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# SCHOOLSAPES

WORKING TOGETHER TO INSTRUCT, SOCIALIZE AND PROVIDE QUALIFICATION

By Francine Payette  
(Translation)

## Schoolscapes: A Testimonial to the Creative Energy of the School System



Our readers have no doubt noticed that the format of *Schoolscapes* has constantly evolved over time, and this time has gone by so quickly! This is the fourth of five 2002-2003 *Schoolscapes* issues and, true to form, it reflects the energy that drives the team from the *Direction générale de la formation des jeunes* and school and school board teams.

Some of you may recall the first issue of *Schoolscapes* published in November 1998, when approximately 400 program development committee members met for the first time in Quebec City to work on the

QEP for preschool and elementary education. Since then, the elementary program has made its way into all schools and about 400 other members of program development committees have handed in their work on the program for Secondary Cycle One. The program was validated last fall and is now being revised in order to produce an improved version for approval by the Minister in June 2003.

*Schoolscapes'* mission is to inform stakeholders in the school system by reflecting on developments in the reform and supporting its progress. Up until this year,

articles had focused on the work that had been done at the major province-wide meetings and training sessions for resource persons. While it will continue to report on the developments at these major meetings, *Schoolscapes* will also increasingly illustrate how schools are gradually becoming educational communities, namely learning and creative organizations where partners can act in a coherent manner by using the education program and frameworks. Moreover, we will draw on these experiences to inspire other teachers and other school teams. 📌

## Building an Education Program

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Québec 

# BUILDING AN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Robert Bisailon, Assistant Deputy Minister for preschool, elementary and secondary education



By Claudine St-Germain  
(Translation)

## Building An Education Program

For more than two years, hundreds of people have participated in a project that is as important as it is ambitious: the development of the QEP for Secondary Cycle One. The following article outlines how this work is being carried out.

*“The Program is a social blueprint. It conveys the expectations of our society as regards students’ needs.”*

Just like the QEP for elementary school (which took three years to develop), the new QEP for Secondary Cycle One is a collective work based on the expertise of all the stakeholders in the school system. Hundreds of individuals participated in its development, validation and revision. The result of their efforts will be shared in August 2003 when the final version of the QEP will be distributed in the schools.

On November 26, Robert Bisailon, Assistant Deputy Minister for preschool, elementary and secondary education was eager to point out the true nature of the Québec Education Program. “There are actually misunderstandings about the Program,” he said. Some people view it as the sum of several subject programs, a vision that does not take into consideration the links connecting the subjects, the cross-curricular competencies and the broad areas of learning. Others see it as a manual. “The Program was not designed to be used by students, and it certainly cannot be replaced by a manual. Nor is it an educational guide containing so many methodological details that one loses sight of the substance.”

“The Program is in fact a social blueprint,” explained the Assistant Deputy Minister: “It conveys the expectations of our society as regards students’ needs. It is also an educational itinerary: an itinerary of learning that develops intelligence, sensitivity and active citizenship; a professional itinerary, used by autonomous teachers who adapt it to their personality; and an institutional itinerary, both for the school and the school board, used to create continuity between the elementary and secondary school, because it is impossible for teachers to pursue their professional itinerary without training and support!”

### Main conceptual phases of the QEP for Secondary Cycle One

**February 2001:** Design work for the QEP for Secondary Cycle One begins. Members of the expanded development committees meet to explore the foundations of the education reform.

**October 2001:** Expanded development committees meet for the second time.

**2001-2002:** Expanded development committees, committees of experts, drafting committees and the drafting support committees continue their work throughout the year.

**May 2002:** Drafting committees finalize and harmonize the subject programs developed by the various committees.

**September 2002:** A working document is distributed for validation purposes. It is also available to teachers on a protected Internet site.

**October and November 2002:** QEP for Secondary Cycle One undergoes validation process, to verify the clarity, relevance and consistency of the Program.

About 300 members of the development committees (including 200 teachers) meet for three days to validate the preliminary version of the Program, based on a consultation document.

The consultation document is also sent to 500 teachers in pilot schools. The teachers meet to validate the Program and forward their comments and observations to the Ministère de l’Éducation.

The same process is undertaken by the education sector partners. Sixteen organizations are identified, including central labour bodies, parent and teachers’ associations and school managerial staff.

By Claudine St-Germain  
(Translation)

# Validation: A Truly Collective Project

The validation of the QEP for Secondary Cycle One required the participation of hundreds of individuals from all sectors of the school system. They generously shared their expertise and experience in order to develop the best Program possible for Québec youth.

Since the beginning of the Québec education reform, there has always been a steadfast commitment to work together and encourage the players in the school system to work directly with students, in particular, to develop new education programs.

The QEP for Secondary Cycle One was validated from this perspective. As was done with the elementary school program, hundreds of individuals from every region, holding various positions, were called upon to examine the preliminary draft of this document. Their task was to assess its clarity, readability and relevance,

and propose suggestions to improve the Program in this regard.

The validation began last October with the members of the expanded development committees seeing, for the first time, the results of their work over the past years. Having worked on a specific subject, they were becoming acquainted with the entire Program. They worked in teams for two days and provided feedback on the preliminary version.

Meanwhile, the document was sent to two other groups who were asked to participate in the validation process: teams from pilot schools and partners from the education sector. They, in turn, analyzed the preliminary version of the QEP and provided comments and suggestions in order to improve it.

The final version of the QEP for Secondary Cycle One, to be distributed in August 2003, will then reflect the results of the extensive collective work that began nearly three years ago. To all those who participated in the validation process across the entire province, too numerous to mention, we extend our deepest thanks and gratitude. 🏡

**Winter 2003:** The Ministère de l'Éducation considers and analyzes the results of the consultation process. The comments are used to improve the QEP for Secondary Cycle One.

**August 2003:** A final version to be distributed so schools can begin to use the QEP for Secondary Cycle One.

**2004-2005:** QEP to be implemented for the first year of secondary school.

**2005-2006:** QEP to be implemented for Secondary Cycle One.



*There has always been a steadfast commitment to work together and encourage the players in the school system to work directly with students.*

By Eve Krakow

# Lead Schools Fall Conference: Lead Schools Tell Their Stories

At the Lead Schools Fall Conference held on November 28, 2002, in Montreal, teams from four schools presented some of the projects and practices being implemented in their schools in relation to the Québec Education Program. Organized by the Implementation Design Committee (IDC), the conference aimed to support the lead school network by providing a forum for schools to share their experiences and to discuss how lead and pilot schools can “tell their stories” to the rest of the school community.

Teams from both lead schools and pilot schools were invited to the conference. One will recall that pilot schools were designated to experiment with the reform and provide feedback to the Ministère on the applicability and appropriateness of the new curriculum. The mandate of lead schools (which emerged from the English-language school community) is to act as resources to other schools with respect to areas of expertise they are developing within the context of the QEP. Lead schools are supported by their respective school boards.

Below are summaries of two of the presentations given at the conference. (To read about the other presentations, see the IDC Portfolio to be distributed in May.) You can also read about the experiences of English-language elementary and secondary schools on the new “Best Practices” Web site the IDC has created.

## Projects and Practices

**Teachers at St. George’s Elementary school, a private school in Montreal, described some of the projects, activities and classroom practices initiated at their school.**

Judy Berger, who teaches English and Math, talked about the Leadership and Community Service project for Grade 6 students. The project involves a three-day outdoor leadership retreat, where students work in small groups to solve various challenges, and a community service and commitment program, in which the students carry out volunteer work on a regular basis.

Students begin by brainstorming on the issue of leadership. “What is character? What is a leader? What is a group? As educators, we frame the discussions with snippets of theory to help students build the appropriate vocabulary,” Berger explained.

The three-day field trip takes place with the teachers, but without parents. The students are given various tasks to perform in small groups. These might include activities such as building sculptures out of materials found in nature, or physical challenges such as a spider web puzzle where they have to go through the holes in a certain order. In each case, students have to figure out how to work together as a team to complete the task. They develop skills such as how to give each other feedback. “They learn a lot about themselves and each other,” said Berger. In addition to discussions on what worked or didn’t, students keep personal journals to record their thoughts, feelings and observations.

Back in the classroom, links are made to leadership and teamwork in the school. Then comes the community service and commitment component. Once again, students begin by brainstorming on feasible volunteer opportunities for 11-year-olds. These might include helping younger students in the school by tutoring or being a recess monitor; spending time at a seniors’ residence or helping out at a community centre in a disadvantaged neighbourhood.

Each student chooses an activity and commits to carrying it out once or twice a week, from November to May. Their involvement is supported by classroom activities: oral and written presentations on what their volunteer work entails, discussions on problems they run into so that their classmates can help them find solutions and journal writing on what they are learning and experiencing.

## Projects for Young Learners

Clare Gabert shared some of the projects and practices she uses in her Grade 1 classroom. First, there is her Community of Readers, a 45-minute reading routine she does each morning. It



*Through feedback on their choices, students begin to understand why one piece of work is better than another.*

includes five stages. First, children are teamed with a buddy to read a book they're already familiar with. In the second stage, the children choose a new book. To help them select a book with the right level of difficulty, Gabert has them put up a finger every time they have trouble with a word. Three fingers means the book is challenging enough but not too difficult; one finger means it could be a "holiday" book.

In stage three, she reads to the children. In stage four, the children read with a parent. Gabert admits that she is quite lucky in this respect: she usually has about five parent volunteers for morning reading. Last is free reading time: children can choose to read alone, with a buddy, or read items posted around the room.

Gabert enjoys doing various projects with her class. One is called a Journey to the Moon. Each night, students observe the moon and write in their moon journal. Entries can take various forms: questions, letters, descriptions, poetry. In the classroom, students discuss their ideas and share their writing. They study various aspects of the moon. "For example, we look at the scientific aspects, as well as how the moon appears in legends. The children can even create their own legends," she said. They also create works of art about the moon. "These in turn can serve as a springboard for writing."

She also discussed creating authentic situations for the students. Some years, for example, she had an aquarium with tadpoles in the classroom; the children followed their growth up to releasing them into a pond. Last year, Gabert managed to get eggs and an incubator. For two weeks, the children watched the eggs hatch into chicks. "This was an experience I remembered from my own childhood," she explained.

Related activities involved studying the chicks from a scientific perspective, writing in a logbook, creating cartoons about the chicks and discussing ethical issues such as breeding animals in captivity. When one chick almost died, they talked about death. The class also received visits from other classes, which gave the children an opportunity to

share their discoveries and explain to visitors how to behave around the chicks. Students even created a video about the experience, doing all the filming and editing themselves.

Finally, Susan Van Gelder, coordinator of technology, shared some video clips of skits the children produced as part of Destination Conservation, an environmental awareness project. In addition to various classroom and school-wide cross-curricular activities, a small group of students formed a Destination Conservation team. The team made suggestions on how the school could reduce its waste (for example, the school no longer uses plastic plates and cups in the cafeteria) and save energy (the administration is currently studying the students' proposed changes to school lighting).

## The Portfolio Process

**Amber Coons and Jennifer Goodall teach at Centennial Regional High School, Québec's largest English-language school. For their presentation, they decided to concentrate on how they use portfolios in the classroom.**

Coons and Goodall view portfolios as a process: they are not just a showcase of the student's best work, but a reflection of a year's worth of learning and lessons. At the start of the year, the teachers go over the steps for building the portfolio with the students. The portfolio is a collection of work—"and lots of it!" It involves taking risks. "Students shouldn't feel like they are being evaluated; they should have the chance to try things out and make mistakes," said Goodall. The teacher gives the students feedback as they go, "conferencing" with them as they build their portfolio.

Students choose what goes into the portfolio. They are encouraged to select what they feel is most important. "This means not just their best work, but work that reflects their learning. So it can include disasters!" Goodall explained that she provides more structure for the younger students. For example, she will give them a criteria sheet and ask them to choose two of six items. The structure loosens as the students get older.



Reflection is an important part of the process. Students must explain why a certain item is in the portfolio. "They find this difficult in the beginning, but it gets easier as they go. It makes them responsible for the process and aware of their strengths, weaknesses and how they've improved. It makes the portfolio meaningful to them." Through feedback on their choices, students begin to understand why one piece of work is better than another and what they need to work on. "This sometimes leads to pride, other times to disappointment," said Coons.

Both teachers admitted they are still struggling to find the best way to do the final evaluation. By the end of the term, all the pieces in the portfolio have already been evaluated, sporting the teacher's corrections, comments and annotations—but no mark. For the final evaluation, Goodall uses a sheet with two columns of boxes: for each item to be evaluated, on the left, the students give themselves a mark and write why they think they deserve that mark. On the right, she gives her mark and her own comments. "Their self-evaluation counts, but I have the final say."

Students really grasp the idea that learning is "about the journey rather than the destination," said Coons. "Now they're offended if I mark a piece before they've had a chance to rework and finalize it!" Even parents are involved in the process. They're asked to give suggestions on how their child might improve the portfolio. "It creates social interaction between the child and the parent."

One of the main advantages of the portfolio is that it is individualized. In an inclusive classroom where students are at very different levels, the portfolio allows each person to work at his or her own pace. Students set their own goals and work towards them. "Students with difficulties have been told all their lives what they can't do. They know it and don't need to be told again. The portfolio allows them to see and show others what they *can* do," said Coons. 🐦

[www.qesnrecit.qc.ca](http://www.qesnrecit.qc.ca)  
click on "School Reform in Québec"  
and then "Best Practices"

By Claudine St-Germain  
(Translation)

In order to broaden our vision of the QEP for Secondary Cycle One, we called upon our partners in the education sector, who agreed to take part in the validation process.

Nicole Gagnon, Coordinator of the validation process



# Committed Partners

The development of the QEP for Secondary Cycle One is a large-scale project that concerns all actors in the school system and will have repercussions on society as a whole. It is also a collective work to which hundreds of people from all areas of the sector have contributed. To ensure that this program is as clear, understandable and relevant as possible, the Ministère called upon various partner organizations from the world of education.

These organizations received the first version of the QEP in the fall of 2002. They then met on several occasions to provide their comments and observations. Their task was not to focus on the application of the Program, but rather on its nature.

To find out more about the partners' contribution to the validation process of the QEP for Secondary Cycle One, *Schoolscapes* attended the meeting held on November 18, 2002 in Québec City. The meeting, chaired by Nicole Gagnon, coordinator of the validation process, was attended by dozens of people with different experiences and training, including, among others, teachers, school principals, parents and university students.

Gagnon began by asking participants to summarize their organization's assessment of the first version of the Program. "It considers the challenges which young people must face", "It

does not mention the work the teachers will have to do as a team", "A glossary would be welcome", "We appreciate the consistency between this program and the elementary program" are some examples of the comments made.

Next, the first three chapters of the Program (which explain the basics) were examined in depth. The participants commented on the words they found to be inaccurate and on the notions that could be explained more clearly. Gagnon's team carefully noted each comment, which will be taken into account during the revision of the QEP.

"Your writing standards are high!" exclaimed Gagnon at the end of the meeting. The comment came as no surprise, however, as it was precisely what had been expected of them. 🐦

*Their task was not to focus on the application of the Program, but rather on its nature.*

## Organizations consulted for validation of the QEP for Secondary Cycle One

**Association des cadres scolaires du Québec (ACSQ)**

**Association of Administrators of English Schools of Québec (AAESQ)**

**Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Québec (ADGESBQ)**

**Association des directeurs généraux des commissions scolaires du Québec (ADIGECS)**

**Association des directeurs généraux des établissements scolaires de l'enseignement privé (ADIGESEP)**

**Association québécoise du personnel de direction des écoles (AQPDE)**

**Association montréalaise des directions d'établissement scolaire (AMDES)**

**Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)**

**Conseil pédagogique interdisciplinaire du Québec (CPIQ)**

**Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec (CRÉPUQ)**

**Fédération des comités de parents de la province de Québec (FCPPQ)**

**Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec (FCSQ)**

**Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privé (FEEP)**

**Fédération québécoise des directeurs et directrices d'établissement d'enseignement (FQDE)**

**Commission des programmes d'études (CPE)**

**Comité sur les affaires religieuses (CAR)**

**Québec Association of Independent Schools (QAIS)**

**Québec English School Boards Association (QESBA)**

**Québec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT)**

By Claudine St-Germain  
(Translation)

# Validation Results

Here is a summary of the comments received during the validation process. They have been taken into account for the revision of the first version of the QEP for Secondary Cycle One.

Overall, the people who took part in the QEP validation process agree on its quality. It takes into account the educational challenges in our current society and adequately describes the adolescents whom it addresses. It also builds on what has been done with the QEP for elementary education. Finally, the participants agree with the idea of a program that recommends a competency-based approach, which defines students as the main actor in their learning.

They therefore support the educational orientations and aims explained in the initial chapters of the Program, but nevertheless have some suggestions to enrich this part of the document. Firstly, they ask that the privileged learning approach be better explained. They also want more emphasis to be put on the socio-constructivist approach and the respective roles of the teacher and the student in learning and evaluation to be better defined. Moreover, the participants would like the key features and the synergy of the various elements of the Program to be set out more clearly (cross-curricular competencies, broad areas of learning and subject-specific competencies). Lastly, they suggest making links with current practices to avoid giving the impression of starting from square one.

Regarding the presentation of competencies in each subject area, the participants deplored certain weaknesses in the links that exist between learning

content and the competencies. They would also like the links of each subject with the other elements of the Program to be better defined. For example, one suggestion is to highlight the relationship between each subject and the aims of the Program (constructing identity and developing a view of the world). Furthermore, they want to use the links with the competencies of other subjects to help teachers adopt a systemic vision of the Québec Education Program.

Finally, regarding the evaluation, the participants would like references or examples to be added to the principles outlined in the initial chapters. They would also like the links between the evaluation criteria, the end-of-cycle outcomes and the key features of the competencies to be more easily understandable.

In general, this validation process has enabled us to notice that the discourse coming from communities that have begun reflecting on the QEP was more reasoned than that of communities reading it for the first time. The first stakeholders report that they observed a change in the students as soon as they implemented the initial actions in their school. However, they stress that it has led to higher demands on the school team, especially with respect to planning and teamwork. All the participants greatly insisted on the needs for education, time and organizational conditions that are necessary to facilitate implementation of the QEP. The integration of the first three chapters of the Program should seem not only useful, but unavoidable for all the teachers of a school, and require the reflection of the community. 🗨️

*The participants agree with the idea of a program that recommends a competency-based approach, which defines students as the main actors in their learning.*



# EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING

By Eve Krakow

## From Education to Evaluation

**How do we evaluate competencies? What are competency levels used for? How do we use the different evaluation tools?**

**A series of professional development workshops were held last fall to answer these, and other burning questions.**

In response to a request made by teachers during consultations on the draft policy on the evaluation of learning, a series of professional development workshops were held from October 11 to November 22, 2002, to help resource persons become more familiar with the new evaluation framework and competency levels.

This was a logical step following publication of the documents *Competency Levels by Cycle – Elementary School* and the *Framework for the Evaluation of Learning at the Preschool and Elementary Levels* in April and June 2002 respectively.

Led by professionals from the Direction de l'évaluation, and co-animated by local education consultants in some cases, the two-day sessions were attended by education consultants and other resource persons who will act as multipliers to train teachers in their respective schools and school boards. Workshops were held in all eleven regions, as well as in Montreal and Québec City for the English-language sector.

The objectives of these sessions were as follows: to support the resource persons who will help teachers become familiar with the Framework, to situate the Competency Levels within the evaluation process and explore their use by means of concrete examples, to harmonize the language to be used in evaluation, and to develop collaborative relationships within the education community. 🗨️

By David Fuchs

## Interview with Patrick Ryan

# Evaluation in

The English training session on evaluation was held in Montréal on November 21 and 22, 2002 as part of the province-wide consultation organized by the Ministère de l'Éducation. This was an opportunity for consultants, school administrators and school board officials from both elementary and secondary levels to become better acquainted with the framework for the evaluation of learning (preschool and elementary levels) and to voice their opinions and concerns about evaluation. It was also an opportunity for *Schoolscapes* to meet with Patrick Ryan, assistant facilitator of the session and resource person with the Math Action Plan Committee (MAPCO).

"Teachers are looking for ways in which they can modify their evaluation techniques," said Ryan. "There is a new vocabulary and new instruments that have been developed to look at students' work. Focusing on actual work provides teachers with an understanding of how students are developing the competencies of the QEP. This is essential to guide teachers in their assessment."

“We looked at four phases of evaluation: planning, gathering and interpreting information, making judgments about the information that is given and following up with decisions that will be reinvested into teaching and that will modify practices. Evaluation is the guiding principle of teaching and it includes both formal evaluation and ongoing evaluation that is inherent to teaching.”

## Practical situations

Participants looked at samples of work to see whether or not a profile of a particular student’s work was sufficient for them to be able to describe that student’s placement within the competency levels of the QEP.

“Although they were looking at samples from a portfolio, it was interesting to see how experienced teachers were able to look at the work and gain a lot of information. There was a lot of consistency with how they looked at the student,” said Ryan.

“When teachers look at some of the complex tasks, they have to look at a large sample of students’ work. It becomes a much more continuous practice. They need to make sure that the gathering of this information is managed well because each of these situations is giving them more evidence to support the ways in which the child is gaining the competencies. Teachers need tools to help them store all kinds of information and to help make the reporting at the end of the process easier.”

The evaluation of competencies involves all kinds of practices: teamwork in planning the school year; attention to the different ways in which people who work with students interact and to how teachers deal with students, each teacher having different opportunities and perspectives on a child’s work; monitoring and management of all the examples of student progress over time, etc. “You have to build in opportunities for teachers to collaborate on developing the assessment for the students,” said Ryan. “There’s no question that it really adds to the time, but teachers are willing to invest the time because there is a recognition that this kind of assessment of a student is much more authentic.

# the English-Language Sector

“If you consider an elaborate learning task, it gives you many more opportunities to see different elements of the child’s progress. We looked at some of the ways in which the child responds to a challenge, or develops a project; you can notice all kinds of different strengths that the child has brought to create the work.”

## Establishing a new process

“I think that as teachers begin to gather information about students and use the competencies of the QEP as their guide, they will become a lot more skillful at recognizing how student work is a reflection of their competency. It is still a new experience and this year will be critical in taking a step forward in the evaluation of students,” said Ryan.

“At the secondary level, we are looking to develop other kinds of assessment tools that may be given over a period of time at the end of a cycle, where you can look at a variety of tasks. So we’re not going to be using the same kind of traditional instruments. There have been some initiatives implemented as pilot projects that have received very positive feedback. They’re being redefined and redeveloped and will be field tested. We are looking at the end of 2004 for a province-wide assessment on a voluntary basis, and then a formal Ministry assessment at the end of 2005,” said Ryan. “Everyone who has seen the samples being developed is confident that this will be an authentic assessment tool!”

You can consult the Framework at:  
[www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/dfgj/eval/pdf/frameworkpres-el.pdf](http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/dfgj/eval/pdf/frameworkpres-el.pdf)



*this year will be critical in taking a step forward in the evaluation of students,*



Patrick Ryan, assistant facilitator of the session, and resource person with the Math Action Plan Committee (MAPCO)

By Eve Krakow

**After 35 years as an educator and consultant, Beverly Steele, evaluation coordinator for English Language Arts at the MEQ, is retiring. *Schoolscapes* recently met with Beverly to learn more about her views on evaluation and find out what's next for her.**

“About 15 years ago I clued into the fact that evaluation, if done properly—and I stress that—is the best tool that teachers and students can use to understand why they're at where they're at and what needs to be done to go further,” says Beverly. “That's the attitude I've brought to the Ministry: trying to develop assessment instruments that pay off for learning.”

## Beverly Steele Retires in April

But Beverly says that she didn't always see it this way. “There are very good reasons why a lot of teachers and administrators are leery about testing, particularly the kind that is done externally—that doesn't take into consideration any of the local circumstances, needs, strengths or weaknesses. I was certainly was one of those teachers who thought that way.”

In the late '60s, Beverly was among those teachers who resisted multiple-choice exams as a means of determining a student's writing capabilities. “We fought for the essay-type examination. If you want to know if students can write, let them show you, by producing it themselves. I think we've won that battle for English Language Arts—but we haven't won it for other subjects.”

Another breakthrough, she says, was acknowledging that, “you just don't ask students to produce something. You have to respect the nature of how one writes: the process. A whole generation in our schools now knows that drafting and peer conferencing are helpful to the writing process.”

Originally from Kenora, in Northwestern Ontario, Beverly earned an Honours BA in English Language and Literature at the University of Toronto and obtained a specialist certificate from the Ontario College of Education. She began her teaching career in London, Ontario, and then moved to Québec with her husband, taking on a teaching position at Alexander Galt Regional High School in Lennoxville. She then became a consultant for the Eastern Townships School Board, and soon began working part-time for the MEQ.

With curriculum reform in full swing in the late '70s, she spent a full year travelling the province to assist with implementing what was the new program at that time. That experience was key to her later work. “It got me a foothold into almost every English school in the province,” she says. “I know the regions, I know their circumstances. I kept in touch with so many of those people.” The MEQ then asked her to work on making changes to the high school ELA leaving exam. That marked the beginning of her full-time position at the MEQ, where she would spend the next 15 years of her career.

Over the years, Beverly has developed a keen interest in how people learn. She began reading about cognitive psychology, and did her MA thesis on the relationship between language and thinking. She sought to “decode” kids, to look for signs of their learning. This led her “right into the lap of evaluation.”

While she doesn't regret her decision to retire, Beverly knows she'll be missing some exciting years, as educators grapple with two major dilemmas. “The first is that of the role of metacognition. If we know cognitively that the highest kind of evaluation is that of the self, then in future assessments, what role are we going to allow students to play in judging themselves?”

The other “killer dilemma,” she says, is how to accommodate group work in assessment. “We can't continue saying, in this day and age, that we're equipping the children in our schools to function in life—socially, politically, culturally, intellectually, methodologically—and then ignore the fact that in life, you work in groups. We still have this tendency in assessment to say, can he or she do it alone, without help?”

Beverly will also miss seeing the QEP progress to the secondary level. “This reform embodies every principle I've ever believed in. It doesn't matter what kind of label you put on it: students have to be involved in their own learning. Providing a context that is real-life and authentic for them is the best way to power up their minds.”

So, what's next for Beverly? She plans to become more involved with the outreach centre in her community, where she helps kids with homework, spend more time with her grandchildren (who call her “the book lady”) and enjoy two new loves she has discovered late in life: the opera, and perennial gardening. Beverly is also likely to find a niche for herself at McGill's cognitive lab, where she's doing doctoral work. In her own words, she enthusiastically concludes, “I think I've earned the right to slow down. But I'll never lose interest: I'll always be cheering on the sidelines!”

*“You just don't ask students to produce something. You have to respect the nature of how one writes: the process.”*



Beverly Steele, Evaluation Coordinator for English Language Arts at the MEQ

# EXCHANGING AND LEARNING

*A meeting of the minds*

By Alexandre Robillard  
(Translation)

Québec-wide meetings and training sessions for resource persons have been held over the past four years. While the format has evolved, the objective for training and exchanging has remained unchanged.

## Four Years On

By June 2003, four years after the first Québec-wide meeting was held, twenty-three days in all will have been devoted to the meetings. Each meeting involves an average of 500 participants and provides a perfect opportunity for networking.

"It's hard to work alone. The Québec-wide meetings create horizontal and vertical links between schools and individuals," stated Margaret Rioux-Dolan, director of the Direction générale de la formation des jeunes.

The recurrence of the same themes allows them to be addressed from a different angle each time. "We've been able to cover a wide range of topics based on four categories: the Québec Education Program, evaluation, implementation and organization." This has led to the establishment of links based on shared context, going beyond the everyday context to construct the collective structure of the reform.

Originally intended as a one-time event, the first meeting led to calls for an ongoing series of meetings. The participants split into separate groups, with school administrators continuing to meet at Québec-wide meetings, while education consultants and resource teachers set up their own meetings during training sessions for resource persons. Other meetings were organized for program design committees at the elementary and secondary levels, along with symposiums (on media studies and citizenship education). The events have been covered by various publications, including *Vie pédagogique*, *Virage* and *Schoolscapes*. ◀

By Claudine St-Germain and Francine Payette  
(Translation)

## Places to Learn and Share Information

For the past four years, the Ministère de l'Éducation has been organizing two types of activities to facilitate the integration of new programs: province-wide meetings and training sessions for resource persons. The following is a description of these events.

The main difference between province-wide meetings and training sessions is the target audience. While the province-wide meetings are intended mainly for school and school board administrators, training sessions are aimed at resource persons, that is, teachers and other professionals responsible for training and informing their colleagues in their respective workplaces.

The events have a similar structure, however, based on the principles of the education reform. They revolve around three main focal points: providing information, sharing expertise and collecting feedback. They allow participants not only to attend conferences given by renowned specialists, but also to participate actively in the construction of their knowledge in workshops where they can share ideas with colleagues from around the province.



Margaret Rioux-Dolan, General Director of the Direction générale de la formation des jeunes



Reinelde Landry, Organization Coordinator for the training sessions for resource persons



The training sessions for resource persons are aimed at providing participants with facilitation models that they can bring to their respective workplaces. While they explain the major principles of the reform, they focus more particularly on guidance for teachers. For this reason, the workshops are based on experimentation: the participants learn through action and in cooperation. That is one of the focuses of the reform and of those who develop the training sessions.

Every province-wide meeting and training session is planned in detail by an impressive team of facilitators, who prepare activities to meet the needs expressed by the participants. The organizers face an unenviable challenge: addressing all at once people who have come to manage, understand or study the implementation of the Education Program.

On November 4, 2002, Nicole Gagnon, coordinator of the province-wide meetings, explained in more concrete terms how her team proceeded. On the basis of a report submitted by workshop leaders last year, they formulated content proposals, which were submitted to about sixty educators from every region of Québec and every administrative and advisory function in schools and school boards. These administrators expanded upon, validated and consolidated the initial proposals. They decided which topics would be addressed and which speakers would be invited to spark

discussion. The training sessions are planned in a similar manner:

Topics addressed in the past four years include the contribution of social constructivism to the development of competencies, contexts that favour learning and educational practices that facilitate the implementation of the Program.

On November 27, 2002, Reinelde Landry, organization coordinator for the training sessions for resource persons, offered a colourful analogy between the resource persons and a typical situation in her region. "The training sessions remind me of what goes on at the docks in Gaspésie in the summer. Everyone at the docks has something to share. They might be wishing *bon voyage* to those who are casting off for an ocean voyage or new shores. They might be greeting those who have come back from a fishing expedition, which may or may not have been plentiful: if they're not sharing their catches, then they're talking about the procedures followed to come home safely. There are also the big boats, with their captain and officers, who add to the gathering by sharing anecdotes and stories of great deeds. And finally there are the observers, who come to partake in the adventurous atmosphere of departures and arrivals, breathing in the salty air and feeling the wind, sometimes chilly and sometimes warm, but always invigorating!"

## A Profile of Participants

Who are the participants in the province-wide meetings and training sessions for resource persons? Below are a few interesting statistics compiled at the province-wide meeting of November 4 and 5, and the training session held on November 26 and 27, 2002.

Half of all participants in the training session for resource persons were education consultants. School principals and vice-principals accounted for 14% of participants and teachers, for 9%.

The profile is different for the province-wide meeting. School principals and vice-principals accounted for 31% of all participants. The next largest group was made up of directors of instructional and educational services, accounting for 13%. Pedagogical consultants, coordinators and representatives of the CSP-CSE each made up about another 7%.

Every level of education was represented at both events. About 40% of participants were involved in all three levels. The others were divided more or less equally among the preschool, elementary, and secondary levels.

There were slightly more women than men: women represented 66% of participants in the training session and 60% at the province-wide meeting.

At both the meeting and the training session, nearly 60% of participants had attended at least two previous events. Approximately 7% of the participants attended the workshop sessions organized for English speakers.

By Claudine St-Germain  
(Translation)

# Answers From the Field

At the training session for resource persons held November 26 and 27, 2002, workshop participants formulated questions on various aspects of implementing the QEP. To answer these queries, a few passionate educators agreed to share their experiences and points of view.

Reinelde Landry, organization coordinator for the training sessions for resource persons, moderated the discussion panel, which consisted of four people with very diverse backgrounds. Each had a different point of view to contribute to the subject of guidance. The participants were: Marie-Caroline Côté, principal of Curé-Hébert school, Commission scolaire du Lac-St-Jean; Monique Carreau, pedagogical consultant for the Commission scolaire de la Capitale and member of the core program development committee for secondary school French (language of instruction); Yves Gamache, teacher at Sacré-Cœur school, Commission scolaire des Hautes-Rivières; and Nérée Bujold, retired and associate professor in the Education Faculty at Université Laval.

## Questions on Teaching Practices

### What have you changed in your practice since the advent of the reform?

**Yves Gamache:** "I've introduced more variety into my teaching. That doesn't mean I've changed everything; I modified some elements and kept others. For example, I still give dictations in French. But now I ask the students to correct them individually, and then to compare their text with their neighbour's."

"My approach is more student-centred: now that I'm not as tied down by the material constraints, I have time to be more attentive to their needs. For example, one student who has difficulties in class recently asked me how a paper towel absorbs water. We did an experiment on the topic and the student found it very motivating, because I had listened to his questions."

### What challenges do you foresee in terms of secondary teachers changing their practices?

**Monique Carreau:** "The first challenge is related to the teachers' perception and representation of their job. They see themselves first and foremost as people who know their material and control how it is delivered—not as people who are learning. What type of guidance should we choose to enable teachers to draw on their experience and renew their teaching practices? One path I find appealing is to work in small teams, because it allows people to protect their self-image."

"The second challenge is how to implement new teaching practices that are interdisciplinary and go beyond the school. Several teachers have tried new pedagogical approaches, but have run up against organizational frameworks that did not welcome these new approaches. We have to reach and reenergize these teachers."

### As a school principal, what are some of the concrete means for fostering practices that are in line with the QEP?

**Marie-Caroline Côté:** "In our school, we have two major projects along these lines. One is the creation of progressive groups, for at-risk students. They work progressively in each subject. For example, a student may take a Secondary I math course, a Secondary II French course, a Secondary III English course, and so on. The strength of this group is the teachers' meeting time. In building the timetable, we set aside one whole afternoon per cycle where the 12 teachers can sit down together. They devote a lot of thinking to pedagogical approaches, because several of the students require entirely different ways of working."



The events have a structure based on the principles of the education reform. They revolve around three main focal points: providing information, sharing expertise and collecting feedback.

Yves Gamache, Monique Carreau, Reinelde Landry, Marie-Caroline Côté and Nérée Bujold

## Interdisciplinarity

### How does interdisciplinarity contribute toward the goals of the QEP?

**Monique Carreau:** "Students who participate in cross-curricular projects develop various aspects of their personality. They take on the project process, develop their individual responsibility within the team, and learn the social roles of sharing, expertise and competency. They draw on their own resources, talents, strengths and limits, which helps them integrate their identity and knowledge of themselves. Finally, teachers can guide their students to ask questions, and these questions can become sources for constructing their world view."

### Where are you at in terms of your own reflections on interdisciplinarity in your elementary school classroom?

**Yves Gamache:** "I'm still asking myself questions. For example, for the past four years I've been doing a construction project with my students where they build a small racing machine using recycled materials. Since the project has worked well for several years, I've had a tendency to think the reform was already in the bag! Then I started wondering if my students were really developing new competencies with this project or simply applying what they already knew. I still have to ask myself how I can make sure they will truly improve their skills through this project."

### How do you deal with teachers who react negatively to the idea of cross-curricular initiatives?

**Nérée Bujold:** "Any time you ask a teacher to change something, you risk coming up against resistance. It's normal, because as human beings, we find security in our habits. When you ask a person to change something, you're asking them to let their habits die, and so they react the same way as a person facing death. Their reactions follow a set pattern: denial, rebellion, depression, negotiation, resignation and, finally, renewed commitment. You have to expect all these reactions and allow them to occur. What is not defined is the relative length of each of these steps: for some people, it's two minutes, for others, two years! But if you plan for all these stages, you will have the patience to wait for them to run their course."

## Cycle Life

### What are some of the ways cycle life might be introduced into secondary school?

**Monique Carreau:** "The first step, which some schools have already made, is to work more in groups of teachers. For example, some places have grouped teachers of a same level together around a cohort of students. I see that as an interesting option to explore. Cross-curricular projects can lead to interaction among teachers as well. We've also worked with school administrators on the links to be made between the educational project and the cycles."

### How much importance should be placed on values in cycle life?

**Nérée Bujold:** "In my opinion, the question of values should be a constant topic of discussion in all schools. Each person has the right to his or her own values in the school, and we should respect these differences and allow people to express them. These differences can be a source of conflict, but when their expression is permitted, healthy relationships are created between all parties concerned."

"For an organization to have weight, however, it must have common values. This doesn't mean that all values have to be identical, but rather, that time should be taken to identify the values that are shared. These shared values will be the glue that holds the team together."

*"We have to work with the parents, who play a key role in young people's success," says Marie-Caroline Côté.*

### How can you find new ways of doing things to achieve the goals of the QEP?

**Yves Gamache:** "Before even hearing about the reform, we had begun a reflection on pedagogical practices in our school board. For three years we worked on strategic teaching, enjoying incredible support from the educational services department. I thought a lot about how I learn, in order to better understand how my students learn. As I began to try new things in the classroom, I realized that my motivation was increasing and that it had an impact on my students. I think people who have not undertaken this kind of reflection will find it quite a big step to get a handle on the new program!"

**Nérée Bujold:** "Two years ago I gave a course called "training for pedagogical supervision." Going through my notes, I've pinpointed the following elements:

#### **As a guide for teachers, what functions do you need to fulfil?**

**Reassure:** Since change makes people insecure, you should reassure teachers. And the key to reassuring teachers is to compliment them. As Gabrielle Roy once said, you have to look for the good in everyone.

**Motivate:** This means starting the motor. As guides, you are the starters!

**Animate:** I mean this in the sense of "to give life to," to fill with enthusiasm. To do so, you have to be enthusiastic yourself. You therefore have to integrate the principles of the reform and, especially, work on your emotional reaction to this reform.

**Inform:** Provide the content.

**Demonstrate:** This means practising what you preach.

**Evaluate:** Not necessarily to sanction, but to improve what's not working.

**Marie-Caroline Côté:** "It's important to work in collaboration with the educational services of your school board. These are resource people who can stimulate your reflection. You can also go see what other people are doing and use that as a starting point. There's no need to reinvent the wheel; you can adapt ideas to the context of your own school."

"As a principal, I also feel it's important to go into the students' common area often, to make

myself available to them, and to make them feel they're important. The same is true for teachers: I often go see them in their classrooms, to listen to their needs, take the pulse of the school, or just to join in the fun they're having!

"We have to work with the parents, who play a key role in young people's success. If we respect them for who they are, parents can help us reach our objective of student success. Finally, the community should also be included in our "new ways of doing things." It's important for the school to forge ties with both its community and the neighbouring schools." 🌟

*We were saddened to learn that Nérée Bujold passed away suddenly on March 12, 2003.*

By David Fuchs

**Many other questions were raised by participants during the training session. Here are a few.**

### On Cycle Life

"How do we change the perception that students who take more time to learn are considered as failures?"

"How do we reconcile locally developed initiatives in the spirit of the QEP with the legislative requirements and constraints of the MEQ?"

"What is the role of each educational stakeholder in order to make cycle-based learning work?"

"How do you integrate students from and into other constituencies?"

# Burning Questions...

"How feasible are changes to the collective agreement to make time and support reform?"

### On Teaching Practices

"How do you manage two different teaching practice cultures within your school?"

"Do teachers have effective technical support and textbooks to be able to collect the necessary information to create complex learning tasks?"

### On Interdisciplinarity

"How do we bring all teachers in a school to focus on a school or cycle project? How do we get them excited about working together?"

"The reform is coming at a time when there are a lot of new teachers who are shopping around for their jobs; their personal concerns are very

important. The reform requires a lot of goodwill and work beyond the hours expected. With this clash of culture, they need to be fired up with rewards: How do we recognize those leaders that are pushing ahead?"

"How flexible is the Ministry and the Basic School Regulation for the students? Is the Ministry prepared to make provisions to have cycle-team planning incorporated into the teaching workload?"

... *finding answers together*

By Eve Krakow

**In Workshop 3 of the Training Session for Resource Persons held on November 26 and 27, 2002, participants were asked to identify courses of action for guidance with respect to the themes addressed earlier in the session (cognitive and affective dimensions, structuring one's identity, interdisciplinarity, cycle life, etc.).**

"Teachers need to see what's in it for them if they are to come on board," participants in one workshop said. "We've learned that people do not change unless they feel a need to change. We therefore have to make teachers aware of the advantages of cycle life, not just for the students, but also for themselves."

School principals should be encouraged to

# Helping People See the Benefits of Change

participate in the training of cycle teams. Also, training should be differentiated, i.e. adapted to the needs of the cycle team members and their level of commitment to or integration of the reform. "We need to find ways to create ties between people who are already implementing the reform and people who are still trying to get a handle on it, so that those who are further ahead can support those who are still struggling."

Care should also be taken not to dampen people's motivation by insisting too much on the theory—especially in the beginning. "Let's remember how long it took us to become comfortable with the QEP concepts and vocabulary."

Participants discussed the problem of some teachers who are reluctant to share materials they have developed. These teachers may resent others using something they've put so much work into, or feel their materials aren't polished enough. "We need to have activities to foster sharing and cooperation among teachers, such as interdisciplinary projects." Again, teachers need to

be shown the advantages of such cooperation: if they share the material they've developed with others, others will share their materials too.

One way to foster cooperation and cycle life would be to have teachers present their subject to the rest of the cycle team, and discuss the connections between their subject and the reform.

School principals and education consultants at the workshop pointed out that they have to remember to look at their own practices. "Are we being reflective? Are we being constructivist? Are we placing learners (i.e. school staff) in problem-solving situations as often as possible?"

Creating a climate of trust in the school is key: trust between teachers and the school administration, trust among teachers, and trust among all school personnel. Participants also discussed the need to pay attention to the affective experiences of teachers. "The social aspect of meetings should not be neglected; food and wine are important!" 🍷

By Claudine St-Germain  
(Translation)

# A Learning Community

The education reform requires a new way of thinking about teaching, organizing work and viewing the school. Such a change obviously raises issues and poses great challenges for the players in the education world.

During the past year, several education thinkers have been invited to the province-wide meetings to share their views about school management within the context of the reform. The following article presents the opinions of two guest speakers with

different perspectives (the school team and managers), but who have the same vision for the school of tomorrow: a school open to its community, managed by a mobilized team, where everyone is committed to the learning process.

By Alexandre Robillard  
(Translation)

L a Fontaine's fables are replete with teachings that the education community would do well to learn from. That was the message that Paul Laurin, education administration professor at Université de Sherbrooke had to offer at the provincial meeting of school administrators in November 2002.

a wheel, the professor stresses the importance of the reflective phase, without which it is impossible to get at the root causes of a situation. "Since childhood, we have mainly been taught to give the right answer. Today's problems are too complex for us to continue in this way. We must break away from the action-reaction model!"

# The Importance of Leadership Learning Organizations

In education, students do not have a monopoly on learning. The entire education system must also learn in order to foster empowerment and leadership.

Citing Lafontaine's fable *The Fox and the Grapes*, Laurin stressed the importance of developing the ability to reach the grapes. Too often, managers consider solutions beyond their grasp, which excuses them from having to question their approach. Leaders must open up to individual learning. "The goal is no longer to know everything. You must be able to say 'I don't know,'" says Laurin. He is also of the opinion that students must not be the only ones immersed in a learning situation. "The whole system must follow."

The process begins with a questioning of the approach used in a given situation. On the basis of methods and beliefs, we must envision and evaluate the consequences of a new approach so that we can proceed to the research phase. Sometimes it may be enough to consult with another school to find out how people there solved a similar problem. "We must open up to the world as a source of solutions." This information can then be synthesized and used to determine the action to be taken: this is the redefining phase.

## The Fox and the Grapes

**A certain Gascon fox, a Norman one,  
others say,  
Famished, saw on a trellis, up high to his  
chagrin,  
Grapes, clearly ripe that day,  
And all covered with purple skin.  
The rogue would have had a meal for the  
gods,  
But, having tried to reach them in vain,  
"They're too green," he said, "and just  
suitable for clods."  
Didn't he do better than to complain?**

(Jean de La Fontaine)

## The ability to learn

To achieve this objective, Laurin proposes the school as a learning organization. This model is defined as an association of people deeply rooted in action, who work together as a team. They are able to anticipate, innovate and find new ways of carrying out their mission. They are capable of creating, acquiring, transforming and sharing their knowledge. They are continually changing their behaviour in order to integrate new ideas and points of view.

The road map that leads to the school as a learning organization is represented by what Laurin calls the *wheel of learning*. Explaining his diagram of

## The ability to share

The path toward schools as learning organizations is necessarily a joint effort. "The school administration cannot in and of itself represent all the parties involved," says Laurin. We must therefore be able to attain a shared



Paul Laurin, education administration professor at Université de Sherbrooke

vision of the objectives to be attained, without which positive change is impossible, since the key to becoming a learning organization is mobilization. He gives the example of academic success. "If people don't believe in it from the outset, that's a problem." And, he reminds us, there is a difference between sharing and imposing one's point of view. "Managers are not gurus!"

Once again, the growing complexity of the situations and problems to be dealt with calls for alternative solutions. Strictly vertical solutions are reflections of the walls within which organizations evolve. "Analysis must be an open concept," says Laurin. "You have to approach it laterally."

From this perspective, a manager's job is mainly to encourage leadership in the team, which Laurin calls *empowerment*. For school administrations, empowerment comes from sharing power with the members of the school team. These people play an active role in decisions related to academic success. The administration may also share responsibilities, for example giving teachers control over certain important matters. This allows the administration to gather information and make decisions in an open environment in which everyone is recognized as a competent professional capable of reflective thought and judgment.

There are, however, four conditions for the achievement of effective empowerment. First, the administration must want to share its power. Then, the decision-making areas must be defined. The team must also have decision-making skills. Finally, the team must agree to take on the added responsibility.

The school administration then acts as an orchestra conductor favouring personal expression and self-leadership. According to Laurin, empowerment is the answer to the questions that have been

## and Schools as

plaguing the education community for years. "Thirty years ago, the question was whether we needed administrative or educational school administrations. I think that the answer is clear today: we need educational leaders." 🐦

By Claudine St-Germain  
(Translation)

# The School Viewed as an Educational Community

**What is the best model of a school for educating the children of today? Jean-Pierre Proulx, Chairman of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, offered an answer to this question during a province-wide meeting on November 27, 2002.**

As with the question, his answer is both simple and complex: the school is an educational community that mobilizes its players and focuses on the sharing and quality of relationships in order to fulfill its educational mission. "It's not wishful thinking to believe that school life can be based on a new community spirit as an organizing principle," says Jean-Pierre Proulx.

The first aspect that the Chairman dealt with was the institutional culture of each school. He defines this culture based on two elements: the legacy and the project. The school's legacy is a set of elements that can make sense out of present-day life: the name of the school, its traditions, its renowned graduates, etc. "The legacy is usually ignored in public schools," Jean-Pierre Proulx says. "Yet it promotes a sense of belonging and makes a school project seem meaningful." As for the project, it sets goals to adopt, values to promote, guidelines to establish, standards to set and objectives to achieve. Jean-Pierre Proulx believes that more importance can be given to goals, which are the school's ultimate horizon. There is a consensus on this topic in Québec: it is a question of developing the entire individual (intelligence, determination, body, mind and spirit) and individuals' rights and freedoms.

### The path to individual learning: How well do these statements describe you?

	yes	no
1. I like to analyze problems in depth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I like to question my methods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I like to learn new things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. In a group, I'm not afraid to ask questions when there's something I don't understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I'm comfortable saying "I don't know."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I read regularly about my profession.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I like to find innovative solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I'm quick to give credit where credit is due.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I avoid blaming colleagues or members of the school team.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I like to share what I've learned.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>total</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The values to promote in the school must be the subject of a shared vision. In this regard, the President of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation mentioned the results of a survey conducted last summer. To the question "What is the most important value to instill in students?", Quebeckers answered (in order of preference): respect for others, the desire to learn, a sense of responsibility, discipline, critical thinking, autonomy and precision. "It's interesting to note that the most important value for Quebeckers is not the school's primary mission (*to instruct*), but rather its secondary mission (*to socialize*)," Proulx says. "The Conseil therefore believes that the school's values need to be readjusted. Obviously, it is not a question of abandoning social and moral values; yet the presence of a certain imbalance can be explained by the forms of social disorganization in which schools find themselves (broken homes, violence, youth suicide, etc.)."

As regards the guidelines to establish, the Conseil proposes that they be based on the following elements: typical organizational characteristics, good human relationships, and a foundation of values that are shared and displayed. "The leadership that the school demonstrates will play a key role in this latter element," says Proulx.

The objectives to achieve are largely determined by the Education Act. However, Proulx points out that academic achievement is not the only goal to attain. "It's also important to focus on educational success that goes beyond academic achievement. Educational success is characterized by a sense of belonging to the school, making the educational project one's own and the maturation of students' career choices."

## Various players

The second aspect that the Chairman of the Conseil discussed was the organizational structure, namely all the means that enable a group of individuals to achieve the goals that they have set for themselves.

A community of learners should be made up of students, the primary players. This initially entails the organization of community classes, based on the qualities of the relationships existing among the individuals. It also requires the organization of permanent groups, a question that the Conseil considers to be essential, but which poses somewhat of a challenge for school organization.

The second group of players is the teaching staff. "Could we say that teachers are the school's 'stewards?'" asks Proulx. "The power and authority that are rightfully vested in teachers are not given to them for themselves, but rather to enable them to help others."

To do so, teachers should take advantage of professional development, have good relationships with others, be concerned about the weakest students, and be able to share their leadership. According to Proulx, they should also place special emphasis on history, make links between the various types of knowledge to impart, and familiarize students with the world of the past, present and future.

Lastly, the school management has a key role. They are expected to share their vision and values and encourage all the school's players to become involved in the community. "Managers are busy with administrative tasks," says Jean-Pierre Proulx. "The Education Act defines their

task primarily as ensuring the quality of educational services and managing their institution's educational organization. Unfortunately, there is currently a negation of this former role. It is important to allow them to fulfill all aspects of their role."

## A multi-faceted action plan

The last aspect that Jean-Pierre Proulx raised was the school's action plan. It should highlight the legacy in order to develop the sense of belonging and enhance the students' and school's culture in general. It should also reinforce the governing board's mandate by acknowledging communication and meeting all the expectations of the school's players.

The action plan should also involve parents. To do so, Jean-Pierre Proulx suggests moving away from personal interest and aspiring to collective interest by getting parents interested in what their children are doing, in school activities and, lastly, the management of the school. "It is important to turn consumer parents (the current trend) into participating parents," he says.

In conclusion, substantial change is required for a school to become an educational community, namely focusing attention on the students' interests and opposing the prevailing current of consumerism, and emphasizing strong leadership from school administrators and governing boards. "The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation is convinced that it is an attainable project: its opinion is based on the views of the credible observers it has met from schools—educational communities in the making," Proulx concluded. ◀

*"It's not wishful thinking to believe that school life can be based on a new community spirit as an organizing principle."*



Jean-Pierre Proulx, Chairman of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation

# INFORMATION

## A Health Passport For the 3rd IAAF World Youth Championships in Athletics

A "health passport" has been distributed to the 45 000 students of the Eastern Townships in order to help young people become more physically active. In keeping with the Québec Education Program, this educational tool builds awareness, thereby encouraging young people to take part in physical activities and adopt a healthy lifestyle. The health passport will be used by educators to support young people's efforts in this regard.

Young people will also receive a certificate allowing them to participate in a regional athletics meet, to be held May 24-25, 2003 in Sherbrooke University's new stadium. The meet will give young athletes a taste of the challenges their counterparts from around the world will be facing in July 2003 at the 3rd World Youth Championships in Athletics, put on by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

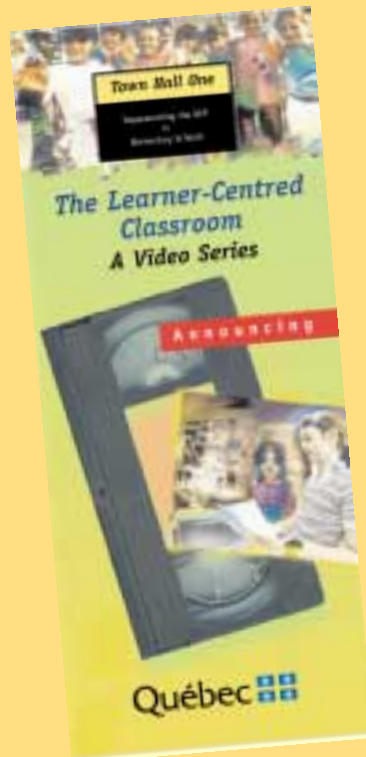
[www.sherbrooke2003.ca](http://www.sherbrooke2003.ca)



### **Town Hall Video Series**

*The Learner-Centred Classroom video series is intended to help elementary school communities explore issues, in theory and practice, surrounding the implementation of the Québec Education Program. The goal is to spark discussion, develop an understanding of concepts, and point to some practical approaches consistent with the philosophy of the reform.*

*The videos were produced in cooperation with educators, parents and students representing all English school boards in Québec.*



**Every school board will be supplied with *Town Hall One* video copies free of charge.**

For more information or additional copies, please contact:

**Kevin O'Donnell — Télé-Québec**  
Service à la clientèle anglophone,  
Phone: (514) 521-2424, ext. 4245  
E-mail: [kevin.odonnell@telequebec.qc.ca](mailto:kevin.odonnell@telequebec.qc.ca)

Sponsored by the Implementation Design Committee (IDC), Télé-Québec, Service à la clientèle anglophone and the Ministère de l'Éducation, Services à la communauté anglophone

# TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK



We would like to thank you for the words of appreciation that you sent us following the publication of the special *Schoolscapes* issue on the Close to your Heart project. In several schools, colleagues were eager to mark this tribute, thereby testing the modesty of the teachers.

On Monday, February 3, Education Minister Sylvain Simard inaugurated Teacher Appreciation Week with the students of Renée Bernard, a Close to your Heart teacher at École Bienville of the CSDM.

# GAME PLAN

## DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE DE LA FORMATION DES JEUNES

Revision of the Basic School Regulation  
Consultation on the draft regulation  
with partners in the school system

**Spring 2003**

### Direction des programmes

Québec Education Program for Secondary Cycle One

**Revision: Winter 2002**

**Distribution: August 2003**

### Direction de l'évaluation

Policy on Evaluation of Student Learning

**June 2003**

### Direction de l'adaptation scolaire et des services complémentaires

Revision of the MEQ-MSSS service agreement

**Winter 2003**

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Has your school team forged ties with resources in your community, such as individuals, organizations or facilities? Has this partnership provided opportunities for engaging students in their learning? Whether you're in

the preschool, elementary or secondary sector, if you have an experience to share, *Schoolscapes* would like to hear about it!

Contact us at [francine.payette@meq.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:francine.payette@meq.gouv.qc.ca)

**SCHOOLSCAPES**  
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