

Channeling Quebec's True

ENERGY

THEMATIC DOCUMENT

31st Members' Convention
of Quebec Liberal Party



II

A QUEBEC
FOR ITS CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

Every government's principal function is to prepare society for future generations. This is expressed through the development of a strong and modern economy that creates jobs for tomorrow and generates the wealth necessary for the fulfilment of the younger generations and Quebec's future success.

It is also expressed through a permanent concern to provide youth with the tools and environment they need if they are to take over the reins.

In this section, we combine the four areas of political action that directly impact the quality of life for future generations.

These areas are part of a continuum. There is education, which develops talent and makes dreams possible. There is assistance for the family, where every individual is first nurtured. There is the environment and sustainable development, through which we can guarantee a healthy place to live for our descendants and safeguard our natural heritage. And there is culture, which defines us as a nation and helps every one of us stay in touch with our roots.

In each of these areas, the government has laid solid groundwork. The QLP is proud of this accomplishment and proposes a roadmap for doing even more.

1- Education as a lever for prosperity and fulfilment

Quebec has made great strides in economic and social progress since the early 1960s, and this is largely due to its great advances in education.

In 40 years, from 1966 to 2006, progress has been truly extraordinary:

- The percentage of individuals between 25 and 44 who never graduated has decreased from 56% to 12%;
- In 2006, no less than 69% of the individuals in this age group had a post-secondary diploma versus only 30% forty years earlier; and
- The high-school dropout rate has decreased from 56% to 12% over this same period.

In terms of education, Quebec now compares favourably to the OECD countries. This great leap forward in the field of education has made it possible for francophones to become enfranchised, achieve a North American standard of living, and take charge of the affairs of State and the economy.

Today, as in the past, the key to Quebec's future prosperity lies in education and training. The global economy is increasingly dominated by knowledge. The countries that will be most successful will be those that can best adapt their education and training systems to the economic and technological realities.

Throughout its history, the QLP has made education one of its main issues. It is the Liberals that built the education system, the key factor in the Quiet Revolution.

As a worthy steward of this heritage, since 2003 the QLP government has striven to ensure a better pairing between professional training and the needs of business, has implemented an ambitious plan to ensure that everyone completes their schooling, and has had the political courage to raise tuition fees to guarantee our universities' future while keeping a university education within reach. Then, at the point where education and health converge, the government gave historic impetus to the development of university medicine with projects to renew the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal, the McGill University Health Centre and Sainte-Justine Hospital.

We also invested major sums of money in specialized personnel, reduced the number of students in each class, reintroduced a standard percentage-based report card, strengthened the teaching of English as a second language, added one hour of teaching in elementary school, developed school sports, and initiated a major plan for upgrading our school infrastructure.

Comparisons show that the education received by Quebec schoolchildren is as good as in other parts of the world, as evidenced by the performance of Quebec students on the well-known international PISA test.

But there is still much to be done. The dropout rate is still higher in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. And the overall scholastic performance of boys is worrisome. We need to continue to bring schools closer to the students and the community and build a living environment that is favourable to fulfilment and learning.

If Quebec is to stand out internationally and take up the challenges of the demographic transition, we need to foster a culture of excellence, perseverance and success.

1.1 Rate student and school performance

To aim for success and excellence, it is necessary to rate the performance of both students and schools. Then we need to compare the various schools, having regard to the socioeconomic background, in order to determine, prescribe and apply the appropriate remedies.

We believe that schools should be rated by rating the students rather than the teachers. The students can easily be rated annually by administering a single ministerial exam. This is an objective rating that measures student learning.

In our view, there is no better way to rate schools. Rating the teachers involves too many subjective variables to devise a proper benchmark for comparison that would be reliable, objective and accurate. We believe that the best way to rate a teacher is through the performance of his or her students.

This is why we propose that a QLP government...

PROPOSITION 23

Rate our schools based on student performance, and:

- 23.1 Administer a single ministerial exam in English and math every year for all students in elementary and secondary schools;***
 - 23.2 Establish a comparison of the schools' performance by comparing the results obtained on the ministerial exams after weighting the socioeconomic factors;***
 - 23.3 Reward the schools with the best performance through budget allocations;***
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1.2 Give school principals more autonomy

Academic research on success factors is unanimous: the dynamics of the school and the quality of the teaching staff remain decisive factors on which policy-makers can act. The key player is the principal of the institution, provided he or she has enough latitude to mobilize the staff.

Quite logically, if we establish a comparative school rating system, we must give more autonomy and control to the school administration over the factors that directly influence the institution's performance.

Accordingly, we believe that elementary and secondary school principals should have greater latitude to give their institution its own personality and a special vocation by relying on its strengths: the characteristics of the teaching staff, the academic programs, the after-school activities and any other distinguishing factors.

It is by developing an individual personality that the principal can make a school more dynamic and motivate the teachers and students through common identification factors.

To do this, we believe it is necessary to distribute students with learning disabilities more evenly amongst public and private schools. School principals should also have more control over the hiring of professional resources so that the staff they recruit can better meet the specific needs of the school and its special vocation.

To encourage good school performance, we believe that the most worthy schools should be rewarded financially when budgets are allocated. And we believe it is necessary for parents to be able to compare their school's performance and question the school principals about the results obtained.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 24

Grant more autonomy to public school principals, and:

- 24.1 Give each elementary and secondary school principal greater latitude to "personalize" their institution and give it a special vocation by relying on the characteristics of the teaching staff, study programs, after-school activities or other distinguishing features;***
 - 24.2 Distribute students with learning disabilities more evenly amongst the schools and classrooms, notably by involving private schools;***
 - 24.3 Give more control to school principals over the hiring of professional and specialized resources to better meet their specific needs;***
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1.3 Refocus the action of school boards

School boards play an essential coordinating role at the regional level. For instance, they are responsible for organizing school buses, ensuring that the school infrastructure is maintained and upgraded and administering the payroll for all of the schools under their jurisdiction.

Those who advocate the abolition of school boards forget to mention that they would have to be replaced by another regional structure that would administer their services, which are better off being combined for reasons of efficiency and cost.

Moreover, after it abolished its school boards, New Brunswick brought them back four years later.

We in the QLP find that energy and limited financial resources should not be wasted on structural reform. At the end of the day, the savings would not be significant and do not warrant such upheaval.

Instead, we propose reviewing the mandates and responsibilities of the school boards. This would achieve substantial savings, more than what would be derived by abolishing them, and without useless upheaval.

What we would like is to reduce the bureaucracy, which would make it possible to direct more financial resources into student services.

This review of the school boards' mandates and responsibilities is a corollary to our willingness to give the schools more autonomy so they can develop a special vocation and hire professional and specialized resources.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 25

Review the mandate and responsibilities of the school boards:

- 25.1 In order to achieve \$100 million of annual savings in the bureaucracy over three years. Ultimately, recurring savings of \$300 million per year should be achieved;***
 - 25.2 In order to give more autonomy to school directors in the elementary and secondary school systems;***
 - 25.3 While assessing the possibility of simultaneously holding school board and municipal elections to encourage greater electoral participation;***
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1.4 Encourage the use of new technologies

Although the vast majority of Quebec schools have at least one computer, our computer equipment has gotten old. Almost one-quarter of the computers in our schools are not connected to the Internet, while half of our high-school students only use a computer once a week.

The obsolescence of the computer equipment does not encourage the use of new technologies in education. In fact, students are often better equipped at home than at school. It is no wonder that their interest is waning.

However, the reason the QLP government advocated the systematic replacement of the blackboard by the interactive whiteboard (IWB) was to prepare the school environment for the necessary integration of ICTs in education. With this technological choice, the government began the shift to School 2.0.

As a logical outcome of this choice, the initiative must be continued by adopting technologies to heighten children's interest in reading, especially young boys. We believe that to modernize teaching, stimulate students' interest in school and foster equal opportunity, every child should have an electronic book reader. Introduced gradually, such an approach would enable not only the diversification of reading options for our schoolchildren, but would allow parents to save on the purchase of textbooks and the schools to save on their library collections.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 26

Expand the use of new technologies in our schools, and:

- 26.1 Provide an electronic book reader to every student attending a public secondary school;***
 - 26.2 Offer teachers continuing education on the use of digital technologies in teaching;***
 - 26.3 Improve teacher training so the use of IT for educational purposes will be more widespread;***
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1.5 Fight harder to keep boys in school

Girls do better at school than boys. That is true not only in Quebec, but in the OECD countries as a whole. Indeed, girls systematically get better grades than boys on the international PISA tests, which rate students 15 years old and over in some 60 countries.

Boys are also more likely to drop out and never complete their high-school education.

Since 2003, the QLP government has taken many steps to deter students from dropping out of high school. Some examples are the introduction of homework assistance, which was very successful, the hiring of specialized staff in schools, the reduction of class sizes, and the research program on student perseverance and success.

But more must be done, and special attention must be paid to boys. For despite the progress achieved since 2003, the dropout rate is still higher in Quebec than in other parts of Canada.

One of the theories often put forward in the specialized literature to explain the different results obtained by boys and girls is that young boys lack motivation and spend little time reading. Thus, those children who have trouble reading at the end of grade one will be at the bottom of their class throughout elementary school. Reading being essential to the acquisition of knowledge across the academic spectrum, a direct link has been established between reading skills and scholastic success.

In 2005, the government initiated the Action Plan on Reading in School to facilitate learning to read. This program was renewed in 2008.

We believe that more must be done. The government should use the success factors from the homework assistance program to create a reading assistance program aimed specifically at the problems experienced by boys. Thus, it is recommended that communities, retirees and parents become involved in setting up reading assistance programs in all of Quebec's elementary schools.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 27

Initiate a reading assistance program inspired by the homework assistance program, and:

- 27.1 Involve communities, retirees and parents to help boys acquire better reading skills;***
 - 27.2 Take action as of the first year to maximize the success of this initiative;***
 - 27.3 Make parents aware of the importance of introducing children to reading and the importance of good reading skills as an educational success factor;***
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1.6 Adapt education to gifted students and promote excellence

Excellence promotion efforts in our trade schools have given students who excel new confidence. This can be seen in many trades, for example, in the field of cooking, where talented young chefs are raised to the level of stars.

It would be good for such a culture of excellence to also be the prerogative of our elementary and secondary schools. Some students distinguish themselves through their hard work, and that is worth praising. Others stand out due to their exceptional talent, and this calls for some adjustments.

Our schools are not always ready for or adapted to the special needs of gifted students. Although they are well regarded by the teaching staff, gifted students get bored in school, where they are seldom presented with suitable challenges through which they can develop their full potential.

While resources are made available to children who have problems, there is nothing similar for gifted students, no doubt out of a fear of elitism. This attitude also has an impact on the lack of attention paid to giftedness when future teachers are being trained. The current solution of making gifted students "skip" grades in school is not without its drawbacks, for being gifted is not synonymous with social and emotional maturity. Integration in regular classes can be difficult and become a source of disruptive behaviour, or even lead to a gifted student's¹ dropping out. The conclusions of recent studies have shown that almost half of the students who repeat a grade are gifted!

Moreover, students who systematically obtain high scholastic results and hand in exemplary work receive little recognition. This is especially true in high school, where praise from the teacher and stars on the report card no longer have the same impact, and honour rolls disappeared a long time ago.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 28

Provide more support for gifted students and more rewards for effort and excellence:

28.1 By instituting programs to identify gifted students in order to offer them educational measures adapted to their learning curve;

28.2 By allowing the creation of enriched programs (in math, science, languages) for gifted students in schools willing to set them up;

28.3 By awarding 500 excellence scholarships to the highest achievers at the elementary, secondary and collegiate level;

¹- Vie pédagogique, no. 150, p. 72. Studies have pointed out (Jeanne Siaud-Facchin 2006) that 45% of the students who repeated a year were highly gifted, 20% dropped out and 20% had psychological problems.

1.7 Place more value on the teaching profession

As we have pointed out, one of a school's success factors is the quality of its faculty. If we want to improve our schools' performance, we have to place more value on the teaching profession.

In order to achieve this, the best students should be encouraged to go into the teaching profession. Also, working conditions for young teachers should encourage them to persevere in their chosen career. Over 20% of new teachers are no longer in the profession five years later.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 29

Place more value on the teaching profession:

- 29.1 *By raising the education faculties' entrance criteria for university teacher training programs;***
 - 29.2 *By awarding excellence scholarships to the best students in the Faculties of Education who complete their studies within the allotted time;***
 - 29.3 *By allowing school administrators to develop retention measures so they can keep their best teachers;***
 - 29.4 *By negotiating clauses with the unions to improve job stability for young teachers;***
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1.8 Adapt technical training to the clientele's reality

Of new registrants in technical training programs at the college level, only 38% obtain their college diploma (DEC) within the allotted time, namely after three years. Barely 50% obtain their diploma after five years.

These figures are very low. And given the specialized labour needs forecast in the coming years, we have to do much better.

We believe it is necessary to adapt technical programs to the realities of the student clientele and the needs of the job market.

The vast majority of students studying technology in college are adults who have gone back to school to complete their education or learn new skills after spending some time on the job market. The average age of technical college students is 24.4 years old.

Often, these students are also parents and have dual responsibilities. To them, registering in a full-time program for three years can be a hardship. Meanwhile, these students do not necessarily have to complete all of the DEC requirements to improve their situation on the job market or to meet their employer's requirements. Sometimes, just one year of continuing education will be sufficient.

Conversely, others will want to complete all of the college diploma requirements, and some will even go on to university.

Not all employers are looking for someone with a DEC. Some are looking for students who have the skills and basic techniques for their profession, and that does not always mean they have to complete the full DEC program. Moreover, many students are hired even before they have completed their studies and then find themselves without a diploma, notwithstanding the skills they have acquired.

Restructuring the offer of some college programs into a gradual succession of separate segments attested by a certificate of proficiency or a diploma appears to be the route to take. Thus, a student who comes from the job market and wants to improve his or her knowledge and skills will be able to register for a one- or two-year program leading to a certificate of college studies in a specific discipline.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 30

Revamp technical training programs so that there is more than one route towards a certificate of proficiency or college diploma (DEC) in order to better meet the needs of the student clientele and the job market;

2- The family

Since it came into power, the QLP government has nearly doubled the resources allocated to its family policy, making those resources twice as high as in Ontario in proportion to the GDP.

Quebec is the only place in North America where parents can find low-cost day care for pre-schoolers. Elsewhere, those services are either very expensive or non-existent.

It was also the QLP government that introduced the parental insurance program, restored the family allowance and developed the daycare system. Financially, the combination of these three measures has made Quebec a family paradise. Thus, taking the example of a couple who are both working and have two children, it can be seen that in six years, their disposable income has increased by:

- slightly more than 13% for a family with two incomes totalling \$75,000;
- 28% for a family with two incomes totalling \$35,000; and
- 43% for a family with two incomes totalling \$15,000.

The family policy put in place by the government since 2003 has contributed to a mini baby boom, and made Quebec the Canadian champion of job participation by women with young children.

Indeed, according to the OECD, low-cost daycare explains, in particular, the full-time participation of Quebec women in the job market, which is 10% higher than in the other provinces. This gap widens to 34% for mothers of children under three years of age².

Given the current context of the public finances, the family policy could not be any more generous. In the coming years, priority should therefore be put on developing subsidized daycare spots to better meet demand and adopting certain measures designed to facilitate the still complex issue of balancing work and family.

2.1 See to the development of daycare spots

The government has been developing daycare spots since 2003, adding thousands of spots. However, growth in demand has exceeded growth in the supply, primarily due to a significant rise in the birth rate.

We find that the development of daycare spots must once again become a priority and that resources for developing the system must be made available on a foreseeable basis in a spirit of fairness and shared responsibility. Right now, parents who send their children to \$7 a day daycare centres set up as CPEs (Centres de la petite enfance, or early childhood education centres) contribute less than 20% of the real costs. Given the natural rise in costs due to, for example, inflation, a freeze on parental contributions is actually a decrease in their contributions. As a result, it is the costs borne by the State that increase, thus impeding the development of the system at the expense of parents who are desperately waiting for a spot.

2- [Babies and Bosses – Reconciling Work and Family Life, A Synthesis of Findings for OECD Countries, 2007](#); [Bilan 2003-2006, DES RÉALISATIONS GOUVERNEMENTALES EN FAVEUR DES FAMILLES ET DES ENFANTS](#), Ministry of the Family and Seniors, 2007, page 25; and [OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care – Canadian Background Report, October 26, 2004](#), and [Ingrid Peritz, "Public daycare helps fuel Quebec workforce," Globe & Mail, May 1, 2006](#).

PROPOSITION 31

See to the development, funding and availability of daycare spots:

- 31.1** *By increasing the parental contribution from \$7 to \$10 a day in the first year of a future mandate and by indexing that contribution thereafter, setting the fee at 20% of average total cost, in order to ensure that resources will be available to develop the system;*
- 31.2** *By creating regional Web sites so that parents can easily find out where spots are available in subsidized daycares or find alternative solutions that are eligible for the child care tax credit;*
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2.2 More flexibility for dealing with family obligations

Simultaneously with the evolution of new family models, the work world has also undergone a great transformation: unconventional schedules, self-employed workers (15% of the total), double jobs, continuing education, and career change highlight new needs for balance between work and family life.

More and more women aspire to hold a career and raise a family. This is a legitimate choice and it has provided a tremendous pool of talent heretofore unavailable to employers. However, despite the progress made in flexible work schedules, this choice appears to have held back the careers of a good many women.

Jane Waldfogel, an economics professor at Columbia University, has analyzed the pay for women as a whole over their lifetime. She has found that the average pay for women is equal to that of men at the start of their career, in their early to mid-twenties. After a few years on the job market, in the 25-29 age group, women's average pay is 87% of the men's average. However, looking at the 40-44 age group, once women go back to work full time after having babies in their thirties, she finds that on average women's salaries are 29% lower than men's³.

Almost one in two women is unable to return to the job market full time at the same level as when she left after giving birth, and three in four women go back to work for a different employer. Overall, women who have had children will spend an average of 5% less time working than men over their active lifetime, but will finish their career with an income that is 25% to 30% lower, the "gaps" in their resumés and their choppy career paths sometimes precluding them from promotion or advancement opportunities.

³— Jane Waldfogel and Susan Harkness, "The family gap in pay: evidence from seven industrialised countries," London School of Economics, November 1999, Table 3.

In the last few years, after numerous talks with employer groups, the Ministry of the Family tasked the Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ) with developing an analytical grid of the measures for balancing work and family life offered by various employers. The grid allots different scores based on the presence or absence of policies that allow greater flexibility to young parents who work. This grid, which grants recognition to employers based on the score they obtain and distributes them over four levels, is the right approach to adopt in our view. It makes it possible to distinguish and recognize those that make more of an effort than others, while allowing the flexibility needed to take account of the great diversity of working environments. However the ISO Family Standard grid is designed to recognize short-term measures, those that allow parents to adapt to family obligations while maintaining their bond of employment. But the grid is silent on the programs and measures designed to allow parents to resume their career without being penalized forever due to their choice to have children and devote their time to them at the critical stage. We would not only like to correct this situation, but also see to it that employers have a greater interest in adhering to this new standard, and that the standard as such become better known in the job market.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 32

Help parents achieve their professional ambitions and:

- 32.1 Amend the Labour Standards Act to include a declaration on the duty of accommodation for parental and family obligations;***
 - 32.2 Add a fifth level to the Work-Family Balance standard developed by the Bureau de normalisation du Québec at the request of the Ministry of the Family. To qualify for this higher level would require the satisfaction of criteria intended to ensure real career advancement opportunities for women who have children. This level would entitle the employer to a tax holiday on the payment of contributions to the Health Services Fund;***
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2.3 Respond better to the needs of parents with unconventional schedules and working conditions

The development of daycare services has had a tremendous impact on family life by providing quality daycare and facilitating the pursuit of young mothers' professional careers.

Nevertheless, these services are basically only available during standard hours. Meanwhile, more and more parents have unconventional schedules.

Solutions could be put forward for better meeting those parents' needs without incurring additional costs for the State.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 33

Incorporate flexibility in the provision of daycare services, and:

- 33.1 Facilitate the establishment of workplace daycare centres, whether for the medium or large corporation or for a consortium of small companies located at or near the same physical location, by cutting back on wait times for approval;***
 - 33.2 Allow CPEs to extend their business hours if demand permits and allow them, for that sole purpose, to bill the extra costs to the parents who avail themselves of the extra service on a voluntary basis;***
 - 33.3 Allow municipalities to promote the creation of "transit daycares" by encouraging non-subsidized daycares to become established near commuter parking facilities and reserve access to parents who use public transit;***
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2.4 Recognize today's realities

Quebec society is changing, and our multi-racial schools are a reflection of this change. In this environment where our future is being shaped, it is vital that we vehemently affirm our ideals of openness and respect. In recent years, instances of bullying and rejection have been reported, sometimes with dramatic consequences for the victims and perpetrators. There are also new forms, like cyber-bullying. We must firmly repudiate such occurrences and commit to preventing them.

Meanwhile, it is society that is sometimes ill-adapted to the reality of today's family. Thus, it is now common for children who are in shared custody to live part-time with one parent, and part-time with the other. However, for all practical purposes, it is impossible to obtain duplicates of State documents such as a health insurance card. School boards, amongst other examples, have adapted to such situations by sending a copy of the report card to both parents.

Also, a number of merchants and companies offer "family packages." However, the prevailing format is almost always two parents / two children, which results in a form of discrimination against "non-traditional" families, who have to pay more than the others.

We need to uphold our values and take action to facilitate the lives of parents.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 34

Protect those who are most vulnerable and recognize the realities of today's family, and:

- 34.1 Institute a new policy in the public education system to prevent all acts of physical and psychological violence and every form of intimidation, including cyber-bullying, and, in such instances, make sure that the victim's rights are protected;***
 - 34.2 Instruct agencies that issue official documents, such as the Régie de l'assurance maladie or the Directeur de l'état civil to deliver a duplicate health insurance card or birth certificate upon request;***
 - 34.3 Amend the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) so that merchants that promote family packages will make them available to any group of parents and their offspring, regardless of the number of offspring;***
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2.5 Intensify early detection of learning disabilities and behavioural problems

The experts unanimously agree that the earlier a cognitive disability or behavioural problem is detected, the better the chances that the child will overcome it quickly and eventually succeed scholastically just like other children. In a 2008 study, Montreal's Public Health Department found that one in three children in Montreal starts grade one ill prepared. With early detection, parents could be better equipped for such problems and receive guidance for their child's progress.

At the infant stage, it is often the nurses and social workers assigned to prenatal care and infant follow-up who are in the best position to instil confidence in young parents about their skills, encourage exposure to reading and detect early signs of future learning disabilities.

Four-year-old kindergarten (K-4) has existed for 10 years and has proven itself in Montreal's and Quebec City's disadvantaged neighbourhoods. But it is not available everywhere, even in Montreal, much less in more remote centres. It is especially for children who have not yet attended daycare, for it allows those children to get used to group life in a structured context before they are exposed to it in five-year-old kindergarten, which all will attend.

Similarly, the Passe-Partout facilitation program, created by the Ministry of Education in 1978 and adapted in 2003 to the goals of educational reform, pursues a dual objective of helping people acquire parenting skills and preparing four-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds for kindergarten. Less intensive than K-4, this program, which relies on community involvement, has nevertheless proven itself.

Meanwhile, parents should also be made aware of their responsibility for stimulating their children, especially for sparking their interest in reading at a very early age, which later on is a factor for scholastic success in their mother tongue, and in every other subject.

PROPOSITION 35

Intensify early stimulation for reading and early detection of behavioural and language problems, and:

- 35.1 Substantially increase salaries for professionals who specialize in the detection and treatment of behavioural and language problems throughout the system and develop models by which daycare coordinating offices can access the services of remedial teachers and psychologists in private practice and in the CLSCs;***
 - 35.2 Offer upgrading courses to teachers and daycare workers on early detection and facilitate the development and sharing of expertise in the subject;***
 - 35.3 Expand access to four-year-old kindergarten, beginning with the neighbourhoods targeted by the disadvantaged communities map;***
 - 35.4 Continue and expand access to the Passe-Partout program for parents and children from disadvantaged backgrounds, develop a web-based tool analogous to the "Allô Prof" homework assistance service, but designed for parents, and encourage school boards to develop workshops for parents, to be held on weekends and in a more festive framework;***
 - 35.5 Give every child, as of birth, their own municipal library card providing free access;***
 - 35.6 Invite the nurses and social workers who visit young parents who have just had their first child to convey more information and advice to those parents about awakening an interest in reading, and take this opportunity to give every child their first book;***
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2.6 Encourage alternatives to medication for hyperactive child

Although there are pharmaceutical treatment protocols for a diagnosis of ADD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), the unfettered application of those protocols induces disparities from one school to another and also depending on the specialized resources available. Doctors and other professionals active in the school setting are short of time, and diagnoses are sometimes made too quickly. A child psychiatrist should take 45 minutes to diagnose a case of ADD requiring medication, but diagnoses are made in just five to ten minutes. However, a misdiagnosis can follow a child for a long time and have dramatic consequences on the child's learning and, ultimately, his or her active life.

Meanwhile, the number of resources in schools is not sufficient to properly follow students who are on medication and ensure effective monitoring. This lack of specialists can be explained both by the low number of graduates in that field and by the appeal of private practice, which is more financially rewarding.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 36

Provide support for parents of hyperactive children and a better medication framework, and:

- 36.1 Make professional development workshops available to educators in collaboration with the school's remedial teachers, to facilitate early detection and diagnosis;***
 - 36.2 Increase the availability of the medical staff assigned to evaluation and diagnosis in schools and daycare centres, so they can take the necessary time for the diagnosis using the best medical practices;***
 - 36.3 Encourage professionals working in the school system to give intervention plans, parental support and behavioural solutions a chance before prescribing in the case of an ambivalent diagnosis;***
 - 36.4 Adapt the daily school routine to make more room for dynamic activities that will allow children, especially boys, to expend their energy. In that regard, raise the tolerance level for more turbulent male activities in a recreational context;***
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3- Sustainable development and renewable energy

The emergence of environmental awareness is probably one of the most important changes our societies have seen in the last 20 years.

Our relationship to the economy, consumption, transportation and our resources has been entirely transformed.

Since 2003, the government has been in tune with the citizens and truly repositioned Quebec, which is now emerging as a North American leader in sustainable development.

Its achievements in this realm are innumerable.

Thus, the QLP government has:

- Adopted a Sustainable Development Act, even amending the Charter of human rights and freedoms to guarantee the right to live in a healthy environment;
- Adopted a plan to fight climate change, lauded as one of the best in the world;
- Implemented a plan to develop clean and renewable energy, which will make Quebec a North American powerhouse; in particular, this plan has given rise to the windpower industry and it has been associated with an unprecedented initiative for the development of energy efficiency;
- Set greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets that are some of the most ambitious in the world; thus, in 2012 Quebec will be one of the only States in North America to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets; and when the Copenhagen Conference was held, it set a GHG reduction target of 20% by 2020. Since 1990, the reference year for the Kyoto Protocol, Quebec's population has increased by 10% and its GDP by 43%. However, during this period, Quebec has reduced its GHG emissions by 2%, including industrial reductions of 20% and real estate reductions by 5%. In the short interval since 2004, Quebec has reduced GHGs by 9.4%.
- Instituted the strictest antipollution standards for automobiles (California standards);
- Put a new forestry system in place which will ensure the sustainable exploitation of our forests;
- Introduced a public transit development plan, which has led to a 19% increase in available service, all within the three year period between 2006 and 2009;
- Introduced a plan promoting the shift to electric cars and the electrification of our public transit systems;
- Established a carbon market, in partnership with the most willing North American States; and
- Introduced the North Plan, the biggest sustainable development project in the world, announcing upon its introduction the creation of a new national park, the extension of protected areas and the sheltering from industrial development of half of the huge territory located north of the 49th parallel.

The combined effect of all these initiatives is to completely reposition Quebec and confirm it as one of the societies participating in the definition of a new way of living and growing.

To say that much has been done would be an understatement.

What is at stake is maintaining Quebec's leadership.

3.1 Break free of our dependence on petroleum products

Our steps towards sustainable development should reduce our dependence on oil. Quebec must still import all of its oil. The environmental impact is huge; so is the economic impact. No less than \$12 billion leaves Quebec every year to procure our fossil fuel. We make this a priority issue.

To reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuel, we have to act on every front:

- We need to use more replacement fuels;
- We need to convert equipment to other forms of energy; and
- We need to make use of our own hydrocarbon resources.

By working on these three aspects, we will consume and import less oil.

One avenue to be prioritized is the reclaiming of residual materials. Studies have shown that biogas produced by reclaiming putrescible materials could meet as much as 16% of the annual demand for natural gas in Quebec.

This biogas could be utilized in domestic and industrial heating equipment and in vehicles used for public transit or trucking.

Quebec has significant assets to succeed with this shift, starting with hydroelectricity, which enables the clean production of such biogas at a competitive cost. Quebec's territory is also suitable for the generation of energy from biomass.

The electrification of transportation is another way of reducing our dependence on oil.

Moreover, earlier this year, the government unveiled a huge plan for the electrification of transportation, which includes, most notably, the roll-out of recharging terminals in urban areas and the electrification of a number of commuter train corridors. The members of the task force have found it advisable to improve the plan by adding factors that push the envelope.

PROPOSITION 37

Initiate determined and sustained action to reduce oil consumption, replace oil, and convert equipment to other forms of energy, and:

- 37.1 Roll out a network of electrical charging terminals in Quebec's highway rest stops;***
 - 37.2 Change the Quebec Construction Code to require the installation of electrical charging terminals for vehicles in all new buildings or developments of a certain size;***
 - 37.3 Promote the conversion of heavy vehicles registered in Quebec to natural gas;***
 - 37.4 Authorize Hydro-Québec to finance the conversion of public transit equipment and facilities to electricity;***
 - 37.5 Develop an action plan for the exploitation of biomass, including forest residues and plants harvested for that purpose, to generate energy in industrial environments or remote areas, as a substitute for oil and gas;***
 - 37.6 Require that Hydro-Québec prioritize the supplemental supply of facilities generating fuel from residual materials, thus providing an opportunity for the energetic reclaiming of such materials, which would otherwise just be buried;***
 - 37.7 Allow Gaz Métro to sign long-term contracts with companies that transform residual materials for the transmission of the natural gas produced from residual materials;***
 - 37.8 Introduce regulations on minimum biogas content for all of the natural gas distributed in Quebec, similar to the Renewable Fuels Standard;***
 - 37.9 Offer all of Quebec's citizens living in urban areas an OPUS card containing a certain number of free passes so they can try it out;***
 - 37.10 Increase the availability of public transit in the regions by bringing the school bus fleet into play;***
-

In addition to helping lessen our dependence on oil imports, some of these propositions offer solutions to complex problems. The prevalence of biogas would thus, as a side benefit, convert what are now residual materials into jobs and wealth, while the electrification of transportation would also cut noise pollution, a nagging problem in urban centres.

Reducing our dependence on fossil fuel must become a priority, but we also need to recognize that we will still need fossil fuel for many years to come.

In this context, the right choices need to be made.

3.2 Responsible exploitation of our non-renewable resources

Quebecers believe, and rightly so, that the exploitation of natural resources, especially non-renewable ones, whether hydrocarbons or minerals, should benefit Quebec society and be carried on with respect for the host communities. Quebecers also want these resources transformed into intermediate or final products within Quebec's manufacturing sector, as is the case for the copper refined by Xstrata at its Valleyfield electrolysis plant, or the titanium dioxide extracted from the Rio Tinto mine in Havre-Saint-Pierre, which is transformed into pigment or a nutritional supplement at the Sorel metallurgical complex.

In the transformation of renewable resources, either from forests, the ocean or the land, Quebec has a long tradition and outstanding companies. With a wise blend of patience and firmness, it will be possible to do the same thing for minerals or hydrocarbons, thus maximizing the spinoff for Quebec while extending the benefits of the mining boom at the same time.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 38

To develop a separate royalty system for petroleum resources and commit to setting aside the net proceeds from such royalties into two equal shares: to build a reserve fund to deal with the financial impacts of a major environmental accident, and for a contribution to the Generations Fund;

3.3 Bring real estate into play

First begun on the U.S. west coast at the start of the new millennium, the LEED standard has now become the tool for promoting environmental performance in the real estate sector — a sector that is responsible for almost one-third of GHG emissions on the continent.

Unlike most other standards, like Energy Star, Boma Best or Green Globes, which are based on qualification thresholds, the certification levels (LEED, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum) correspond to a weighted score attributed based on various criteria, covering not only effective energy performance but also the reduction of residual materials, proximity to materials production sites, urban mobility and public and alternative transportation, the reduction of wastewater treatment, and even the regulation of the dust produced by a construction site. Therefore, the LEED standard offers property managers more flexibility in choosing how best to reduce their ecological footprint.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 39

Reduce energy consumption in the real estate sector, and:

- 39.1 Instruct the Bureau de normalisation du Québec, in conjunction with the relevant ministries and agencies, to identify criteria adjusted to climatic constraints, environmental and urban issues so as to develop a standard equivalent to the LEED;***
 - 39.2 Encourage public administrations to set the example by adopting the LEED standard or its equivalent for the construction or renovation of their own properties;***
 - 39.3 Empower municipal administrations to promote the attainment of levels in excess of the equivalent to the LEED standard by using urban planning tools, such as various waivers (density premium), or a property tax rebate or tax holiday;***
-

The Société immobilière du Québec, which manages the Quebec government's own properties, has already adopted the LEED standard for a number of construction projects, notably the new police stations for the Sûreté du Québec. This is a movement that should be applauded and extended.

As a property owner and major lessee in the Quebec market, the government needs to set an example and lead the way to a carbon-free future.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 40

Set the example with public and government buildings, and:

- 40.1 Design and build government buildings so they will have "zero carbon emissions" as of the first day they open;***
 - 40.2 Set a goal for 2020 to replace, in all buildings, the main heating systems running primarily on fuel oil with systems that use renewable energy;***
 - 40.3 Give priority to space leases in buildings equipped with heating systems fuelled by a renewable energy source, by granting a preferential margin of 5% on the rent when calls for tenders are issued;***
 - 40.4 Prioritizing wood for the structure and cladding of public construction projects that lend themselves to that material and for which wood is the best environmental option;***
-

In conjunction with this commercial and institutional real estate goal, we need to push the boundaries for residential energy efficiency by financially supporting property owners when they buy cost-effective but expensive devices to realize significant savings on their electricity bill.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 41

Support residential property owners who want to invest in the energy efficiency of their home, and:

- 41.1 Create an energy efficiency fund for the owners of family residences and rental properties so they can recuperate the costs of the work and equipment related to energy efficiency from their savings on electricity. Accordingly, the electricity bill would remain unchanged unless and until the amounts saved have equalled the cost of the initial investment, for up to 10 years;***
 - 41.2 Foster the micro production of renewable energy by developing a smart energy distribution system for all new residential developments;***
 - 41.3 Develop pilot projects for solar and geothermal houses in an urban and rural setting to test their viability;***
-

3.4 Triple water royalties

Water is designated as the collective heritage of Quebecers in the Quebec Water Policy. The government, as steward, makes sure to preserve the value of water, which is vital to human health and our economy.

Today we are aware of the value of water and of our responsibility for its protection.

At the start of the year, the QLP government instituted a royalty system on the use of water by companies. Two rates apply: the higher one is charged to companies that bottle water and incorporate it into beverages or products; the lower one is charged to companies that use water for cleaning, cooling or other applications related to production. Although it is much higher than that of our neighbours, we believe this second rate is too low and does not reflect the real cost of the supply.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 42

To triple, over five years, the royalties on the volume of water used for production so as to bring them up to the level in effect for bottlers;

3.5 The social acceptability of investment projects

Some investment projects in the field of energy (i.e., gaz exploration) or the environment (i.e., waste disposal sites) have in the past met with significant opposition from nearby citizens.

We believe it is worthwhile to introduce new mechanisms to allow citizens to voice and characterize their concerns and see to it that projects are located where they are most readily accepted by local communities.

We think a reversed auction scheme could be a promising solution to allow the successful implementation of otherwise acceptable projects in environmental and social terms.

The scheme would work as follows : if, for instance, a dozen of communities share the features that would technically make them a suitable location for such a project, the elected leaders of those communities would be asked to consult their fellow citizens and propose to the project's promoter a suitable compensation amount, in exchange for which the community would accept to play host to the investment. The promoter would then commit to pay compensation equivalent to the lowest amount proposed and locate the project in the area featuring the lowest compensation bid. In this scenario, both parties can feel confident the compensation amount settled for is reasonable, and the project can be located in the one place where it is deemed the most acceptable. It is a solution worth exploring.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 43

Make selective use of the reverse auction mechanism in order to arrive at a fair compensation price, in the case of energy or environmental projects carrying risks or nuisances and that can be located in many settings;

4- Culture as a lever for asserting our identity... and prospering

Culture is Quebec's cornerstone. The first criterion for defining Quebec within Canada, North America and internationally, is that it is the only nation in America with a francophone majority.

This situation of a minority people, representing less than 2% of the continent's population, used to be viewed as fragile.

But the reality is something else altogether.

In their desire to uphold their language and culture, Quebecers have found a creative energy that has fuelled all aspects of our economic and social life. Quebecers are recognized worldwide as a creative people.

Like the Premier said during his inaugural speech on February 23, 2011, "Quebec is, for instance, Robert Lepage at New York's Metropolitan Opera, Danny Laferrière and the Prix Médicis, Arcade Fire dominating at the Grammy Awards, Denis Villeneuve and his film *Incendies* at the Oscars and Céline Dion back on stage in Las Vegas. We Quebecers are at home on the biggest stages in the world."

4.1 Culture creating wealth

Today our culture appears as a force, a way of standing out, a way of charming, a way of inventing.

Our culture is a source of wealth and prosperity and our artists' success resonates throughout Quebec, instilling in our entrepreneurs, researchers and industrialists a feeling of confidence and a determination to confront all challenges.

In recent years, the Quebec government has backed this policy to make culture a lever for prosperity.

It did so, most notably, through a remarkable project that laid the groundwork for a new wave of success: the construction of the Quartier des spectacles and the new concert hall for the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in the very heart of our metropolis.

These projects, which involved investments in excess of \$0.5 billion, have redesigned an entire section of downtown Montreal and created, in the heart of the city, one of the world's densest concentrations of artists, creators, and venues for presenting and creating cultural events.

The construction of the Quartier des spectacles and the concert hall, along with Place des arts and Place des festivals, the modern layout and lively fountains, has already put a new stamp on Montreal and materialized this vision of Montreal as a world-class cultural metropolis.

The government must continue to view culture as a factor in the creation of wealth.



PROPOSITION 44

Stimulate public and private investment in culture, and:

- 44.1 Continue to develop the Quartier des spectacles in Montreal;***
 - 44.2 Encourage greater private sector involvement in the financing of the arts and culture, either by improving the Placement Culture program or developing new incentives;***
-

4.2 Culture, Quebec's ambassador

Quebec artists who travel abroad are superb ambassadors for our society. The promotional and advertising impact for Quebec of a sold-out hall at the Olympia in Paris, or a palm at Cannes, benefits our entire society and opens doors for other Quebecers in other fields of activity.

It was on the strength of this conviction that the government took up the slack when the federal government abolished its support for the financing of international tours by our artists.

This initiative should be maintained and developed. We believe it advisable to organize more cultural missions abroad. Copied from the well established and successful trade mission model, the primary objective of these missions would be to foster cultural and artistic exchanges between Quebec and its foreign partners, primarily in the major artistic centres of the world. Through such cultural missions, many artists would find some doors open to them that would otherwise remain shut.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 45

Develop support for the presence of our artists abroad, and:

- 45.1 Make the resources granted to support international tours by Quebec artists permanent;***
 - 45.2 Develop these initiatives by granting Quebec companies that do business abroad the possibility of sponsoring certain artistic tours to heighten their importance;***
 - 45.3 Send cultural missions, modelled on our trade missions, to various major cultural centres of the world;***
-

4.3 Be better seen and better heard

Culture is our soul. Culture adds to our prosperity. By better spreading our culture we better affirm who we are. With the surge of the Internet and the advent of the digital age, new ways of spreading our culture are within our grasp.

WebTV is one phenomenon that is in full growth in Quebec and elsewhere in the world. For instance, look at the e-zine 33mag, the video blog le Tapis rose de Catherine and the digital wire service Webpresse. Since 2008, growth of the WebTV sector has been notable in Quebec as well as abroad. Moreover, a display of international and francophone content created exclusively for the Web, the WEBTV festival⁴, was recently organized in France. WebTV, as it evolves, could become an excellent tool for spreading and promoting Quebec's culture.

The government has undertaken to invest to help cultural organizations shift to digital. In the last Budget Speech, \$10 million was committed to support the digital broadcast of works by Quebec artists in the fields of cinema, music and variety programming.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 46

Broadcast our culture in the modern media, and:

- 46.1 Adapt Quebec's cultural policy to the digital age by revising all of the existing programs with a view to maximizing the exposure of our artists and their works on the Web and facilitate their digital broadcasting;***
 - 46.2 Work on developing first-rate Quebec expertise in the field of WebTV, initially targeting the international francophone market;***
 - 46.3 Implement measures to expand and expedite the digitization of our cultural heritage, like our libraries and museums, to make them accessible to the world and to all Quebecers, showcasing our culture and memory;***
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4- <http://www.webtv-festival.tv/>