

STUDENT TEACHER PRACTICUMS IN ENGLISH SCHOOL BOARDS IN QUEBEC

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Each academic year the provincial government provides financial support for supervised, in-school training experiences for student teachers, known as teaching practicums. This brief examines how these funds are distributed across the nine English school boards⁴ based on the proportion of student teachers they host from Quebec universities. **The data highlights a concentration of teaching practicums undertaken in school boards with proximity to English universities and Greater Montreal, thereby disadvantaging some rural and remote⁵ schools.**

The Teaching Practicum

The teaching practicum is a cornerstone of teacher education programs in supporting the professional learning of student teachers (also referred to as pre-service teachers, or teacher candidates). In Quebec, it is associated with an in-school experience where student teachers are provided opportunities to apply knowledge and theory learned in their teacher education courses, and to navigate and develop their professional identities (Cobb et al., 2018). These in-school experiences rely on the support and mentorship of various stakeholders, including associate teachers, university advisors, and, arguably, classroom students (Cook-Sather, 2010; Pattison-Meek, 2024).

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⁴ The Cree School Board and the Kativik School Board are considered "special status" school boards (not English school boards) because they are not categorized by language. Student teachers attending English universities are permitted, however, to conduct teaching practicums in these school boards. English-language schools on the Lower North Shore are also excluded from this study, since they are not governed by a school board but instead fall under the jurisdiction of the bilingual Centre de services scolaires du Littoral.

⁵ Remote areas are generally less accessible than rural areas, and "remote from" more developed villages or towns, where transportation connections are time-consuming and/or limited (see for example Canada, 2020).

Associate teachers, also referred to as host or mentor teachers, have a significant influence on student teachers' professional learning (Glenn, 2006; Leshem, 2012). Student teachers are typically matched with an in-service associate teacher in the field through their teacher education program. These experienced teachers provide daily direct support to student teachers throughout the practicum. An associate teacher is expected to create opportunities for mentees to develop their professional abilities and personal growth, become acquainted with the school environment, and identify ways they can have a positive impact in a school (Aydin & Ok, 2022; Cohen, Hoz & Kaplan, 2013).

Conventional Path to Teacher Certification in Quebec

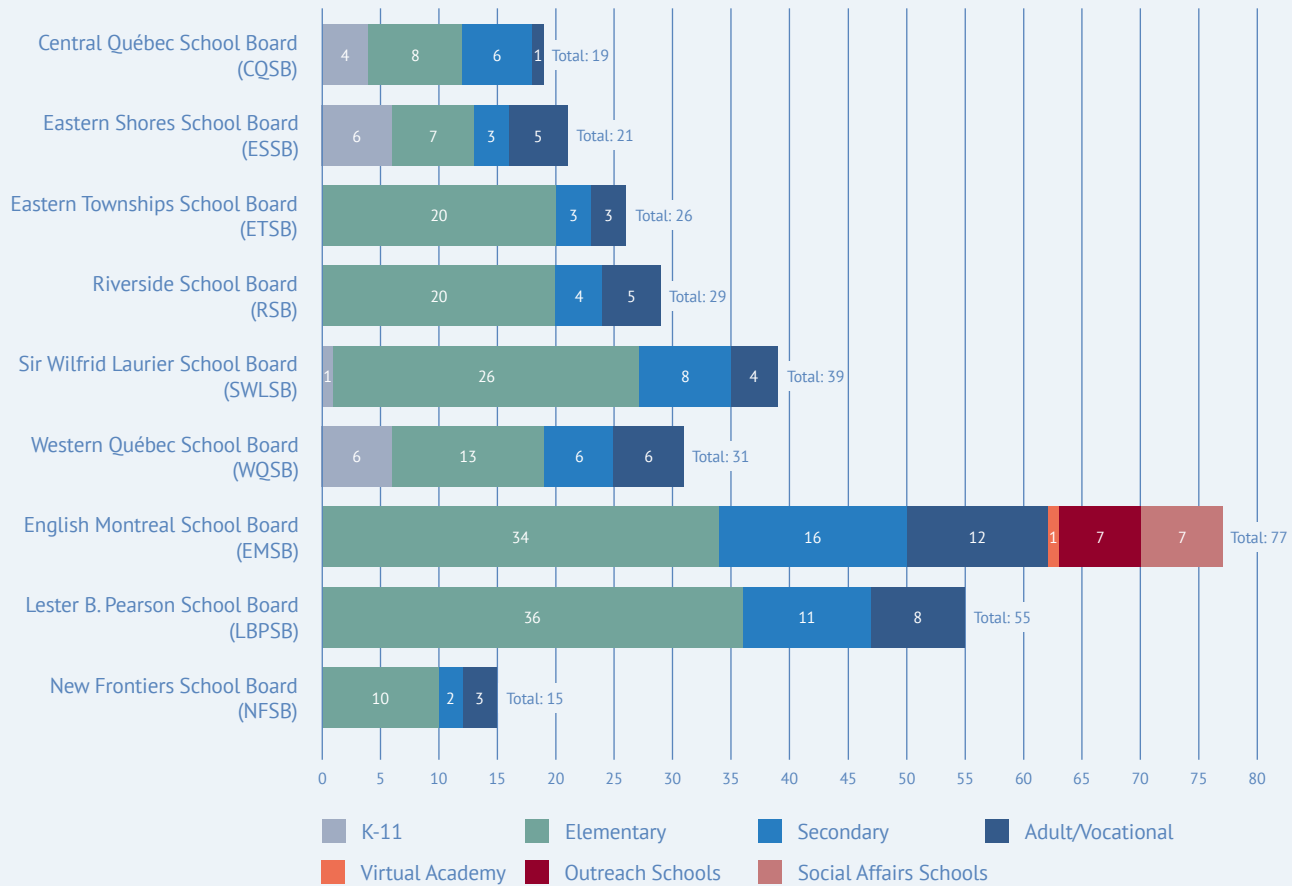
A teaching certificate (*brevet d'enseignement*) is required in Quebec to become a licensed general education teacher in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools, and adult education and vocational training centres (Québec, 2025). The conventional path to obtain a teaching certificate in the province is to complete a four-year certified Bachelor of Education (BEd) program leading to a teaching degree. **Teacher education programs typically include a minimum of 700 hours of practicum, to be successfully completed upon graduation** (Québec, MELS, 2008). While student teachers generally enter the field in each year of study, how the 700 hours are distributed and organized across the four years is left to the discretion of each postsecondary institution.

The three English-language universities offer degree programs that result in certification to teach in Quebec and supply the majority of student teachers to English-language schools: McGill University (Montreal), Concordia University (Montreal), and Bishop's University (Sherbrooke).⁶ Student teachers enrolled in education programs at these universities are likely to experience practicum in one of nine English school boards in the province (**Figure 1**).⁷ These nine school boards each organize and oversee preschool, elementary, and secondary education, and adult education and vocational training in their region. One method to track the annual distribution of teaching practicums across the nine English school boards is to review school board Measure 30020 reports submitted to the Ministère de l'Éducation at the end of each academic year.

⁶ McGill University is the largest of these institutions, graduating students in Bachelor of Education and Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning (MATL) programs. Concordia University specializes in early childhood and elementary education, and teaching English as a second language (TESL). Bishop's University is the smallest of the three English institutions, and offers provincial certification in elementary and secondary education, TESL, and creative arts programs.

⁷ Student teachers also have opportunities to complete teaching practicums in independent schools, out-of-province schools, "special status" school boards, and school service centres (e.g., in TESL programs).

Figure 1:
Number of Schools/Centres in English School Boards in Quebec



Measure 30020 – Supervision of Trainees

Since 1994, the ministerial trainee supervision program (Measure 30020) has provided guidelines for the supervision of student teachers (Québec, MEQ, 2021). The program’s objectives include i) supporting the training of associate teachers, and ii) recognizing associate teachers’ contribution in training the next generation of teachers.⁸ To support these objectives, the Ministère de l’Éducation provides a financial contribution paid to school boards and service centres based on their annual intake of student teachers.⁹ In general, each student teacher who completes a full practicum period (as determined by the university) generates a full stipend amount. Since 2022-2023, the base amount per student teacher is \$1,000 (previously \$660).¹⁰ Table 1 shows the total stipend amounts paid as lump sums to each English school board over the past three academic years.

⁸ https://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/PSG/ress_financieres/rb/21-090-04_RB-CS-21-24-fonc-21_v2.pdf

⁹ Independent schools (see QAIS – Quebec Association of Independent Schools) and out-of-province schools that host student teachers are not eligible for Measure 30020.

¹⁰ The budget envelope for this measure increased as part of the Strategy for Valuing School Personnel (2022-2026). See: https://cdn-contentu.quebec.ca/cdn-contentu/adm/min/education/publications-adm/education/strategie-valoriser-personnel-22-26_ANG.pdf

Distribution of Student Teachers from Quebec Universities Across English School Boards

The compensation generated from Measure 30020 presented in **Tables 1, 2, and 3** shows that **the four school boards located in and around Greater Montreal (EMSB, LBPSB, RSB, and SWLSB) receive the highest proportion of student teachers and financial compensation annually** (more than 75%). This is not surprising, given their position within or near the most populous metropolitan area of Quebec, home to most of the province's English-speaking population, and proximity to two of the three English universities with teacher education programs. The contribution amounts are somewhat proportionate to the number of students who attend schools in these four school boards (for example, in 2022-2023, 72% of students attending English-language schools in Quebec were enrolled in schools managed by these boards).¹¹ The ETSB receives a disproportionately high financial contribution annually relative to its number of students. The ETSB, home to many rural schools, has a near exclusive relationship with Bishop's University, on its doorstep in the Eastern Townships.

Tables 1, 2, 3:
Relation of Measure 30020 Contributions to Student Population Sizes, 2021-2024

2021-2022	Funding amount ¹²	Size of student population	Amount per student	Ratio / Provincial average
Central Québec School Board (CQSB)	\$23,278	5,289	\$4.40	0.42
Eastern Shores School Board (ESSB)	\$0	1,264	\$0.00	0.00
Eastern Townships School Board (ETSB)	\$194,047	7,410	\$26.19	2.49
English Montreal School Board (EMSB)	\$434,484	30,181	\$14.40	1.37
Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB)	\$261,294	25,557	\$10.22	0.97
New Frontiers School Board (NFSB)	\$16,949	4,906	\$3.45	0.33
Riverside School Board (RSB)	\$118,331	13,230	\$8.94	0.85
Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board (SWLSB)	\$106,933	14,048	\$7.61	0.72
Western Québec School Board (WQSB)	\$8,144	8,719	\$0.93	0.09
Total	\$1,163,460	110,604	\$10.52	1.00

¹¹ https://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/PSG/statistiques_info_decisionnelle/evolution-effectif-scolaire.pdf.

¹² Stipend amount per full-time student teacher in 2021-2022: \$660.

2022-2023	Funding amount ¹³	Size of student population	Amount per student	Ratio / Provincial average
Central Québec School Board (CQSB)	\$28,700	5,332	\$5.38	0.43
Eastern Shores School Board (ESSB)	\$0	1,246	\$0.00	0.00
Eastern Townships School Board (ETSB)	\$251,140	7,260	\$34.59	2.75
English Montreal School Board (EMSB)	\$557,860	30,189	\$18.48	1.47
Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB)	\$299,460	25,465	\$11.76	0.94
New Frontiers School Board (NFSB)	\$20,510	4,978	\$4.12	0.33
Riverside School Board (RSB)	\$117,490	13,572	\$8.66	0.69
Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board (SWLSB)	\$117,580	14,378	\$8.18	0.65
Western Québec School Board (WQSB)	\$5,000	8,830	\$0.57	0.05
Total	\$1,397,740	111,250	\$12.56	1.00

2023-2024	Funding amount ¹⁴	Size of student population	Amount per student	Ratio / Provincial average
Central Québec School Board (CQSB)	\$32,130	5,405	\$5.94	0.47
Eastern Shores School Board (ESSB)	\$9,000	1,261	\$7.14	0.57
Eastern Townships School Board (ETSB)	\$244,320	8,024	\$30.45	2.41
English Montreal School Board (EMSB)	\$519,400	31,905	\$16.28	1.29
Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB)	\$290,980	26,207	\$11.10	0.88
New Frontiers School Board (NFSB)	\$26,040	5,241	\$4.97	0.39
Riverside School Board (RSB)	\$157,660	13,630	\$11.57	0.92
Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board (SWLSB)	\$154,010	14,636	\$10.52	0.83
Western Québec School Board (WQSB)	\$21,360	8,924	\$2.39	0.19
Total	\$1,454,900	115,233	\$12.63	1.00

Source:

Funding amounts obtained through freedom of information requests from the Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la valorisation et des politiques de formation du personnel scolaire.

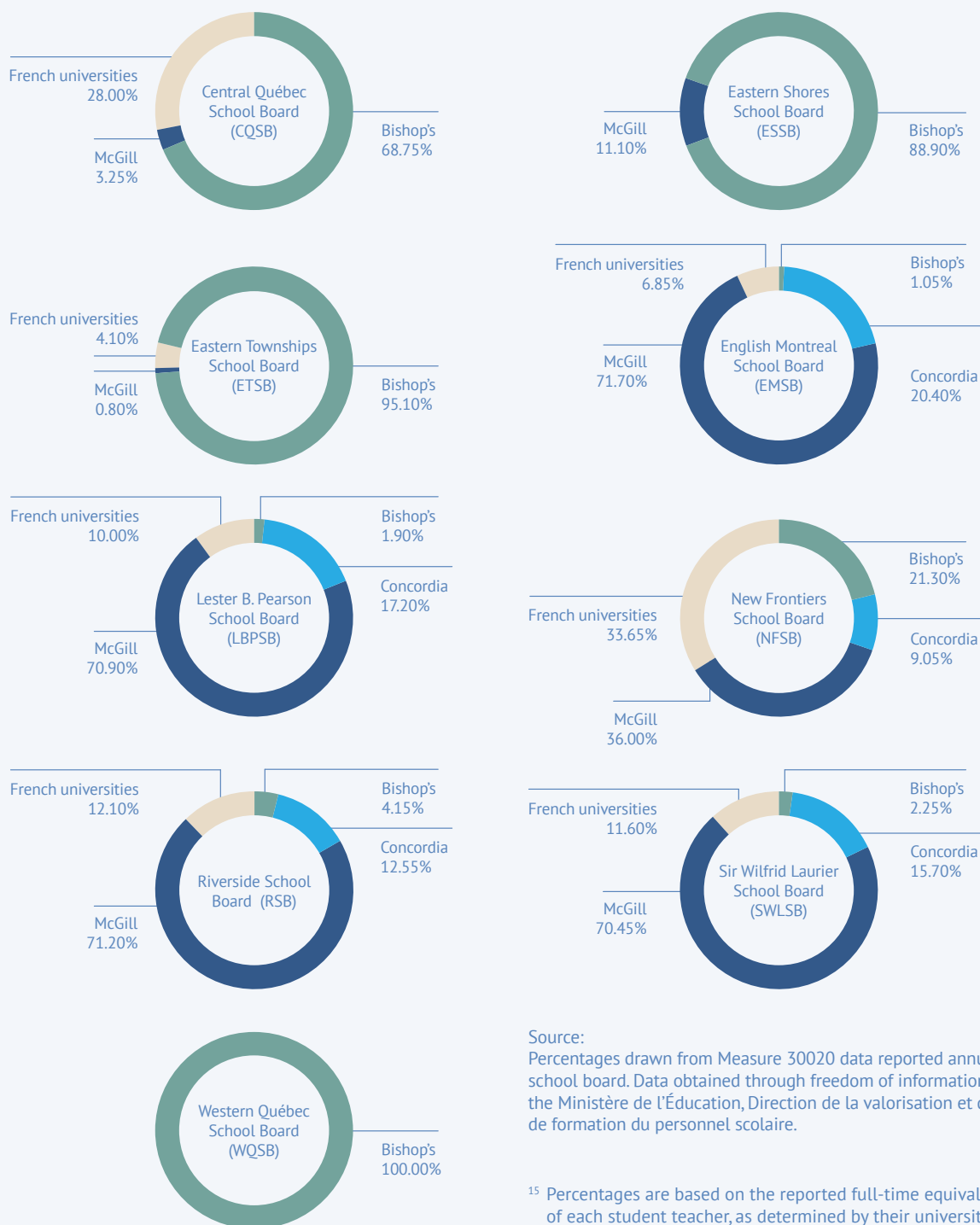
School board student populations obtained from *Tableau de bord de l'éducation*.

¹³ Stipend amount per full-time student teacher in 2022-2023: \$1,000.

¹⁴ Stipend amount per full-time student teacher in 2023-2024: \$1,000.

The data depicted in **Figure 2** illustrates the distribution of student teacher practicums in each English school board by university.¹⁵

Figure 2:
Distribution of Student Teacher Practicums in English School Boards by University, Average 2022–2024



Source:
 Percentages drawn from Measure 30020 data reported annually by each school board. Data obtained through freedom of information requests from the Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la valorisation et des politiques de formation du personnel scolaire.

¹⁵ Percentages are based on the reported full-time equivalent (FTE) value of each student teacher, as determined by their university. In cases of incomplete practicums, the FTE value is adjusted in proportion to the time spent by the student teacher in their practicum. The maximum value per student teacher in a practicum period is 1.

English school boards located at a distance from English universities are not as likely to attract student teachers to complete their teaching practicums. The ESSB, for example, is one of the largest English school boards geographically, including the Magdalen Islands, the North Shore, the Gaspé Coast, and the town of Fermont. The ESSB's 21 schools/centres receive very few student teachers from Quebec English universities, with some years, none.¹⁶ **Except for the ETSB, student teachers from Quebec appear less likely to practise teach in English schools in rural and remote communities.** As another example, the WQSB has a student population similar in size to the ETSB and yet receives a disproportionately low Measure 30020 contribution. The NFSB and CQSB also receive less funding in relation to their student populations. Even within some school boards, an uneven distribution of student teachers placed in more urban-centric schools in relation to their rural schools can be observed. For example, the SWLSB comprises three regions: Laval, Laurentides, and Lanaudière. Laval, having fewer English schools than both Laurentides and Lanaudière together, tends to receive disproportionately higher numbers of student teachers, likely owing to its nearness to Montreal.¹⁷

The unevenness of teaching practicums across the province places English schools in rural and remote communities at a distinct disadvantage to attract and retain new teaching staff, especially amid a severe provincial teacher shortage (Bongiorno, 2025).

This is unfortunate, **considering the teaching practicum serves as a mutually beneficial exchange**, offering significant benefits not only to student teachers, but to associate teachers and host schools. Mentoring new teachers provides opportunities for in-service associate teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and develop collaboration skills (Garza et al., 2018). Associate teachers and the classroom students who experience student teaching presumably gain exposure to the latest in teaching innovations brought by student teachers from their teacher education programs (DiCamillo et al., 2021; Pattison-Meek, 2025). In this way, student teachers can support associate teachers' professional learning. Host schools also benefit from funds provided by Measure 30020, which can be used in schools to support school projects, purchase classroom materials, and provide various training opportunities for teachers. **The uneven distribution of student teachers across school boards in the province disproportionately affects rural communities, resulting in underfunding of regional schools and a loss of the valuable expertise student teachers can offer.**

¹⁶ School boards in Quebec can accept student teachers from other provinces; however, financial contributions under Measure 30020 do not apply.

¹⁷ Observation based on university internship confirmation reports obtained through freedom of information requests from the Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la valorisation et des politiques de formation du personnel scolaire.

Recommendations

To attract more student teachers to complete teaching practicums in English schools in rural and/or remote communities, the author offers the following recommendations:

- 1 In the interest of teacher recruitment and retention, and in some cases the survival of small rural and remote schools, **English universities have a role in supporting teacher practicums in school boards outside their immediate surroundings. Teacher education programs within these institutions can do better to promote the advantages of teaching in small schools.** Some benefits include working with small class sizes, affording opportunities to personalize students' learning (Nelson, 2010), a strong sense of community within the school (Gallo, 2020), and opportunities for leadership and collaboration (Seelig & McCabe, 2021). As one example, inviting teachers and their students from rural and remote communities to attend virtual sessions to speak with student teachers about their schools and communities can humanize rural and remote schools.
- 2 **Universities are encouraged to build stronger partnerships with English school boards through development of rural teacher education programs that emphasize place-conscious learning.** Consideration should be given to supporting students from rural areas to stay close to home, where they are needed in schools, for part of their teacher education program and all practicums, rather than leave for university campuses full time. Examples of such programs include the University of British Columbia's West Kootenay Rural Teacher Education Program¹⁸ and the University of Calgary's Community-Based Bachelor of Education.¹⁹
- 3 English school boards, local governments, and/or teacher education programs can **provide financial incentives to offset costs associated with rural and remote practicums**, such as travel expenses and additional rent. As one example, the Living in Gaspésie Strategy offers a financial assistance program to support internships in the territory.²⁰

English schools located in rural and remote communities, whose populations have always been small when measured against those of Montreal and other urban areas, are disproportionately disadvantaged by Quebec's language policies (ABEE, 2018). For this reason, the above recommendations may qualify for funding under the forthcoming Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction (2024-2025 to 2027-2028).²¹

¹⁸ <https://teach.educ.ubc.ca/bachelor-of-education-program/wktep/>.

¹⁹ <https://werklund.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate-programs/future-students/pathways-and-admissions/four-year-community-based-bachelor-education>.

²⁰ <https://vivreengaspesie.com/allocation-de-stage/>.

²¹ https://www.cmec.ca/156/Official_Languages_in_Education_Protocol.html.

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