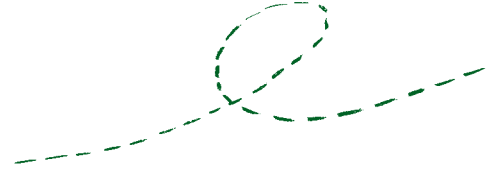




10 years of wishes and achievements





Over the past ten years, much progress has been made in classrooms, at home, in cultural centers and in the Montréal community, to ensure that students from Montréal’s disadvantaged areas have the same chances for success as all other Québec students. And all throughout this period, the Supporting Montréal Schools Program has helped schools and their partners to attain their goal of making a difference for these students.

This Program is a good example of partnership between the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and the five school boards on the Island of Montréal. Not only is the Program managed by these six partners, it was also developed by the schools and a team of professionals from each of the Island’s school boards.

Over the years, the Supporting Montréal Schools Program has managed to mobilize a team of Montréal stakeholders to ensure that schools “make a difference” in their students’ lives. Making a difference for students means acting together as a group in the various areas of their lives by sharing a common goal and, especially, by inviting students themselves to play a more active role in their own development.



Over the years, several schools, assisted by their partners, have introduced effective means to attain these goals. These means have been guided by the Program's seven measures, which are recognized as having positive effects on students' motivation and success.

We have witnessed some remarkable events over these past ten years. For example, more than 3000 teachers took part in ongoing professional development activities that focused on understanding disadvantaged environments and pedagogical intervention in these areas. We watched as they questioned themselves, looked for innovative ways to accomplish their task, reviewed their approach to teaching reading, shared relevant and effective practices for their students and adopted innovative approaches, in order to expand the limits of their intervention.

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Administrators of the schools targeted by the Program also took part in professional development sessions, in order to collectively build on their expertise in managing schools in disadvantaged areas.

The *Jeune Public* outings enabled more than 400 000 students to learn about and visit a wide variety of cultural, artistic and scientific centres. More than 300 *innovative models* have appeared over the past ten years. These varied projects have given Montréal-area cultural partners and teachers the desire to work together.

While the Supporting Montréal Schools Program was able to support the schools in a context of social change attended by the emergence of new questions and issues, it was also helpful in working with families and the other partners in the Montréal community. And it was able to recognize their different areas of expertise. The target schools opened their doors, shared their vision of disadvantaged environments and questioned their educational practices with the collaboration of their partners.

What can we hope for in the future? That each of us continue to contribute, so that each and every student from Montréal's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods will one day be able to say: "*School has really made a difference in my life.*"

Chantale Richer, coordinator



**The
Program's
seven
measures**

Measure 1 — ADAPTED ACTIONS

The goal of this measure is to have school teams introduce actions that promote the personal and educational success of all students from disadvantaged areas.

After 10 years, we know that:

- / disadvantaged areas have many faces thus it is essential to understand students and their relationship to language, knowledge and school, if we want to take into account their learning needs;
- / it is essential that the whole school team be kept abreast of knowledge about disadvantaged areas and their effects;
- / the ongoing evaluation of teaching practices and services is necessary in order to be able to adapt them.

Over the past 10 years, schools have:

- / established several intervention models to promote student learning and success;
- / favoured modelling and professional support from resource teachers;
- / encouraged group decompartmentalization to better meet students' learning needs;
- / organized Saturday school or summer school;
- / called upon complementary resources such as special education teachers, education consultants, speech therapists, etc., to provide better support for teachers.

Measure 2 — DEVELOPMENT OF THE READING COMPETENCY

The goal of this measure is to have school teams ensure that students are immersed in a culture of writing.

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After 10 years, we know that:

- / the purposes of reading form part of the learning to be acquired so that students develop a true concept of reading;
- / students' actions while reading are key indicators as to where and how to intervene;
- / all school stakeholders, families and communities have a role to play in supporting students who are learning to read.

Over the past 10 years, schools have:

- / set up a wide variety of situations that are as rich as they are meaningful, in order to support students who are learning to read;
- / offered reading activities to students and their families;
- / successfully conducted reading projects with partners in the community;
- / contributed to fine-tuning the reading continuum, a tool adapted from *First Steps*¹, which illustrates the development of the reading competency;
- / participated in various innovative models where reading and culture come together.

¹ *First steps*, Department of Education of Western Australia, under the direction of Alison Dewsbury.



Measure 3 — GUIDANCE-ORIENTED APPROACH

The goal of this measure is to have school teams introduce steps that help students assume responsibility for their own educational paths.

After 10 years, we know that:

- / developing the ability to understand one's tastes, strengths and competencies as well as the work world are necessary for students to assume responsibility for their own educational paths;
- / exposing students to rich and diversified learning situations helps to support them as they assume responsibility;
- / all school stakeholders, families and the community have a role to play in order to help students assume responsibility for their educational paths.

Over the past 10 years, schools have:

- / provided students with opportunities to identify their interests and abilities through learning situations both in and outside the classroom;
- / introduced measures to help students learn how to successfully complete a project;
- / conducted projects in conjunction with cultural partners;
- / helped to develop the "guidance-oriented" approach by participating in professional development networks;
- / recognized that the guidance-oriented approach requires the participation of all those concerned.

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Measure 4 — PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND THE SCHOOL TEAM

The goal of this measure is to ensure that school administrators and school teams have opportunities for ongoing professional development.

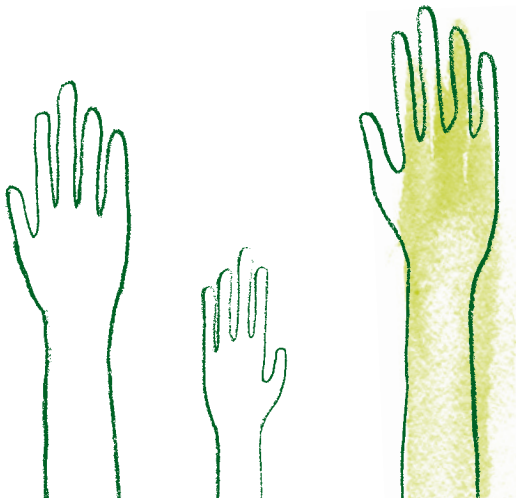
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After 10 years, we know that:

- / ongoing professional development has long-lasting positive effects on the learning process of students and on staff motivation;
- / stakeholders' practices must be at the heart of the training suggested for them;
- / ongoing professional development promotes reflective practices, which is essential for schools to succeed in disadvantaged areas.

Over the past 10 years, schools have:

- / shared experiences or initiatives that have yielded positive results;
- / increased their participation in training linked to disadvantaged areas or Program measures;
- / adapted their schedules to facilitate cycle team meetings to review the value of learning situations;
- / contributed to research projects in conjunction with universities;
- / participated in ongoing professional development activities offered by the Program (over 3000 teachers, 100 school boards, 200 non-teaching professionals, and many others).



Measure 5 — ACCESS TO CULTURAL RESOURCES

The goal of this measure is to have school teams and students visit cultural venues and events in Montréal, in order to enrich the learning context through artistic and scientific cultures.

After 10 years, we know that:

- / cultural input in the learning process is essential in disadvantaged areas;
- / the teaching process is enhanced by ties created with cultural artifacts, artists and scientists;
- / contact with culture and the arts can make a difference for students from disadvantaged areas.

Over the past 10 years, schools have:

- / established links between cultural activities and the competencies of the Québec Education Program;
- / organized cultural outings for students and their families, such as family theatre days on Saturdays;
- / created projects in conjunction with cultural partners from the Montréal community;
- / succeeded in having more than 400 000 students attend cultural events in and around Montréal;
- / devised and shared cultural projects so that other schools could introduce them.



Measure 6 — COOPERATIVE LINKS WITH STUDENTS' FAMILIES

This measure is intended to bring families and the school closer together, and to have parents become more involved in their children's schooling.

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After 10 years, we know that:

- / parental involvement throughout the child's schooling contributes to academic success;
- / when teachers encourage parent participation and commitment, parents have more discussions with their children at home and feel better equipped to help them;
- / when schools promote the parents' role and favour direct collaboration, this results in increased empowerment for parents.

Over the past 10 years, schools have:

- / invited families to take part in a variety of weekday and weekend school activities throughout the school year;
- / participated in professional development initiatives dealing with the family/school relationship;
- / made use of interpretation services to ensure proper communication with families whose mother tongue is not French;
- / set up a telephone line and other means of communication in order to share good news with families concerning their children;
- / varied their forms of communication and collaboration in order to reach out to all types of parents.



Measure 7 — LINKS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

This measure promotes collaboration between the school and the community.

After 10 years, we know that:

- / all areas frequented by students have an influence on their development;
- / effective solutions for student success have a simultaneous impact in class, the school and the community;
- / a partnership network favours the sharing of responsibility for students' success.

Over the past 10 years, schools have:

- / worked closely with community partners;
- / participated in various neighbourhood or local roundtables;
- / opened their doors to various organizations to enrich the environment in which students learn;
- / organized neighbourhood visits and other activities to introduce school staff to outside organizations, making them more aware of the environment in which students live;
- / participated in professional development networks with the theme "a school open to its community," with representatives from many partners on the Island of Montréal.

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Important achievements



Events

...organized for the entire Montréal educational community: two major symposiums open to all, held on March 30, 2000 and March 29, 2004, with more than 8000 participants; four other symposiums for the approximately 60 Montréal cultural partners; 10 “back-to-school” events for the 100 or so school administrations, and a day-long retreat on school / family / community ties.

Tools

...designed for all schools targeted by the Program and for their partners. Whether they be discussion papers, guides, films or “turnkey” projects, the Supporting Montréal Schools Program disseminated all of these tools and offered the appropriate professional support.

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Studies

...conducted with school staff, university researchers, professionals from the Direction de la recherche, des indicateurs et des statistiques of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and, lastly, researchers from other organizations. About 10 studies have been conducted since the start of the Program. All of these studies looked at how well the Program is understood and implemented in the various communities, as well as at the impact it is having.

COMMENTS FROM SCHOOLS THAT BENEFIT
FROM THE SUPPORTING MONTRÉAL SCHOOLS PROGRAM



**THE PROGRAM HELPS TO UNDERSTAND
WHAT A DISADVANTAGED AREA IS
AND TO DEVELOP A VISION TO MAKE THE
SCHOOL A CONDUCIVE TEACHING AND
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.**

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**THE ONGOING TRAINING
OFFERED ON THE BASIS
OF CURRENT CONDITIONS
IN MONTREAL IS ESSENTIAL.**



**IT IS A MAJOR FINANCIAL RESOURCE
THAT ENABLES US TO KEEP
OUR EDUCATIONAL PROJECT IN TUNE
WITH THE NEEDS OF OUR STUDENTS
FROM DISADVANTAGED AREAS.**



**WE FOUND THE PROFESSIONAL TEAM THAT
SPECIALIZES IN INTERVENTION IN
DISADVANTAGED AREAS A GREAT HELP.**

**THE SEVEN MEASURES HELP US
TO MAKE OUR ACTIONS MORE
CONDUCTIVE TO OUR CHILDREN'S
ACADEMIC SUCCESS.**

**IT ENCOURAGES US TO DEVELOP
SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS
WITH AND FOR PARENTS, SUCH AS THE
"SACS D'HISTOIRE" PROJECT.**

**THE OBLIGATION TO IMPLEMENT
THE SEVEN MEASURES
FAVOURS REFLECTION AMONG THE
MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL TEAM.**

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

And what
do we do now?

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We persevere because we know that support in the community is indispensable if the school is to make a difference in the lives of its students. **We persevere** because we know that some interventions and practices are effective in disadvantaged areas. **We also persevere** because we help in the development of integrated educational practices, and because we must continue to progress in this area. **We persevere** because after 10 years we are starting to see the positive effects on perseverance in school among the first cohorts of students in the Program. **And finally we persevere** because the Supporting Montréal Schools Program is an unending source of inspiration, because it has put down roots among the very people who constitute the Montréal school system.





Supporting
Montréal
Schools
Program



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Québec 