

September 14, 2020

Monsieur Jean-Francois Roberge  
Ministre de l'Éducation  
600, rue Fullum, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Montréal (Quebec), H2K 4L1

Monsieur le Ministre,

The Riverside School Board Parents' Committee wishes to convey to you, its extreme disappointment for not having granted, for a third time, the expansion of REACH School to centralize all services under one roof and have enough room to provide all the services that our students are entitled to.

REACH is the only Public English-Language School, with a mandate for Regional classes, which caters to students with special needs from the ages of four to 21. The Program is offered by the Riverside School Board on the South Shore of Montreal. The student population at REACH has more than doubled in the last five years, resulting in services being offered across five different locations in settings not originally designed for their needs. Some classroom sizes are too small and hallways are not wheelchair accessible. There is a lack of elevators, intervention spaces, therapy areas, handicap-accessible washrooms, diaper-changing stations for students of all ages, a playground, a gym and a library. Some students have to be sent to other schools on the island of Montreal as a result thereof.

The REACH Governing Board, the RSB Parents' Committee, the Council of Commissioners and RSB Staff advocated for Regional Status and obtained it in the fall of 2019. They also closely monitored, through regular briefings and updates provided, the status of multiple proposals put forth to the Ministry of Education to secure appropriate budgets that would solve the current infrastructure shortcomings. Five years ago, RSB had applied for a gym extension and subsequently received approval. The construction of this much-needed gym was put on hold, at the request of the Ministry, while the extension request was being analyzed. Every year that the project is not awarded deprives our students of a gym.

During your September 2019 visit, you clearly indicated that you wanted to ensure that the dedicated facility proposal for REACH would move forward. You suggested to not take a piecemeal approach in asking for an extension. Rather, that it was best to propose an all-encompassing project. Following your suggestion, RSB met with your staff to jointly structure an option "A" project, as a full Centre for REACH or option "B" for a REACH extension to Saint-Lambert International.

The Riverside School Board Parents' Committee is hereby demanding that you, the Minister of Education, reconsider your decision and grant the REACH project to ensure that the students with special needs may thrive and reach their full potential with dignity and equity.

Sincerely,



Fadi Tawil  
Chair, Riverside School Board Parents' Committee

CC: Daniel Lamoureux, Chair, Riverside School Board Council of Commissioners  
and Chair of QESBA  
Sylvain Racette, Director General, Riverside School Board  
Nicole Ménard, MNA for Laporte