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| QESEC | Québec English Special Education Commissioners |
| - the voice of the special needs community in public education | |

Introduction to the QESEC group:

The English Parents Committee Association (EPCA) facilitated another meeting of the QESEC group on November 15, 2015. QESEC was formed last year and consists of the Special Needs Parent Commissioners and the Executives of the Special Needs Advisory Committees of six English School Boards in Québec. The goals of the QESEC group are to share ideas and best practices within the special needs parent community throughout Québec, and make recommendations for improvement to the MEESR as appropriate. 3 letters of recommendation were sent to the Ministry last year, as outlined in the [QESEC Annual Report 2014-15](#).

Best Practices:

As always, the special needs parent representatives from the various school boards shared their recent achievements. WQSB and LBPSB held very successful Annual General Meetings and had the best turnout ever of parents in attendance. SWLSB has recently completed and distributed an IEP Resource Kit, based on the LBPSB model. The LBPSB and WQSB are planning workshops for parents. EMSB has received 23M in funding from MEESR to construct a new Mackay school in 2018. EMSB has established an ad-hoc transition plan committee to provide points of service for special needs adults over 21 years of age. WQSB and LBPSB have begun the process of encouraging individual school Governing Boards to establish a Special Needs Parent Representative, with the aim of providing a specific contact for special needs parents at every school, and increasing parent communications with the special needs advisory committees.

Challenges:

ETSB shared a list of goals and recommendations for improving supports to their special needs students with their Administration. SWLSB has requested more detailed financial information regarding the allocation of finances to support special needs, based on the EMSB model. Concern was expressed about the process for the validation of Handicapped Codes now that the MEESR has closed the local offices that previously administered this function. This is particularly problematic in rural areas.

There continues to be inconsistencies between school boards as to what extent each of the Special Needs Advisory Committees is meeting its mandate as per the Education Act. For example, none of the QESEC members receive detailed information about Ombudsman contacts and/or Requests for Reconsideration relating to parents of students with special needs, as required by the Education Act.

There continues to be difficulty in various school boards related to the formation of the Special Needs Advisory Committees, the rules governing the elections of the parent members, and the role of the Special Needs Parent Commissioner within the general Parents Committee.

Action Items:

Members will collaborate to develop an “IEP Best Practices” document, with the aim of suggesting a standardized protocol for the development, implementation and follow-up of an IEP.

As changes to school board governance are expected to be introduced by the MEESR in the short term, QESEC members have identified key areas in which there is a lack of special needs parent representation throughout the school board structure. A summary document will be prepared to re-iterate the suggestions previously provided regarding structure, election process and roles of special needs parent representatives.