



## **APPELE-Québec Calls for Further Study of Bill 40**

**(Montreal, December 2, 2019)** – In releasing its Report on the hearings held with English-speaking community groups from across the province, APPELE-Québec urged the Quebec Government to delay passage of *Bill 40; An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance* to allow for further discussion and analysis.

“Our common objective is to ensure that the governance of our school system supports and enhances student success,” explains Geoffrey Kelley, Chair, APPELE-Québec. “The diverse voices we heard at our hearing are unanimous in their belief that Bill 40 in its current form fails to pass this litmus test. Only through further discussion and analysis will we as Quebecers be able to reach an agreement on the framework required to ensure a successful path forward. Bill 40 represents the most important transformation of school governance since the creation of linguistic school boards in the 1990’s, and we urge the Quebec government to take the time necessary to build consensus on the path forward.”

“Our strong preference is to work with the Minister and other partners in the education system to improve the Bill to the benefit of students and their families,” notes Mr. Kelley.

“If, on the other hand, the Quebec Government is determined to pass Bill 40 in its current form, it should exempt our school boards from the legislation as they have done with the Cree School Board and Kativik Iisarniliriniq, the school board of Nunavik. If the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement is, quite rightly, sufficient cause to exempt the Cree and Inuit educational networks from Bill 40, then the Constitutional rights of Quebec’s English-speaking community to control and manage our educational system merits similar treatment.”

At its hearing on Tuesday, November 18 APPELE-Québec heard from the following organizations and individuals including:

- Association for Canadian Studies (ACS)
- Black Community Resource Center (BCRC)
- Canadian Parents for French
- Canadian School Boards Association
- Christian Jewish Dialogue - Spiritual Care, Guidance and Community Animation Services
- Citizens of the Outaouais For the Future of English Education in Western Quebec
- Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)
- English-Speaking Catholic Council (ESSC)
- Marcus Tabachnick
- Quebec Association of Independent Schools (QAIS)
- Quebec Association of Retired School Educators
- Quebec Board of Black Educators
- Quebec Community Groups Network
- Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA)

- Quebec Farmers' Association (QFA)
- Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA)
- Townshippers' Association
- Walter Duszara

Concerns were raised about various elements of the draft legislation ranging from the composition of Service Centre Boards of Directors to the electoral process and the centralization of power in the hands of the Minister of Education. Participants at the hearing expressed disappointment, for example, that consideration has not been given to the recommendations of the Election Systems Panel of 2015 chaired by Marlene Jennings.

They declared their opposition to the statement made by Jean-Francois Roberge, Minister of Education, that “We are not asking them (Service Centre Boards of Directors) to govern on as a governing body, as school commissioners do now.”

An element of Bill 40 that has not received much media attention but was cited as a concern by the English Speaking Catholic Council, Spiritual Care, Guidance and Community Animation Services and the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations(QFHSA) is the repeal of provisions of the Quebec Education Act entitling young people to student services in spiritual care and guidance and community involvement. Intervenors stressed that the purpose of the program is to instill civic values in students

*About APPELE-Québec:*

APPELE-Québec – the Alliance for the Promotion of Public English-language Education in Québec – is a broadly-based, Quebec-wide community coalition to promote the continued existence of English school boards, to ensure they are governed by commissioners who are democratically elected by the English-speaking community at large. Our Alliance is comprised of 16 supporting organizations and nine observer groups.

The Chair of the APPELE-Québec Alliance is Geoff Geoffrey Kelley, a former MNA and Minister. The vice-chairs are former Senator and journalist Joan Fraser and Kevin Shaar, a lawyer with two children enrolled in the Western Quebec School Board.

For more information about APPELE-Québec, go to [www.appellequebec.org](http://www.appellequebec.org).

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