

18 août 2010 | Le Droit | FRANÇOISFRANÇOISPIERREPIERREDUFAULT DUFAULT
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Moratoire demandé sur les tests de 3e et 6e années en Ontario

Le syndicat qui représente le personnel enseignant de niveau élémentaire en Ontario demande un moratoire sur les tests de rendement imposés aux élèves de 3e et 6e années.

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La Fédération des enseignants de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario (FEEO) veut que ces tests menés par l'Office de la qualité et de la responsabilité en éducation (OQRE) soient suspendus pour une période de deux ans, le temps de tenir des consultations publiques sur « l'utilité, la valeur et l'impact » d'un tel mode d'évaluation. « C'est troublant de voir que des domaines comme les sciences, l'histoire, les études sociales et les arts sont mis de côté pour permettre aux élèves de mieux se préparer aux tests de l'OQRE, qui se concentrent seulement sur la littérature et les mathématiques », a déclaré Sam Hammond, président de la FEEO, par le biais d'un communiqué. M. Hammond affirme que les tests de l'OQRE « font très peu pour améliorer l'apprentissage » chez les élèves. Il déplore le fait que ces tests, d'abord conçus pour évaluer le système d'éducation ontarien, en sont venus à dicter ce qui s'enseigne dans les salles de classe de la province.

La ministre de l'Éducation, Leona Dombrowsky, n'est toutefois pas prête à sabrer dans les tests de l'OQRE. Elle dit que ces tests donnent au ministère des « informations importantes » sur lesquelles se baser pour mieux appuyer la réussite scolaire à l'élémentaire et au secondaire.

Mme Dombrowsky rappelle qu'un tel système d'évaluation avait été instauré, en 1996, à la demande de parents qui voulaient un regard indépendant sur le progrès de leurs enfants à l'école.



Chaque année, l'OQRE dépense environ 32 millions\$ pour évaluer les compétences des élèves de 3e, 6e, 9e et 10e années en littérature et en mathématiques.

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18 août 2010 | Le Droit | DOMINIQUE DOMINIQUE JARRY-JARRY-SHORE SHORE LALa PRESSE Presse
Canadienne CANADIENNE TORONTO —

Des professeurs ne veulent pas de Wi-Fi dans les écoles

Des enseignants ontariens ont joint leurs voix à une initiative dont l'objectif est de faire retirer les réseaux Internet sans-fil des salles de classes de la province, par peur qu'ils ne représentent un danger pour la santé des écoliers.

Dans le centre de l'Ontario, certains parents ont créé le Comité pour des écoles sécuritaires du comté de Simcoe, lorsqu'ils ont commencé à suspecter qu'Internet sans-fil présent dans les classes était responsable des symptômes qu'ils avaient observés chez leurs enfants.

Ils ont appelé la Commission scolaire du comté de Simcoe à retirer les réseaux Wi-Fi et à recommencer à distribuer Internet par câbles, comme par le passé. La commission a refusé, plaidant qu'il n'existait pas de preuve scientifique ni médicale pour confirmer que les enfants étaient devenus malades en raison de la présence de technologie sans-fil dans les classes.

Hier, les enseignants de la région du Niagara ont ajouté leurs voix à cet appel pour remettre en question la présence d'Internet sansfil dans les écoles, mais leurs collègues du reste de l'Ontario ont refusé de les appuyer.

La vice-présidente du chapitre local du syndicat, Terri Beck, a présenté une résolution à l'assemblée générale de la Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario, au nom du chapitre local de Niagara. La résolution demandait aux enseignants de faire pression sur les commissions scolaires de la province afin qu'elles développent des politiques strictes qui interdisent la diffusion d'Internet sans-fil dans les écoles. Elle a finalement été battue à plate couture, récoltant seulement quelques dizaines d'appuis dans une salle remplie de plus de 500 délégués.

Si Terri Beck a reconnu que la science fournissait des arguments pour les deux camps, elle a énuméré les maux de tête, les difficultés à se concentrer, les problèmes de mémoire et l'épuisement comme problèmes qui pourraient être causés par une exposition d'un enfant à un réseau Wi-Fi.

Santé Canada

La ministre de l'Éducation de l'Ontario, Leona Dombrowsky, a affirmé que c'était à Santé Canada de déterminer si la présence de réseaux Internet sans-fil dans les écoles était dangereuse. Pour sa part, Santé Canada a émis un communiqué expliquant que les technologies d'émission d'un signal sans-fil installées dans les endroits publics devaient se conformer à des normes fédérales de sécurité. Selon l'agence, ces appareils arrivent souvent bien en deçà des limites.

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Quelque 500 personnes se présentent à une soirée « entre amis »

Facebook joue les trouble-fête



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Etienne Ranger, LeDroit

La fête a mal tourné dans cette résidence de la montée des Érables, lorsque le jeune résidant a perdu le contrôle de sa soirée.

Un adolescent de Cantley a sous-estimé le pouvoir de Facebook en annonçant une fête chez lui, lundi soir. Il attendait une centaine d'amis, il en est venu 500.

La fête a mal tourné sur la montée des Érables, lorsque le jeune résidant a perdu le contrôle de sa soirée. Les policiers de la Municipalité régionale de comté (MRC) des Collines et de la Ville de Gatineau ont été appelés vers minuit pour calmer le jeu et arrêter cinq personnes pour vol.

L'hôte voulait profiter de l'absence de ses parents, partis en voyage, pour inviter ses « amis Facebook » chez lui. L'adolescent, a-t-il confié, hier, a omis de cliquer sur l'option « privé » afin de limiter le nombre d'invitations. Le média social a causé un véritable effet domino, avec des gens pratiquement inconnus qui ont répondu à l'invitation.

« La fête s'est déroulée à l'extérieur », affirme Martin Fournel, de la police de la MRC des Collines. Et heureusement que le jeune a eu la présence d'esprit de contrôler les entrées et les sorties dans la maison, réservée seulement pour la salle de bain. Cela aurait pu être pire. »

La situation est devenue chaotique lorsqu'un invité a ouvert la porte d'en avant, créant un effet de masse. Plusieurs jeunes ont alors investi la maison. Une télévision a été volée, mais les policiers ont tôt fait d'arrêter des Gatinois âgés de 17 à 21 ans. Cet effet de masse s'est soldé par des bouteilles de bière au sol et dans la piscine, dans laquelle une chaise a aussi été lancée.

L'adolescent et un membre de sa famille n'ont pas commenté ouvertement les événements, hier, lors du passage du *Droit*. L'adulte a refusé de parler publiquement, pendant que le jeune, regrettant les dernières heures, laissait savoir qu'il prévoyait ne recevoir que ses amis les plus proches, sans vouloir causer quelque dommage que ce soit.

Le jeune a appelé la police lorsqu'un groupe est parvenu à pénétrer à l'intérieur pour s'emparer d'un téléviseur et d'autres items. Le fils d'une résidante du secteur, qui désire garder l'anonymat, estime quant à lui que plus de 500 fêtards se trouvaient dans les environs. « Il y avait des autos partout sur des Érables et dans les rues avoisinantes », dit-il. Sa mère, affirme-t-il, a été victime d'une introduction par effraction sur sa propriété, vers 23 h. Le ou les malfaiteurs se sont enfuis après le déclenchement du système d'alarme.

« Des ados ont 350 amis, et même plus, rajoute le policier. Bon nombre d'entre eux ne sont pas vraiment des amis. »

La révolution des communications a des répercussions sur les notions de ce qui est privé et de ce qui ne l'est pas, résume M. Snyder. « Des gens écrivent des choses qu'ils pensent être privées, mais ne savent pas comment elles seront diffusées. »

Quand « l'ami d'un ami » réécrit la définition de l'amitié

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L'ami d'un ami... La définition d'amitié sur Facebook n'est pas la même que dans les dictionnaires. Le dérapage d'une fête qui se voulait sans problème, à Cantley, est directement lié au phénomène Facebook. « La victime, dans notre cas, est comme bien d'autres jeunes sur Facebook, dit le porte-parole de la

Municipalité régionale de comté (MRC) des Collines, Martin Fournel. Un peu naïf par rapport à l'utilisation d'Internet... »

Révolution

Les communications ont changé en moins de 20 ans, rappelle le directeur des médias sociaux chez

Octane stratégies, Marc Snyder. Le schéma classique de « l'émetteur, message, récepteur » est devenu beaucoup plus complexe. « Le point B est, aujourd'hui, aussi un émetteur, dit-il. Si tu veux restreindre la communication, (Facebook) devient négatif. »

La situation qui s'est produite à Cantley n'est pas la pire, selon le spécialiste, qui rappelle le célèbre cas de Heather Armstrong, une Américaine qui a perdu son emploi après avoir parlé contre son employeur, sur son blogue. « Il en découle une expression aujourd'hui, dit M. Snyder. On dit d'une personne qui a perdu son emploi dans de pareilles circonstances qu'elle a été *doocée*, un terme repris du nom du blogue de la femme, 'dooce' ».

« Des gens écrivent des choses qu'ils pensent être privées, mais ne savent pas comment elles seront diffusées. »

Le policier Fournel croit en l'implication des parents pour prévenir de gros problèmes. « À 17 ans, ce sont presque des adultes, dit-il. Le jeune qui s'organise avec ses parents évitera bien des problèmes. Il arrive que ceux-ci nous appellent pour nous dire que leur jeune organise une fête, et qu'ils sont au courant. Au moins, si c'est supervisé et connu, ça diminue les risques. »

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Plus qu'une étape à franchir pour le CMFO

Dans l'ancienne école Grant

Le projet de Centre multiservice francophone de l'ouest d'Ottawa (CMFO) n'est maintenant plus qu'à une formalité d'obtenir le feu vert de la Ville d'Ottawa.



SIMON SÉGUIN-BERTRAND, Archives LeDroit

Le CMFO souhaite acquérir l'ancienne école Grant pour 2 millions \$.

Après avoir obtenu l'aval du comité municipal des services organisationnels et du développement économique, hier, le projet n'a plus qu'à recevoir le sceau du conseil municipal, mercredi prochain, pour aller de l'avant.

« Nous sommes très contents. Ça fait déjà cinq ans que nous peaufinons le projet. C'est un beau projet qui va servir toute la communauté de l'ouest d'Ottawa », s'est réjouie Diane Normand, la trésorière du CMFO.

Le CMFO souhaite acquérir l'ancienne école Grant pour la somme de 2 millions \$. La transaction serait accompagnée d'une subvention municipale de 1,9 million \$ sous forme de don d'une parcelle de terrain. Le site appartient à la Ville d'Ottawa, qui l'a racheté de l'Ottawa-Carleton District School Board en 2008 pour la somme de 3,9 millions \$.

Dans les plans du CMFO, l'édifice patrimonial du 2720, chemin Richmond serait rénové et transformé en centre communautaire. On prévoit y greffer un centre de soins de longue durée, une

coopérative d'habitation, une équipe de santé familiale et un centre de formation satellite de La Cité collégiale. L'ancienne école Grant est appelée à devenir un noyau de services pour quelque 28000 francophones qui vivent à l'ouest de l'avenue Bronson. Ces résidants sont dispersés sur un territoire qui compte pour plus de la moitié de la superficie de la ville.

Terry Kilrea

L'appui au CMFO n'est cependant pas unanime dans l'ouest d'Ottawa. La semaine dernière, le candidat Terry Kilrea a lancé sa campagne dans le quartier Baie en exprimant son « dégoût » pour le projet de l'école Grant. Un autre candidat dans le même quartier, G.-J. Hagenaaars, s'est aussi opposé pour des raisons semblables.

Pour le CMFO, les commentaires de MM. Kilrea et Hagenaaars démontrent une incompréhension malheureuse de leur projet.

« Ces gens-là n'ont pas pris le temps de bien regarder le projet. Nous ne voulons pas créer un centre de services uniquement pour les francophones. Ce sera un centre administré par des francophones mais il offrira des services dans les deux langues. Un peu comme l'hôpital Montfort », de rectifier Mme Normand.

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18 août 2010 | Le Droit | LeDroit

INCENDIE CRIMINEL À GEORGE-VANIER

L'école George-Vanier, une maison d'enseignement membre du Conseil des écoles catholique d'Ottawa, a été la cible d'un incendie criminel, vers 15 h 30, hier après-midi. Les malfaiteurs ont fracassé plusieurs fenêtres et se sont glissés à l'intérieur de l'institution d'enseignement de Kanata pour y mettre le feu dans une salle de classe. Les pompiers ont rapidement maîtrisé le brasier, restreignant l'incendie à la salle de classe. Les dommages s'élèvent toutefois à 150 000\$. Personne n'a encore été arrêté. L'incident fait l'objet d'une enquête de l'Unité d'enquête d'incendie criminel de la police d'Ottawa.

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18 août 2010 | Le Droit | *GUILLAUMEGUILLAUMEST-ST-PIERRE PIERRE*
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Expansion pour contrer la surpopulation

Francojeunesse

Les élèves de l'école élémentaire Francojeunesse, située dans le secteur Côte-de-sable à Ottawa, pourront enfin mieux respirer d'ici quelques mois. Avec l'acquisition d'une ancienne école catholique anglophone à deux pas de Francojeunesse, le Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario (CEPEO) a enfin trouvé une solution à long terme au problème de surpopulation dont souffre la maison d'enseignement depuis trois ans.

Pleine à craquer

« Ça fait quand même assez longtemps que le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario est conscient des problèmes de surpopulation de l'école Francojeunesse. Nous devons répondre aux besoins de la communauté », affirme le président du conseil du CEPEO, George Orfali, ajoutant que cette dernière est pleine à craquer.

Quelque 160 élèves déménageront leurs pénates, en janvier prochain, à l'intérieur des murs de l'édifice acquis il y a trois semaines, situé au 339, rue Wilbrod, au centre-ville d'Ottawa. Des travaux de réfections à la bâtisse et au terrain, au coût de 100000\$, sont présentement en cours.

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18 août 2010 | Le Droit | JUSTINE MERCIER jmercier@ledroit.com JUSTINE MERCIER Avec Guillaume St-Pierre, LeDroit
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L'UQO demande un statut particulier

Le recteur Jean Vaillancourt évoque une « iniquité historique »

Le statut particulier du réseau de santé dans la région fait des jaloux. L'Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO) a réclamé la même reconnaissance, hier, à Québec, devant la Commission de la culture et de l'éducation, en affirmant que son offre de programmes est « la plus dépouillée » de la province.

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Évoquant à maintes reprises une « iniquité historique » en raison de la présence des établissements universitaires du côté d'Ottawa, le recteur de l'UQO, Jean Vaillancourt, a déclaré hier que « le nerf de la guerre, c'est l'offre de programmation ».

Le recteur a fait valoir que 3000 étudiants de l'Outaouais fréquentent chaque année des établissements postsecondaires de l'Outaouais, entre autres parce que plusieurs programmes ne sont pas offerts à l'UQO, notamment dans le domaine des sciences naturelles.

« Je pense qu'il y a un effet frontalier évident au niveau universitaire, possiblement au niveau collégial, mais certainement que l'UQO et le Québec bénéficieraient que l'Outaouais ait un statut particulier pour la formation universitaire », a soutenu Jean Vaillancourt.

Il estime qu'une « correction importante » s'impose, puisque l'UQO détient 2% de l'offre universitaire au Québec pour desservir l'Outaouais et les Laurentides, qui représentent 10% de la

population de la province. Selon M. Vaillancourt, l'offre de 21 baccalauréats est insuffisante pour ces deux régions où la croissance démographique est rapide.

Dans le cadre de son allocution devant la commission parlementaire qui entend, tous les trois ans, les dirigeants des établissements universitaires du Québec, M. Vaillancourt a également soutenu que l'UQO est sous-financée, et ce depuis 2001. Cela explique, selon lui, la totalité de la dette de l'établissement, qui engendre des coûts de plus d'un demi-million de dollars chaque année.

Tous les députés présents ont prêté une oreille attentive à son exposé, selon M. Vaillancourt. « Nos propos ont été écoutés attentivement par tous les députés des partis présents, souligne-t-il. Nous avons reçu des questions pertinentes quand aux raisons de l'iniquité historique dont souffre L'UQO. »

En entrevue téléphonique avec LeDroit, M. Vaillancourt a d'ailleurs soutenu que Québec a une « obligation morale » de corriger cet « écart important » entre l'UQO et les autres institutions d'enseignement universitaire qui desservent un bassin de population similaire. Le recteur a ajouté que ses demandes ne représentent en fait qu'une mise à niveau avec le reste du réseau universitaire québécois.

La députée de Gatineau, Stéphanie Vallée, qui siège à la commission, a reconnu la « situation particulière » de l'UQO, en ajoutant « qu'il y a un travail qui est fait de plus en plus pour nous sortir de cette dépendance-là face à Ottawa ».

L'avenir de l'UQO passe aussi, selon le recteur Vaillancourt, par la fin des activités au pavillon Lucien-Brault, au profit d'une consolidation au campus Alexandre-Taché.

Le projet d'un imposant édifice à l'angle des boulevards Alexandre-Taché et Saint-Joseph est toujours dans les plans de M. Vaillancourt. L'un des schémas de cet édifice prévoit que le boulevard Saint-Joseph, s'il est prolongé, passe carrément en dessous d'une partie surélevée du bâtiment dont la construction est évaluée à 20 millions\$.



L'UQO souhaite également développer son campus de Saint-Jérôme. Selon les prévisions de l'établissement, le nouveau pavillon des Laurentides, inauguré en janvier dernier, sera plein d'ici deux ans.

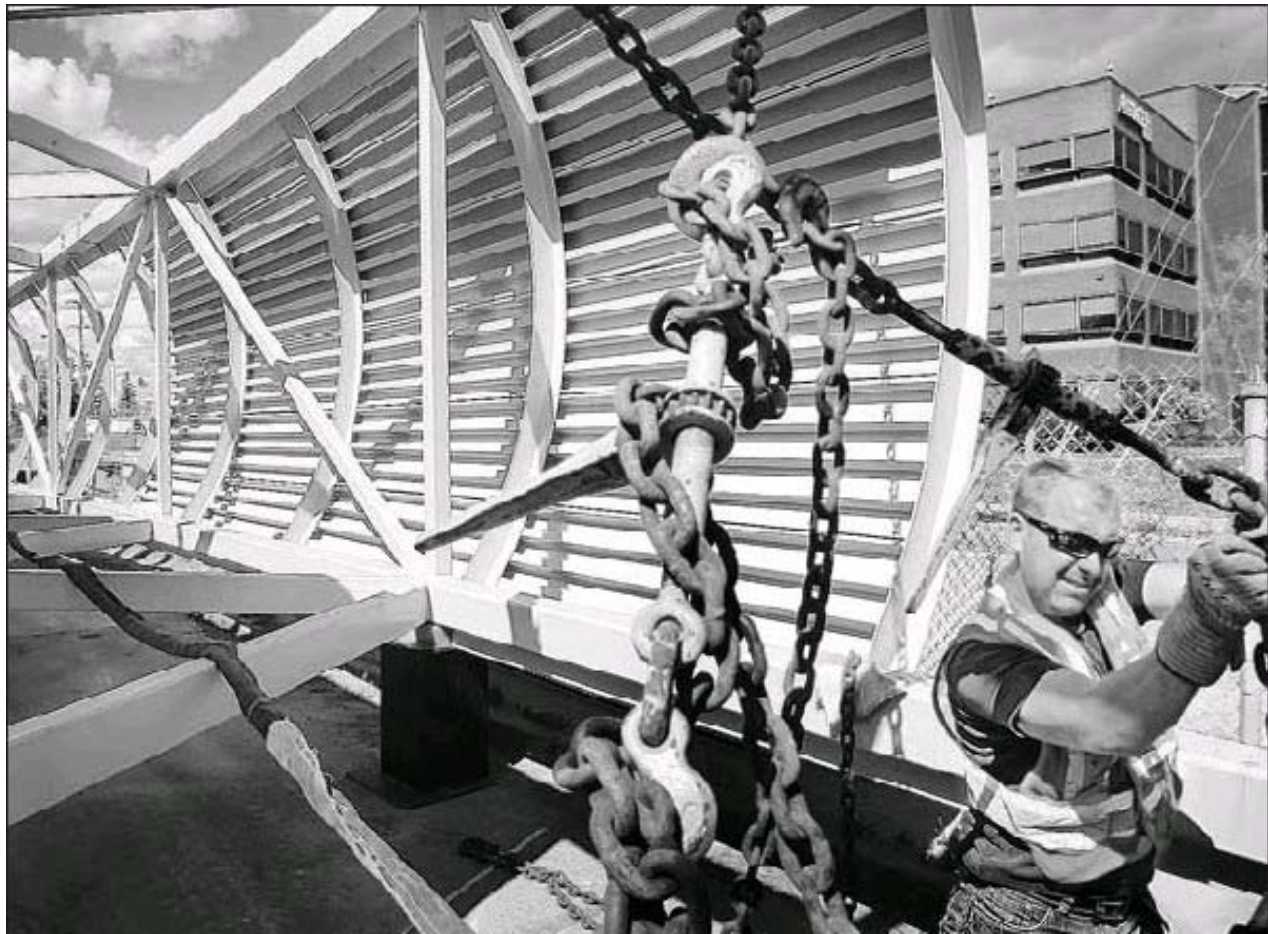
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Article rank | 18 Aug 2010 | Ottawa Citizen | BY CLAIRE BROWNELL

Algonquin to finally get its bridge

Second piece to arrive in time for weekend

After more than a week of delays, the Algonquin pedestrian bridge has finally arrived in Ottawa. At least, half of it has.



WAYNE CUDDINGTON, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Dany Mondour loosens the chains holding one half of the pedestrian bridge, which arrived by truck from Montreal on Tuesday afternoon. The second half is expected to arrive by Thursday and they will be installed Saturday night.

"It's Christmas in August, and we're getting both halves of our present," said College Councillor Rick Chiarelli.

Road closings to install the bridge were scheduled for the weekend of Aug. 7, but construction was pushed back after the city learned the Quebec Ministry of Transport had denied Mometal Structures, the company that made the bridge, a permit to haul it across the St. Lawrence River. Instead, Mometal had to take a 250-kilometre detour and apply for new permits from each municipality it passed through and from provincial police in Quebec and Ontario for escorts.

Half of the 66-metre long bridge arrived at the construction site Tuesday at about 2:30 p.m. and the other half is scheduled to arrive in the middle of the night on Thursday. Construction is scheduled to begin Friday night, with crews assembling the bridge on Saturday night.

"You'll go to bed Saturday night and wake up Sunday morning and there will be a bridge," Chiarelli

said.

Despite the delays, Chiarelli said the bridge is still on track to be completed under budget and ahead of schedule. Installation of the bridge was originally planned for early September and Chiarelli said he expects the final cost to be more than \$5 million, but less than the \$5.4 million originally budgeted.

That's because the contractor, not the city, is bearing most of the costs associated with delays caused by the permit problem. The City of Ottawa contracted the construction and transport of the bridge to a company in London, Ont., which in turn subcontracted it to Mometal, Chiarelli said.

Santo Ciccarelli, a production manager with Mometal, said the delays have cost his company about \$ 4,000. But compared with other times he's waited for the Quebec Ministry of Transport to approve a load, he said this was a breeze.

" I've waited up to three months for a permit," Ciccarelli said.

Guillaume Beaurivage, a spokesman for the Quebec Ministry of Transport, said delays are common when it comes to permits for transporting heavy loads in Quebec. The ministry requires companies to take extra care and drive slowly with a police escort to avoid damaging provincial roads.

Chiarelli said city officials didn't know the project would get subcontracted to Mometal and would think twice before giving out a construction contract that could end up getting snarled in Quebec again.

Chiarelli said construction crews plan to start closing some lanes of traffic on Friday evening, with Woodroffe and parts of Meadowlands scheduled to close completely on Saturday night. All roads are expected to reopen Sunday afternoon.

The bridge will link the new college trades building and a future underground transit station on the west side of Woodroffe with the rest of the college and the communities on the east side of the street.

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National Post

News

View the story "School board sticks with Wi-Fi amid complaints of illnesses" on YouTube.



A parents' group attributes various unexplained illnesses to about 30 Ontario students to wireless Internet signals in schools.

By Adam McDowell, National Post · Monday, Aug. 16, 2010

Dizziness, nausea, fatigue, behavioural issues and even heart problems: Children in Simcoe County school with mysterious maladies and some parents are pointing the finger at wireless Internet in classrooms.

A parents' group called the Simcoe County Safety School Committee says parents from 14 elementary schools that as many as 30 children have suffered unexplained illnesses that they believe only started when wireless Internet was installed in schools starting four years ago. Over the past six months, the parents have demanded the technology be removed, or at least have their use curtailed. But the school board insists the technology is safe and will resume next month.

Leading the campaign is Rodney Palmer of Collingwood. He said his nine-year-old son and five-year-old daughter were taken off school from being at Mountain View Elementary School. He and wife Patricia Naylor discovered other children with similar symptoms.

“People would say, ‘My kid just isn’t the same. They don’t play with their friends anymore.... They’re hyper,’ ” Mr. Palmer said.

“Then we started looking at microwave radiation, and all of these things are written in the annual report on microwave exposure. That was only after we found out Wi-Fi uses microwaves. We didn’t know

Two of the children were sickened to the point of being put on heart medication, Mr. Palmer said over the weekends and during the summer break. He said there is no way the sick children, who do not attend school, could be faking their symptoms.

The school board counters that the technology is not only safe, it is a valuable learning tool.

“We’re in the business of education. We don’t put children at risk, but we can’t just shut it down on students because someone says it might have health effects,” John Dance, superintendent of education for the Simcoe County School Board, said yesterday.

“We wouldn’t be in the new world of 21st-century learning if we went hardwired. It’s not a path

Mr. Dance also pointed out the impossibility of keeping children shielded from wireless signals. Many children have devices of their own within range of schools.

In June, the province affirmed the school board’s position that the technology is safe. In a letter to the health branch of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, it wrote that the “Simcoe County’s intention to have all installations conform with Health Canada Safety Code 6 is a reasonable approach to wireless technology in a manner that conforms with current safety standards.”

The worried parents have the support of Magda Havas, a researcher at Trent University’s Centre for Environmental Health. She wrote a letter to school boards last year, before the Simcoe County controversy, warning educators of the risks in classrooms. She counselled a better-safe-than-sorry policy of limiting exposure.

In an interview, Dr. Havas said Canada’s radiation regulations are too lax, as they permit microwave radiation many times more intense than certain other countries. She believes wireless technology will emerge as a major health concern.

“I get people contacting me on a daily basis that are telling me what their symptoms are, telling me they’re asking for help,” she said. “This is being discovered one individual at a time. I think it’s a big issue that’s going to get worse.”

Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ont., has bucked the trend toward more wireless access at its campus by banning Wi-Fi.

Daniel Krewski of the McLaughlin Centre for Population Health Risk Assessment in Ottawa said he knows of no institution in North America that shuns Wi-Fi.

Dr. Krewski said “literally thousands” of academic papers have indicated wireless technology is some biological effects is warranted.

“There’s been extensive research and I think the scientific consensus is we don’t have a smoking

In 2007, British teachers raised concerns about the safety of Wi-Fi in classrooms. That country’ investigated, and found a year’s worth of Wi-Fi exposure was equivalent to talking on a cellphor create 100,000 times less microwave radiation than a microwave oven.

National Post,

with files from Postmedia News

amcdowell@nationalpost.com

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DPK

10:56 PM on August 16, 2010

Wireless WiFi may operate in the "microwave" frequency range, BUT cellphones in the PCS spectrum are very close the micro and operate at higher power levels. When you bring a cellphone into a school, it must transmit at a higher power to reach the o adults should be more concerned about cellphones because they are held much near the body than any WiFi transmitter. Therefore, WiFi is safe.

JNOLET

10:57 PM on August 16, 2010

Somebody should tell these peoples that if you scan for Wi-Fi you find networks everywhere including in your own HOME!!!! lol Wimax, DTV...

NORTHERNTHOUGHTS

10:59 PM on August 16, 2010

Simcoe County Safety School Committee are a group of "Luddites"...

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luddite>

Only thirty students from a group of over 50,000 are supposedly affected which means that either these children are the rare ex parents are being negligent in trying to connect their illness to the use of Wi-Fi in schools. There are a multitude of physical illne different symptoms, as well, this could be psychological in that these children could very well be acting out (last time I checked,

Article rank | 18 Aug 2010 | *Ottawa Citizen*

Teachers vote down Wi-Fi ban in schools

A proposal for a provincewide ban on wireless Internet in Ontario elementary schools was defeated Tuesday by Canada's largest teachers' union. Nearly 600 members attending the annual meeting of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) in Toronto turned down the proposal "after an informative debate," said a spokeswoman. The vote was brought forward by teachers from the Niagara region who had safety concerns surrounding Wi-Fi and radiation exposure. Earlier this week, a school board north of Toronto rejected claims from a group of parents who believe wireless transmitters installed in area elementary and high schools are making their children sick.

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Article rank | 18 Aug 2010 | Ottawa Citizen | BY NECO COCKBURN

Committee OKs conditional land transfer at old Grant site

A francophone group's plan to turn the former Grant Alternative School site into a co-operative seniors' housing project, long-term care facility, community centre, family health centre and dental clinic was pushed forward after a city council committee on Tuesday approved a conditional land transfer.

The project is meant to serve west Ottawa's francophone population of about 28,000 people.

In March 2008, the city bought the school property at 2720 Richmond Rd. from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board for \$3,940,000. Staff were to report back to council on how the property could be best used by severing the school at the front of the property and selling it to the Centre multiservices francophone de l'ouest d'Ottawa (CMFO), and offering the remaining land to a developer.

The CMFO said it needed the entire site to develop a viable business plan, and has reached an agreement under which the city would transfer the property to the group within the next three years. The CMFO would pay operating and upkeep costs for the building, at \$ 105,000 a year, until a deferred closing date.

On closing, the CMFO would pay \$ 2,000,000. The city would contribute \$1,940,000 — the market value of the site's front portion.

The CMFO also expects about \$55 million in government money to build the project, and would have until July 15, 2011, to give the city its final business plan.

Council is to vote on the proposal on Aug. 25.

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Article rank | 18 Aug 2010 | *Ottawa Citizen*

Councillor's spouse running for school board

The wife of mayoral candidate Alex Cullen has entered the race for school board trustee. Theresa Kavanagh wants to be the OttawaCarleton District School Board trustee for Zone 4, which includes the Bay ward on the city's west side that Cullen represents now as a city councillor. Doug Lloyd is the zone's current trustee. Kavanagh currently works on Parliament Hill for the New Democrats. Cullen himself was a school board trustee in the early 1980s.

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Article rank | 17 Aug 2010 | Ottawa Citizen | BY MATTHEW PEARSON

Halt standardized tests, elementary teachers say 3

Exams for grades 3, 6 are costly, take away from non-test subjects

Ontario's public elementary school teachers have called for a two-year moratorium on standardized tests in Grade 3 and Grade 6, saying the annual exams are expensive, detract from other subjects and give parents the wrong idea about what makes a good school.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), which represents 76,000 teachers and education workers, asked Monday for the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) tests to be halted to allow for public consultation on the uses, value and impact of the current testing regime.

"Something is very wrong when areas including science, history, social studies and the arts are getting sidelined in the race to get young students prepared for EQAO, which is focused solely on literacy and math," said Sam Hammond, ETFO's president.

He added the province spends more than \$100 million on the testing and what he called "the Literacy and Numeracy education bureaucracy."

The teachers union hired Environics Research Group to conduct eight focus groups — including two in Ottawa — with ETFO members back in June. A total of 64 teachers with at least five years' experience, all of whom were paid an incentive for participating, were asked to discuss the pros and cons of the tests, which have been in place since 1996.

The results, which Hammond unveiled to delegates at the union's annual meeting in Toronto, suggest parents and the public may believe EQAO scores are an indicator of a good school, but teachers do not. Teachers say the standardized tests have created opportunities for professional development, fostered more collaboration among teachers and helped some plan lessons.

But those benefits could have been achieved through cheaper means and some teachers add EQAO is of limited or no use for informing parents about their child's progress in school, or assessing the quality of the education system as a whole.

The report suggests the goal of making all children capable of performing to a specific level in EQAO is at odds with the Ministry of Education's goal that learning should be geared toward a child's specific needs.

Teachers say EQAO testing means non-test subjects such as arts, drama, music and even science get less attention than the subject areas of the tests, which focus on literacy and numeracy skills.

Teachers also say the pressure on students, particularly those in Grade 3, is too much.

"They are starting to think of school as a series of hoops to jump through," one participant was quoted as saying.

The standardized tests also have "huge drawbacks" to special-needs and English-as-a-second-language students, as well as those from different cultural backgrounds, students with behavioural issues or learning disabilities, and highly gifted students.

And despite the tests being "standardized," the report claims EQAO tests are not uniformly administered, putting test results, comparability and tracking over time into question.

According to the teachers, schools administer tests differently, and the standards of marking have changed over time, as have the difficulty of the tests.

Finally, there is the cost — in both class time to prepare and resources spent to administer the EQAO tests.

"School boards are always cutting back and saying 'we can't afford this' — things that I would say are essential, like educational assistants and more personnel, yet they're willing to put tons of money into EQAO," says another participant.

The study says most teachers think the testing should be eliminated. Otherwise, they recommend the government reduce the scale of the test to reduce pressure on students and teachers, consider random sampling, and take steps to reduce the importance of EQAO testing in the eyes of the public as the best or only way of evaluating a school.

Phil Serruya, the communications manager for EQAO, said the testing costs \$17 per student annually and provides good value for money.

“ It provides information at key points in each student’s education about how they’re developing these fundamental literacy and numeracy skills,” he said.

While a rich curriculum is important — including subjects not covered by the test — students must master literacy and numeracy.

“They are the foundation for success in all other subjects and for life outside of school,” he said.

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Article rank | 18 Aug 2010 | Ottawa Citizen | BY KRISTY NEASE With files from Jennifer Pagliaro

Police investigate schoolroom fire

Ottawa police are investigating a suspicious Tuesday afternoon fire at an empty Catholic school in the west end just a few weeks before classes are due to start.

Fire department spokesman Marc Messier said that when crews arrived at about 3:30 p.m., a classroom at Georges Vanier Catholic School was "heavily" engulfed in flames.

The windows to the same classroom were broken, he said, indicating a possible entry point.

The rest of the school, located at 40 Varley Drive near March Road, was heavily damaged by thick smoke from the fire, Messier said. But the blaze was contained by firefighters to the one classroom.

Messier said anything in the room — computers, desks, books — was likely lost in the blaze.

The fire department estimates the building suffered about \$100,000 in damage, while its contents suffered \$50,000 in damage.

Mardi de Kemp, communications officer for the Ottawa Catholic School Board, said the board doesn't expect the fire will affect the school's ability to open on time for the start of classes.

"We've still got a couple of weeks and the damage seems to have been limited to the one room," she said.

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Standardized tests to go ahead

By **TONY SPEARS, OTTAWA SUN**

Last Updated: August 17, 2010 9:34pm

The education ministry will not be putting a moratorium on standardized tests for elementary school students.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario had written a strongly-worded statement condemning the Education Quality and Accountability Office tests as a "costly exercise" that is too limited, monopolizes classroom time and "does little to improve learning."

The tests — mandatory for students in grades 3 and 6 — cover mathematics and literacy, which gives short shrift to science, history, social studies and the arts, ETFO president Sam Hammond said in the statement.

But on Tuesday, ministry spokesman Gary Wheeler confirmed that a moratorium "is not part of the ministry's plan."

The tests provide an "important snapshot" of achievement that allows the ministry to focus resources on areas that need them most, he said. And parents like that an independent body can assess their children's progress.

That doesn't sit well with Theresa Kavanagh, who launched her campaign for Ottawa-Carleton District School Board trustee this week.

"It's starting to be used for ranking schools," said Kavanagh, who will run in Bay ward.

Schools with higher concentrations of new immigrants whose first language isn't English will naturally fare poorly on literacy elements, making it seem like the schools are no good.

"That's something I'm really concerned about," she said.

Kavanagh, who's worked for over 21 years on Parliament Hill, will face off against incumbent Doug Lloyd.

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Article rank | 18 Aug 2010 | Ottawa Citizen | BY DON BUTLER

Students challenged to question our treatment of immigrants

Government task force develops material to spark debate on civic responsibility

'When you give students a rich approach, and you're not feeding them history by the spoonful, they really have to think and talk and argue about some of these issues.'

RUTH KLEIN

As Canada grapples again with the thorny issue of migrants who arrive unbidden on its shores, a federally funded task force will soon roll out a new teaching resource that asks students to critically examine the country's treatment of immigrants and refugees throughout history.

Welcome to Canada? was developed by John Myers, a curriculum expert at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, for B'nai Brith's National Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research.

The material is nearly complete and will be available for use in high schools across Canada this fall.

"I hope we will be able to train students to look at our past and be able to make meaningful decisions on how they will take on civic responsibility," said Ruth Klein, the task force's executive director.

The resource material begins in pre-Confederation times with the United Empire Loyalists, who fled the United States at the time of the American revolution.

It looks at the treatment received by groups such as runaway slaves, Chinese railroad workers and survivors of the Irish famine in the 19th century.

There's a chapter on Canada's refusal to give safe haven to more than 900 Jewish refugees aboard the MS St. Louis in 1939. Their story was the subject of the 1974 book Voyage of the Damned, and a 1976 film of the same name.

The resource material also raises the case of the Komagata Maru, a Japanese steamship carrying 376 would-be migrants from India that was turned away by Canadian officials in 1914. Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized for that in 2008.

More recent cases include the Vietnamese boat people and survivors of genocide in such places as Cambodia, Rwanda and Darfur.

Klein said the historical examples come with a teachers' guide designed to help students "critically assess" the treatment immigrant and refugee groups have received.

"We tried to take a slightly different approach because we want to ask the questions," she said. "We don't want to give the answers.

"When you give students a rich approach, and you're not feeding them history by the spoonful, they really have to think and talk and argue about some of these issues."

The task force doesn't want students simply to blame governments for the mistreatment of immigrants and refugees in the past, Klein said.

Rather, "we want them to ask, 'where is the ordinary citizen? What is their role moving forward?' We're looking to create citizens who are going to take an interest, get involved and try to carve out a role for themselves."

The arrival last weekend of 490 Sri Lankan migrants aboard a cargo ship illustrates the contemporary relevance of the issue, Klein said.

"I don't think much has changed," she said. "There are so many groups who are facing discrimination of different types.

"Sometimes you only see it when there's a crisis, maybe a ship coming in, when policy has to be made on the fly."

The three-year task force was created in June 2009 with nearly \$ 1 million in funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and additional support from the B'nai Brith Foundation.

It's using some of that money to produce 10,000 textbooks — 7,500 in English and 2,500 in French

— that will be available free of charge to educators across Canada.

The initial response has been positive, Klein said. Teachers have told her the material could be used to teach lessons in civics, history, law, economics or geography.

Klein, the child of a Holocaust survivor, pointed out that the Jews who survived the Nazi reign of terror in Europe have now largely died off. "We have to hope there's something enduring that's left, some sort of legacy."

The effort to teach students about Canada's treatment of immigrants and refugees can be seen in that light, she said.

" I know that my mother would have wanted the lessons be used to inform the future and build societies where people were more aware."

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Article rank | 18 Aug 2010 | Ottawa Citizen | JANET BAGNALL Janet Bagnall writes for the Montreal Gazette.

Working moms and happy children

As a country, Canada benefits enormously from the economic contribution of working mothers. Yet outside Quebec, they are given very little support.

Eight years after telling mothers that going out to work and leaving their children in substitute care was harmful to children's development, academics combing through the same research material have now decided that mothers should not worry after all.

This newest study was published last month by the U.S. Society for Research and Child Development. It was based — like the 2002 study — on data collected over several years on more than 1,300 children.

This year's findings showed that when the overall impact of a mother's participation in the paid workforce on her child's mental and social development was measured, the effect was neutral. The positives — higher family income, better child care, the mother's improved mental health — outweighed the negatives, such as less time for mother and baby to interact.

But the best of all worlds was not when mothers of young children stayed at home full-time, but rather when they work part-time. As the London Telegraph reported, children whose mothers worked fewer than 30 hours a week benefited from the higher household income, better quality daycare, a happier home-life, plus interaction with their mother.

This conclusion is a stunning turnaround from 2002, when the U.S. National Institutes of Health warned that children who spent long hours in child care could experience more stress and be at increased risk of developing behavioural problems. As the New York Times reported, problems included disobedience and aggressiveness.

The 2002 study, by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, seemed categorical: The longer a child spent in daycare, the more likely he was to have behaviour problems and the worse those problems would be.

For working mothers there was no getting away from the guilt. A British study suggesting that children whose mothers went to work within the first three years were slower learners was particularly brutal.

What woman would dare go out to work within the first years after her baby was born, knowing that she was jeopardizing her child's mental and social development?

Lots of women, statistics show.

In the U. S., 60 per cent of mothers of children under age six are in the workforce. In Canada, the figure is 66.4 per cent.

Last month's study should help put their minds at ease, if they trust it. Jane Waldfogel, a Columbia University professor and co-author, explained to the Telegraph why women should believe the study results: "Prior research has asked a somewhat artificial question: If the one thing that changed in a family was that the mother went out to work, what difference would it make for the child?"

"But in reality, lots of other things change the minute she goes out to work, including the quality of childcare, the mother's mental health, the relationships within the family and the household income. We've examined all those things."

And what they found is that although infants raised by mothers with full-time jobs scored a little lower on cognitive tests, that effect was offset by their mother's greater sensitivity to them, the family's higher income and its ability to pay for better quality daycare.

One of the most painful things about these conflicting studies — even one that suggests it won't ruin your child's life if by choice or unforeseen circumstance you have to be in the workforce — is the expectation that women should look after these issues on their own. Or, if not mothers only, then certainly families.

This is unfair. As a country, Canada benefits enormously from the economic contribution of working mothers. Yet outside Quebec, they are given very little support.

Where Quebec provides regulated daycare spaces for more than one-in-three children ages six or younger, in the rest of Canada barely one-in-10 children has access to regulated care. An alternative

option for the crucial first year of a baby's life is to allow a parent to stay home. Here too, Quebec spends more on parents through its parental insurance plan, including selfemployed parents.



Without that kind of support, the birthrate in the rest of the country has stagnated while Quebec's has increased. Fear about jeopardizing a child's future can be a terribly dissuasive force. This is a problem that shouldn't be left to the sometimes slender resources of individual families.

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