

**From:** [Chris Eustace](#)  
**To:** [Geneviève Dugré](#)  
**Subject:** Response to the Budget 2021-2022 Consultation  
**Date:** 31 mars 2021 19:53:01

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March 31, 2021

## **Lester B. Pearson School Board**

### **RESPONSE to the BUDGET 2021-2022 CONSULTATION**

Geneviève Dugré, Secretary General

from

Chris Eustace - Candidate for Chairperson LBPSB - 2021

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#### **Question 1: What is your relationship to the Lester B. Pearson School Board?**

I am a retired LBPSB teacher. My children and grandchildren attended Pearson schools - one still does. Since the board's inception (approaching 23 years), I have participated, strictly as a volunteer, at monthly Council of Commissioners meetings by asking questions and making comments at Public Question Period time. For the past several years I have also participated at Executive Committee and Parent Committee meetings. Most often, I am the "Public" at these meetings.

I ran for chairman in the Nov. 2014 school board elections. The most memorable line during the campaign came from fellow candidate, long-time LBPSB Vice-Chair Angela Nolet. In response to a written question on the budget, by the Central Parents Committee, she wrote:

**"As it stands now, the school board budget is not even that transparent to the commissioners !"**

In the past five years, I have submitted consultation briefs to the National Assembly's Committee on Culture and Education. They were school board reform Bills 86, 105, and 40 ; school tax reform Bill 166 and Bill 185, which dealt with extending the mandate of school commissioners for two years.

In 2020, I appeared three times (June 23, Aug. 20, Sept. 14) at the Superior and Court of Appeal of Quebec as a 'Friend of the Court' (amicus curiae), in support of the government fighting the Quebec English School Boards Association and the LBPSB who wish to maintain the status quo regarding school board reform Bill 40.

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#### **Question 2: Do you have any suggestions regarding objectives, principles or criteria**

used to govern the allocation of funds?

1- **Ethics Commissioner** : as it is now , the board hires the ethics commissioner - and this has caused problems ...There needs to be a new way of doing things in regard to ethics commissioners.

The government needs to build a bank of revolving ethics commissioners. Assign them to different boards as cases come up.

2- **Class sizes** are always a problem. More money should be devoted to reducing class sizes. Period.

3. **Humane Education** is a subject that generally teaches our youth about hate. It is becoming part of the curriculum in several jurisdictions. We need to educate our youth regarding the hatred and intolerance that is becoming prevalent in today's society . Think of Asian hate

Humane education promotes compassion and respect for people, animals and the environment to produce a caring society. Basically, the course examines the challenges facing our planet, from human oppression and animal exploitation to consumerism and ecological degradation.

The course is designed to encourage students to “be kind” which may contribute to produce more thoughtful adults

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**Question 3:** To help us further support our students’ success, in your opinion, which of the following resources and programs are essential to supporting high levels of student achievement? Please select all that apply: the red ones.

Integration of Technology • **Early Literacy Intervention** • Renewed Math Strategy  
• **French Programming** • Staff Training • Experiential Learning • **Special Education Programming**

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**Question 4:** The school board's priority is to maintain buildings in the best condition that is possible within the budgets provided by the Ministry of Education. If there are surplus funds available please choose the school and centre building component that you believe requires the most service, maintenance or replacement.

• **Interior upgrade:**

This subject was raised on March 16, 2021, at the Pierrefonds Comprehensive High School Governing Board.

There are some classrooms that are separated from other classrooms by folding dividers made from vinyl, cardboard and other material. They are not as soundproof as cement / concrete walls. If there are surplus funds it would be a good idea to make those walls

soundproof. I know it would be appreciated by those who spend their days in those classrooms.

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**Question 5: In light of upcoming budget compressions, do you have suggestions for cost savings throughout the school board?**

**DROP MEMBERSHIP TO THE QESBA** There has been one constant in my Responses to the LBPSB Budget Consultations: the LBPSB should DROP MEMBERSHIP to the Quebec English School Boards Association and save a minimum of about \$250,000 - for starters.

This organization is of no pedagogical, cultural or any economic value to any one of our schools, classrooms and students. They will spend money to preserve themselves. Part of the problem is the fact that the chair of LBPSB is the vice-president of the QESBA. The vice-chair is a Director of QESBA

An excerpt of its Mission Statement says it all: "Because school commissioners and boards are valued clients, the prime focus of the Association is to fulfill the needs of school boards."

For several years, successive governments have attempted to reform school boards. The QESBA always puts on fear-mongering campaigns. They claim it's an English-French thing and threaten to go to the Supreme Court. This past year the Pearson board, led by chair Noel Burke, passed four resolutions concerning the legal challenge to Bill 40. The bill transforms school boards into service centres. The LBPSB is paying a minimum \$100,000 education dollars, regardless from which 'envelope' should be plowed into classrooms, not courtrooms. This year there will be elections. As stated I am running for chair. If I win, QESBA will become history - if things are done right.

There is a realization across Canada that anachronistic provincial and national associations are nothing more than feeders at the public coffers, whose minimal value to the public good is hugely outweighed by their cost to the fed-up taxpayer.

The abuse of the education tax dollar by school commissioners (trustees), spendthrift boards, and self-aggrandizing provincial associations, marked by a culture of self-entitlement, displayed at their conventions and conferences, must end

**Put another way: as a grandfather of kids attending the public school system, I would prefer getting a bigger bang for my education tax dollar, by seeing it go into a classroom, rather than a board room.**

This Suburban article on March 22, 2017 gives an idea of the way things were:

[https://www.thesuburban.com/news/pearson-pulls-plug-on-junkets/article\\_d7c5c3bc-5d4d-573e-8e3b-372043582095.html](https://www.thesuburban.com/news/pearson-pulls-plug-on-junkets/article_d7c5c3bc-5d4d-573e-8e3b-372043582095.html)

Today, March 2021 tells another story .

<https://boardsite.lbpsb.qc.ca/Modules/FileManagement/files/Root/News/2021-03-25-Election-Expense-Reimbursements.pdf>

Chris Eustace

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