

BRIEF PRESENTED TO

LA COMMISSION d'ETUDE SUR LA FORMATION  
DES ADULTES

by

THE FEDERATION OF ENGLISH SPEAKING CATHOLIC TEACHERS

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On behalf of the FEDERATION OF ENGLISH SPEAKING CATHOLIC TEACHERS INC. of Montreal (F.E.S.C.T.) I welcome the opportunity to present this Brief to the Commission d'Etude Sur la Formation des Adultes.

The F.E.S.C.T. is a syndicate of approximately 1840 teachers, about 1600 of whom teach in the English Sector of La Commission des Ecoles Catholiques de Montreal, and the rest teach in English schools of La Commission Scolaire Jerome-Le Royer. Also affiliated with the F.E.S.C.T. are numerous teachers who teach part-time in the adult education centers in the Montreal region.

In addition to fulfilling its syndical role on behalf of the membership with regard to the signing of a Collective Agreement and the application of that Collective Agreement, the F.E.S.C.T. engages in numerous activities of a professional nature, not the least of which is participating in a consultative role with the School Board on such topics as Professional Development and In-Service programs for teachers, curriculum development, Special Education, the problem of Premature School Leavers, and many other facets of the Educational Spectrum.

Our particular motivation in participating in the present task of the Commission d'Etude Sur la Formation des Adultes stems from our concern that the student who leaves school upon attaining the legal age for school-leaving but who has not completed his high school studies, for whatever reason, faces numerous problems when he attempts to pursue these studies through "continuing education" or "adult education".

Permit me to enumerate some of the problems which we refer to:

I. Once the student is in his sixteenth year he may leave school, but he may not legally enroll in adult education classes until he has reached the age of seventeen, except in very special cases upon recommendation from the Social Services department. Students leave school before completing the high school program of studies for a variety of reasons: they are unable to cope with the courses of studies offered in the school; they have to take up full-time employment because of financial considerations; and so on. Such students are barred from legal enrollment in adult education even if they have a desire and an inclination to continue their studies on a part-time basis at night. If not permitted to transfer immediately into the adult education sector, the interest in pursuing studies at night is apt to diminish, and this is undesirable.

We recommend that transfer from the regular day school into the adult education sector be made less restrictive so as to facilitate such transfer; perhaps the recommendation of the school administration rather than the attainment of a minimum age limit should be the criterion for admission of such students in adult education.

II. One of the most serious concerns we have is for the lack of equivalence between the regular day school diploma requirements and the requirements for the night school diploma. The two systems are entirely different and this leads to a great deal of chaos and uncertainty, and often serves to discourage the prospective student from completing his studies at night. The credit

system to obtain a high school diploma at night is different from the unit system required for day school certification. In fact, the two diplomas are not the same. Thus a student who has left day school with a partially completed diploma is unable to complete the same diploma at night. Such a student has two options:

- (a) Study at night but write the day school provincial examination and thus get a day school diploma. Such a student runs the risk of following a course of studies at night that does not adequately prepare him to write the day school examination; there is often a lack of correspondence between the content of the day courses and that of the night courses.
- (b) Convert the units that were obtained in day school into equivalent night school credits and then continue studies to obtain a night school diploma. Unfortunately, not all day school courses are given night school credits. For example, students who have earned units by passing certain options, such as Technical-Vocational courses, do not receive any credits for these courses at night school. This is a serious discrimination against these students. They are generally the ones who would benefit most from the opportunity to complete their high school studies at night, yet they are discouraged when they discover that these Technical-Vocational units are not given any equivalence at night school.

We would recommend that there be only one high school diploma for day and night students, or at least that there be one common system of credits

for certification and that all courses successfully completed for day school certification be equally valid for night school certification.

III. Generally, the candidate for a high school diploma at night school is not highly intellectually endowed; often lacks some of the basic skills needed for academic success; frequently has a full time job during the day; in some cases the student is one who would be categorized as a Special Education student during the day school. Yet all these students are required to choose from a fairly limited selection of academic courses in order to obtain a high school diploma.

Technical-Vocational courses offered by the Department of Manpower are not readily available to the students whose concerns we have addressed: such courses are generally not given at night except for upgrading purposes. Furthermore, the student must have been out of school for a year; and there are long waiting lists for admission and preference is given to adults, especially married persons.

Popular courses are offered at the adult education centers but because of financial restraints, these must be auto-financed, that is, the students are charged a fee to cover the salary of the teacher.

We recommend that there be a wider range of academic courses offered at night to make the attainment of a high school diploma more readily accessible to the student. Furthermore, the two centers for English language education --- John F. Kennedy and Marymount Comprehensive High Schools --- which are already equipped with the facilities, should offer Technical-Vocational

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programs leading to high school certification; time and budgetary restraints should be relaxed in order to permit this to happen.

We also recommend that there be a wider range of courses related to coping with life skills, such as Finance Management, Family Relationships, Marriage, Mortgages, etc. and that these courses be given credit for certification.

IV. The adult education centers present an atmosphere that is cold and uninviting, geared mainly to people who wish to continue their education. There are no courses offered to the new immigrants to help them integrate into Quebec Society. There are no counselling services and academic advisors within the premises to provide help to the clients. There is a lack of resource persons to work with the people, identify their needs, offer help such as social services, tutorial services, etc.

We recommend that each adult education center become a community center where the local community can meet; where counselling services and other resource personnel are available to help both as academic advisors as well as social counsellors; where social and community problems are discussed and solutions developed; where the integration of new immigrants to Quebec life is fostered.

For and on behalf of the  
FEDERATION OF ENGLISH SPEAKING  
CATHOLIC TEACHERS

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