



Bill 86

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Bill 86 was tabled in December 2015 and proposes many significant changes to the functioning of schools and school boards. QPAT has been primarily interested in what the changes mean for student learning and the impact they will have on teaching. QPAT has reached the conclusion that Bill 86, as presented, will have a negative impact on student learning and that it is harmful to the democratic process.

Bill 86 will have a harmful effect on student learning for the following reasons:

- The educational project would become an amplified version of the management and educational success agreement (MESA), with an emphasis on targets that will come at the cost of overall learning;
- The increased focus on specific targets could force teachers to adopt practices that seek to meet said targets, rather than looking at the entire educational experience of the students in their classes;
- Governing boards would have added responsibility over certain matters, including some pedagogical ones, despite the difficulties for a number of governing boards to function well with their current level of responsibility;
- Schools and principals would compete with each other for resources and students, which would damage equity between schools and students and reduce educational opportunity for many;
- Programs in vocational education would have to be more compliant with local economic imperatives which could lead to students receiving specialized training to meet the needs of a local employer, but not enough general training in the field for job mobility;

- The minister would be able to impose specific administrative and managerial decisions on a school board without even a framework indicating that this would be an exceptional occurrence.

In QPAT's view, many specific proposals in the bill need to be withdrawn or substantially modified in order to allow for equitable educational opportunities for all students, schools that focus on overall learning, proper teacher autonomy, general vocational education, and ministerial powers that are better contextualized.

Bill 86 also damages the democratic process. It removes the right to vote from people who currently have it and replaces it with a system where one group of voters (parents) would decide whether anyone else would have the right to vote. On the other hand, the current electoral system needs to be reviewed and QPAT will make a number of recommendations to change and improve it while maintaining the right to vote for those who have it presently.

The parliamentary commission that is examining Bill 86 began in mid-February after several weeks of delay. QPAT will have the opportunity to present its views at the commission; QPAT will make its full brief public at that time.