

The agreement on the egalitarian envelope does not go far enough, according to the International Observatory of Linguistic Rights

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The Equal Opportunities Agreement made public

If the amounts that the Gallant government were awarding under the agreement on the equalization envelope were known, the protocol was not. An unveiling that satisfied some, but an agreement that the International Observatory of linguistic rights considers insufficient.

The agreement on equal funding signed by the government on September 30, 2016 is not enough, according to Michel Doucet, director of the International Observatory of Language Rights. In the long term, the agreement did not advance the rights of the francophone minority in New Brunswick.

Ronald Caza, a lawyer for the New Brunswick Francophone Teachers' Association (NBATA), sees a positive outcome in the unveiling of the agreement to the public. "It's very good news that the MOU is now public because people can recognize and realize what the AEFNB, the parents' association and the youth federation have achieved. "

It points to the fact that without an agreement, the egalitarian envelope would have been \$ 2.5 million rather than \$ 10.5 million for 2017-2018.

A nuanced victory

Mr. Caza added that the government had recognized its obligation to invest in the equalization envelope and that the amount had to be assessed on the basis of actual needs. He explained that at the time of bringing the dispute between the AEFNB and the government, the amount offered for the equalization envelope was \$ 1.5 million.

Michel Doucet does not quite agree. The province did not admit it and the agreement is only a confirmation of what already existed in the Education Act and section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Extract from section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

"This section of the Charter obliges provincial governments to educate Canadians in the language of their choice, even in regions where only a minority of residents speak the language.

In the nine provinces where English is the language of the majority, and in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, Canadian citizens have the right to have their children educated in French if one

of the following three situations Applies to them:

Their mother tongue is French;

They received their own primary education in French in Canada;

They have a child who has received or is receiving instruction in French in Canada. ”

The government agrees to fund the egalitarian envelope, as stipulated in the agreement, but it does not specifically recognize its value, says the director of the International Observatory of Language Rights. It gives itself the discretion, over the next two years, to pay sums to ensure equality between the two communities, without recognizing the envelope.

Even the agreement itself could not serve as a precedent, he said.

It is well specified that it must remain between the parties. It is without recourse in law and it could not be used in the courts.

Michel Doucet, Director of the International Observatory of Language Rights

Michel Doucet also wonders what will become of the egalitarian envelope after two years. “This is far from being a clear commitment on the part of the government for an egalitarian envelope that would be recurring year after year. ”

On this point, the lawyer of the AEFNB concedes that another prosecution might be necessary, if the future government decided to invest less.

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\$ 19.3 million in two years

Fredericton will inject \$ 19.3 million more in two years into francophone schools. The current year is expected to reach \$ 8.6 million and \$ 10.7 million in 2017-18. Funding for the equalization envelope provided for in the agreement signed in the fall is valid for a period of two years.

The agreement was confidential, but was made public by Anne Bertrand, Information and Privacy Commissioner. The document also provides that the government will pay part of the legal fees of the AEFNB

<http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1022104/egalitaire-education-fredericton-aefnb-professeurs>

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