



# QESBA ACTION PLAN

## Implementation of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan

### Abstract

Objectives, Actions, Desired Outcomes, Ranking and Indicators for each of the “Four interdependent and mutually supportive strategies” identified in QESBA’s Strategic Plan  
Adopted by the Board of Directors on March 22, 2019

March 8, 2019

## 1. BACKGROUND

In October 2017 the Board of Directors of QESBA decided to undertake a strategic planning process for the 2018-2019 to 2020-2021 years. It commissioned a management consulting firm, KSAR & Associates, to assist it in developing the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.

The purpose of QESBA's strategic planning process was to renew its future vision, direction, and priorities and to align its day-to-day operations with these. In so doing, QESBA's Strategic Plan positions the association to produce meaningful value for its members on an ongoing basis.

The strategic planning process offered QESBA the opportunity to  
(a) revisit and learn from its rich history, while  
(b) facing and addressing the significant transformational forces shaping the world of all its member boards and their students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

According to the Strategic Plan, moving forward, QESBA will continue to respond to the needs of its school board members. It will collaborate with a wide network of educational partners, including the Ministry of Education, to fulfill its mandate. It will continue to help its members:

- Provide student-centered educational services and learning environments which prepare students to live and thrive in a world being transformed by science, engineering, and technology, the rethinking of the economic order, and the imperative for greater social inclusion and development;
- Support the vitality and ongoing development of Quebec's Official Language Minority Community, especially by demonstrating the ongoing value and relevance of elected school boards;
- Demonstrate the quality of French language education in its schools;
- Address declining enrollment in a constructive and innovative manner.

It became quite clear that while QESBA's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan provides high level direction to the organization, it required a more detailed Action Plan to implement its goals and objectives.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

According to the Environmental Scan done by KSAR and Associates as part of the strategic planning process, English-speaking parents and students are generally well served by the English educational system. Indeed, the continuum of observations, especially during the in-depth interviews, ranged from well-served to very well-served. The English system performs well in relative terms. It compares very favorably to the majority system in Quebec and to education systems in other provinces and countries. The single most common reference point for this conclusion was the relatively high graduation rate for students of the English language education system.

The “Observations Emerging from the Environmental Scan” offer some guidance for the actions required of QESBA. According to the Environmental Scan, in addition to focusing on the quality of education in our system, QESBA needs to:

- Position itself in order to address the unique challenges that result from our reality as a minority educational system within a French speaking majority that also sees itself as a minority community within Canada and indeed North America
- “look Canada wide” for best practices and lessons learned, especially regarding minority language boards in other provinces
- Issue a “call to action” to ensure that the rights relating to English education in Quebec (including our Constitutional Rights) are better understood
- Strengthen our policy and advocacy capacity
- Increase collaboration across schools, school boards and regions
- Provide more professional training and development for School Commissioners
- Improve stakeholder outreach and communications

## **3. THE 2018-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN**

(This section is drawn directly from the Strategic Plan)

### Introduction

QESBA’s 2018-2021 Strategic Plan is framed by its Guiding Statements, which will shape and direct the organization’s work and behaviour over the next three years.

## QESBA's Guiding Statements

### *VISION*

*The QESBA is the strategic enabler of English language school boards in Quebec which are committed to providing twenty-first century English language, community connected, Quebec-centric educational services at the primary, secondary, vocational, and adult levels*

QESBA's **Vision** directs the organization to become a strategic enabler, i.e.: to empower its members to work together to identify and achieve shared priorities in a complex environment. It further indicates that the association will actively contribute to the development of twenty-first century education in Quebec, with a focus on (a) essential knowledge and skills, (b) digital competency, and (c) critical thinking.

QESBA's Vision Statement positions the association as a critical contributor to the English-speaking community of Quebec. In this regard, it will assist its members in developing a Quebec centric approach which leverages its unique *minority within a minority* situation to enable all students to live, work, and thrive in Quebec.

### *MISSION*

QESBA's **Mission** indicates that on a day-to-day basis, the association "*unites the collective thinking and efforts of its members and partners to develop, deliver, and defend English language education in Quebec*".

### *PRINCIPLES*

QESBA's **principles and values** outline the standards and beliefs the organization will employ to guide the conduct of its business affairs.

QESBA is a voluntary association of English language school boards in Quebec.

- It exists to serve and respond to common member needs, interests, and priorities.
- It works collaboratively with students, parents, teachers, educational professionals, school and school board administrators, the Quebec Ministry of Education, the Government of Quebec, the Government of Canada, and minority and majority language community representatives, groups, and institutions to be successful.
- It employs active listening, proactive consultation, critical analysis, and member mobilization when carrying out its work.

QESBA is the constructive and collective voice of English language school boards in Quebec regarding initiatives as well as issues of common interest and concern

#### VALUES

- Forward-looking
- Educational excellence
- Integration and Collaboration
- Solidarity with school boards and community stakeholders

QESBA's values affirm the association's beliefs in and commitment to:

- Creating and delivering educational value in a twenty-first century context;
- Making a leadership contribution to the development of public education in Quebec;
- Leveraging members' unique *minority within a minority* situation to provide students in English language schools with the knowledge and skills they need to live, work and thrive in 21<sup>st</sup> century Quebec
- Mastering complexity;
- Creating mutual trust and support within QESBA and between QESBA and stakeholders;
- Achieving unity of purpose and action.

## 4. THE ACTION PLAN'S STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan states that "to achieve its vision, live its mission, and model its principles and values, QESBA will undertake four interdependent and mutually supportive strategies".

These "strategies", drawn directly from the Strategic Plan, are presented as the **Strategic Orientations** of this Action Plan:

### 1. Build and Actively Pursue a Global 2035 Vision of English Language Education in Quebec

- Build what English language education has been envisioned as in 2035:
  - Best in class French second language education;
  - Connect students to an English community within French Quebec and to French Quebec as the enveloping society for English Quebecers;
  - Bilingual and bicultural, multilingual and multicultural;
  - Provide essential skills, digital and critical thinking skills and life-long learning opportunities.
- Position QESBA and its members as leading contributors to the social, economic, cultural, and political development of Quebec.

- Focus on English language education with a future comparative/competitive advantage.

## **2. Ensure Long-Term Existence, Growth, Relevance and Development of English Language School Boards and Elected School Board Commissioners in Quebec**

- Define and agree to future-oriented, added value contribution of English language school boards and elected School Board commissioners to 21<sup>st</sup> century education in Quebec;
- Develop and evolve a shared set of success metrics which demonstrate agreed-to value;
- Brand English language school boards and elected School Board commissioners as innovative leaders in the design and delivery of twenty-first century education in Quebec;

## **3. Strengthen Collaboration Across Member School Boards**

- Develop member initiated and supported, province-wide strategies to address issues of equity:
  - Teaching quality, learning option choices, community learning centers, second language learning;
  - Resource and digital divide;
  - Special needs students;
  - Vocational training.
- Develop member initiated and supported, province-wide enrollment recruitment and retention strategy:
  - Target non-attendees who are eligible for English education;
  - Link to the vitality of English-speaking community and frame as an issue of fairness and equity;
  - Engage majority community in conversation about providing oxygen to English language education.

## **4. Adopt *une politique de visibilité et de présence***

- Design and deploy a strategic, results-oriented, and technology enabled province-wide communications and stakeholder engagement/outreach strategy that maximizes high interest, high impact activities.
- Take a comprehensive and inclusive approach so that all QESBA members and stakeholders work together to contribute to the design and success of the strategy – include:
  - Push and pull communications;

- Consultations;
- Partnerships and alliances;
- Position making and taking.

Again, according to the Strategic Plan, to enable QESBA to effectively and efficiently execute its chosen strategies, the association will put in place the following **strategic enablers**:

- Strong and committed leadership at the top from commissioners:
  - Commissioners will lead from the top. They will be proactively consulted on key association matters, and proactively invited to lead or serve on mission critical committees, as well as to participate in key QESBA activities and initiatives.
- Senior staff with extensive and demonstrated strategic policy development and communications experience will be recruited and trained.
- QESBA will
  - develop an enhanced strategic research and policy capacity.
  - develop an enhanced communications and stakeholder engagement capacity.
  - revisit and clarify the definitions of roles and responsibilities within the association.
  - continue to diversify and increase its funding base.

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

This section of the Action Plan details, for each of the strategic orientations, the specific actions, desired outcomes, a priority ranking (associated with an implementation timeframe based both on urgency and complexity<sup>2</sup>) and indicators in order to achieve the orientation.

It is also proposed that once reviewed by the Executive and Board, the appropriate committees of QESBA's Board be mandated to further flesh out the proposed objectives and actions for each of the strategic orientations, where applicable.<sup>3</sup>

*N.B.: The four Strategic Orientations have been re-ordered to reflect their overall priority as recommended by the Executive Committee and adopted by the Board.*

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<sup>2</sup> Priority 1 = By June 30, 2019, Priority 2 = By June 30, 2020, Priority 3 = by June 30, 2021

<sup>3</sup> The Executive Committee will review this Action Plan at three-month intervals to both gauge progress and to re-evaluate the political environment

**Strategic Orientation 1: Ensure Long-Term Existence, Growth, Relevance and Development of English School Boards Governed by Commissioners and Chairs Democratically Elected by the English-speaking Population at Large**

(to be read in conjunction with Strategic Orientation 2 – the QESBA’s “*politique de visibilité et de présence*”)

Objectives	Actions	Desired Outcomes	Ranking	Indicators
1. Strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of elected commissioners (including parent commissioners) and chairs	a) Focus on capacity building and effectiveness at PD sessions	Governance clarity	1	Proportion of commissioners attending relevant PD sessions and feedback
	b) Offer member boards an advocacy training course	More effective advocacy capability	1	Development of the course
			2	Use of the course
2. Maintain the existence of English school boards governed by commissioners and chairs democratically elected by the English-speaking population at large	a) Collaborate with the FCSQ and other stakeholders on developing and implementing a public and government relations strategy (with the appropriate communications plan)	A strategy to convince the Government of Quebec to keep elected school boards	1	Adoption and implementation of the strategy  Production of briefs for the Government and the National Assembly
	b) Develop key advocacy messages for our boards	Widespread and effective lobby of elected officials and opinion leaders	1	Number of meetings with elected officials and opinion leaders



Objectives	Actions	Desired Outcomes	Ranking	Indicators
2. Maintain the existence of English school boards governed by commissioners and chairs democratically elected by the English-speaking population at large continued	c) Form a broad-based alliance to defend elected English school boards	Demonstrate the relevance of and level of support for school boards	1	APPELE-Québec
	d) Explain the crucial role played by local elected school commissioners and chairs	Demonstrate the importance of local elected school commissioners and chairs	1	Retention of democratically elected commissioners and chairs
	e) Seek funding sources for a Charter Rights court challenge	Have the resources necessary to undertake such a court challenge	2	Fundraising success (reach the establish target)
	f) Liaise with the CSBA and the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones	Learn from the experiences in the rest of Canada	1	Number of meetings and joint events
	g) Create winning conditions for school board elections	Various measures to increase the participation rate	2	Increase the participation rate to 25% of eligible voters in the next election
3. Create conditions that will permit growth in our network	a) Research on French school attendance by children eligible for English instruction	Better understand why and how many eligible children attend French schools, private schools or cross border schools	2	Bank of collected statistics and analyses including any exit questionnaires when students leave the public sector
		Respond to above	2	Increase in enrolment

Objectives	Actions	Desired Outcomes	Ranking	Indicators
3.Create conditions that will permit growth in our network continued	b) Do testimonials from alumni to attract more registrations	Woo families who choose private or French schools	2	Number of testimonials created and used
	c) Adopt a policy of advocating for a broadening of access within current legislative framework	A larger pool of eligible children	2	Policy adopted
	d) Emphasize the “humanitarian” clause for students with special needs	Obtain eligibility for those students who qualify	2	Successful integration into our network
	e) Promote the importance for eligible parents to obtain certificate of eligibility for their children	A larger pool of eligible children	2	Reflect this in various communications and social media sources
	f) Working with our member boards, promote better options for vocational training and market those options	Improved coordination and marketing of the offer of vocational training in English	3	Increase in the availability of courses in English
4.Strengthen French language attainment	a) Promote exchange programs between English and French Boards	Improved FSL results and better competition with French schools for children	2	Number of exchange programs

Objectives	Actions	Desired Outcomes	Ranking	Indicators
4.Strengthen French language attainment continued	b) Increase opportunities for our boards to provide exposure to French language and culture	See above	2	Number of new opportunities
5.Improve opportunities for the successful recruitment of professionals	Lobby the Government of Quebec and professional orders to ease French language requirements and to better recognize equivalences for professionals who want to work in English	Increase the pool of professionals eligible to be hired	3	Increase in the number of professionals hired

**Strategic Orientation 2: Adopt *une politique de visibilité et de présence***

Objectives	Actions	Desired Outcomes	Ranking	Indicators
1.Improve QESBA communications	a) Have staff develop a detailed annual communications plan	Greater more coherent proactive visibility	1	Annual communications plan adopted by the Executive Cttee
	b) Seek regular feedback from Board members on communication		1	Internal communications survey

Objectives	Actions	Desired Outcomes	Ranking	Indicators
2. Improve the visibility of elected school commissioners and chairs and a better understanding of their roles	a) Produce promotional material for social media	A better understanding of the important role of elected commissioners and chairs	1	Production and use of the promotional material  Positive references to their roles in the media
	b) Highlight the role of elected commissioners and chairs in all QESBA external communications			
3. Improve visibility of QESBA and of elected	a) Produce a QESBA promotional campaign which includes a “celebrating our successes” component	Make QESBA an essential actor in the educational community	1	Annual campaign  Number of ads  Number of media appearances
	b) Prioritize outreach to other educational stakeholders		1	Schedule and number of meetings
	c) Ensure the presence of QESBA on key Government Committees		1	Semi-annual inventory of committees and QESBA presence at meetings
	d) Ensure the presence of QESBA representatives at key community events		1	Quarterly inventory of key community events and QESBA presence
	e) Organize “town halls” on educational issues		2	Number of Town Halls per year

**Strategic Orientation 3: Strengthen Collaboration Across Member School Boards**

Objectives	Actions	Desired Outcomes	Ranking	Indicators
1.Improve QESBA Governance	a) Functioning Sub-committees of the Board of Directors	Strengthen the contribution of Executive Committee and Board members	1	Number of sub-committee meetings and their activities
	b) Promote generative discussions (free-wheeling, content-based discussions on broad issues) at the Executive Committee		1	Number of generative discussions
	c) Include members questions as a standing item on Board meetings		1	Revise the meeting agenda template
2.Strengthen QESBA Cohesion	a) Do an annual Board Retreat	Better understanding of particularities of member boards and greater buy-in on QESBA policies and actions among boards	2	Hold annual Board Retreat
	b) Do an annual President's tour of boards		1	Tour results
3.Strengthen collaboration across school boards	Participate fully in the D.G.'s Table and its sub groups to foster collaborative decisions	Improve QESBA's reputation and share information	1	Number of meetings where QESBA is present

**Strategic Orientation 4: Build and Actively Pursue a Global 2035 Vision of English Language Education in Quebec**

Objectives	Actions	Desired Outcomes	Ranking	Indicator
1. Develop the Global 2035 Vision	a) Mandate QESBA's Education Committee to produce the vision with input from other stakeholders	A Vision Document for QESBA and its member boards	3	Production of a document  Publish and promote the vision
2. Develop or strengthen the culture of innovation and improvement	a) Develop or update existing best practices guides in a number of key areas	Continuous improvement of our boards through shared information	2	Best practices guides
3. Augment the research capacity of the QESBA	Create additional research possibilities and resources	Stronger policy - making capacity	2	Increased research resources

**6. CONCLUSION**

The lead consultant at KSAR and Associates indicated to QESBA staff that “organizational coherence is the key to success”. How we measure that success is perhaps debateable but surely the overriding goal of this Action Plan is to improve services to and outcomes for the students in our school boards. No one could ask for more.