

SWLSB PARENTS' COMMITTEE: February 2nd, 2017

Highlights – report to GB

School Board Personnel Changes:

Principal of Joliette High School will retire as of Feb 15th – position to be advertised

Election of Commissioner Dean Dugas to Vice-Chair of the SWLSB Executive Committee

Organization Chart 2017-2018 has been approved

New position: Director of School Affairs & Organization to be advertised

Secretary General will retire as of May 31st

New Position: Director of Corporate Affairs & Secretary General to be advertised

Presentation on History Curriculum:

Why are they presenting to us? They want PC and GBs to pass a resolution endorsing their statement to the government calling for changes to the Quebec History Curriculum.

Speaker: Mr Robert Green, History Teacher Westmount High, Lead activist for curriculum reform.

Presentation in summary:

- The History Curriculum reform was initiated by the previous PQ government to address the complaints about the structure of the program. The PQ did not engage the diverse committee that usually develops curricula, but instead went with a lobby group who were more politically and ideologically motivated.
- Rather than just correcting the structural issues, they changed the content of the curriculum:
 - Minorities have been “written out” of Québec’s history (First Nations, Immigrants, Religious groups, etc.)
 - Presents a biased view of key historical figures
 - Infers support of separatism
- Teachers welcome the structural improvements, but are not pushing back against the content.
- Exams will stay the same (referring to the current curriculum) until the changes are made.

Speaker: Mr Angelo Grasso, Director General EPCA

Cited an example given by the 2016 conference of the Quebec Federation of Home & School Association’s keynote speaker (she’s a survivor of the Residential Schools, taught her kids about their heritage, her son’s school project on first nations was failed because it didn’t match what was taught in the new curriculum). <https://vimeo.com/194416317> Click for video – Intro starts at 7min, then go to 43:34 to hear her example.

Listed various groups who have already endorsed the statement.

Speaker: Mr Dayo Odubayo, EPCA & PC Delegate from Lester B Pearson School Board.

Government says that “parents are the biggest stakeholders” in education – we have a voice. As parents, our default priority is to have our kids pass the exam.... but we also have a priority to raise intelligent, well-informed citizens who will lead a tolerant, open-minded society in the future. This narrow view of what built Quebec is not going to help our children be curious and open-minded about other people with different heritage, cultures, etc. LBPSB has endorsed the statement.

Speaker: Mrs Debie Germann, Vice-President EPCA

If we were debating the math curriculum, it would be the same as leaving out the number 5. If the Education Minister had said “we’re no longer going to teach anything that includes the number 5” every one of us would push strongly against it. Unfortunately this history content reform was done quietly under the disguise of restructuring and it has passed through unnoticed.

Here is the full document pertaining to the new history curriculum that the provincial government released. <http://www.ledevoir.com/documents/pdf/histoire27fevrier.pdf> The detail of the new curriculum is in annex 3 (pg 59)

There was no one present from the SWL School Board to comment, therefore PC will wait till the next meeting to propose a resolution on whether the SWLSB Parents Committee endorses the EPCA’s statement to the Minister of Education calling for immediate supplementary history material that fills the omissions to be provided, and calling for the initiation of a reform of the history curriculum with all consultation groups involved.

Governing Boards are asked to consider the same resolution.