe what learning processes are occurring in their classrooms. Schools themselves try to establish their credibility through universal exams, which is the traditional — albeit limited — way to measure and evaluate learning. As the reform in education evolves, it will be incumbent upon teachers to find ways of presenting and explaining what the children in their charge have learned: the difference between where children were at the beginning and where they are at the end of a term.

In the meantime, whatever the debate over exams, there remains the issue of how else to establish the credibility of a teacher's evaluation of student learning. Teachers do not want to be put in the position of evaluating each other's evaluation; a student's exam is easier to deal with.

Even though many teachers have taken part in the drafting of the new but still unpublished Québec Education program at the secondary school level, most teachers have not been involved and many feel isolated. This feeling of disenfranchisement lessens the sense of ownership. That teachers on the drafting committees are told not to share their development work has not raised the level of confidence of their colleagues.

Professional status

Teachers point to much evidence that their status is not considered truly professional.

Teachers' pay is not comparable to that of other professionals. No one spends substantial time and energy questioning the number of hours worked in order to decide whether or not workers in other fields are professionals. No one tries to tell doctors or lawyers how to do their job or ask them how their holiday time is used. Teachers often cite ministerial rigidity as a prime cause of their professional downgrading.

Teachers themselves, however, have not always responded diligently nor taken a proactive approach regarding the negative images reflected in public opinion. Many of the tasks required of teachers in the course of their duties, although related to what goes on in the classroom, cannot be performed in class time. While it is widely understood that teachers work beyond 3:00 p.m., those further tasks, if they were performed at the school, would be more visible and teachers' arguments concerning their workload would be more persuasive from a public relations point of view. With the school day soon to be extended by some five hours a week, increased opportunities for teachers to do more of their administrative work on the premises may raise the profile of their professional presence.

There are, on the other hand, many encouraging aspects of the reform as it relates to the status of teachers: teachers can become involved in creating programs, assessment strategies and in-service sessions. Some teachers clearly enjoy these activities while others feel out of their depth and may become hesitant to share with peers work they have always done alone.

Within governing boards, teachers should be assuming leadership roles in matters for which they are professionally qualified by helping to raise parental awareness about the content and the intent of the reform. Teachers' pedagogical knowledge combined with their classroom experience can make valuable contributions to enriching programs, planning complementary activities, exploring evaluation practices and forging privileged partnerships with parents. Parents see themselves as experts in regard to their own children; when they meet with teachers, it should be seen as a meeting between partners who share many of the same concerns. Yet, for teachers who are insecure about their own professional status, any questioning by parents can be

taken as an attack, thus generating an unprofessional defensive attitude on the part of the teacher. In this regard, administrators can provide important leadership by instilling confidence in their teaching staff and encouraging trust between parents and teachers.

Comments have been made to the ABEE about the effects of some union activities on teacher professionalism, leading some to believe that there is a lack of professional autonomy in a union controlled environment. For example, while many recognize that there is a need to promote good practices, unions have been known to disapprove of the acknowledgment of individual teachers' practices or the singling out of individual teachers as examples for their peers. If a union policy on workload has the effect of discouraging a teacher from spending time doing additional work with students, it is seen as limiting that teacher's exercise of professional responsibility, leading to a loss of respect for the profession. In this context, certain actions undertaken by teachers in the course of labour negotiations have angered parents who see their children, who have no say in labour conflicts, being used as hostages. An example of this was the case of the cancellation of extra-curricular functions during work-to-rule campaigns.

The teachers' boycott of all reform-related activities as a pressure tactic for several months this past year also resulted in the loss of their input since certain reform-related activities within the Ministry and school boards continued nonetheless. The boycott was seen as unprofessional and tarnishing to the teachers' public image because it kept them from influencing a matter of key importance to them: the development of teaching strategies to be used in the context of the reform. As it is difficult to require teachers to implement what they do not understand or believe in, development work in this area should have involved the input of teachers at every stage.

The enhancement of self-esteem among teachers

A consequence of teachers' not feeling that they have ownership of the evolution of teaching and learning is that much bad press comes from quoting teachers themselves. As a result, poten-

tial good candidates for the teaching profession may look elsewhere, preoccupied as much by possible negative images of the teaching profession as by financial considerations.

Feelings of alienation are making many teachers reticent about investing energy in the planning of a reform they consider they have little power to affect. One of the ways to encourage teachers is to give them time to participate in its planning. If time is created, it gives value to the operation; if room is made for discussion about the reform within the school's organizational plan, teachers will know that their contribution is important.

In the implementation of educational change, each school develops its own approaches, depending on its problems and its socio-economic context. Especially in areas where there are many needs, it is important for schools to develop an overall perspective of development rather than to conclude that, because of the many needs, change is impossible or too difficult to implement. Teachers are, and will continue to be, the ones who find ways of crafting the proposed changes into realistic practices to which their students can relate. As teachers explore such methods as team teaching, mentoring amongst teachers can play a useful role as it helps them learn the skills needed to work together.

Encouraging innovative thinking, experimentation and collaboration in teaching methods

Many teachers hit a rut sometime in their careers and lose confidence; even the most creative can feel stifled. Being exposed to theories about creativity in the classroom while in university does not guarantee that teachers will find outlets for putting these theories into practice once they are on the job.

The reform has been characterized as a way of bringing "kindergarten teaching methods" to the whole school system: that is, as much value is placed on process as on content. While implementation has been proceeding relatively smoothly in Elementary Cycles One and Two, modifying their teaching practices has been

somewhat more difficult for teachers in Cycle Three.

It will be that much more difficult when the reform officially moves into secondary school. Pilot projects, of which there have been a considerable number, have shown that, given the time, support and leadership, secondary school teachers have been able to work effectively in teams and to adapt their teaching habits to the reformed curriculum context without losing sight of the teaching and learning standards associated with quality education.

The experiments, however, have also shown that memorizing a simple formula does not bring about the fundamental change the reform requires of teachers. It is a process that will require ongoing reflection, fine-tuning, perseverance and the wise choice of pedagogical approaches. That is not to say that “pre-reform” teaching is to be discarded, that it is no good. Rather, it is a question of adapting it to a new set of objectives. In the opinions heard by the ABEE this year, it is widely felt that individual teachers will not be able to meet the long-term challenges of transforming their teaching on their own.

One of the most frequent suggestions about how to provide continuing support for teachers is to give them curriculum design support on site, with release time to share their “best practices” with their colleagues. Were schools to adopt such a policy, fewer outside consultants would be needed to map out strategies, although some external resources would always be required. The proposed extension of the school day will ease pressure on the school’s time table and may allow room for various forms of curriculum design activity, such as, for example, the organizing of working groups of teachers with a rotating curriculum coordinator to work on models of curriculum delivery with which they feel comfortable.

One private school, with the latitude to experiment with change, tried to find significant time for teachers to work on implementation and to develop cross-curricular projects, all in a context of uncertainty. The school examined restructuring its timetable and the school day to allow

teachers more planning time. That, however, came to be seen as having a detrimental effect on students who still needed the regular amount of class time to complete existing curriculum requirements.

Initial teacher education

In the last decade, there has been a shift in teacher education away from a focus solely on disciplinary content and towards an exploration of inquiry and learning processes. There is now an emphasis on a socioconstructivist philosophy of learning and less concentration on individual disciplines. Education students learn to blend theory and practice during their 700 hours of student teaching.

School administrators are noticing that new candidates for teaching positions are different from their predecessors. Much scepticism has been expressed about whether the recent graduates of university programs influenced by the reform will be properly prepared to assume the complex teaching loads that will be required of them.

Many administrators in secondary schools are now wondering if more emphasis is needed on curriculum content in the various disciplines. There is a fear that graduates of the new programs will not be as marketable as their predecessors since they may lack a concentration in a second subject area (which is no longer a requirement). Principals are concerned because they observe that student teachers often do not have sufficient mastery of the subject matter and that they may demonstrate weakness in literature and history, as well as in grammatical skills.

Another cause for concern is the ambiguity surrounding the cross-curricular competencies to be learned by secondary students. Presumably, teachers will require matching cross-curricular skills. On the other hand, sequences determined by disciplines are not going to be abolished at the secondary level, and the exam system will continue to have an impact on the organization of the curriculum.

The reform has revived the debate about whether teachers should be trained as subject-

material transmitters or learning facilitators. Which takes precedence, subject matter or classroom management? There is mixed opinion as to whether a full four-year B.Ed. as the only entry to teaching results in more proficiency than a three-year bachelor's degree in a teachable subject followed by a one-year program of education arts. These discussions take place primarily between universities and the Ministry; teachers' opinions on the issue are rarely heard, one way or the other. And yet, it is the structures of their profession that are being designed and put in place.

Principals who were consulted about requirements for new teachers indicated they prefer their new staff to have good management skills, an understanding of the reform and an ability to use technologies. On the other hand, in a study undertaken in the U.K., knowledge of the subject ranked higher than teacher training, since principals felt that they could train teachers in their own milieu to meet the needs of their school environment.

Regardless of the emphasis on content or on process, more people at all levels of teacher education now have some knowledge of and familiarity with curriculum design. Postsecondary programs must make administrators aware of and encourage them to be involved with curriculum reform.

The role that universities can play in accompanying the reform in schools needs to be clarified. Universities need to rethink in-service and develop new types of professional programs or courses that accommodate the current needs of practising teachers.

A university can also provide valuable support over time. For example, in the "Agir Autrement" (New Approaches, New Solutions) program, university staff are monitoring and researching the implementation of the school improvement program and will provide feedback and analysis to help the school assess its progress and improve its results.

Some observers consulted by the ABEE feel that the Ministry should have involved universities in systematic monitoring and evaluation activities

from the inception of reform, rather than as an afterthought. If universities were to be invited to carry out such a process, they would undoubtedly be supportive, as it would provide them with valuable teaching and learning material. It would require a long-term commitment from university faculty and would, of course, have to be eligible for funding.

Support for teachers: the school setting

Many of the rules and structures concerning teaching are decreed from outside the school. If teachers are to be recognized and appreciated as professionals, it seems reasonable for them to be allowed a considerable degree of autonomy, responsibility and accountability in the fashioning of their own education within accepted professional guidelines. For teachers to be able to sustain and reinforce the role only they can play in the school setting, there should be a more dependable support system. For instance, at present, where do new teachers go for help? Recent studies show that they approach other teachers, not universities, school boards or consultants. Most new teachers did not know about available outside resources. Some found that more experienced teachers were helpful in many ways, while others found that more experienced teachers tended to feel threatened by new ones.

Young teachers need to be introduced to the politics of teaching, both in university and when they enter the profession. In a system where new teachers interact with students, fellow staff members, principals, governing boards, parent participation organizations, unions, the Ministry and the general public, a working knowledge of the Education Act is not in itself a sufficient roadmap. A clear understanding of administrative procedures and process in all areas that affect the teacher is an essential prerequisite to any teacher feeling in control and at ease in the system. Teachers should be encouraged to assure their own continuing education and to convince their peers that keeping up their professional expertise is a form of pride in the profession.

How do teachers make their case for the establishment of norms for the much-needed

support in the form of nonteaching specialists, such as special education professionals, psychologists and speech therapists?

How should teachers in Québec's English schools go about helping to convince the Ministry that they have specific training needs not required by their colleagues in the French sector? In the past, English sector teachers have participated less in the development of Ministry-approved curriculum than their French-speaking counterparts. Since programs are generally developed in French, participation by anglophones requires a certain degree of sophistication in French. Ministry policies could encourage more program writing by English teachers, translating their work into French rather than, as is now the case, translating much program material from its original language into English.

Teachers in the English-speaking boards must deal with a growing phenomena not present in the French school boards: widespread immersion programs in which not only a second language, but many other subjects are taught to English-speaking students, in French. Many immersion teachers are francophones with extensive skills in second-language teaching, but with limited depth in the subject they may be teaching. In other cases, especially at the secondary level where the subject material is more specialized, there may be highly competent subject teachers whose proficiency in teaching in a second language could use some upgrading.

These are just some of the questions that teachers will have to find answers to if they are going to have the impact on the school system their numbers and station warrant.

Control of the curriculum: subject specialists and curriculum design

While teachers ostensibly have the freedom to choose their own methods and materials, the existence of uniform exams in the core disciplines in the last two years of secondary school tends to concentrate teaching on the official textbook and leaves little room for creativity, little leeway on the use of materials and evaluation and little space for cooperation with students. The pressure to perform on external

end-of-year exams obliterates the freedom to explore throughout the year because student input is lost and the top-down process, which the reform is aimed at redressing, is still firmly in place as long as teachers remain conduits of information and overseers of tasks.

The results are a sense of frustration and loss in the teaching profession. They are also indicative of a more distant relationship between teachers and the Ministry in which much seems imposed and micro-managed from above, leaving the impression that teachers are not considered capable or worthy of trust. This perception taints the reform. For example, the majority of teachers feel out of the loop regarding the reform in secondary schools. They receive little or no explanation of where the new policies come from and little indication they will have much hands-on control and input. Teachers with long experience have tended to express the view that they have seen this all before — a pedagogical “flavour of the month”; the reform is seen as just another bridge to cross.

This reform, however, is different from others. The status quo is not an option: both colleges and universities are changing their own curricula and implementing program and competency-based approaches.

The prevalent scepticism about the approaching reform in secondary schools is due in large part to anxiety about the unknown. Even with the occasional professional development day, there has been little real information available. Some teachers are aware of the reform only because of what has been happening in the elementary schools; a few have been involved in curriculum committees or writing teams outside their schools. There is a wide consensus that any implementation will be difficult as long as information on the reform, not only its principles but also its practical realities, is inadequate.

The insecurity of secondary school teachers is exacerbated by the many divergent opinions now circulating about the future place of specialists in the secondary school setting. Can specialist teachers team-teach with non-specialists? Opinions are mixed. This is now happening in CEGEPs. The problems encountered

there have been more administrative (timetable and budget) than pedagogical.

Teachers hear rumours; for example, that the Ministry does not know what will happen to subject matter specialists after the interdisciplinary approach is adopted. Some teachers feel threatened by the perceived downgrading of subject specialties. One hears comments like, "I am not a teacher. I am a mathematics teacher and I wouldn't want to have to teach anything else." Most secondary school teachers are specialists. The reform is perceived to mean that teachers will be expected to change their approach in order to teach in areas where they have less confidence in their own abilities.

Everyone consulted by the ABEE was of the opinion that it is necessary to maintain specialists at the secondary level for students to be well grounded in the subject matter. It isn't every teacher who can successfully teach, for example, Secondary I or II Mathematics. An inspection of student exam results has shown that the pass rate is higher in the later years of school, precisely in those years when there are subject specialists. Teachers who know their subject thoroughly are considered a pillar of secondary education. They have, however, become a scarce commodity. Schools are having difficulty recruiting and retaining specialists and most generalists do not feel comfortable or confident in specialist areas.

Examples are cited of subject specialists who have become enthusiastic about working with teams at the Secondary Cycle One level in pilot schools. It is expected that others will find the same satisfaction once they become more familiar with the reform. But until they can see the larger context, there will continue to be resistance. At present, the typical teacher receives very little information about "best practices" or about research in other schools and school systems. As a result, the frontline teachers regard all new changes with trepidation, as they have no knowledge of how the changes can be beneficial to their teaching or to student learning.

The curriculum for Secondary Cycle One is currently being validated in 16 schools across Québec, four of which are in the English sector.

While all schools have received the orientation for the Cycle One program, there are very few copies of these documents in the schools; the content is being circulated slowly.

In those secondary schools where the reform is currently being piloted, teachers are beginning to become familiar with the assessment and reporting of competencies. As well, parents are now starting to be exposed to these concepts.

Information, then, is the key to encouraging secondary school teachers to get on board the reform and be receptive to its potential. Most information today is made available only to consultants who are few in number and widely dispersed. Some boards do not have consultants who can discuss the pedagogical reform concept with teachers. For staff at boards with large territories, access to meetings is problematic. Information, no matter how scant, should be transmitted to all concerned, even if all the details are not yet available. In fact, feeling that one is part of a work in progress is preferable to feeling as that one is being kept in the dark.

At this point in the implementation process, it is not difficult to see Secondary Cycle One as a continuation of primary school. It is less evident how a competency-based, student-centred approach can be applied in the later cycles of secondary school. How are cross-curricular activities to be established within the organization of the schools? How can teachers become architects rather than victims of the changes that the reorientation and the reorganization will require?

There appears to be an urgent need to strengthen communication within the teaching profession as a whole and among individual teachers in their own school settings. Broader communications among teachers themselves would help bridge the gap between viewing curriculum reform as extraneously imposed and recognizing that teachers have actually conceived much of it. In the adult sector, for instance, the new curriculum is being written almost entirely by committees of teachers because they are expected to understand the needs of students in different contexts.

In the youth sector, committees of teachers also worked on the curricula of disciplines to be taught. The average teacher, however, does not sit on such committees, either for lack of interest or the contacts to get onto them. Anglophone teachers who do find their way onto curriculum committees often feel very isolated. What is missing is communication between those teachers who participate and their colleagues to foster a broader understanding that teachers do have influence in curriculum development.

Very few teachers are qualified to design curriculum. It is a fallacy to think that any group of teachers can design or even adapt curriculum. While the Education Act gives schools the right to design curriculum, not all teachers are equipped or willing to take part in such an exercise, citing a lack of experience. Currently, courses concentrating on curriculum design are dealt with almost exclusively at the masters' level in university faculties and departments of education.

Transition from Elementary Cycle Three to Secondary Cycle One

Elementary school teachers are concerned about how their students are going to fare in the transition to secondary school. Students emerging from a much less stratified elementary school where they have become accustomed to being treated as collaborators in their own education may find the transition to current rigid secondary school structures and pedagogy disorientating. Moving from a reform-oriented elementary school where they learn to explain what they have learned — for example, how they arrived at their math answers — to a more regimented secondary school where only final results are considered important appears problematic.

Teachers in elementary school who have already embraced the reform tend to feel in charge of the learning/teaching process. By and large, except for a chronic lack of time in which to perform their multiple tasks, they feel in control. They are trying to teach their students about lifelong learning and in the process, they themselves tend to apply the concept to their own development. They speak with conviction about “keeping up” with the latest developments and technologies. A measure of ownership is

described as the extent to which a teacher is able to develop programs of study based on student needs. Generally, at the elementary level, there is a lot of opportunity for creativity.

At the secondary school level, that flexibility is still nonexistent and creativity has but small purchase on teaching, especially in the context of obligatory provincial exams. As well, many teachers are overwhelmed with special needs students (oppositional defiance, learning disabilities, autism, dyslexia, etc.) in their classrooms. The ability of teachers to work as teams is not yet part of the culture or organizational structure of the schools. This more rigid structure and the culture it breeds become more entrenched as secondary schooling progresses.

There is some optimism that students themselves will help integrate the reform into secondary school education. Those who have come through elementary student-oriented cycles will be better prepared for taking more responsibility for their own learning. It is they who will force teachers to learn how to look at different aspects of success, to focus on how far they have brought students along rather than concentrating solely on the final grade.

A teacher should be in a position to celebrate having reached a child that no one else has managed to reach. For example, recognizing a student's ability to express him or herself mathematically will help that student to solve the math problem. Administrators could improve morale by supporting and recognizing all victories, large and small. The school's attitude towards student improvement, at whatever stage or in whatever form, will be an important factor in getting parents to understand, adapt to and support the reform at the secondary level.

Evaluation of student competencies

The long-awaited Ministry policy on student evaluation in a competencies-based curriculum has not yet been issued at the time of writing of this document. However, as soon as it appears, together with the final policy documents outlining the reformed curriculum at the secondary level, teachers will be required to start evaluating their students according to new guidelines.

Teachers are attempting to adapt their teaching to the learning styles of students, to present themselves and their learning in different ways. Teachers know intuitively and practically how their students are doing. On the other hand, there is a political agenda on evaluation, known as standardization of objectives and competencies, which is different from the pedagogical agenda. It is far from clear to teachers how these two approaches can be reconciled, how individualized learning can be assessed if everyone is obliged to be on the same track. How does one deal with the need to demonstrate objectively that all the pertinent ground has been covered?

Some current attitudes towards evaluation are based on a desire to meet provincial standards, which allow comparability and transferability of marks and credits. At the same time, in the classroom, teachers are expected to adopt strategies adapted to individual students. The question of real needs is often raised. What are the real needs that one must deal with in basic core education as compared to courses that prepare students for higher levels? Should there be more flexibility with each school's educational project determining the curriculum and the evaluation? Evaluation tools used for selecting those who move to the next level, however, are going to continue to have a major influence on what is taught in the classroom. Standard exam results and the subsequent comparison by outside agencies do not encourage concern with classroom processes. Finding ways of managing to make the secondary school curriculum process-driven is still to be worked out.

The guidance-oriented approach to learning (GOAL) fosters working with students and parents in order to sensitize them to different career paths before the end of secondary school. While a secondary school diploma is important for the entrance requirements at the next level, will it always be necessary? The CEGEPs have instituted their own competency-based system. Not all programs have the same profile of prerequisites. While matriculation results are paramount, a "relevé de compétences" is part of the reform underway at the CEGEP level.

While some feel that only an exam can provide credible evidence of student learning, port-

folios are becoming an increasingly important element in the process. Students can become more involved in their learning. With an ongoing evaluation, students get to know what they have learned. Portfolios must be continuously kept up, and not just for the purpose of report cards. With current technology, it is easy for both the student and the teacher to keep up-to-date records. By comparison, in other classes without portfolios, students may have very little idea of what they have gained as the term progresses.

The reform is still weak on supporting teachers on student evaluation. There are few examples of what reform evaluation should look like. The expectations for each level or cycle have to be carefully defined. Students must be edged out of a warm, fuzzy environment familiar to them from preschool levels and introduced to the more realistic world of summative evaluation without it thwarting their spontaneity or confidence.

Evaluation of teachers: enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and learning

In the modern school, evaluation involves not only how the administration sees the teachers, but also how colleagues see them and how they see themselves.

The evaluation issue raises many questions for teachers. To whom are teachers accountable today? To their students, their governing boards, their school boards, their unions, the Ministry or the Essential Services Board? The list of those with power over teachers is long. While there is some ongoing evaluation, a regular systemic evaluation process for teachers is still not in place, except in the case of new teachers or those who appear to be having trouble. To help teachers feel they own the teaching process, a feedback loop is crucial. In some schools, a regularly scheduled session with the administrator in a "how is it going" debriefing context can help significantly. Principals have to be trained to listen to teachers and to act on the basis of those discussions.

Teachers are very leery of being evaluated. They perceive the purpose of the evaluation

process to be a search for the weak link in the chain. Can evaluation of teachers exist in a form that is not confrontational? There is much evidence that the process can be confidence building rather than the reverse. By defining outcome goals not in terms of pass/fail but in terms of looking for areas for professional improvement, one can facilitate goal setting and finding the means to get there. The reform itself should help in this regard as it is aimed at putting less emphasis on pass/fail results in the classroom and more on a continuum of lifetime learning. The culture of evaluation in the schools should be more focused on feedback in order to encourage more constructive involvement in improving the teaching profession.

Teacher evaluation is more advanced at the elementary level where many teachers are involved in team teaching and small groups of teachers are linked to foster both their personal development and school improvement. Much of this self-evaluation is quite successful and is being endorsed by principals. Elementary teachers, being less geared to the pressures of external exams and deadlines, have the power to implement changes; the new flexibility allows them to be more creative.

At the secondary school level similar experiments have so far failed; teachers didn't want to become involved or were afraid to refer to each other's teaching or modelling.

The ABEE learned of the teacher evaluation practices at a private-sector school where institutional goals are shared with all members of the staff. The administration meets with every teacher to set individual goals. Together, they select professional development opportunities to foster development and growth as indicated by both the teacher's and the school's objectives. During the year, the teacher keeps a portfolio and collects material on each of the goals set for the year. The teacher and administrator meet at the end of the last term to evaluate whether the goals have been met and to make plans for the next school year. For many teachers, this is the first experience of its kind. They had never before been encouraged to think in terms of goals on which to focus — in a non-threatening context — for the purpose of achieving personal growth.

There is evidence that an evaluation program for teachers is a good way to direct professional development. The process doesn't have to be called "evaluation." The administrator looks at the teacher's competency in the classroom and suggests ways for him or her to work on any perceived areas of weakness or discomfort. This focusing on areas for improvement is a useful way of encouraging teachers to seek out relevant pedagogical development programs that cater to specific needs rather than those that take a blanket approach to professional development.

Much as teachers feel anxiety about being evaluated, they miss it if it isn't present. If attention isn't paid to someone, he or she doesn't count. Evaluations are not there to weed people out, but to make them see how they can perform better in their jobs. If everyone were evaluated, defensive attitudes might fade away. (Teachers often wonder how their principals are evaluated. This information should be widely accessible.) Perhaps evaluation should be renamed "diagnosis for professional growth."

Experience in some private schools validates the practice of taking care of teachers, particularly new ones. New teachers' demands receive high priority in many of these schools. Mentors are assigned to new teachers and a professional evaluation process is put in place for at least the first two years while they are getting acclimatized. New teachers are expected to be supported by others in their department. Teachers are allowed to visit each other's classes and are encouraged to offer support to help the new teacher in goal setting. Assignments and workload are determined using criteria for equity, with the input of teachers and the administration. There is less rigidity and more leeway compared to the public school system, even though their collective agreements call for local negotiation of workload.

The nurturing of new teachers is less apparent in public schools where mentoring and extra periods for course preparation have been phased out and where new teachers are often given impossible workloads. It is important that new teachers not be given classes with a high concentration of students with multiple problems or serious disciplinary issues, those very classes

that some experienced teachers quite naturally try to avoid. Under the circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising how many new teachers leave within the first few years on the job.

Professional development

Professional development is seen as the key to making the reform a success and having it viewed in a more favourable light. Teachers need an environment in which they can work collaboratively. One of the advantages of team teaching is that it brings new perspectives into play, giving the teacher the opportunity to review and to reflect on what works and what does not.

There is no single description of what the reform looks like or should look like. There is a misconception that teachers must learn “the brick” by heart. It is more important for teachers to develop their own goals in order to feel comfortable in the exercise of their professional duties. The educational project is a means for a school — teachers and parents and administrators together — to define its goals and implement its vision using the principles found in the reform.

In the context of the reform, professional development should be, to the greatest extent possible, determined and implemented locally. A principal can set the tone and the pace of a school. Each school has to develop its own image and its own way of experiencing its educational project.

Schools should try as much as possible to use professional development days to provide in-house training for their staff. It is cheaper than sending people to conferences and helps out those without access to professional development budgets. Improvement of professional skills is, or should be, an ongoing part of professional status.

There is growing conviction that professional development should be an obligatory condition of employment, but that the employer should cover the cost. (Teachers may be reticent about taking courses during the summer, especially if the employer does not cover the cost.) With every school expected to institute a pro-

fessional development plan, it should be possible for schools to pool their resources, including funding for Professional Improvement Committees (PIC) and Success Plans. The budgets for reform are also available to the schools for releasing teachers to learn about reform-related matters. Professional development plans would be geared to the needs of each school.

The Education Act gives teachers the right to have a say in their own professional development. Ideally, a school’s program should be drawn up after discussion between teachers and the administration. A problematic aspect of individual training for teachers is the absence of a group dynamic. In a group setting, everyone comes away with the same language. A climate that reinforces further improvement is generated through a common experience.

There are other systemic impediments to teacher participation in professional development activities. The high cost of providing access to teachers in remote areas is a major issue. Videoconferencing may change this in the future. The more teachers participate, the more it will become a custom, a habit and an accepted professional requirement.

It may become easier for teachers to find ways of setting their own professional development goals. Longer presence time for teachers will allow for more meetings among teachers during school hours. If universities follow the trend and change their offerings to allow for more mini-certificates rather than full master’s programs, there could be more teachers willing to register for them.

The ABEE was told of several innovative professional development approaches currently being undertaken.

- **Bishop’s University** made special arrangements with teachers from one school board, as it was difficult for them to register in a master’s degree. A made-to-measure program was designed, involving forty-four teachers. Professors came to the school to meet with the teachers. The course and the networking and motivation it generated were much appreciated by the teachers.

- **McGill University's Department of Integrated Studies in Education** and Western Québec School Board have begun a collaborative project to create a teacher training partnership with hands-on in-house learning. To date, twenty-four McGill education students have spent their entire second semester on-site in the Western Québec School Board while studying and doing their required placements. The partners see this as a beneficial relationship: students will have firsthand experience living in the community in which they work and study and will gain valuable knowledge of school values and basic operations; the school board will contribute to shaping the students' cultural knowledge and will be able to observe their aptitude for teaching.
- This past fall (2002) the Western Québec School Board engaged Dr. Barrie Bennett from the **Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)**, an affiliate of the University of Toronto. Bennett's program, titled Instructional Intelligence, is a five-year project to engage school teams in the craft of expanding their instructional repertoire.

Using the book *Beyond Monet*, which was authored by Bennett and associate Carol Rolheiser, the school teams are engaged in two days of training at least three times a year. In addition, they participate in a summer institute.

The Instructional Intelligence program involves strategies, skills and tactics that teachers should have as part of their repertoire, regardless of the teaching level. A combination of any of these research-proven approaches delivered by a skilled professional has identifiable significance in student learning. Only five other school boards in Canada and Australia are involved in this project. The expectation is that as each school board develops their data sets of instructional material, it is shared with the other boards in the project.

Bennett models the approaches he is teaching by taking a participant's actual classroom, students and all, regardless of level, and adapting the teacher's lesson using the approaches of Instructional Intelligence. Teachers are invited to view Bennett in action, after which there are debriefing sessions.

After three two-day visits in the first year, there is already tangible evidence of the impact the program has made with participating school teams. Six new school teams have applied to participate, and Western Québec has extended an invitation to the other English boards in the province, as well as the public boards in the Ottawa region.

PART II

Special programs examined by the Advisory Board on English Education

1. The Ministry's "Agir Autrement" program targets secondary schools with low socioeconomic status and low graduation scores. These schools draw up experimental and innovative projects to improve academic results and their students' attitudes towards learning. The program has been piloted at **James Lyng High School** (EMSB) with dramatically positive results.
2. The Ministry has offered sixteen schools the opportunity to become pilot schools for the implementation of the reform in Secondary Cycle One. The implementation process has been very encouraging at **Pierrefonds Comprehensive High School** (LBPSB) and **Villa Maria** (private school).
3. School initiative: **Pontiac High School**, Shawville, Québec (WQSB)

1. James Lyng High School (English-Montréal School Board)

The projects implemented in the school are far reaching. Students have been divided into core groups of 22 students each. There are three core teachers at each level. These small groups allow teachers and students to get to know each other. In order to effect the transition from traditional teaching, it has been important to create an environment that is as friendly as possible. While most middle-class students have already acquired the social skills that a school would like all students to possess, many of the students at James Lyng have weak interpersonal skills in areas such as being able to share information or work cooperatively. They have problems with self-esteem and difficulties in accepting failure.

The environment must also be teacher-friendly since the same few teachers must establish relationships with many students and provide those students with a consistent approach. Teachers at this school and in this program are very enthusiastic and have felt empowered: they have been given the freedom to create a new environment in which both they and their stu-

dents can find more room and incentive for creativity.

Rearranging the timetable has made more time available for teachers to do planning. Every period has been extended by several minutes; students do not miss total instruction time but it affords the possibility of freeing up a half-day for weekly staff meetings to plan, coordinate, etc., which is critical. Teachers are so enthusiastic that they are contributing extra time of their own.

In certain disciplines, students have been grouped according to gender and these classes are working well. So often, students are confronted with stereotypical images of themselves. Their expectations are often limited to early motherhood, a small dead-end job and similar unambitious goals. The school is trying to fight such low expectations by helping students to aim higher and by giving them reasons and tools to change the dynamic.

The "Agir Autrement/New Approaches, New Solutions" (NANS) program that was piloted here has allowed the school to bring about certain changes in attitude in a short time period. It led to the reorganization of school life and the implementation of a project-based approach. There has also been the addition of support staff and of child-care and community workers who have been of enormous support to teachers and without whom teachers would have had more logistical and time-related problems.

The school provides a variety of other support services for students: laundry can be done at school; community organizations provide in-school food programs. Teams of teachers work with students to learn to understand a blue-collar environment and how it influences the students' family life. When students start to see themselves as having their own roles to play, they discover that they too have something to bring to the table.

"Agir Autrement" has allowed the school to organize pedagogical days devoted to the discussion of modalities and challenges. Awareness of the need to change was very present before "Agir Autrement" came along. Ministry statistics have shown only a 50% success rate for some

time. The latest statistics show a success rate of 77% to 80%, due in great part to the students' newly-found belief in their ability to function.

"Agir Autrement" is well named. The money is being spent differently in different schools. At James Lyng, the focus has been on curriculum reform. In rural areas, since it is hard to get families involved, money may be used to bus parents and families to the schools.

The thrust of the reforms at James Lyng has been to actively support teacher initiatives and to work through the structures to allow for those initiatives to flourish. The school's principal actively recruits teachers with specific qualities to build his school team, which he then supports at every turn. His leadership has acted as a catalyst for dialogue: he provides the leadership to get the message across and the resultant dynamic is doing the rest.

Great efforts are being made to maintain contact with parents. A liaison agent has been hired thanks to "Agir" funding. Parents are contacted every two weeks and house calls are made, when necessary. Parents are encouraged to visit the school to see for themselves what their children are producing. The school was very happy this year when 75% of parents attended a meeting on a particularly cold night. Parents who show an interest in their children's school life have a noticeably beneficial effect on their children's attitude and performance.

James Lyng has received \$400 000 of "Agir Autrement" money each year for the past three years. Two hundred and forty students are involved in the program; it has not been possible to involve everyone. Since much has been done with the extra funding, the school is now asking itself what happens when this source dries up. While there are other programs available which could fund some of the current activities, it is also hoped that the results of the experience will be considered so worthwhile that activities that have been generated by the extra "Agir" financed staff will be integrated into everyone's work plan.

The school has made great efforts to involve other community partners, such as community groups and local employers. As an example, the

school invited the Women's Y to introduce its kickboxing program into school activities. The program is designed to give adolescent girls self-esteem and is enjoying considerable success with the often-troubled 14- to 17- year-old youngsters. Activities in the school have generated energy outside the school. Ex-Lyngers remain supportive and many have even contributed to funding.

The program's curriculum designer was formerly the coordinator of the school's literacy program. Forty-five per cent of the school population is coded (some degree of learning difficulty or disability). All are integrated into regular classes. Teachers need strategies to be able to interact well in the classroom. As an example, some parts of the Secondary IV curriculum are being introduced to students as early as Secondary II and III so that they are familiar with the material when they get to Secondary IV and have to master it and write exams in it. The task of the curriculum designer is not to modify the curriculum but to adapt or redistribute it to ease the learning difficulties it can present.

Since many teachers are retiring, eighty per cent of today's teaching staff have come to the school only in the last three years. For the principal, this presents a plus and a minus. The new people are a blessing; on the other hand, it is evident that very few of the realities occurring in his classrooms are being taught in university.

There is also much concern among teachers in Secondary IV and V about how the reform can be applied in the absence of a new evaluation policy. Traditional modes of evaluation are considered inappropriate to the reform. The new instruments and instances of evaluation would only be considered valid by teachers if they were to allow students to demonstrate competencies.

The school is working hard with teachers in Secondary I to avoid a difficult transition from elementary school. Already teachers are noticing that students are becoming much more autonomous by the second half of their first year. They are responding better to parts of the curriculum that traditionally proved difficult; ancient history is a course that was always reserved for "others" but since they are now

exposed to it as an obligatory subject, they are jumping in with a certain enthusiasm. Shakespeare has become of interest because it is “so weird.” By engaging students’ current interests (what did Michael Jordan study when he was at university?) new doors can be opened, since the competency-based curriculum is open-ended.

To the sceptics who ask whether a project-based approach to curriculum is sufficient and if a wider foundation of knowledge, a common base shared across the board is not an essential part of schooling, the advocates of the James Lyng approach argue that it is working. The school has existed for 37 years and throughout that time emphasis on content was at the heart of the programs. The results were that students, lacking models and support, were dropping out in large numbers and more than half were not graduating at all. Evidently, the system was not working well for the students.

Now the school is working at getting ahead using the means at its disposal based on the principle that progress is unlikely if based on the continuation of what has not worked in the past. The project-based approach has produced a 75% success rate. It is attempting to generate the student’s ability to access information, rather than just retain it. For the coded students with learning problems that they will take through life, learning to use technology is an extremely useful tool. Knowledge bases and databases are available to these students. Dropouts in earlier years had no such learning aids.

The educators at James Lyng have embraced the reform; the “Agir Autrement” program has allowed them to break their school out of the mould of constant failure and their students to find new interest and purpose in “getting through school.” They had little to lose and they feel they and their students have gained much.

2. Pierrefonds Comprehensive High School (Lester-B.-Pearson School Board)

Last year, there was a vote taken among the teaching staff as to whether or not to become a pilot school for the reform. The teachers were

told that there would be additional money to cover the costs of release time for reform activities. An Implementation Committee was formed in September with members from the junior and senior sectors of the school. All teachers, even those on the verge of retirement, were encouraged to read the QEP “brick.” An information session for teachers was held with a speaker from another school board providing background implementation information. Activities for teachers took place in the afternoon to familiarize them with cross-curricular competencies. Teachers were grouped according to their teaching subjects and worked on the elaboration of competencies and goals. At the end of the day, each group was asked to define its priorities.

The two principal priorities that emerged were time release for planning and sufficient financing for implementation. A retreat was held in February to examine team teaching. The school is in the process of looking into how to adjust the teaching schedule for next year to allow teachers time to plan and coordinate their concerted efforts. At present, it is mostly the Middle School that is involved but soon all sectors will be brought into the process. Teachers have begun to cooperate on materials and to share responsibility for expanding the scope of the pilot project.

Villa Maria (Private school)

This year, each of the school’s five levels has a team of teachers with a project manager. Participation has been voluntary but most teachers have volunteered. Last year, there was time for them to brainstorm and suggest projects; for example, a movie made by Secondary II students, a puppet show produced by Secondary IV students, a project on physics and economics in Secondary V. Each project had to be approved by the principal to ensure that it fitted into the school’s overall planning.

One project, the Secondary II movie, is now underway. It requires a lot of work for the teacher who manages the team, who organizes workloads and types up the documents. The working group of Secondary II teachers consists of history teachers who are responsible for the content on the history of ancient Egypt, English language arts teachers who work with the students on

scriptwriting, the French teacher who helps students research roles and produce descriptions which must be written in French, the science teacher who helps students learn about camera angles, and explains optics and the finer technical points of photography.

The question arises as to the effects of time taken up by filmmaking on the required subject matter. For instance, how does the mathematics teacher, who is also the project manager, make up the time she is not spending in the classroom? The teachers involved in the project, all of whom have a good deal of teaching experience, feel they can better manage their time now than when they were beginning teachers. They are finding ways of covering the curriculum requirements even though the regular course loads are still in place because reform implementation has not yet been officially set in motion.

All the teachers involved in these projects are enthusiastic about what students are learning from each other through teamwork. The process takes time, but its positive effects continue to develop as interest is high and the collective determination to succeed continues to grow rather than lessen throughout the academic year. Teachers see the project as a luxury not available in regular classes and as a plus for them rather than a drain. They are confident they will be able to cover the parts of curriculum not included in the project per se. For instance, since the English language arts teacher's contribution concerns competencies involving script and writing skills, the study of novels will be taken up in regular class time.

At the end of the academic year, an assessment of the Secondary II pilot project will determine the size and scope of future projects. Areas to be studied are adjustment of workloads, generating the energy and the interest among teachers and students to continue developing projects, the incipient dangers of a project not being specific enough for academic program needs and the questions raised about the overall evaluation of the learning generated by such a project.

In the movie project, the film itself does not get marked but the various steps in its production are. The students must produce materials related to the project, which will be marked in history, in English language arts, etc. The evaluation of cross-curricular competencies is less evident as is ensuring equity of assessment between different projects. Not all projects will be of the same calibre and assessment will have to be different for each child, unless some satisfactory method of group assessment can be worked out. Looking at individual students' handling of the relevant aspects of putting a project together — not simply its content — needs time, attention and measurement methods on the part of teachers. Measuring cross-disciplinary competencies is an area that the individual teacher cannot cover alone, for it needs close collaboration between teachers.

Teachers already embarked on the reform see the necessity of changing the curriculum in order to help students change themselves. With the current curriculum still in place, teachers are providing most of the structure for these pilot projects. To be able to feel comfortable in a reform environment, a teacher has to know the textbook really well and periodically go through a checklist of what remains to be covered. Thought has to be put into assessing competencies and into developing new ideas of evaluation. Teachers in secondary school cannot as yet read elementary school report cards. If faced with a decision about whether or not a student can handle a special project, the secondary school teacher may be at a loss.

For the teachers consulted, the biggest challenge facing implementation of the reform in the secondary sector is time: finding time for marking, supervision, the learning of new skills and how to work in teams.

3. Pontiac High School (Western Québec School Board)

Pontiac High School has taken a page out of the reform book and set up a student-oriented program that suits the needs of its school population in the areas of motivation, academic

improvement, acquisition of competencies and overall school improvement. The program in question is an ambitious project to turn out graduates who are qualified and employable welders.

Why welding? Because it offers good employment possibilities and the necessary teaching expertise was already present in the school. Successful students receive a certificate issued by the Canadian Welding Bureau with which a graduate can find an entry-level job in a welding shop and be eligible for admission to a full-scale diploma of vocational studies (DVS). The program has received support from the school board; the local Lions' Club donated the money for the purchase of equipment. At present, there are eight work stations, costing \$75 000, which is far less than the average cost of such normal vocational training shops which can rise to over \$500 000, putting a lot of financial onus on the school board.

To remain in the program, which is considered a prestige position, students must maintain good academic standing or be obliged to return to the regular academic program. The target set for the academic performance of each student is, in effect, a pilot project in mentoring. Soon all secondary students will be involved in similar target setting.

Mentoring is particularly important in schools where parental backing for academic success may be limited. Mentoring can also help in understanding the students' target "numbers," i.e. how to understand the qualitative difference between a 75 or 77 in history or English language arts. The program, however, does not set goals by numbers. It is the students themselves who like to see their progress in terms of numbers. The actual onset of the reform may bring about a paradigm shift towards a set of competencies. In the meantime, numerical marks are what denote success or failure. The school's mission is unequivocal: the school must ensure that all students achieve. Every student has one or two meetings with a school administrator.

To facilitate a shift towards the culture of reform, the school moved to a team model of teaching to break up teacher isolation and encourage collaboration. Adjustment to scheduling made this possible. The course loads of the teachers who have been freed up for the pilot project have been spread amongst the remaining staff. All staff members are contributing to the project, some by teaching more periods. Today, there are three teachers working with groups of students on a pilot project. Emphasis will now be placed on cross-curricular projects with the students learning to work in groups.

PART III

Recommendations

This report focuses on the role of teachers in the reform process and practice. Whereas the pedagogical and school governance principles on which the reform of elementary and secondary school are based have found wide acceptance, the practical implementation of the new curriculum at the secondary school level is of growing concern. The implementation plan as it now stands leaves more questions unanswered than practices clearly defined. It is perceived as being both too complicated and too imprecise.

Much of the same kind of criticism was being voiced when the new elementary school curriculum was about to be implemented and the implementation plan was considered indecipherable to the point of needing extensive rethinking and rewriting. The implementation document was sent back to the drawing board. Since being simplified and clarified, the blueprint is proving to be encouragingly workable for elementary school.

The substantially more complex content of a secondary school curriculum requires a greater degree of precision and attention to pedagogical priorities. The working documents for the implementation of the new curriculum at the secondary school level leave many basic pedagogical and organizational questions unanswered; it should not be surprising that teachers are concerned, sceptical or in denial.

In the opinion of the Ministry's **Commission des programmes d'études**, the program in question "lacks clarity."¹ It suffers from "imprecision and a persistent incapacity" to define or describe the relationship between the learning of specific and required subject matter and the acquisition of the broader-based "competencies" called for in the reform. The problem of how this mixed but not yet matched dichotomy is to be evaluated remains unresolved. There continues to be widespread concern about the fundamental question of which takes precedence, specific knowledge (subject matter) or the development of attitudi-

nal competencies, as how these concepts complement each other are neither articulated nor weighted. And as the Commission points out, teachers need the program to be "unequivocally comprehensible."

Le Conseil supérieur de l'éducation has also voiced its disapproval, not about the principles underlying the reform but about the dangers of launching such an important and fundamental reworking of the school system in the classroom in such an *ad hoc* fashion.²

The ABEE believes that all parties — the Ministry, schools boards, teachers, parents, unions, administrators — must develop common strategies to ensure that ALL teachers have a sound understanding of the new curriculum reform, based on a common language and a common perspective of the imperatives of the reform.

In view of these reservations, but believing that the concepts underlying the reform are pedagogically sound and institutionally workable and that the successful implementation of the reform will, in the end, depend on the constructive participation of teachers, the ABEE recommends:

1. That the implementation of the reform at the secondary school level not be unduly postponed.
2. That the implementation pilot projects now underway not be abandoned and that schools wishing to undertake similar implementation trials be given the resources to do so.
3. That pilot programs in Secondary I be extended through Secondary V so as to underline the ongoing purpose of the experimentation
4. That the Ministry make it a priority to clarify, in conjunction with practising university educators, the meaning and scope of "cross-curricular competencies."
5. That public discussion of the potential benefits of a rigorous yet flexible reform curriculum be encouraged.

1. http://www.cpe.gouv.qc.ca/synth_progform_ensseccycle1_a.htm

2. <http://www.cse.gouv.qc.ca/pdfs/abA-refo.pdf>

6. That the Ministry, in conjunction with practising educators, define and describe the appropriate methods for evaluating the cross-curricular competencies that are required of students by the reformed curriculum.
7. That the Ministry, the school boards and school administrators recognize that before the reform can benefit students, the teachers from whom they learn must have understood its requirements. To this effect, presentations on the experiences in pilot schools should become mandatory Pedagogical Day professional development activities.
8. That the evaluation of competencies being explored in the various pilot programs be shared with other schools as examples of how the new approach can be dovetailed with the acquisition of subject matter.
9. That, for the purpose of encouraging collaborative approaches to the teaching of specific disciplines, it would be helpful if subject departments were grouped into broader units by cycle.
10. That school boards, school administrators and unions recognize the necessity of giving teachers in-school time and opportunity to share their pedagogical preoccupations and work-related concerns with their colleagues. As teachers' in-school time is being increased, some significant part of it could be allocated to periods for teachers to work together.
11. That in the areas of curriculum design and adaptation — areas in which most teachers have little experience or expertise — school teams enlist teachers in the role of rotating in-school coordinators and, when necessary, outside experts.
12. That school boards become more actively involved in both initial and ongoing teacher education.
13. That, to anchor curriculum design projects in the short run, links be established by school boards and schools with university faculties/departments of education. Amongst the activities to be examined are assigning appropriately qualified education students, under the supervision of their professors to help teachers in schools with the change from a positivist to a constructivist approach in the classroom and with the evaluation of curriculum content.
14. That, using the lessons learned in the process of reform implementation about the importance of curriculum design on teaching practices, initial teacher education in future include appropriate knowledge and experience in the area of curriculum design.
15. That school boards and schools be given the option of reallocating funds from various budget categories for the purpose of engaging part-time staff to assist teachers in curriculum design and the development of pedagogic materials.
16. That school boards be mandated to carry out continuing teacher in-service training in order for teachers to integrate specialization and pedagogy under the supervision of experts.
17. That each school's pedagogical program should allow for teachers to be involved in determining their own professional development.
18. That days set aside in the school calendar for professional development be used for their original purpose. Each school calendar should give priority to the implementation of the reform and to professional development needs throughout the school year.
19. That the evaluation of teachers and principals include a professional and personal growth plan and goal setting.
20. That the Ministry develop a policy that would provide incentive for teachers to update their professional qualifications periodically.
21. That the Ministry and school boards encourage the use of technology, including Web sites on reform issues for developing self-guided programs for teachers' professional development.
22. That the Ministry and school boards examine the issue of the professional upgrading of supply teachers whose initial teacher training did not expose them to the concepts of the reform.
23. That secondary schools with over 500 students be invited to incorporate into their programs courses that expose their students to vocational and career options and life experiences.

Appendix I

Individuals Consulted by the Advisory Board on English Education 2001-2003

Joce-Lyne Biron	Secretary/Coordinator, Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant (COPFE)
Martine Boivin	Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant (COPFE)
Rob Buttars	Place Cartier Adult Centre (LBPSB)
Pompea Cardone	John F. Kennedy Business Centre (EMSB)
Carolyn Clarke	Pierrefonds Comprehensive High School (LBPSB)
Wayne Commeford	Principal, James Lyng High School (EMSB)
Carmela Dilorio	John F. Kennedy Business Centre (EMSB)
Michael Dubeau	Principal, Pontiac High School (WQSB)
J.-P. Dubois	Pontiac High School (WQSB)
Jean Fillatre	Partnership for School Improvement
Denyse Gagnon-Messier	Présidente, Conseil pédagogique interdisciplinaire du Québec (CPIQ)
Anne Heenan	The Study, Montréal
Ronald Hughes	Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT)
Tania Journeau	Massey-Vanier High School (ETSB)
Patricia Lamarre	Groupe de recherche sur l'éthnicité et l'adaptation au pluralisme en éducation (GREAPE)
Kate LeMaistre	McGill Faculty of Education
Marina Lesenko	Villa Maria School
Christopher Lyons	Student, McGill Graduate School of Library Science
Marilyn MacLean	Place Cartier Adult Centre (LBPSB)
Marie McAndrew	Groupe de recherche sur l'éthnicité et l'adaptation au pluralisme en éducation (GREAPE)

Judy McBride	Lecturer, McGill (Education); Teacher, Macdonald-Cartier (RSB)
Kim McGrath	Teacher (RSB)
Wendy Moore	Pontiac High School (WQ5B)
Bill Nevins	St. George's School
Kevin O'Donnell	Télé-Québec
Michel Pagé	Groupe de recherche sur l'éthnicité et l'adaptation au pluralisme en éducation (GREAPE)
Kerri Payette	Lakeside Academy (LBP5B)
Ron Silverstone	Association of Administrators of English Schools of Québec (AAESQ)
Marie-Claire Skrutkowska	Macdonald-Cartier High School (RSB)
William Smith	Groupe de recherche sur l'éthnicité et l'adaptation au pluralisme en éducation (GREAPE)
Don Stevens	Pontiac High School (WQ5B)
Carol Swiston	Principal, Royal Oak School (RSB)
Pierre Weber	President, Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT)

APPENDIX II

CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(adopted March 21, 2002)

Purpose and scope

1. This Code sets out the ethical principles and rules of conduct applicable to the members of the Commission de l'éducation en langue anglaise (hereinafter referred to as the "Advisory Board").

Ethical principles

2. The mandate of the Advisory Board is to advise the Minister of Education on all matters relating to the educational services provided in English elementary and secondary schools. For these purposes, the members of the Advisory Board shall perform their duties in the public interest and act impartially and objectively, as is incumbent upon any person who participates in the accomplishment of the mission of the State.
3. The rules of conduct provided herein do not list all appropriate actions or describe all inappropriate actions. The members of the Advisory Board must perform their duties to the best of their abilities and knowledge, with diligence, application, integrity, honesty and judgment, in accordance with law and in keeping with the public interest.

Rules of professional conduct

Discretion

4. The members of the Advisory Board are bound to discretion in regard to facts or information that come to their knowledge in the performance of their duties and are at all times bound to maintain the confidentiality of information thus received.

Dealings with the public

5. The chair of the Advisory Board is the only member who may act or speak on behalf of the Advisory Board, except where by del-

egation another member is expressly mandated to act or speak on behalf of the Advisory Board. By tradition, individuals authorized to speak on behalf of the Advisory Board do not comment on the news or the Minister's statements but explain only the positions of the Advisory Board.

Neutrality

6. In the performance of their duties, the members of the Advisory Board must act without being influenced by any partisan political considerations or any pressure group.

Political activities

7. The chair of the Advisory Board must inform the Secretary-General of the Conseil exécutif before running for an elected public office.
8. The chair of the Advisory Board with a term of office of fixed duration shall resign from his or her position if he or she is elected to a full-time public office and agrees to the election.

Conflict of interest

9. The members of the Advisory Board shall avoid placing themselves, in the performance of their duties, in any situation involving a real, potential or apparent conflict between the members' personal interest and the public interest.
10. The members of the Advisory Board may not use for their own benefit or for the benefit of a third party confidential information obtained in the performance of their duties, unless expressly so authorized by the Advisory Board.
11. To prevent conflict of interest, no contract or other form of financial contribution may be made by the Advisory Board to obtain services from its members, except for the

remuneration to which the chair is entitled in relation to the performance of his or her duties.

12. The members of the Advisory Board may not solicit or accept a favour or an undue advantage for themselves or for a third party.
13. The chair of the Advisory Board may not, on penalty of dismissal, have a direct or indirect interest in an enterprise or association the nature of whose activities entails a conflict between the personal interest of the chair and the performance of his or her duties.
14. Any other member of the Advisory Board who has a direct or indirect interest in an agency, enterprise or association entailing a conflict between his or her personal interest and that of the Advisory Board shall, on penalty of dismissal, reveal the interest in writing to the chair of the Advisory Board and, where applicable, shall withdraw from the meeting whenever a subject on the agenda could place the member in a situation of conflict of interest.

Period after the holding of office

15. The members of the Advisory Board who have completed their term of office shall not disclose confidential information obtained in the performance of their duties on the Advisory Board or use for their own benefit or for the benefit of a third party information unavailable to the public that they obtained in performing their duties.

Application

16. The authority competent to act in the case of the violation of an ethical principle or a rule of professional conduct set out in this Code shall be the Associate Secretary-General for Senior Positions of the Ministère du Conseil exécutif.

17. The chair of the Advisory Board shall be responsible for the implementation and application of this Code. He or she shall ensure that all members of the Advisory Board comply with the ethical principles and the rules of professional conduct set out in the Code, and shall inform the competent authority of any cases of violation of those principles or rules.
18. Any member of the Advisory Board accused of a violation of an ethical principle or a rule of professional conduct set out in this Code may be temporarily relieved of his or her duties by the competent authority, in order to allow an appropriate decision to be made in an urgent situation or in a presumed case of serious misconduct.
19. The competent authority shall inform the member concerned of the violation of which he or she is accused, of the possible penalty and of the fact that he or she may, within seven days, provide the authority with his or her observations and, if he or she so requests, be heard regarding the alleged violation.
20. Where it is concluded that the member has violated an ethical principle or a rule of professional conduct set out in this Code, the competent authority shall impose a penalty.
21. The penalty that may be imposed on the member is a reprimand, a suspension without remuneration for a maximum of three months in the case of an administrator of state, or dismissal. Any penalty imposed shall be presented in writing and give the reasons.