

CSQ News

Spring
2016

Official publication of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec

EVERYONE
DESERVES AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
to write their own future.



Special feature
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EDUCATION
CONFERENCE**

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**SAVING THE
PUBLIC CHILDCARE
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**THE CHALLENGES
OF GRADUATING
IN THE NORTH**

**Public-sector negotiations
AGREEMENT IN
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A true education policy would be possible if the government put effort into it and believed in its necessity. Until now, our persistent demand for an open dialogue with stakeholders to identify the real needs of education has been in vain. In fact, the four liberal ministers of education who have succeeded each other for two years have turned a deaf ear.

Our very legitimate demand to hold a broad consultation on priorities in education has not been heard, no more so than the demands of parents who surround our schools. We are more than a little puzzled by the government's actual desire to make education a national priority.

The parliamentary commission on Bill 86 regarding education governance has started its work. We've been heard and explained the double democratic deficit of the project. A deficit in the process since the chosen method is not conducive to social dialogue and does not allow for debate. And a deficit in the content because in addition to the decline in school democracy, the bill jeopardizes equal opportunity, which is the foundation of our education system.

For us, a real dialogue about the issues in education would have allowed to focus on educational success, essential services, improved learning conditions for students, improved working conditions and professional recognition for personnel... But none of this is on the government's agenda. Rather, it prefers to suggest structural changes that don't make sense.

In mid-March, the CSQ held a conference on education under the theme of equal opportunity and social justice. In a context where social inequalities are growing, how can we ensure equal opportunity? In his book, *The Great Divide*, Joseph Stiglitz, winner of the Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel (also called the Nobel Prize in Economics), unequivocally states that equality only happens with education, both its quantity and quality.

Sharing this same conviction, our Centrale continues to fight so that the debate on the future of public education focuses on the quantity and quality of services offered to students, and not on the types of structures to put in place or eliminate.

It's high time to ensure that fairness and equality are at the core of decisions in matters of education. This is the roadmap we recommend.

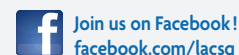


Louise Chabot
President

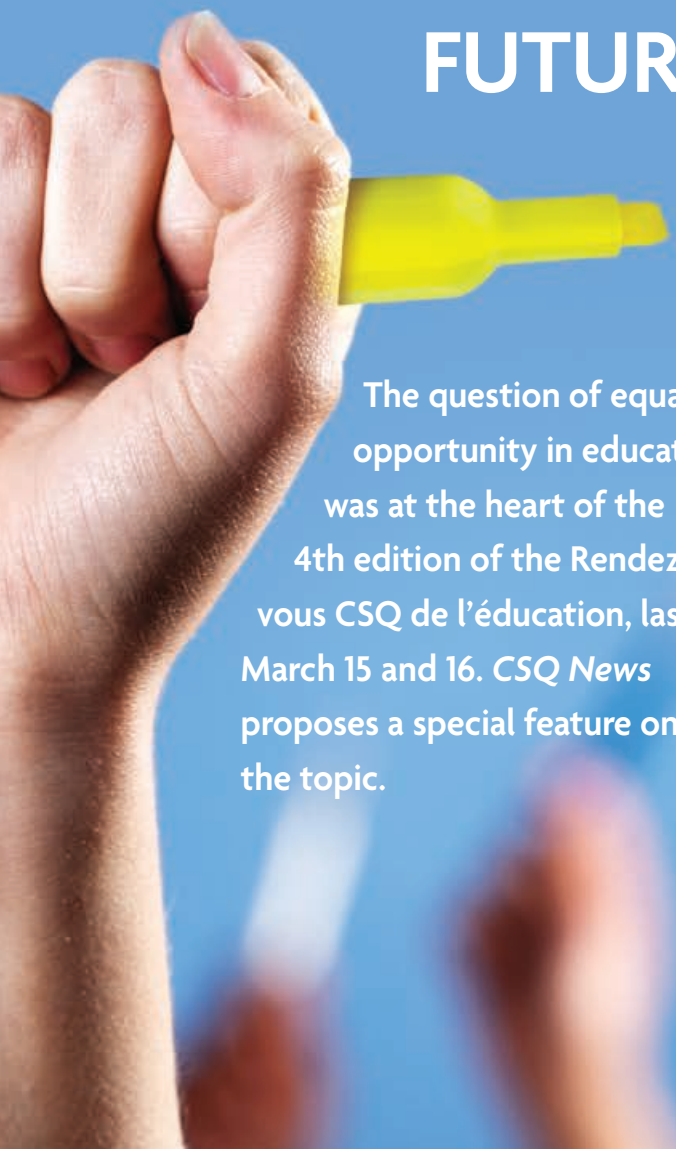


CSQ News Volume 31, No. 3 Official publication of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec, 9405 Sherbrooke St. East Montréal (Québec) H1L 6P3, Phone 514 356-8888, Fax 514 356-9999, E-mail nouvellescsg@lacsq.org / **Director of Communications** Marjolaine Perreault / **Chief Editor** Catherine Gauthier / **Production Secretary** France Giroux / **Translation** Suzanne Shields, Carolyn Perkes / **Revision** Dominique Carle / **Printing** Impression F.L. Chicoin / **Photos** François Beaugard, Jean-François Leblanc, Pascal Rathé, Gratien Tremblay, iStock / **Advertising Manager** Jacques Fleurent, Phone 514 355-2103, E-mail fleurent.jacques@csq.qc.net

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EVERYONE DESERVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO WRITE THEIR OWN FUTURE



The question of equal opportunity in education was at the heart of the 4th edition of the Rendez-vous CSQ de l'éducation, last March 15 and 16. CSQ News proposes a special feature on the topic.

A troublesome phenomenon in the West

UNEQUAL EDUCATION AT THE SERVICE OF THE LABOUR MARKET

LUC ALLAIRE *CSQ Advisor for international relations*

Nico Hirtt is a founding member and research analyst for the Appel pour une école démocratique organization in Belgium. Invited to speak at the Rendez-vous CSQ de l'éducation, he paints a harsh picture of the evolution of education systems in the West.

He recalls the massification of education from the 1950s to the 1980s, supported by an important discourse for the democratization of education. Since the 1990s, the socioeconomic context has completely changed.

“We then entered what was poorly referred to as the knowledge or information society. In fact, we witnessed a polarization of the labour market. The number of jobs requiring high skill levels increased significantly, at the same time as the demand for unskilled jobs, mainly in the service sector, exploded.”

This transformation had important repercussions. “The discourse of the 1950s to 1980s moved backwards for the benefit of a financial wave that stated: ‘now, what’s important, is that everyone get training adapted to the needs of the labour market.’”

Therefore, instead of focusing on increasing levels of education and qualifications, the demand has been on a more flexible and adaptable workforce, a discourse led by international organizations, such as the European Commission, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the International Monetary Fund.

Today, the results are palpable. “Since PISA’s initial international investigations in the early 2000s, we have seen an increase in social inequalities in most OECD members, demonstrated by results obtained in math and literary skills.”

Nico Hirtt is scathing: “The growth of social inequalities is not a sign of a dysfunctional school system, but rather the education system’s great ability to adapt to the socio-economic environment. It’s sad to say, even cynical perhaps, but this is what’s happening: the increase in social inequalities in schools is a reflection of the polarization of the labour market to which schools tend to spontaneously adapt!”

Photo iStock

1 Programme for International Student Assessment

Racial segregation: New York schools are the most affected

Anthony Harmon is the New York regional president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). As such, he collaborates with the Federation of Teachers (AFT) in a working group on racial equality in education.

The NAACP faces enormous challenges in the education sector. New York schools are the most segregated in the U.S. The situation is explained by the fact that the most underprivileged neighbourhoods in the Bronx are only a few subway stations away from the richest neighbourhoods in Manhattan. The solution according to Anthony Harmon would be to allow black students in poorer neighbourhoods to attend white schools in upscale neighbourhoods. “To do so, we would need to eliminate zip codes as the criteria for school zoning,” he says.

For him, it is necessary to address the issues of equality and justice in the school

system, starting with speaking the truth to those in power. As a result, the AFT organized meetings in areas where individuals could speak on the discrimination they experience. “White people were floored when they heard young black people describe the discrimination they are subjected to daily, such as being followed into a store simply because you are black, for example.”

The report lists several recommendations to improve the situation in schools. The first consists of funding programmes that would provide alternate solutions to school suspensions. For Anthony Harmon, “it is critical that suspensions not be perceived as holidays, but rather as educational opportunities that make sense especially for black students who are most often suspended”, concludes the guest speaker at the Rendez-vous CSQ de l'éducation. /



Anthony Harmon

EARLY CHILDCARE IN QUÉBEC A PUBLIC NETWORK IN JEOPARDY

ISABELLE-LINE HURTUBISE *CSQ Advisor*

The Québec government achieved a major milestone in the late 1990s when it introduced a network of regulated and subsidized educational childcare centres that aimed to offer all children, regardless of their background, access to quality services. But, over the last fifteen years, the network has undergone many cutbacks, in addition to recent adjustments to fees and tax credits, which have pushed parents to the private sector. Are we witnessing the dismantling of the public childcare network?

The Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économiques (IRIS) recently conducted an important study of the childcare sector, which took a closer look at the issue of fees and the dangers of privatizing services.

“What jumps out most is the relative stagnation since the 2000s in the number of places in regulated and subsidized childcare centres compared to the private sector,” says Philippe Hurteau, researcher at IRIS.

Regulated and subsidized childcare services refer to early childcare centres and home childcare providers. “When it comes to home childcare centres, growth is hardly 3%, that is, 2,000 spots over 10 years. But, for private childcare centres, the number of spots has exploded from 271 in 1998 to 52,000 today,” he says.

MASS EXODUS OF PARENTS

“We are witnessing an exodus of families to the private sector. Fee adjustments have made these daycares seem less expensive in their eyes. But, in private home childcare centres, there are no government regulations regarding the number of infants, the training of educators, and mandatory background checks, for example,” explains Julie Pinel, vice-president of the Alliance des intervenantes en milieu familial – Montérégie (ADIM-CSQ).

As for early childcare centres, something new has occurred: waiting lists have virtually disappeared as parents are no longer trying to get in. Yet, research has confirmed that the quality of regulated and subsidized educational childcare centres is excellent. According to a recent study by the Institut de la statistique du Québec, the percentage of children benefiting from good or excellent services in early childcare centres is four times greater than in commercial, unsubsidized daycare centres.

A PLUS FOR EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

In addition, several studies have shown the substantial impact that educational and universal childcare services have on future academic success and the fight against poverty.

“Access to quality services during early childhood provides children with better social-emotional, cognitive and linguistic development, as well as, greater autonomy. Children are therefore better equipped to begin their academic path. This ensures more equal opportunity to all children,” says Valérie Grenon, first vice-president of the Fédération des intervenantes en petite enfance du Québec (FIPEQ-CSQ).



Photos François Beauregard



Philippe Hurteau, Julie Pinel and Valérie Grenon were speakers at the Rendez-vous CSQ de l'éducation.

Cuts to early childcare centres run very deep.

CUTBACKS THAT RUN DEEP

IRIS findings have led to a second observation: “The Robillard Commission¹ suggests an increase of 79.6% in the cost of subsidized daycares. But the reality is quite different! Rather, we should speak of a 23% increase due mainly to the increase in the number of spots and not to the cost of spots, the latter being no more costly. One might think that the commission is advising the government using data that is, at the very least, problematic,” affirms Philippe Hurteau.

Cuts to early childcare centres run very deep. “Resources for children with special needs are the first to pay the price. What happened to equal opportunity, which was at the heart of creating public childcare centres in Québec?” questions Valérie Grenon.

FAR MORE COST-EFFECTIVE SERVICES

Studies have shown that public childcare services are cost-effective. “Economist Pierre Fortin demonstrated that every dollar spent generates \$1.47 for the state. In addition to contributing to the optimal development and future success of young children, regulated and subsidized childcare centres have given thousands of women access to the labour market. This network represents a tremendous asset for Québec. It is a creator of equal opportunity that is the envy of other Canadian provinces and around the world,” concludes Julie Pinel. /

¹ Commission de révision permanente des programmes presided by Lucienne Robillard.

Dealing with the impossible

PORTRAIT OF CLASSROOM COMPOSITION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

JACQUES TONDREAU CSQ Director for professional and social action

Classroom composition has changed so much in recent years in Québec, that it has had a profound impact on the way teaching personnel work as well as the learning conditions of students. Hoping to demonstrate these significant negative effects, the Syndicat de l'enseignement de la région de Québec (SERQ-CSQ) conducted an investigation into the question and presented their conclusions at the Rendez-vous CSQ de l'éducation.

The flight of students to private schools or special projects, integration into regular classrooms without the necessary resources for students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities, and repeated budget cuts, affect the ability of personnel to provide quality education to all students. In some cases, classroom composition is so dysfunctional that it is nearly impossible to include all students in learning process.

AN INVESTIGATION TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE REALITIES OF PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

During the 2012-2013 school year, comments about 5936 students were collected from 283 teachers in as many classrooms from 20 primary schools in the Premières-Seigneuries and de la Capitale school boards. Several factors were considered for every student. Were they allophone or regular students? Did they have any specific difficulties or risk factors? Did they need an intervention plan or special resources? The information collected provided a wealth of data, both quantitative and commented, that was then rigorously analyzed.



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TROUBLESOME RESULTS

The results of the study¹, conducted by researcher Caroline Jeanson, put into perspective the integration in schools of students in wheelchairs or with Down Syndrome. On paper, the profiles of these students are much simpler than in reality, as if it were possible, by simply attributing a code or a title, to describe the entirety and complexity of a child.

An official name can hide many special needs, procedures that are difficult to follow, services that are refused, inadequate resources, daily adjustments, uncooperative parents...or all at the same time! Multiply this profile by 18, 20, 24...26 for a more accurate portrait of "regular" classrooms in public primary schools today. It's clear that they call upon extraordinary work from all personnel, starting of course with the teachers.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT – AND ACTION

The investigation leads to an important observation: this trend that demands that school personnel do more with less cannot continue. The quality of schooling in our classrooms, the learning conditions for all students, and the working conditions of personnel, starting with teachers, are at stake. /

¹ JEANSON, Caroline (2014). *Opération portraits de classe. Étude des compositions de classe des commissions scolaires des Premières-Seigneuries et de la Capitale. Québec.* Québec, Syndicat de l'enseignement de la région de Québec.

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND UNEQUAL OUTCOMES

JACQUES TONDREAU CSQ Professional and social affairs director

Over the course of fifty years, many countries have implemented intervention policies in schools in disadvantaged environments to help students successfully complete their education. However, the effects on persistence to graduation and academic success have been rather limited, as demonstrated by the generally poor performances of these programs around the world. Are we on the wrong track, seeking to solve social problems with educational solutions?

In the early 1960s, the democratization of education made secondary education accessible to all young Quebecers. Québec was embarking on a period of significant economic prosperity, and schools were expected to provide a competent workforce. At the time, people strongly believed that education could lift young people out of poverty, as reflected in the adage: *Qui s'instruit s'enrichit*.¹



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SCHOOLS CANNOT SOLVE EVERYTHING

Education intervention policies in disadvantaged communities were built on tremendous optimism about the potential of schools for reducing the gaps between outcomes for youths from disadvantaged communities and those from privileged backgrounds. Over time, however, these policies gave rise to awareness that schools, in isolation, cannot bring about social change.

PROACTIVE EFFORTS

Proactive efforts are needed to reduce social inequality before schools are able to play an adequate role in social change. There are many ways of combatting poverty, such as progressive tax rates – that distribute wealth more equitably – as well as policies to support families, affordable housing for parents living on low income, and an increase in the minimum wage or income supplements.

EFFECTIVE MEASURES

Over time, a number of measures have proven effective. Clearly, one of the most successful measures has been food assistance in disadvantaged communities. Unfortunately, because of education cuts, schools have recently been pressured to axe this kind of assistance.

As research amply illustrates, other measures to improve the atmosphere in schools, to reduce staff and student turnover and to encourage mixed class composition, bringing together students with different levels of academic achievement, are also conducive to learning and success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

SIGNIFICANTLY FLAWED POLICIES

However, intervention policies for disadvantaged communities do not usually engage the practices of school staff, even though the experience of staff would make it possible to avoid many pitfalls with policy implementation. There are other significant shortcomings, as attested by the assessment of the *Agir autrement* (SIAA) intervention strategy.

Implemented in 2002 to support schools in disadvantaged communities, the strategy did not demonstrate any effect on lowering school dropout rates. Why? The tightly structured process imposed on schools was too demanding. Furthermore, implementation that proved complex for the schools, the concentration of decision-making in the hands of directors and a planning process bound by administrative imperatives did little to encourage motivation in staff members.

¹ “Education brings prosperity”

Schools, in isolation, cannot bring about social change.

This should give political officials pause to consider often unreasonable expectations about the capacity of schools to change the order of things for students. Officials should begin by questioning their own ability to design and implement policies that are meaningful for schools, school staff and students.

THE LESSONS FROM SCHOOLS IN DISADVANTAGED ENVIRONMENTS

On the other hand, certain schools in disadvantaged environments do manage to get their students to achieve beyond expectations. This means that, despite the disappointing performance of educational policies in disadvantaged environments, such schools find ways of helping more students to achieve educational success. Research shows, in particular, that these schools have high expectations of students in terms of learning, regardless of the students' learning or behavioural difficulties.

EDUCATION STAFF, KEY PLAYERS

Schools, in isolation, do not have the power to address the failings of a capitalism that creates economic inequality. It is through their unique sphere of influence and intervention – pedagogical action – that they can be most effective. So let's give school personnel the means to fulfill this important mission by allowing them to fully contribute their experience to fostering persistence to graduation and educational success for students. /

DOUBLE STANDARD IN ADULT EDUCATION

MAXIME GARNEAU *FSE-CSQ Communications advisor*

In Québec, more than 300,000 adults attend General Adult Education (FGA) and Vocational Training (FP). Although our education network is feeling the effects of the demographic decline at the high school level, registration in FGA and FP has been on the increase for the last ten years. Yet, complementary services available to younger students are nearly non-existent. Are adult learners being unfairly treated?

Many adults arrive at adult learning centres following a difficult educational experience. Some have experienced failure several times, whereas others are overcoming difficult personal situations. The resources needed to support these individuals and provide the necessary help are too often lacking.

“A significant number of adults registered in FGA are students who had trouble at the primary and secondary levels, where they had access to special services. At the adult level, these resources are virtually non-existent,” says Jean-François Boivin, union advisor for the Syndicat de l'enseignement du Saguenay (SES-CSQ).

“We could describe this as a type of ageism. When you're 16 and you leave high school for an adult education centre, you suddenly lose the rights and resources you used to have. This situation is unacceptable and constitutes a significant disadvantage for adult learners,” says Daniel Baril, general director of the Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICÉA).

UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

According to Jean-François Boivin, who taught at the Centre de formation générale des adultes des Rives-du-Saguenay for more than 20 years, some aspects are unfair right from the start for the most vulnerable individuals.

SCHOOLS IN DISADVANTAGED ENVIRONMENTS

Early school leaving is a major issue in most countries. In his essay *L'école en milieu défavorisé*, Jacques Tondreau relates and analyzes the origins and evolution of educational policy on students in disadvantaged environments in several countries and provinces. This book will appeal to those interested in the issues associated with persistence to graduation and academic success.



“In a public education system such as ours, every student should have the right to pursue their dreams, and no one should have to follow a course that is already mapped out.”

“Adults who choose to go back to school show tremendous courage. Once their decision is made, we shouldn’t dampen their enthusiasm. On the contrary, everything should be done quickly and easily. Unfortunately, some get discouraged from the start because their limited learning makes it difficult to fill out forms or they don’t have the skills required to register through the internet. Others simply don’t have access to a computer,” he says.

Often, the most mundane aspects, such as registration or family-work balance, can be big obstacles. “We often address the fight against inequality in very theoretical and philosophical ways. If we want to improve things, we need to make sure all of these people encounter the least roadblocks possible,” adds Daniel Baril.

WRITING ONE’S FUTURE

For Jean-François Boivin, other issues threaten equal opportunity in FGA and FP. “We like to say that every student deserves an equal opportunity to write their own future. To make this possible, they need to be able to choose the program they are most passionate about. But, the government increasingly wants to adapt education to the needs of the regions and businesses. In a public education system such as ours, every student should have the right to pursue their dreams, and no one should have to follow a course that is already mapped out.”

“Unfair treatment, often seen at the adult level, comes in part from a lack of understanding of this sector,” affirms Daniel Baril. “When we talk about a student at the primary or high school level, we all have a good idea of their reality, their daily lives. The same applies for a cégep or university student. However, when it comes to an adult learner, few people can speak on it. In our educational system, we value all sectors, from preschool to university, but we often forget about FGA and FP.”



Photo Jocelyn Bernier



Photo archives



Photo François Beauregard

Heather Cregg, Jean-François Boivin and Daniel Baril were speakers at the Rendez-vous CSQ de l'éducation.

“This lack of interest in FGA and FP also has an impact on the working conditions of personnel. Job insecurity affects approximately three out of four teachers in this sector. The situation has important repercussions on the stability and completion of projects in these centres,” explains Heather Cregg, 3rd vice-president at the Syndicat de l'enseignement de Lanaudière (SEL-CSQ).

“Yet, general adult education and vocational training constitute important elements for our public education system. By providing many adults with a general or vocational education, these sectors play a key role in promoting equal opportunity for success in the Québec education network”, she concludes . /

Competition in education

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

ALEC LAROSE *FSE-CSQ Advisor*

In most of Québec's cities, half of all high-school students have abandoned regular secondary schools in favour of private and special project schools. In one generation, the diversification of exit paths and certain academic practices has incrementally tipped the already visible imbalance in our classrooms. What are the consequences of this situation for society, academic success and social inequality?

In recent years, the issue of competition between schools has resurfaced with a vengeance. Many researchers, media and politicians have raised questions. And for good reason: in Québec, 21.5% of Francophone students attend private secondary schools (Statistiques de l'éducation 2014). That said, the concentration of this trend is fundamental to understanding its origins and its impacts: 4 out of 5 Francophone students live within the boundaries of 30 school boards. In these communities, on average, private secondary schools account for 26% on average, and the proportion peaks at 42% in the Commission scolaire des Découvreurs.

Classroom composition is the determining factor of the situation. In fact, based on a major study published in 2015, Statistics Canada concluded that gaps between public and private schools could not be explained either by school resources or school practices. Instead, "two factors consistently account for these differences. Students who attended private high schools were more likely to have socio-economic characteristics positively associated with academic success and to have school peers with university-educated parents."¹

The exponential growth of special projects in the public schools, when it leads to the creation of groups defined by their comparative socioeconomic, cultural or academic differences, has the same consequences. The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation published a brief on this topic, stating that such projects received from 16% to 20% of enrollment, a figure it claimed was conservative. Thus, the special projects compound the effect of segregation caused by private schools, draining so-called regular classes of half of the most advantaged students.



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THE EDUCATION MARKET AND HOMOGENEITY, BENEFICIAL TO SOCIETY?

One of the most important research findings in recent years is that the effect of competition is not linear: the negative impacts start expanding from a rather low threshold (in Québec, see Caldas and Bernier, 2012; in the United States, see Greene and Kang, 2004). This very likely explains the contradictory studies in this field. In our education system, the critical threshold has been exceeded many times.

Yet, in Europe as in the United States, researchers have demonstrated that all in all, more hierarchical school environments perform less effectively, an observation confirmed by PISA tests. These environments also exacerbate social and ethnic segregation.

Here in Québec, in 2014, following a major review of literature, the expert committee on school board financing, administration, management and governance concluded that promoting heterogeneous classrooms and schools is a low-cost means of improving the effectiveness of the system.

Conversely, the "selective placement of students in different classrooms or schools on the basis of their academic outcomes, outcomes that are inextricably linked to their social background, gives rise to additional costs associated with the concentration of at-risk students in the same groups."²

GHETTO CLASSROOMS?

What we are seeing now is a significant concentration of students in difficulty or who come from disadvantaged communities in the same classrooms: a half that is less advantaged, more vulnerable, and separated from the other half, as is the case in some developing countries.

Beyond effectiveness, this also raises issues not only of fairness and justice, but also issues of true social and linguistic integration into a modern, complex society. Given the seriousness of these matters, the time has come, now more than ever, to reopen debate: where do we go from here?

1 FRENETTE, Marc, et Ping Ching WINNIE CHAN (2015). *D'où proviennent les différences entre les résultats scolaires des élèves des écoles secondaires publiques et ceux des élèves des écoles secondaires privées ?* Études analytiques – Documents de recherche n° 367, [translation]. Also available online: Statistique Canada, 27 p. [statcan.gc.ca/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2015367-fra.pdf].

2 QUÉBEC, MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION, DU LOISIR ET DU SPORT (2014). *Rapport du comité d'experts sur le financement, l'administration, la gestion et la gouvernance des commissions scolaires*, Québec, le Ministère, 182 p. [translation]. Also available online: education.gouv.qc.ca/references/publications/resultats-de-la-recherche/detail/article/rapport-du-comite-dexperts-sur-le-financement-ladministration-la-gestion-et-la-gouvernance-de/.

The challenges of graduating in the North

NICOLE DE SÈVE *Collaboration*

The data on the dropout rates for Inuit and Cree students in Québec are alarming. In 2009-2010, the dropout rate was 80.1% in the Kativik School Board, compared to 17.4% for Québec as a whole. The average for the Agreement territories (École Naskja and the Cree and Kativik school boards) was 85.2%.¹ Such dramatic statistics reflect the challenges that these communities are facing. Highly committed teachers working with these youths share their experience here.



CHALLENGE ONE

Teaching in communities where the mother tongue is not French. “Transmitting knowledge is difficult. French is a second language, and it is also very difficult to learn,” explains Jeff Gagnon, a French teacher in Opitciwan, an Atikamekw community.

“Mastering the language is a major challenge. For example, in the sciences, students have to understand the instructions. If they don’t, this creates problems,” adds Tarek Khazen, a science teacher in Waswanipi.



CHALLENGE TWO

Getting to know the kids, helping them to acquire self-confidence, to feel comfortable in the classroom. The fact is that the students don’t talk very much. They are very shy in class and hardly ever talk about themselves or their families.

“We can get them to open up once they trust us. I have helped young pregnant girls who lacked information about resources and kids with addiction problems. They talk about what they did the day before, what they drank, and violence at home,” says François Beauchemin, a secondary school teacher in Kangiqsujaq, an Inuit community.



CHALLENGE THREE

Combatting absenteeism. “This is a major problem. How can I manage my class, adapt my teaching, or be effective when the students skip their classes, often for long periods of time? The problem is not so visible in elementary school, but it gets worse from year to year,” explains Daniel Charest, a teacher in the village of Quaqtaq.

CHALLENGE FOUR

The housing crisis. Tarek Khazen is clear: “Often, the students are unable to do their homework at home. In the Cree community, the source of the problem is housing. How can you study when there are twelve people living in your home?”

“This is also the determining factor in the Inuit communities,” says François Beauchemin. How do you encourage a family of eight living in a two-bedroom house to value education? The student literally flees the situation, abusing alcohol and drugs.”

¹ GARAKANI, Tatiana (2015). *Persévérance scolaire des élèves inuit : Influence de la perception, de l'attitude et de l'approche pédagogique des enseignants inuit et qallunaat (non inuit)*, rapport de recherche, [Online], Fonds de recherche Société et culture, 20 p. [frqsc.gouv.qc.ca/documents/11326/552404/PRS_GarakaniT_rapport_inuit.pdf/0fab20e-ac81-4b02-9d24-4047e59a85fb].



Insufficient resources. Everyone agrees about how difficult it is to teach when the teaching support resources available to teaching staff, particularly specialized support staff, are inadequate for addressing of the various problems.

“There are tremendous social problems in the North. There are large numbers of students with behavioural problems or learning disabilities in our classes. We do not have the resources to conduct screening,” explains François Beauchemin.

In his view, the lack of resources can be partly explained by a shortage of the same professionals in the South, be they psychologists, pedagogical counsellors or psychoeducators. As a result, social services and schools in the North are penalized.



Teaching staff turnover. Every year, the arrival of teachers who are unfamiliar with the realities of Aboriginal communities creates tensions, because the culture shock is tremendous. These teachers have to get their bearings, plan

their teaching activities, and focus on human relationships and learning activities.

According to Daniel Charest, it takes time to get to know students from a culture with its own codes and customs. “Developing a relationship of trust is essential, because the teacher-student relationship lays the groundwork for encouraging student commitment.”

Yet relationships of trust are often disrupted by staff turnover. “This factor makes attachment more difficult for many students, who experience a kind of abandonment nearly every year. Inevitably, the teacher who guides, the coach who puts his or her energy into the job each day, is asked the following question the day after the March break: ‘Will you be here next year?’”

IS TEACHING IN SUCH CONDITIONS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK?

The teachers we met with reject such a verdict because, year after year, they have observed the results of their interventions. Daniel Charest is amazed by the exceptional athletic skills of Inuit youth.

“They are impressive hockey players and natural athletes. They are ingenious in the carpentry workshop and they have the greatest facility with building all kinds of objects. They love dancing and singing. They like to celebrate. You should see them in the jewellery workshop and in the visual arts courses. Talent in abundance. The girls who do traditional sewing are careful and meticulous.”

Jeff Gagnon is sure of one thing: sports must occupy an important place in the daily lives of students, because sports are a springboard for motivation and persistence to graduation. “What I do is organize sports outings that the kids are interested in, and they make the effort required to train.”

Having observed the problems that students had with finishing their homework, Tarek Khazen decided to do the work together in the classroom. “The students appreciated it, because they had no one at home to help them.”

Over the course of his years in teaching, Tarek Khazen has created countless science activities and organized science fairs. In his view, extra-curricular activities, such as photography, music, science and information technology, help motivate students and encourage them to come to school.

He is also proud of his students who have successfully completed their education: an engineer, a community leader, eight qualified elementary school teachers teaching years one to three, and three secondary school language teachers. François Beauchemin also speaks with pride of his 16 students who have attended cégep.

THE LAST WORD?

François Beauchemin is a realistic optimist: “I have Inuit friends who were born in igloos. How much change can happen within one generation? Change will happen gradually, generation to generation. So, the children of my students who graduated with a secondary school diploma may well graduate with a college diploma ... and perhaps, my students’ grandchildren will be university graduates,” he concludes. /



This article is the second in a series dealing with Aboriginal issues. From left to right: Jeff Gagnon, Tarek Khazen, Daniel Charest and François Beauchemin. They are members of the Association of Employees of Northern Quebec (AENQ-CSQ). François Beauchemin was one of the speakers at the Rendez-vous CSQ de l'éducation.

Immigration and equal opportunity

WORKING TOGETHER TO WELCOME THE STUDENT, AND THE HUMAN BEING

KARINE LAPIERRE *FPPE-CSQ Communications advisor*

The arrival of Syrian refugees in Québec centres and schools has made the headlines for several weeks. This has brought up a question that is still relevant today: how do schools integrate students who are immigrants (born abroad or have at least one parent born abroad), including refugees, to ensure equal opportunity with their peers born in Québec? This is the first part of an article depicting the challenges of welcome, francization and integration classes.

Photos Jean-François Leblanc



Réginald Fleury

Réginald Fleury is an education consultant for education and intercultural relations at the Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM). His work consists of supporting personnel who welcome immigrant students, whether they go through francization classes or are sent directly to regular classes.

He believes that to ensure equal opportunity for students, everyone involved – school personnel and management – must work together to change the way things are done and adapt to the realities of diversity. “We work differently with multilingual immigrant students in Montréal than with French Canadian students from Blainville.”

WELCOMING THE HUMAN BEING

For Réginald Fleury, schools who welcome immigrant students need to be human more than simply educational. “Parents who arrive from another country don’t know how our school system works. They have no point of reference to understand their child’s new experience, to create a bond of trust, to comprehend how the school works. We must get them to come to school and inform them long before the usual first parent-teacher meeting in November.”

Without resources, this responsibility often falls on the shoulders of the teachers. “I have a social mandate, I become the resource person for my students, the one who explains the next steps in their educational experience. The delay they’ve accumulated creates anxiety. At times, I am also the one who shows them the library, the skating rink, the movie theatre, and available aid resources,” says Clément Amphyon, a member of the Fédération du personnel de l’enseignement privé (FPEP-CSQ) who teaches French as a second language to high school students at École arménienne Sourp Hagop. In the past year, the school has created six welcome classes for new Armenian Syrian students.

Similar situation in Longueuil, where Thérèse Villeneuve, member of the Syndicat de Champlain (CSQ), teaches seven-year old students in the welcome class at École Bourgeois-Champagnat. “They need to learn to respect how Québec schools work, get in line, stay in their seats, play outside, love winter, visit a sugar shack, and ski downhill.”

However, the welcome varies from one region to the next. “Surprisingly, it’s often better in smaller areas, where the process isn’t so systematized, than in larger areas where the process has become chrySTALLIZED and where successive job cuts have reduced services. In more rural areas and in some smaller schools, all new immigrant families are met. We’ve seen organized events to collect hats and mitts, and classes get together to introduce immigrant families to winter sports. It’s this human side that school management should increasingly focus on when planning welcome programs,” explains Réginald Fleury.



Clément Amphyon

UNDERSTANDING THEIR MIGRATORY JOURNEY

To help immigrant students be more receptive to learning, we must take their migratory journey into consideration.

“Some have experienced war, refugee camps, lost family members. They also grieve the lives they had dreamed of in their countries, which is no longer possible. We must let



Photo François Beaugard

Thérèse Villeneuve

them share their stories, offer them a space, and not only talk about Québec and hockey. Even if the majority show great resiliency, professional help is often essential to help them through their traumas,” says the education consultant, who is also a member of the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels du milieu de l'éducation de Montréal (SPPMEM-CSQ).

However, there is some confusion on the topic of funding welcome services and those for other students, which means that immigrant students too often pass after students in regular classes when it comes the allocation of services. In a context of austerity, these inequalities are multiplied.

“As a teacher, I often need to fight in the place of parents who are non-status immigrants and are afraid to make waves, for their child to obtain the help of a speech therapist or psychologist, but they are the students who need them the most,” says Thérèse Villeneuve.

Equal opportunity for success is doubly compromised in this case – a situation that needs to change. /

Thérèse Villeneuve, Clément Amphyon and Réginald Fleury were speakers at the Rendez-vous CSQ de l'éducation.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

More than tuition fees

CLAUDE GIRARD CSQ Communications advisor

Four years ago, Québec was shaken by the *printemps érable*. Students mobilized in large numbers to thwart a significant hike in tuition fees in order to preserve access to higher education. However, the question of accessibility is much bigger and more complex, as highlighted by four speakers invited to the Rendez-vous CSQ de l'éducation.

“It has been shown that proximity to a postsecondary institution promotes higher education. The presence of cégeps and several campuses across the territory of Québec, for example in Amqui or Îles-de-la-Madeleine, acts as a real springboard for graduation,” says Frances Dionne, second vice-president of the Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de cégep (FEC-CSQ).

Tangible measures must be implemented to ensure geographic access to higher education across all of Québec. It's even more urgent now that austerity measures in recent years have magnified the problems for cégeps in rural areas, already affected by declining populations.

“In addition to significant reinvestment in the college network, other measures can be implemented to ensure the continued existence of cégeps, such as a better development framework for distance education, incentives for students to study in rural areas, and increasing the status of technical programs that have difficulty with recruitment,” she says.

SACRIFICED IN THE NAME OF AUSTERITY

At their end, André Poulin, president of the Syndicat des chargées et chargés de cours de l'Université de Sherbrooke (SCCCUS-CSQ), and Matthieu St-Pierre-Poulin, advisor for specialized services and union delegate at the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels du collège Ahuntsic (SPPCA-CSQ), question equal opportunities for success of students with disabilities.

“Since 2009, the number of students with disabilities has increased in our cégeps. The success of students with special needs depends greatly on our ability to help and support them throughout their college studies. The increase in numbers puts pressure on the network. Even if basic help is offered to these students, several challenges remain, such as equality among students, the amount of time teachers have to give them, and the allocation of available resources,” says Matthieu St-Pierre-Poulin.

At university, budget cuts also make the job of teaching personnel and lecturers much more difficult, given growing class sizes and increasing numbers of students with special needs.

“Teachers and lecturers don't receive specialized training to work with a special needs clientele.

Although their growing numbers in higher levels of education does attest to the success of support provided to SHSMLD¹ in the education network, we also need to help them thrive. It's not enough to just open the doors! Unfortunately,



André Poulin



Frances Dionne



Matthieu St-Pierre-Poulin



Luc Caron

ly, in the current context, these students risk a brutal reality check after we've given them the hope of receiving a university education,” says André Poulin.

WHEN SCIENCE IS SYNONYMOUS WITH PRECARIOUSNESS AND INSECURITY

Furthermore, to make higher education more accessible, we need to increase the appeal of certain jobs in the field of science. This is far from the case in Québec for those who want to enter the field of research.

“Funded university research in Québec keeps young scientists in a state of incomparable instability in our society. Research professionals, mostly with master's degrees (70%) or PhDs (20%), have an average yearly salary of \$45,000, no matter what the diplomas are. Plus, they live in a permanent state of insecurity, since they depend on the funding agencies,” explains Luc Caron, president of the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels de recherche de l'Université Laval (SPPRUL-CSQ).

Is it any surprise that, in this context, more than 80% of research professionals consider their situation precarious and consider their opportunities for promotion limited? This is even more troubling when we know that 60% of these

jobs are filled by women. Another worrisome fact: 40% of research professionals are between the ages of 25 and 35, and after eight years, 75% will have left the field of university research. These numbers make us question the place Québec holds for youth in the field of science. /

¹ Students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities.

A PASSION FOR DAYCARE

MARTIN CAYOUCETTE *FPSS-CSQ Communications advisor*

An intercom message requests that teachers not send students to the daycare room, because Danielle Landry is giving an interview. She says that “everyone’s always on the go, the students come in to get toys or balls, they come in to bring me notes, my room is sometimes used for meetings or class team work, there’s really a lot of hustle and bustle, but that’s the way things are and that’s how I want them to be!”

Danielle Landry is a daycare service technician at the École Horizon-Soleil in Saint-Jérôme. She has worked there since the school opened 21 years ago. It is a neighbourhood school for regular students from preschool to grade 6 and a regional school in the Commission scolaire de la Rivière-du-Nord for students 4 to 21 years of age who have moderate, severe and pervasive intellectual disabilities.

To hold this position, she explains, you must have the ability to work on many different issues at the same time and adapt to several situations. You must also keep an open mind and know how to deal with contingencies. She acknowledges that although the position involves a lot of managerial work, it is important to maintain human contact with everyone. “I am the liaison between the educators, the children, the teachers, the support staff, the parents, the administration and the specialists. To provide quality service, we all have to talk to each other!”

Complementary input from all the stakeholders has made it possible, for example, to hold an unusually large-scale breakfast hour for students and their parents: “Last year, we served 189 breakfast meals during school daycare services week.” What’s more, harmonious sharing of the facilities enables students to access the gyms and the pool, as well as the nearby skating rink. “There are activities to please everybody!” says Danielle Landry.

A SPECIAL SCHOOL, SPECIAL NEEDS

Among the 117 students in special education, some have very special needs that are not always recognized. “According to the Ministère de l’éducation, at age 12, you can no longer attend school daycare. However, our reality is that we have a clientele with severe motor or intellectual disabilities. They must be supervised. We can’t let them go home on their own.”

“In 2004, we started a pilot project with the Ministère de l’éducation so that students benefit from daycare up to 21 years of age. Since we didn’t have sufficient funds to meet all the needs, we found a community organization, the Centre du Florès, to work with us in this undertaking. With the Centre’s financial assistance and that of the Centre de réadaptation Le Bouclier, and our school nurse and stakeholders are all doing their part to help us day after day”, Danielle Landry adds.

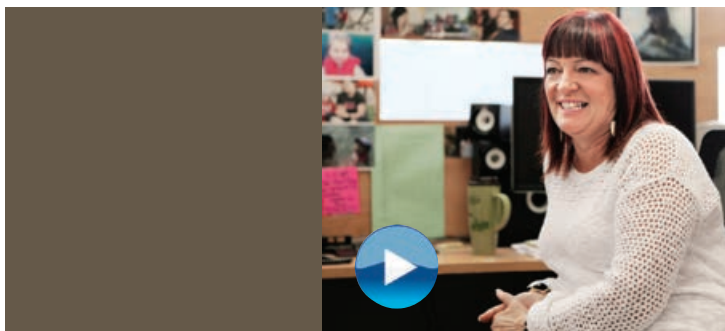


Danielle Landry

Photos Martin Cayouette

In 2010, it became a program overseen by the Ministère de la famille. “As a result, we have to present our project every year, without knowing whether it will be renewed. The amount granted is never the same. It’s a race for funding,” she explains.

Lots of work, but it’s grounded in a single-minded passion for ensuring that children achieve their potential and evolve in a stimulating environment. /



SAVING OUR PUBLIC CHILDCARE NETWORK

CHRISTOPHER YOUNG *FIPEQ-CSQ Communications advisor*

Pushed to the brink by the Liberal government's repeated assaults on the childcare network, CPE educators, home childcare providers, parents and Quebecers are stepping up to mobilize more than ever. Their message: we have to save the public childcare network.

Since it returned to office, the Liberal government has been attacking childcare centres (CPEs) and all subsidized childcare services. The adjustment of childcare fees has already begun to inflict damage: by making private daycare centres more fiscally attractive to a large segment of the middle class, the Liberals are pushing many parents to abandon public childcare.

As a result, thousands of children are now receiving lower quality services. Not to mention that thousands of parents may be receiving a rather costly surprise in tax season this spring ...

On top of this gradual exodus are the announced cuts of \$120 million in the CPE network. Despite the popularity of these services, the government has refused to reconsider its decision: regardless of disastrous consequences, in its view, there will be cutbacks. Its position demonstrates a glaring lack of confidence in the CPEs.

Childcare has not been spared: hundreds of millions of dollars have already been slashed from funding for the network in recent years. There is no more meat on the bone. These new cuts will necessarily diminish the quality of services.

THE REAL GENERATIONS FUND

Faced with this scenario, it should come as no surprise that the Fédération des intervenantes en petite enfance du Québec (FIPEQ-CSQ) and the CSQ are rallying to resist these damaging measures.



Photo François Beauregard

“The public childcare network must remain universal and accessible, because it makes a major contribution to child development and the early screening of learning disabilities in young children. It also gives women better access to the job market. It provides families with essential support and the assurance that their children will be better prepared, not only for school, but also for the future. This is our real generations fund!” said Louise Chabot, President of the CSQ.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO BACK DOWN

At the CSQ General Council meeting last January, delegates decided that childcare would be at the heart of the CSQ's actions in the coming months. We also plan on ensuring we have an impressive turnout in upcoming demonstrations, whether held on our initiative or that of other groups who care about Québec's children.

But it's not only the members of the CSQ and the FIPEQ-CSQ who are joining the front lines. Despite the frigid cold during the first months of the

year, we saw parents heading out to form human chains streaming toward, then standing sentinel over childcare centres. Right across Québec, parents braved the weather to show their support for a quality, affordable childcare network.

UPCOMING ACTIONS ALL ACROSS QUÉBEC

These actions only mark the beginning of citizen-focused mobilization that will be taking a variety of forms, from sending personalized messages to political decision-makers, to regional rallies, as well as even more diverse local initiatives.

Keep an eye out so that you don't miss out on invitations to join forces with us in the movement to save the public childcare network. The more of us there are, the more the government will be compelled to listen to us. The future of our children depends on it. /



PUBLIC-SECTOR NEGOTIATIONS: AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE RATIFIED

FÉLIX CAUCHY-CHAREST *CSQ Communications advisor*

A majority of CSQ members approved the intersectoral agreement in principle reached last December through public-sector negotiations. All in all, over 80% of CSQ members voted in favour of the agreement during consultations held in January and February this year.

“This support shows that members appreciated the outcome of these negotiations, which were held in a context of austerity imposed by an ideology-driven government that, at the outset, showed no openness to our demands. We had to build bargaining power by calling on the exceptional mobilization of our members and by convincing the population of the justice of our demands,” recalled Louise Chabot, President of the CSQ.

GAINS WON AND SAFEGUARDED

“At all the bargaining tables, we successfully obstructed the countless, unreasonable concessions sought by the government and above all, we preserved hard-won significant gains made in previous rounds of negotiation. We also secured gains by forcing the Chair of the Conseil du trésor to depart from the rigid financial framework to which he clung right up until the end. That was no small feat,” she noted.

In particular, the gains won by the Common Front more than double the amounts that the government had initially earmarked for the renewal of our collective agreements. The negotiations yielded results, be it through the enhancement of salary parameters, the extension and creation of retention or inconvenience premiums and the improvement of sectoral provisions.

WORK CONTINUES ON DRAFTING THE AGREEMENT

The negotiations teams are now working on drafting the texts of the collective agreements. Respect for the discussions held between the parties and concern for protecting workers entitled to public-sector trailer clauses is what guides the work of the Common Front, which is ensuring that the final texts accurately reflect the intent of the negotiations and the spirit of the agreement in principle that was reached.

OUTSTANDING WORK AND EXTRAORDINARY SOLIDARITY

Louise Chabot concluded by thanking the negotiations teams for the outstanding work they accomplished in recent months, as well as the delegates who guaranteed an exemplary democratic decision-making process and of course, all the members and unions of the CSQ for the extraordinary solidarity they showed throughout the negotiations. /

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