



PROGRAM TO SUPPORT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Projects to foster pedagogical development and the acquisition of expertise in information and communications technologies (ICT)

Action-research projects to test innovative initiatives in special education, in conjunction with researchers

The Policy on Special Education highlights the importance of improving knowledge with respect to actions to be favoured to help students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities to succeed in the context of the numerous changes brought about by the education reform.

The Plan of Action accompanying the policy statement clearly states the commitment of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) to support research and development in special education and to foster the acquisition of new expertise in conjunction with its partners.

School Year
2006-2007

Éducation,
Loisir et Sport

Québec 

Call for Projects

The Program to Support Research and Development in Special Education encourages innovation and the implementation of practices to bring about more effective intervention on behalf of students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities. It has two components, one pertaining to **pedagogical development and the acquisition of expertise in ICT**, and one pertaining to **the testing of innovative initiatives in special education (action-research projects) in conjunction with the research community**.

Why create a Program to Support Research and Development in Special Education?

This program is designed to provide financial support for the development, implementation and evaluation of innovative projects in special education. To attain its goal of facilitating the development of new educational practices, it requires the collaboration of educators, researchers and other partners with expertise in this field.

The program's objectives are:

- to support the schools in their renewal of educational practices
- to facilitate the development of new approaches or practices in special education
- to foster collaboration among educators, partners who have developed expertise in competency development through technology integration (RÉCIT or other resources), or the research community (action-research projects), to devise, carry out and evaluate projects
- to promote schools' initiatives by making projects public (MELS Web site, symposiums, conferences, publications, etc.)

What is the procedure for submitting a project proposal?

School or school board personnel who would like to test a special education research or development project should contact the person or body the school board has designated to receive project proposals and determine which of them best meet the program requirements. This person, who is generally the special education coordinator with the school board, can foster inter-school collaboration in carrying out the projects selected. The objective is to ensure that the projects meet all the eligibility criteria.

Project proposals should be submitted on the appropriate form, which can be found on the MELS Web site. They should include a brief description of the project along with the signatures required. Any input from outside partners should also be described; in the case of action-research projects, the contribution of researchers at the college or university levels should be described. Projects may also draw upon the expertise of regional office resource persons if the project concerns the ICT sector.

Given the available budget, each school board is limited to a certain number of submissions. A person designated by the board sends project proposals to the person responsible for special education in the regional office of the MELS, who then forwards the proposals to the Ministère's Direction de l'adaptation scolaire along with any comments. Depending on arrangements at the regional level, project proposals may be brought to a regional coordinating body, which would then decide on the proposals to be submitted to the MELS for analysis and selection.

**What is meant by
"projects to foster pedagogical development and
the acquisition of expertise in ICT"
and by "action-research projects"?**

Projects to foster pedagogical development and the acquisition of expertise in ICT

These are projects to promote competency development among students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities, or to develop expertise in the classroom use of ICT among teachers, non-teaching professionals and technical staff.

The projects involve a rigorous and structured process of setting objectives, evaluating the extent to which they are attained and indicating the conditions in which the results were obtained. These projects are carried out in conjunction with the local services of the Réseau pour le développement des compétences par l'intégration des technologies (RÉCIT) or with regional resource persons and consultants. They are carried out by personnel from schools, school boards or regional coordinating bodies.

Each project must clearly show how ICT are integrated into the teaching-learning process and must be carried out in such a way that it can be disseminated and reproduced in other environments.

Project proposal forms must be used when submitting a project.

Action-research projects to test innovative initiatives in special education

The action-research projects are intended to encourage educators and the research community to collaborate to develop expertise in working with students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities.

Action-research consists of hands-on work in the field, with all the advantages and adjustments that this involves. It must be directly linked to the educational project and be consistent with the actions adopted by the school. Research is thus directly connected to the concerns of the educators involved, who can in turn draw upon the researchers' knowledge and expertise to improve their practices. Working together, the two groups develop a dynamic interaction that serves the interests of both parties.

The research is intended to update practices by targeting competency development. It involves a rigorous and structured process of setting objectives, evaluating the extent to which they are attained and indicating the conditions in which the results were obtained. It must be carried out in such a way that both the process and the results can be re-created in other situations, with a view to the transfer of knowledge.

Project proposal forms must be used when submitting a project.

What are the eligibility criteria?

Given the funds available and the number of proposals submitted, only some of the projects will obtain financial support under this program. Projects must first meet certain eligibility criteria, compliance with which will be verified during an initial reading of the proposals. The selection process described below will then be applied.

All project proposals must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- They must feature initiatives that give concrete expression to the orientations of the Policy on Special Education.
- They must focus on competency development among students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, while at the same time targeting competency development among teachers, non-teaching professionals and technical staff, in accordance with the Québec Education Program (QEP).
- They must specify how the school or school board, whose financial support is mandatory, will contribute to the project concretely, through the allocation of human resources (education consultant, non-teaching professionals or technical staff, etc.) and material resources (reference manuals, computer equipment, office space, etc.) for the project.
- They must not require more than \$50 000 in financial aid*.
* Exceptionally, projects extending over two years may receive maximum funding in the amount of \$50 000 for the first year and \$25 000 for the second year.
- They must not be funded by other sources or meet the objectives of other support measures (implementation of the reform, success plans, New Approaches, New Solutions, etc.).
- They must be developed and carried out in conjunction with qualified researchers from the research community (in the case of action-research projects).
- They must be designed so as to be able to evaluate results and the competency development of the student.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS:

- Projects that cannot be reproduced in other contexts, given that they primarily involve staff hiring or training.
- Projects that already receive funding from other sources or meet the objectives of other support measures (New Approaches, New Solutions, success plans, etc.)
- Projects used for financial gain through the sale of materials developed (computer equipment, publications, software or other)
- Projects that are primarily based on the implication of a single person who is assigned full-time and who bears most of the responsibility for the project, leaving other participants to play only secondary or incidental roles

How are projects selected?

Projects are selected based on the different evaluation criteria and the available budget. Final decisions may take into account the diversity of the target population and the regional distribution of projects. The schools and school boards will be informed of the committee's decision in June. This committee, composed of representatives from the MELS and stakeholders (research sector, RÉCIT, etc.), analyzes eligible projects.

Below are the evaluation criteria for each of the program options.

Evaluation Criteria ICT

- Compliance with the Québec Education Program and the Policy on Special Education

The project counts on the active participation of students and the development of their competencies as well as their teachers.

- Innovative character of the project

There is an innovative integration of ICT during the teaching-learning process.

- Realistic approach (feasibility)

The project is not overly ambitious. It is sufficiently specific, does not encompass too many goals, and outlines how results will be measured. It includes a schedule.

- Methodological quality (scientific merit)

Objectives are observable and measurable, and the conditions under which results will be obtained are listed.

- Collaboration

Collaboration of local RÉCIT or resource persons at the regional, provincial and other levels is expected.

- Targeted environmental impact

The project will advance practices in the mid and long term.

- Reproducibility of the process and results

The process should be easily reproduced in other contexts. Thus, it should not be based primarily on staff hiring or training.

- Dissemination

Dissemination methods are provided for, as is access for all special education stakeholders.

Evaluation Criteria Action-Research

- Compliance with the Québec Education Program and the Policy on Special Education

The project emphasizes the pedagogical practices brought about by the education reform, and fosters the adaptation of schools to the needs of all students. It must be in line with the educational project and be consistent with the actions already adopted by the school.

- Innovative character of the project

It opens the door to a renewal of teaching practices in schools.

- Realistic approach (feasibility)

The process is not overly ambitious. It is sufficiently specific, does not encompass too many goals, and outlines how results will be measured. It includes a schedule.

- Methodological quality (scientific merit)

A brief review of the literature was performed, objectives are observable and measurable, and the conditions under which results will be obtained are listed.

- Contribution from the school and the research community

There must be a true collaborative effort between these two communities with regard to development, implementation and evaluation.

- Targeted environmental impact

The project will advance practices in the mid and long term.

- Reproducibility of the process

The process should be easily reproduced in other contexts. Thus, it should not be based primarily on staff hiring or training.

- Dissemination

Dissemination methods are provided for (conferences, symposiums, publications, etc.).

What expenses are allowable?

Allowable expenses are those that are directly related to staff participation in the development, implementation and evaluation of the project. They may include:

- teaching staff substitution or replacement costs associated with participation in project development, implementation or evaluation: meetings, training, production, (e.g. scenarios, instructional materials, summaries, reports)
- training or program support expenses and consulting fees associated with the development and evaluation of the process
- expenses associated with the hiring of research assistants (for action-research projects). However, the researchers' salaries are not allowable expenses if conducting research forms an integral part of their role as teacher-researcher; however, replacement costs are allowable
- other expenses required to carry out the project

Please note that a 15 per cent charge for administrative overhead must be included for all grants disbursed midway through a university research project.

Awarding of grant

Grant allocations to carry out projects selected will be distributed in two installments. The first installment will be equal to two thirds of the grant and be used to carry out the project. It will be allocated in September. The second installment will be equal to a third of the grant and is conditional upon reception of the project report in May 2007.

When should project proposals be submitted?

The project submission and selection process extends throughout the year:

- **March 31, 2006:** Submission of project proposals to school boards
- **April 13, 2006:** Forwarding of projects to the MELS regional office
- **April 20, 2006:** Reception of projects by the MELS special education board
- **May 2006:** Project analysis and selection
- **June 2006:** Sending of decisions to the schools and school boards
- **September 2006 to May 2007:** Carrying out of projects
- **End of May 2007:** Submission of project reports and summaries to the MELS

Questions ?

For further information, please contact the school board's special education coordinator or the person responsible for special education at your MELS regional office.

IMPORTANT

Please note the deadline and send your project proposal form to the special education coordinator at the school board **no later than March 31, 2006**. The coordinator will forward the projects to the MELS regional office **by April 13, 2006 at the latest**.