




**The Supporting
Montréal Schools Program**

Reach for
your **Dreams**

Québec 



The Supporting Montréal Schools Program

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THE SUPPORTING Montréal Schools Program

Background

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation and the Commission for the Estates General on Education have both recognized the urgent need for special measures to support Montréal schools, in particular in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The situation on the Island of Montréal is characterized by the following factors:

- a wide range of success rates
- a wide range of graduation rates: from 59.8% to 95.9%, depending on the school
- a marked academic delay among students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- a concentration of immigrant families: most of the young people from cultural communities attend school in Montréal
- factors specific to the Island of Montréal, with their cumulative and combinatory effects

It has been observed that students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, some of whom have had little schooling by the time they arrive in Québec, experience greater difficulty. They lag farther behind academically and are not as successful at consolidating their learning. Fewer of them obtain a diploma and they often leave school earlier, without any qualifications.

The program

It is this specific situation that brought about the creation, in 1997, of the Supporting Montréal Schools Program, which is one of the lines of action of the education reform. About 100 schools serving more than 47 000 students from the most disadvantaged areas on the Island of Montréal have been targeted by the Program. Remember that the fundamental objective of the program is **to promote the personal and educational success of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, while taking into account their needs and characteristics, and contributing to the creation of a committed education community.**

The measures

The means to achieving this objective are many and they should be chosen according to the specific situation of each target school and its students. The complexity of the factors governing learning and perseverance in school calls for simultaneous, coordinated intervention at several levels by all players who are able to help improve the situation.

Some of these measures are widely recognized in programs with goals similar to those of the Supporting Montréal Schools Program, and are considered to have a positive impact on the educational paths, learning and motivation of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods: adapted action and support for students experiencing difficulties, development of the reading competency, the guidance-oriented approach, professional development for school administrators and school teams, access to cultural resources, collaboration with the family, and partnership networks.

These seven measures make up the Supporting Montréal Schools Program and are compulsory for all schools participating in the program. Thus, target schools must see to it that the measures are implemented, taking into account their own specific situation and needs. These measures and the guidelines for ensuring the quality of the actions associated with them are described in this brochure.

A word of caution. While these measures are described separately here for the sake of clarity, they should nevertheless be seen as an integrated whole serving to improve the students' situation and their learning. They are interdependent and should be combined with the means being jointly implemented to achieve most of the priority objectives chosen by the school.

Actions adapted to the needs and characteristics of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, in particular those experiencing difficulty in school

Why adapted action?

Educational success and orientation, and the length of time spent in formal education are closely tied to a person's socioeconomic milieu. Thus, students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods are at greater risk of having a short educational career and one that is difficult from the outset, despite the fact that they have the same learning capabilities as other students.

When we are familiar with the characteristics of the students in our schools, aware of the obstacles they have to overcome and able to identify risk factors that the schools can influence, we can take preventive action and act rapidly when difficulties arise.

Examples of characteristics to be taken into account:

- the precarious living conditions of the students' families
- the number of stimulating activities (e.g. sports, cultural and scientific activities) in the family, school and community environment
- cultural differences between the school and the families
- family literacy¹

What does this measure involve?

Schools are encouraged to research and implement organizational models for working and teaching, and for providing services with sufficient flexibility and variety to promote continuity in the students' learning and thus encourage a variety of educational paths based on the students' needs, from preschool to the end of elementary school. This requires concerted action at strategic points in time in order to avoid and prevent the accumulation of difficulties.

Regardless of the quality and effectiveness of the actions taken, it must be remembered that many of the students will remain "fragile." It is important to ensure ongoing follow-up and to take immediate action, should the need arise.

In order to ensure that the students achieve personal and educational success, school teams are encouraged to conduct a regular analysis of the effectiveness of the forms of support and services offered. Regular progress reports mobilizing all partners will ensure the quality and appropriateness of the actions taken.

Possible actions

To ensure success, it is necessary to act on several factors at once and select a variety of approaches adapted to each individual environment and to the characteristics of the students and their families.

Teachers and other professionals are encouraged to diversify their approaches and use activities that will help them gain a better understanding of their students. This will allow them to diversify and adapt their actions by tailoring them to the needs and characteristics of the students in order to promote learning and increase motivation.

Differentiated intervention is not limited to the classroom. A variety of approaches may be necessary when trying to improve communications with students and their families. Not everyone requires the same type of support, and actions must meet the specific needs of the students in question.

¹ Family literacy refers to all everyday reading and writing activities that can be carried out at home.

Examples

In the classroom

- At the preschool level, promote prevention programs and action plans for emergent literacy and ensure follow-up during the first cycle of elementary school.
- Make sure all students have the background knowledge they need to understand new learning material.
- Provide students with guidance and support in times of transition (preschool to elementary school, classroom to daycare service, one school to another, elementary to secondary school, one country to another, etc.).
- Adopt means of favouring the joint development of competencies related to speech and writing (particularly with students whose first language is not English).

In the school

- Promote approaches that favour learning and a sense of belonging.

For more information

Lessard, C., and L. Portelance. *Le soutien aux élèves à risque de l'école montréalaise. Analyse des perceptions des acteurs et des plans d'actions des écoles*. Montréal: Université de Montréal, Faculté de l'éducation, LABRIPROF-CRIFPE, 2002.

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Measure 2

Development of the reading competency

Why the reading competency?

It has been proven beyond a doubt that, in order to succeed in school, students must develop the ability to read. Furthermore, a number of studies show a relationship between learning how to read at an early age and doing well in school later on. Failures and academic delays are also largely attributable to failure in reading.

Learning to read is often problematic at the beginning of elementary school. Indeed, for a long time, failure in reading has been the main reason for repeating Elementary 1. Over time, reading difficulties result in a delay in many subject areas. Reading problems at a young age are one of the main predictors of whether students will drop out of school.

The development of the reading competency therefore has a significant impact on students' educational paths and on their success in all subject areas, at both the elementary and the secondary level.

Reading difficulties are particularly evident in disadvantaged environments, due to the predominance of oral culture. Children from these environments enter school with less experience of family literacy.¹ They are not as likely to have access to books and writing materials and have less experience with social interaction based on reading and writing at home. They also have less experience with written culture, on which most learning, starting in the first years of school, is based. Some researchers have observed that certain children come to kindergarten with more than 2 000 hours of experience of family literacy, i.e. a store of implicit knowledge and an idea of the purpose of reading and writing. This knowledge makes all the

difference. It is therefore no surprise that, right from the start, students from disadvantaged environments do not succeed as well as other students in reading and writing.

What does this measure involve?

Essentially, the aim of this measure is to ensure emergent literacy at the preschool level and the implementation of the conditions necessary for the optimum development of the reading competency at the elementary level.

Possible actions and examples

First, cultivate a culture of reading and writing
As early as possible, schools must favour students' introduction to written culture by helping them discover the pleasure and purpose of reading and writing. The students must learn that reading and writing meet a variety of needs. These repeated contacts will help them develop an accurate idea of and an authentic relationship with reading and writing that will serve as a basis for all other learning.

Children from disadvantaged environments have less frequent contacts with reading and writing and with people who know how to read and write. A multitude of family literacy programs have therefore been developed to prevent failure in school. The purpose of these programs is to increase parent-child interaction with the written language. Elementary schools are encouraged to carry out these types of activities with parents of preschool and Elementary Cycle One students.

¹ Family literacy refers to all everyday reading and writing activities that can be carried out at home.

It is important in disadvantaged environments to emphasize the social and cultural practices related to the written word, first by ensuring that the activities have meaning for the students and that they illustrate the different purposes of writing. Thus, teachers are encouraged to read to students regularly, and to set aside time for guided reading activities, discussions about books, shared and interactive reading with their students as well as free reading periods.

Students should also be provided with rich learning contexts to allow them to acquire enough experience in real life. It is also important to take the time to do activities to prepare the students for reading so that they develop the knowledge they need to understand different texts. The more knowledge a person has about a subject and the language, the easier it is to understand, i.e. to actively construct the meaning of a text.

Promote emergent literacy in preschool

Preschool teachers are encouraged to offer a stimulating environment and carry out emergent literacy activities that meet real needs for reading and writing in everyday life (variety of materials, various formal and informal reading and writing activities, projects, etc.). The purpose of this is to help students discover the purpose of reading and writing using authentic practices focused on a search for meaning. Teachers are also encouraged to act as role models by making the process or certain strategies explicit, and as guides by interacting with the children to actively support them in their construction of meaning.

Concerted action in reading and links to other measures

The gradual, continuous development of the reading competency is everyone's responsibility (school, family and other partners). Visiting cultural centres devoted to the arts and sciences and the people there also add to the students' experience and support them in their search for meaning. From the students' point of view, it is

more meaningful to wonder, read, write and communicate in order to complete a project, than it is to read simply because the text was assigned to them.

Most frequently asked question

Is there an effective program offering a series of steps to learn how to read?

There is no such program. Unfortunately, some people think that it would be easier for the learner if the process were broken down into steps to be mastered one at a time. According to Giasson (1995), it would be better to adopt a model capable of actively supporting students who are faced with real and whole tasks even if they are not yet able to accomplish them without assistance. Such authentic tasks encourage the construction of a realistic view of reading. In this context, the students face progressively difficult tasks in accordance with the development of their competencies.

For more information

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The guidance-oriented approach

Why a guidance-oriented approach?

In disadvantaged environments, the guidance-oriented approach gives meaning to the educational path of many students with difficulties who, because of their culture, have little inclination to plan for the future. Also, these young people often have little access to role models and information about the job market and the choices open to them.

Research has shown that 9- to 13-year-olds are more interested in socially valued occupations. They are not only beginning to assess the social status of people and occupations, but also to adopt occupational preferences based on their social class. The elimination of certain occupations therefore begins rather early, which is why there is a need to broaden students' occupational horizons starting in elementary school so that everyone is given the same opportunities, regardless of their background.

Another objective of the guidance-oriented approach is to increase motivation and perseverance at school, so it also has a positive impact on students' success.

What does this measure involve?

First, the guidance-oriented approach is directly related to the qualification mission of Québec schools. This mission should have an impact on the educational project of each school so that student guidance becomes a main concern of all staff members.

The approach is integrated into the Québec Education Program (MEQ 2001) in one of the broad areas of learning, i.e. *Personal and Career Planning*, the educational aim of which is "to enable students to undertake and complete projects that develop their potential and help them integrate into society."

The guidance-oriented approach is a concerted effort by the school team and its partners aimed at guiding students in the development of their identity and of an educational and career plan.

The guidance-oriented approach should not be considered an additional school objective or activity as such; rather, it should be integrated into the school's entire range of objectives and activities.

Possible actions

The implementation of the guidance-oriented approach presupposes the use of a variety of means, such as for example:

- Ensure that the entire school team adheres to the guidance-oriented approach.
- Propose learning situations to help the students learn more about themselves, identify their aptitudes and interests, take on projects, and so on.
- Integrate orientation into subject matter by relating the competencies targeted by school programs to the competencies required for career development.
- Develop and implement projects to facilitate periods of transition along the students' education path: from preschool to elementary school and from elementary to secondary school.
- Work with parents and keep them informed so that they can guide their children in their career choice development.
- Establish links with social partners in the community for a collaborative approach to students' career exploration.

Examples

The guidance-oriented approach favours practices that emphasize the importance of making learning meaningful, demonstrating its usefulness, and providing opportunities to apply it or to actually do things. Thus, many of these educational practices and activities take place in the classroom, for example:

- Explain the relationships between academic learning and the different activities performed in everyday life and in the workplace.

- Help the students identify the tasks and responsibilities they need to take on and the competencies required to do so.
- Integrate activities to help students discover trades and occupations in their community and elsewhere.
- Allow the students to take on new responsibilities during activities and projects to help them gain awareness of their potential.
- Allow Cycle Three students to take stock of what they have learned, identify strengths they need to develop and plan for the future.

Other activities with a broader scope are recommended during the implementation of the guidance-oriented approach, for example:

- Offer extracurricular activities to give students the opportunity to learn more about themselves, to develop competencies other than the ones acquired in the classroom and to make new connections with the world of work.
- Promote cooperation among school staff and other partners with a view to developing a shared understanding of the guidance-oriented approach and identifying educational activities and projects to be carried out.
- Organize meetings with parents to share information on the subject.

Links to other measures

If they are to be effective, the measures implemented in disadvantaged neighbourhoods must be varied, act on several factors at once and be adapted to the particular situation of each community and to the needs of its clientele. The guidance-oriented approach must also contribute to the achievement of the general objective of the Supporting Montréal Schools Program and take into account the other Program measures. The following is a brief illustration:

- The aim of the guidance-oriented approach is to create a learning environment conducive to motivation and perseverance in school. It is particularly useful in supporting students likely to experience difficulty in school (Measure 1).

- Activities involving cultural resources devoted to the arts and sciences (Measure 5) are a good opportunity to explore occupations in these fields. More than 85% of innovative projects are linked to the guidance-oriented approach.
- The guidance-oriented approach also requires closer ties between the school's partners, the closer family and the community (Measures 6 and 7). Several studies have shown the decisive influence of parents on their children's orientation and educational path. It has been recommended that new avenues be explored to encourage their commitment. It is important that they be provided with the information necessary to increase their knowledge of possible career choices and of the world of work. They will then be able to use this information not only to help their children, but also to facilitate their own social and occupational integration (Herring, 1998).

For more information

For more information about the basis of the guidance-oriented approach or for examples of its implementation, consult the following documents:

Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation. *The Supporting Montréal Schools Program, 2002-2003*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002, p.p. 17-19.

Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation. *The Guidance-Oriented School: Guide for Parents*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001.

On the Web site of the Ministère de l'Éducation <www.meq.gouv.qc.ca>, click on "Éducation préscolaire, enseignement primaire et secondaire", then on "Programme de soutien à l'école montréalaise", then on "L'école orientante : un concept en évolution", Anglaise, to access:

- *The Guidance-Oriented School: An Evolving Concept*

On the Web site of the Ministère de l'Éducation <www.meq.gouv.qc.ca>, click on "Éducation préscolaire, enseignement primaire et secondaire", then on "Adaptation scolaire et services complémentaires", then on "Services complémentaires" to access:

- *À chacun son rêve - pour favoriser la réussite (not yet available in English)*

- *Le Petit Magazine - Career Exploration in Elementary School: A Tool for Success (L'exploration professionnelle au primaire - Un outil pour la réussite)*

Professional development of school administrators and the school team

Why?

Schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods have complex and growing needs that call for the development of methods to better adapt to constantly changing situations. School administrators and the school team often find themselves in personally and professionally demanding situations. Under these difficult conditions, support is necessary in order to continue one's efforts and to be willing to question and improve the effectiveness of one's actions with students and their families.

What does this measure involve?

Ongoing professional development is one of the avenues that produces the most lasting results in terms of improving learning and motivating staff. Ongoing, quality professional development will help stimulate the reflection required to implement activities that can improve the situation of schools and students in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, especially in the areas where they are most vulnerable.

Possible actions

- Analyze the professional development needs of all school staff with respect to the priorities established in terms of students' educational paths and success in school.
- Select means according to the targeted objectives, the needs of the staff in question and the resources available. For example: work and discussion groups within the school (according to cycle, interests, subject, etc.), networks of teachers outside the school, peer coaching, internal or external support and guidance, and cooperative development groups for school administrators, education consultants or staff in educational services.

- Encourage cooperation with universities.
- Encourage and support applications resulting from professional development activities.

Links to other measures

This measure facilitates the implementation of all the other measures and the achievement of the general objective of the Supporting Montréal Schools Program.

The most useful types of professional development in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are those that not only improve professional practices, but also have a significant impact on students' learning, motivation and perseverance, and on the consistency of actions implemented in the school. Thus, emphasis will be placed, among other things, on the development of the competencies needed to support students experiencing difficulties in school, the teaching of reading and collaboration with parents and the community.

Most frequently asked questions

Does the Supporting Montréal Schools Program organize special activities to support the professional development of school administrators and the school team?

The Supporting Montréal Schools Program, in cooperation with the Centre des enseignantes et des enseignants of the CSDM, offers professional development activities to teachers in all target schools. These activities include discussion groups, training activities leading to the creation of networks, and training follow-up. The Program also offers the same types of activities directly to teachers in target schools in the English school boards on the Island of Montréal (CSEM and CSLBP).

Each year, the Supporting Montréal Schools Program offers school administrators and nonteaching professionals cooperative development activities on widespread issues in disadvantaged and multiethnic neighbourhoods.

How much does it cost to participate in these activities?

The activities are free of charge. In addition, the Supporting Montréal Schools Program covers the substitution cost of two teachers per school participating in the activities.

Are specific amounts allotted to schools for professional development activities?

Schools can use part of the basic amount allotted them for such activities, depending on their predetermined needs.

For more information

Darling-Hammond, Linda. "Teacher Learning That Supports Student Learning." *Educational Leadership*, 55, 5 (February 1998).

Joyce, B., and B. Showers. *Student Achievement Through Staff Development: Fundamentals of School Renewal*. White Plains, N.Y.: Longman, 1995.

NCREL (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory). *Critical Issue: Realizing New Learning for All Students Through Professional Development*.
<<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl.htm>>

Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation. *Teacher Training. Orientations. Professional Competencies*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001.

Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation. *The Supporting Montréal Schools Program, 2002-2003*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002, p.p. 22-23.

Measure 5

Access to cultural resources

Why?

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds could benefit from greater access to the enrichment provided by the integration of cultural activities into teaching. Artistic creation and cultural experience motivate students by encouraging them to use their inner resources and creativity. Contact with Québec cultural venues also helps immigrant students and their families integrate into their new society.

What does this measure involve?

This measure is intended to instill in students a taste for the arts and sciences and promote visits to cultural organizations. It is also designed to enrich education by creating ties between classroom teaching, cultural objects and people involved in the arts and sciences.

Through this measure, the Supporting Montréal Schools Program also promotes cooperation between schools, museums, scientific institutions, cultural centres and all other cultural venues on the Island of Montréal. Along with the other measures, it effectively contributes to the development of a committed educational community.

Possible actions

This measure includes two submeasures, which are described briefly below:

Jeune public model

Under this model, students visit at least one cultural venue located on the Island of Montréal that is recognized by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (MCC) and go on a guided tour or attend a performance. The teacher is then invited to integrate the cultural activity into his or her classroom teaching.

A directory of cultural venues is made available to schools at the end of August every year. It is divided into three parts:

1. Arts
2. Social sciences
3. Mathematics, science and technology

This directory is an essential tool for establishing the annual plan.

Innovative models

Innovative models are optional. They promote cooperation between schools and cultural organizations, artists and scientists, and favour innovation in classroom teaching, while enriching the learning contexts.

A number of models are proposed, but schools can also present projects tailored to their own needs. There are also models that promote the participation and involvement of parents in the development of educational projects. A directory of innovative models is made available to schools in September of each year.

This type of model is made possible thanks to close ties between the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec and the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec.

Funding

The *Jeune public* model is compulsory. All target schools and schools in transition are entitled to funding. Each school will receive an amount equivalent to \$15 per student. In the fall, each school will receive 50% of the total budget. The remaining 50%, for the school's anticipated expenses, will be paid when the school submits its *Jeune public* annual planning at the end of May. Note that this budget is not transferable to another measure or another year. Each school is responsible for distributing the funds based on the community's priorities.

Innovative models are optional. Registration takes place year-round, depending on the models adopted by the school, by completing the funding form specific to each model listed in the *innovative models* directory. Additional funding is available for some models. This funding does not in any way affect *Jeune public* funding.

Transportation

Student transportation is the school's responsibility. The *Jeune public* funding may be used to cover transportation costs for these activities, while transportation costs for *Innovative models* are included in the additional funding. The students may travel by public transit or school bus. The school bus company is chosen by the school. The *Jeune public* directory gives the names of several school bus transportation companies offering reduced rates subject to the conditions described on the transportation request form provided in the directory.

For more information

See *Jeune public* and *Innovative models* directories

Cooperative links with students' families

Why work with families?

Today, almost everyone agrees that parents need to become involved in their children's school life. A number of factors contribute to success in school, one of which is essential: the involvement of parents throughout their children's academic career. The effects of this involvement are long-lasting and have an impact on the students' development, particularly on their perseverance and academic results.

Encouraging parental involvement in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is especially important. Many of them feel unable to follow their children's progression through school and to stimulate them as much as they would like. Many of them are also dealing with problems related to poverty and life in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, be it homogeneous or multiethnic. It is essential that services and activities be adapted to the particular situation of the family.

What does this measure involve?

The aim of this measure is to set up effective ways of bringing schools and families together and to promote the collaboration of parents in their children's educational success.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Encourage parents to participate in any way they can

The nature of parents' contribution and their degree of involvement should be determined according to their ability. The solutions proposed by school staff should not only be adapted to the situation of each family, but should also focus on the importance of the parents' role and on close ties between the school and the family. In disadvantaged neighbourhoods, this is a basic requirement that has a positive impact on students' success, while helping to empower parents.

Promote a variety of forms of collaboration

Although, ideally, parents should participate by being present at the school, other forms of involvement are also important. For example, parents should be encouraged to make themselves available at home, to show an interest in their children's lives and to support them in their dreams and accomplishments.

To this end, the school is encouraged to promote a variety of forms of collaboration that have an impact on students' lives:

- communication between the school and families (e.g. ways in which parents are greeted at school, frequency and content of messages, languages spoken)
- role of parents (e.g. well-being, health and safety of children, follow-up of learning at home)
- participation of parents in school life (volunteer work, attendance at activities or participation in their organization, parent participation organization) and in decision-making (governing board)
- collaboration with the community to meet families' needs

Establish links with other Program measures

To ensure the success of interventions and to stimulate parents' interest, parents should be considered partners in the projects developed under the other measures of the Program. For example, when you are planning activities related to the guidance-oriented approach, invite parents to talk to the students about their occupation. Or ask parents to accompany their children on cultural outings or visits to the library organized by the school.

Encourage teachers to establish links with the students' families

Research has shown that when teachers encourage the participation or involvement of parents, these parents are more likely to talk with their children at home, feel more capable of helping their children and show greater esteem for teachers' competencies.

Examples

- One school communicates with parents in different ways. In addition to the student's agenda, there is a telephone number that parents can call for recorded information on a variety of topics: homework, school activities, services available in the community, extracurricular activities, etc.
- Another school has set up a room for parents and hires people to lead activities at different times during the day. Every month, a list of suggested activities is distributed to parents. Parents meet over coffee to discuss problems and share advice and support. Members of the school staff sometimes attend these meetings. Family activity days draw a large number of parents.
- Yet another school in a multiethnic neighbourhood greets newly arrived parents and offers activities to help them become familiar with Québec society and the workings of the school. Meetings are held on Saturday, while the children take part in cultural and sports activities.
- Twenty or so teachers interested in improving relations with parents in their school are working together on projects to facilitate communication with parents. In some cases, personnel in a given cycle and sometimes even the entire school staff participate.

Tools and services

- A document entitled *Bringing families and primary schools closer together* will be available to schools in the fall of 2003. It will list ways of collaborating with families and help readers understand parents' needs and expectations. It will contain a number of possible solutions based on the most recent research on collaboration between schools and families.
- An interpretation and translation service has been made available to target schools by the Banque interrégionale d'interprètes of the Régie régionale de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal-Centre. The rules for using this service are available on the Web site of the Ministère de l'Éducation and at the back of this brochure.
- A directory of other organizations offering interpretation or translation services is also available on the following Web site:

<http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/francais/publications/pdf/Repertoire_services.pdf>

For more information

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<<http://www.ulaval.ca/cpires/html/Vol.5.html>>

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Deslandes, Rollande, and Bertrand Richard. *La création d'une véritable communauté éducative autour de l'élève; Une intervention cohérente et des services harmonisés*. Research report. CQRS/MEQ, 2001:
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Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation. *The Supporting Montréal Schools Program, 2002-2003*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002, p.p. 39-41.

Cooperative links with community organizations

Why collaborate with community organizations?

The factors that make children vulnerable are more common in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These factors can be social or economic, or related to school or family. Students from these neighbourhoods must often overcome more obstacles than their classmates in order to succeed in school. This can lead to more complex problems and the search for solutions requires the collaboration of a number of participants. Remember that Montréal schools must also try to facilitate the harmonious integration of young immigrants into Québec society.

Effective measures to ensure success are those that work simultaneously in the classroom, school, family and community, in short, all places that have an impact on students' development. When all the participants are involved and convinced of the importance of providing students with support so that they succeed in school, it becomes easier for each of them to take the appropriate action.

What does this measure involve?

The aim of this measure is to ensure that participants from the school and family, as well as other community partners (community, social, cultural, institutional and economic organizations), work together to put in place the conditions necessary for the students' overall development.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Take stock of the situation

Rather than attempt to meet the needs of students and their families single-handedly, schools must promote the development of partnerships adapted to the most commonly expressed needs, while taking into account the resources available in the community.

To this end, in partnership with the key organizations in their community, schools are encouraged to analyze the situation of students, their families and their neighbourhoods. Families, community organizations and school staff may have different views. Sharing these views and information will facilitate the development of a common and realistic view of the situation. It will then be easier to identify the most appropriate actions adapted to the characteristics of the students and the community.

Promote a variety of forms of collaboration

It is important to review the methods, forms and frequency of collaboration and to ensure that multiple actions are carried out at the same time and that they complement one another. Projects and initiatives may target school staff as well as students or parents. Some actions or activities will be carried out in school, at home or in the community, during the evening or on weekends, during spring break or over the course of the summer.

Intellectual, social, cultural or sports activities may be offered to students and parents. School staff may direct students and their parents toward resources corresponding to their needs or obtain support for managing special situations.

Take complementary and continuous action

The services offered by institutional or community partners can significantly improve the effectiveness and complementarity of actions taken by the school. To this end, it is important to promote greater cooperation and better communication among all participants, while valuing respective areas of expertise. Collaboration between partners develops gradually, so it is important to forge long-term ties.

Identify and promote community resources

Measures must be taken to inform school staff and parents of the services offered by the different organizations that can help them in their task. They must also be informed about the community, social, cultural, institutional and economic partners that can help meet students' needs (e.g. health, sports, culture, recreation) and, in broader terms, those of families (e.g. recreation, sports, job searches, housing searches).

Examples

- In order to avoid a piecemeal approach to meeting the needs of students in a given neighbourhood and to guarantee an environment conducive to success, partners from the CLSC, the school, the City and community organizations work together to offer a range of activities. Homework assistance, mentoring, tutoring, cultural, sports or social activities are offered (evenings and weekends), as are workshops on different topics of interest to students.
- Activities are designed to raise the school team's awareness of the characteristics of the social environment and of the needs of the students attending the school and their parents: a visit to the neighbourhood, presentation of services available to families, training or information sessions with partners on issues affecting the students (e.g. cultural communities, perseverance in school, drug and alcohol abuse, measures to counter violence).
- Within the framework of a project to support parents in their role with regard to their children's development in terms of health, well-being and success in school, the education and health and social services networks propose cooperative efforts to improve the effectiveness, coherence and complementarity of actions with parents. Schools and CLSCs build on and improve the programs, projects and actions in the school in order to better integrate support services for parents.
- Special support is offered to immigrant families (e.g. interpretation services, cultural visits to museums) in collaboration with community organizations.

Tools and services

- A network of individuals responsible for establishing links between the school and the community will be created to allow for the sharing of information, mutual support and participation in joint training sessions.
- A directory of organizations that offer services to schools is available.
- In addition to the Banque interrégionale d'interprètes, a directory of organizations that offer interpretation or translation services to schools is available.
- A document entitled *Strengthening Ties Between Schools and Communities* (MEQ 2000), the result of focus group deliberations on forming partnerships between schools and community organizations. This tool includes a list of needs expressed by parents with regard to supporting educational success and examples of activities that will help give concrete expression to the partnership and address these needs.

For more information

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Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation. *Stratégie d'intervention Agir autrement, Pour améliorer les pratiques éducatives : Des données d'enquête sur les jeunes. École Santé Famille*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2003.

Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation. Direction de l'adaptation scolaire et des services complémentaires. *Complementary Educational Services: Essential to Success*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002.

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Web site

<http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/evolemontrealaise>

Collective Services and Support Offered by the Program's Professional Team

In addition to basic funding, *Jeune public* funding and additional funding related to *innovative models* and applied research initiatives, target schools can take advantage of a number of collective services, including measures to set up professional development networks, the Banque interrégionale d'interprètes, access to different events and the use of various tools (see enclosed list). Moreover, the Program's professional team can offer school teams support on a periodic or ongoing basis, such as:

- assistance in understanding the Supporting Montréal Schools Program
- assistance in understanding any specific measure
- support for schools in integrating the measures and objectives related to Montréal schools into their success plan
- support in evaluating the results and procedures put in place
- setting up of professional development networks
- support in defining professional development needs and creating partnerships



Program Management

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee of the Supporting Montréal Schools Program defines the orientations and collective services offered to the schools, distributes the resources and ensures Program evaluation and impact assessment. The Committee coordinates all Program activities.

The Committee is made up of the assistant deputy minister for preschool, elementary and secondary education, the director of the Direction régionale de Montréal of the Ministère de l'Éducation, and the directors general of the five school boards involved.

The members of the Committee are:

ROBERT BISAILLON

Assistant Deputy Minister, Éducation préscolaire
et enseignement primaire et secondaire
Ministère de l'Éducation

ANDRÉ DUMONT

Director General
Commission scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île

PIERRE JETTÉ

Director General
Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys

ANTONIO LACROCE

Director General
English-Montréal School Board

LÉO LAFRANCE

Director General
Lester-B.-Pearson School Board

GILLES LAMIRANDE

Director
Direction régionale de Montréal
Ministère de l'Éducation

MICHELINE POTHIER

Director General
Commission scolaire de Montréal

Success Plan and Funding Payments

All measures in the Supporting Montréal Schools Program are compulsory and must be integrated into the success plan. The measures are described in this brochure and summarized below.

Measure **1** • actions adapted to the needs and characteristics of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, in particular those experiencing difficulty in school

Measure **2** • development of the reading competency

Measure **3** • the guidance-oriented approach

Measure **4** • professional development of school administrators and the school team

Measure **5** • access to cultural resources

Measure **6** • links with students' families

Measure **7** • links with community organizations

Basic funding payments

An initial payment of 50% of the basic funding will be made around November. The remaining 50% will be paid in the spring, after it has been established that the seven measures have been integrated into the school's success plan.

Information regarding basic funding

- A maximum of 5% of the funding may be used to purchase instructional materials (not including microcomputers, exercise books, dictionaries, grammar books or desks).
- Costs related to seminars and conferences may involve up to 10% of the teaching staff.
- Hiring additional homeroom teachers to reduce the number of students per class is not permitted.
- Hiring individuals to maintain information and communications technology (ICT) systems or to provide technical training is not permitted.



Applied Research Initiatives

Goals of the initiatives:

- to facilitate the creation of a research community for the benefit of all students and staff in schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and their partners
- to document effective approaches for the benefit of the entire education community

An applied research initiative is:

- the development of an intervention model designed to influence student learning or various practices in the community
- a way of encouraging research and development and supporting change

The springboard for an initiative can be:

- a problem requiring a new solution
- the evaluation of a set of actions

Three types of support are offered:

- support for the design, implementation and evaluation of the applied research initiative by a professional resource of the Supporting Montréal Schools Program
- technical support using different tools
- financial support (a total of \$300 000 has been set aside for applied research initiatives related to the Program)

Procedure:

- Identify the initial problem or the actions to be evaluated.
- Demonstrate the relevance of the initiative for all schools on the Island of Montréal.
- Contact a professional resource from the Program team to discuss the implementation of the initiative.

- Send the project by mail to the following address:

Programme de soutien à l'école montréalaise
Attention: (professional resource contacted)
3737, rue Sherbrooke Est, 4^e étage, Aile Ouest
Montréal (Québec) H1X 3B3

Most frequently asked questions:

- *Can you guarantee that my proposal for a research initiative will be accepted?*

No. We suggest that you contact a professional resource from the Program team, who will answer your questions, help with the design of your project and make sure your initiative is in line with the Program's other initiatives.

- *Can the school collaborate with another school, a community organization or a university on the implementation of the research initiative?*

Yes. Several partners often have different views on a given situation, so such collaboration is generally the source of original solutions. In addition, partnerships help revitalize the education community.

- *Does the school have to produce a report at the end of the year on the results of the initiative or its first stage?*

Yes. A report or other tool must be submitted so that all target schools and their partners can be informed of the results of the initiative.

Target elementary schools

2004 - 2005

Adélarde-Desrosiers	CSPI	Garneau	CSDM
Alice-Parizeau	CSDM	General Vanier School **	CSEM
Alphonse-Pesant	CSPI	Gerald McShane School	CSEM
Annexe Charlevoix	CSDM	Gilles-Vigneault	CSDM
Aquarelle	CSMB	Guybourg **	CSDM
Bancroft **	CSEM	Harfang-des-Neiges *	CSMB
Barclay	CSDM	Henri-Beaulieu	CSMB
Baril	CSDM	Hochelaga	CSDM
Barthélemy-Vimont	CSDM	Iona	CSDM
Barthélemy-Vimont Annexe	CSDM	Jardin-des-Saints-Anges **	CSMB
Bedford	CSDM	Jean-Baptiste-Meilleur	CSDM
Bienville	CSDM	Jean-Nicolet	CSPI
Bois-Franc	CSMB	Jeanne-Leber	CSDM
Boucher-De La Bruère **	CSDM	Jules-Verne	CSPI
Camille-Laurin	CSDM	La Mennais	CSDM
Camille-Laurin Annexe	CSDM	Laurentide	CSMB
Cardinal-Léger *	CSPI	Le Carignan	CSPI
Carlyle	CSEM	Léonard-De Vinci	CSDM
Champlain	CSDM	Léonard-De Vinci Annexe	CSDM
Chanoine-Joseph-Théorêt	CSMB	Le Plateau **	CSDM
Charles-Lemoyne	CSDM	Les-Enfants-du-Monde	CSDM
Cœur-Immaculé-de-Marie	CSDM	Lévis-Sauvé	CSMB
Coronation	CSEM	Louisbourg	CSDM
De la Fraternité	CSPI	Ludger-Duvernay	CSDM
De la Petite-Bourgogne	CSDM	Madeleine-de-Verchères **	CSDM
Denise-Pelletier *	CSPI	Maisonneuve	CSDM
Dollard-des-Ormeaux **	CSDM	Marguerite-Bourgeoys	CSDM
École Des Nations	CSDM	Marie-de-l'incarnation	CSDM
École du Petit-Chapiteau	CSDM	Marie-Favery	CSDM
École Nouvelle (La Voie)	CSDM	Marie-Rivier	CSDM
École Sans-Frontières	CSDM	Marie-Rivier Annexe	CSDM
Élan **	CSDM	Martin-Bélanger	CSMB
Enfant-Soleil	CSMB	Martin-Bélanger Annexe	CSMB
Face *	CSDM	Montcalm	CSDM
Félix-Leclerc	CSDM	Nesbitt School	CSEM
Frederick Banting School	CSEM	Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption	CSDM

Continued

Target elementary schools 2004 – 2005

Notre-Dame-de-la-Défense	CSDM	Saint-Jean-de-la-Croix	CSDM
Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix	CSMB	Saint-Jean-de-la-Lande	CSDM
Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes	CSMB	Saint-Mathieu	CSDM
Notre-Dame-des-Neiges	CSDM	Saint-Noël-Chabanel	CSDM
Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs	CSMB	Saint-Noël-Chabanel Annexe	CSDM
N-D-du-Perpétuel-Secours	CSDM	Saint-Nom-de-Jésus	CSDM
Parkdale	CSEM	Saint-Octave *	CSPI
Paul-Jarry	CSMB	Saint-Pascal-Baylon	CSDM
Perce-Neige *	CSMB	Saint-Pierre-Claver **	CSDM
Philippe-Morin *	CSMB	Saint-Rémi	CSPI
Pierre-de-Coubertin *	CSPI	Saint-Simon-Apôtre	CSDM
Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau	CSEM	Saint-Vincent-Marie	CSPI
René-Guénette	CSPI	Saint-Zotique	CSDM
Riverview School	CSLBP	Sainte-Bernadette-Soubirous	CSDM
Saint-Albert-le-Grand **	CSDM	Sainte-Bibiane	CSDM
Saint-Anselme	CSDM	Sainte-Cécile	CSDM
Saint-Arsène **	CSDM	Sainte-Colette *	CSPI
Saint-Barthélemy ** (pavillon des Érables)	CSDM	Sainte-Gemma-Galgani	CSDM
Saint-Barthélemy ** (pavillon Sagard)	CSDM	Sainte-Germaine-Cousin	CSPI
Saint-Benoit *	CSDM	Sainte-Jeanne-d'Arc	CSDM
Saint-Bernardin	CSDM	Sainte-Lucie	CSDM
Saint-Clément	CSDM	Sainte-Odile	CSDM
Saint-Émile **	CSDM	Sainte-Odile Annexe	CSDM
Saint-Enfant-Jésus **	CSDM	Simonne-Monet	CSDM
Saint-Étienne	CSDM	Sinclair Laird	CSEM
Saint-François-d'Assise	CSDM	St. Dorothy	CSEM
Saint-François-Solano *	CSDM	St. Gabriel	CSEM
Saint-François-Xavier **	CSDM	St. John Bosco	CSEM
Saint-Gabriel-Lalemant	CSDM	St. Patrick	CSEM
Saint-Gabriel-Lalemant * Annexe	CSDM	Très-Saint-Sacrement **	CSMB
Saint-Grégoire-le-Grand	CSDM	Verdun (Woodland)	CSLBP
Saint-Jean-Baptiste-de-la-Salle	CSDM	Victor-Rousselot	CSDM
Saint-Jean-de-Brébeuf	CSDM	Westmount Park	CSEM

CSDM	EMSB	LBPSB	CSMB	CSPI	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
88	15	2	18	15	48 626
			138		

* New school

** School in transition

CSDM: Commission scolaire de Montréal

CSMB: Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys

EMSB: English-Montréal School Board

CSPI: Commission scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île

LBPSB: Lester-B.-Pearson School Board