

I care
about
school!



ALL TOGETHER
FOR STUDENT
SUCCESS



Québec 

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Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 08-01257

ISBN 978-2-550-56329-7 (print version)

ISBN 978-2-550-56330-3 (PDF)

Legal deposit – Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2009

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I care about school!

In the past several years, the government and the education community have devoted substantial resources to encouraging young people to stay in school, but there are still too many students who leave school without a diploma or other qualifications. The urgent need for action has been brought up several times in recent months, for example, at the Assises régionales sur la persévérance scolaire, an initiative of the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec, and by the Groupe d'action sur la persévérance et la réussite scolaires au Québec, led by L. Jacques Ménard, President of BMO Financial Group.

We must do everything possible to improve the graduation rate, first of all for the young people themselves, whose future depends directly on their education, and also for Québec, which needs its young people in order to meet the social, economic and cultural challenges facing it. Encouraged by the support that has been expressed by civil society, the government intends to pursue this objective.

The various people who have recently contributed to the discussion of ways to reduce the number of school dropouts appear to agree on two observations.

Firstly, it has become clear that schools alone can no longer assume the entire responsibility for helping students to stay in school and succeed: the reasons students leave school are often outside the school, and it is impossible to make progress without close cooperation from parents, the community and the working world. Furthermore, improving the situation requires that everyone involved share a common vision and that they forge links in order to work together, school by school and region by region. In the course of the coming months, we plan to take the necessary actions to mobilize parents, the education community and other players around shared objectives.

Secondly, it has become necessary to promote education more, particularly within the public system, so that success in school becomes a fundamental value of our society. Promoting education means demonstrating the high value of education, but also giving students activities and projects that can elicit their full involvement and lead to their success.

Students need to know that we are behind them and we believe in them; we have to show our solidarity with their efforts and our pride in their success. I suggest we all adopt the slogan "I care about school!"

One reality, one objective, various means: let us be partners in our children's success.

TOWard mobilization and joint aCtiOn

The school system in Québec has undergone many changes over the years. These changes have been inspired by the great social ideals of the 20th and 21st centuries and have drawn on research carried out in Québec and elsewhere in the world. Helping students stay in school and succeed is central to the concerns of a great many researchers. Their recommendations represent important avenues for planning the actions of the government of Québec. There is general agreement on three recommendations:

- recognition of the importance of parents and the community in promoting education and providing support for young people
- early detection of problems throughout the school years and intervention adapted to the student and the context
- action on learning in reading and mathematics; learning related to behaviour, interpersonal relationships and lifestyle habits; and finally, students' involvement in school and extracurricular activities

This is the direction the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) is taking in proposing mobilization and joint action by all players, so that measures are taken in the classroom and the school and with families and the community.

The main challenge of the school boards and schools is to implement practices that have proven effective, are based on the fundamental conviction that all students are capable of persevering in school and succeeding, and draw on the expertise, creativity and dynamism of the education community. Providing support for students and teachers is also of crucial importance.

In this context, the government has decided to annually invest important sums of money. It will begin by substantially reducing the number of students per class in elementary schools in disadvantaged areas and by providing individualized support in secondary schools.



A single clear message:

EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL

Parents' commitment to their children's schooling is a determining factor in students' success. Everything must be done to involve parents in school life and to make them key partners in their children's success in school. The education community and its partners in civil society, the health sector, community organizations and the business world must also work together to promote the idea that education is essential.

Education is the source of growth and the freedom to choose one's path in life in accordance with one's dreams and aspirations. This message, which was stated by Québec Premier Jean Charest in the context of the Youth Action Strategy *Investing in Youth: Empowering*

Québec's Future, must be followed up by everyone—ministers, members of the National Assembly and mayors; administrators and managers in school boards, schools and businesses; teachers, nonteaching professionals and support staff in schools and school boards; but above all, by parents and those close to young people.



A rising success rate

The data presented in the following table show an increase of 7.5 per cent in the graduation rate for the whole of Québec between 2002-2003 and 2007-2008. The rate for males increased by 8.8 per cent in the same period. This increase was observed following the allocation of substantial resources to student retention and student success during this period.

Among students under the age of 20 in the same period, the secondary school graduation rate increased by 5.5 per cent, of which 2.8 per cent was for the last year alone. An increase of more than 2 per cent was also observed for males under the age of 20.

**Secondary school graduation rate with diploma or other qualifications
Youth and adult sectors**

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008*
Overall	79.8	84.3	85.4	85.5	86.2	87.3
Under 20 years old	66.7	69.9	70.3	70.0	69.4	72.2
20 years old and over	13.1	14.4	15.1	15.5	16.8	15.1
Males	73.0	78.2	79.1	78.6	80.8	81.8
Under 20 years old	59.3	63.5	63.8	63.0	63.9	66.0
20 years old and over	13.7	14.7	15.3	15.6	16.9	15.8
Females	86.9	90.5	92.1	92.8	91.8	93.1
Under 20 years old	74.4	76.5	77.1	77.4	75.1	78.7
20 years old and over	12.5	14.0	15.0	15.4	16.7	14.4

Source: Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport
* Preliminary data

WHO NEEDS TO BE CONVINCED AND HELPED?

- Large numbers of boys, because about 30 per cent of them drop out of school. However, 20 per cent of girls also leave school prematurely.
- Students with academic delays, that is, those who have repeated at least one year, because about 65 per cent of these students will drop out of school.
- Students in schools in disadvantaged areas, because 35 per cent of them leave school before obtaining a diploma or other qualifications as compared to 20 per cent in other areas.



- Students who are recent immigrants to Québec, nearly 40 per cent of whom do not stay in school until they obtain a diploma or other qualifications.
- Some 5000 students who leave school every year after Secondary I or II.
- Some 6000 students who leave school every year after having got to Secondary V, and who are only a few courses short of a secondary school diploma.

The objective: 80 per cent

A GRADUATION OR QUALIFICATIONS RATE OF 80 PER CENT IN 2020

Raising the graduation or qualifications rate to 80 per cent for students under the age of 20 by 2020 will require that everyone involved work together and that they feel bound by an obligation of result. There will also be a target for every school board and for the schools most at risk. This objective appears ambitious when we consider the distance that must be covered in just 10 years. However, it is realistic and attainable if we look at it in terms of the contribution that will be demanded of each school board and each school. Concretely, in terms of current demographic data, a graduation or qualifications rate of 80 per cent before the age of 20 represents:

- about 8000 more students in 2020 who stay in school until they obtain a diploma or other qualifications, including 1500 with a Diploma of Vocational Studies
- about 300 more students in 2020 who stay in school until they obtain a diploma or other qualifications in a large school board such as Pointe-de-l'Île in Montréal
- about 40 more students in 2020 who stay in school until they obtain a diploma or other qualifications in a small school board such as Portneuf



The players

THE MINISTER

The Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports has a threefold responsibility with regard to helping students stay in school and succeed.

Firstly, she approves the frameworks, policies and programs that are developed to help students stay in school and succeed, and are applied by the school boards and schools. To ensure that the support measures are pertinent and effective, the Minister may also request that changes be made to them, as is currently the case for the *Homework Assistance* program and the *New Approaches, New Solutions* intervention strategy.

It is also the Minister's responsibility to guide the actions of the school boards, to set the objectives for them to attain, and to agree to the means used for attaining these objectives. This will be implemented through partnership agreements that will be signed with the school boards over the coming year. These agreements will clearly establish the results expected as well as the roles and responsibilities of each level.

Finally, the Minister has a responsibility for mobilizing the education community. She will therefore be present in the regions in the coming months, meeting with teachers to give them her support in their demanding but inspiring work, and discuss with them their important role in student success.

STUDENTS

More than ever, students must be recognized as the main artisans of their success and must play an active role in educational measures that concern them. In contexts that may sometimes be difficult, their personal commitment to learning and their ability to demonstrate a positive attitude are essential to their success. To maintain their commitment, students will need the support of their parents and their teachers, and sometimes that of other members of the community. Students experiencing difficulties of any kind must be given guidance and support throughout their studies and offered solutions that are flexible and adapted to their needs.



PARENTS

Parents know their children better than anyone else and are thus key partners of the education community. The essential role they play must be recognized, especially during the transitions their children go through in the course of their schooling. They can provide important support by :

- valuing education
- showing perseverance in their own endeavours
- recognizing the effort required to learn
- having high but realistic expectations for their children
- using every means at their disposal to guide their children toward success

They also have a responsibility to collaborate closely with the school, informing it of anything unusual with regard to their children's commitment to their education. Consistency between the actions of the family and those of the school is of great importance for students' success and for their perseverance in school.

TEACHERS

It is crucial that schools be able to count on competent teachers. Teachers must be effective partners. They are best placed to detect students' difficulties and take action to support their success. Their task, which is often complex, is to provide conditions conducive to success for all students in their classes and, where applicable, to implement the appropriate individualized education plans for students with difficulties, with the cooperation of other professional and support resources.

Teachers also have a responsibility for ongoing professional development so as to keep their knowledge up to date. This responsibility is shared with the school boards, which have to facilitate access to programs of study for their personnel or provide them with customized training.

Teachers can make a difference in their students' progress in school through their expertise, their sense of innovation, their ability to work in teams and their commitment to their students. They should also be able to count on their students' commitment and the support of the students' parents. In addition, they need the support of the school administration, the complementary educational services staff, their school board, their community and MELS.

ADMINISTRATORS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

School administrators and directors of vocational training centres and adult education centres are responsible for the day-to-day running of educational institutions that must meet many challenges. They are at the centre of the action, and they know the students, parents, teachers, complementary educational services staff and the school's various partners. They have a responsibility to mobilize their teams, bring people together and coordinate their work by involving, where appropriate, the governing board, parents and other partners, especially those in health and social services and community groups. They also have to encourage participation and a sense of belonging in the school by creating a stimulating environment that reflects the students.

DIRECTORS GENERAL OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Directors general of school boards should ensure that, in the first place, their schools meet the needs of the students under their responsibility with flexibility and adaptability. As the immediate superiors of the administrators of the educational institutions, they have a duty to understand the specific context of their schools, to support them and to provide them with the conditions and resources needed to attain the objectives set out in the management and educational success agreements that must be established annually. They thus enable schools to implement structured initiatives whose first objective is to help students stay in school and succeed.

PRESIDENTS OF SCHOOL BOARDS

School board presidents must be in the forefront of endeavours to promote education and public schools in all regions of Québec. They are the primary spokespersons with regard to efforts to help students stay in school and succeed.

They must also mobilize parents, mayors, employers, and social, community and business groups and organizations that can help support young people in their territory.





THE COMMUNITY

Students live in a community that contributes to their development. Helping students stay in school and succeed must be part of the concerns of people and groups that shape young people's future, whether they are in the municipal sector, cultural organizations, recreation and sports, or community groups. Leaders have a responsibility to mobilize their community behind this cause. The Saguenay–Lac-St-Jean region can serve as an example of this kind of mobilization.

THE WORKING WORLD

Large and small businesses have a responsibility to promote education among young people. The social importance of their commitment to respect hiring and management conditions that are conducive to young people's graduation from school has been demonstrated. They must reduce work hours for students who work after school, provide opportunities for student placements and do more to promote balance between work and studies.

THE TABLES RÉGIONALES D'ÉDUCATION INTERORDRES

The Tables régionales d'éducation interordres, which bring together representatives of school boards, colleges and universities, must play a vital role in helping students in the regions of Québec stay in school and succeed. More than ever, they are called on to be points of convergence of local and regional forces and poles of innovation and action. They should also promote vocational and technical training for the occupations that exist in their territory.

13 paths to success

The actions in schools and in civil society that seem to contribute the most to student success may be grouped in 13 areas. These 13 paths to success are keys in the hands of the people and groups concerned, keys leading to action to reach the objective by 2020. They will be implemented according to the specific features of each region, depending on the needs of the schools and students. They are as follows:

- 1. Promote education throughout Québec and encourage students to stay in school.**
- 2. Establish targets for each school board and monitor them.**
- 3. Mobilize key players in the regions.**
- 4. Prepare children in disadvantaged areas and children with difficulties for starting school.**
- 5. Reduce the number of students per class in elementary school.**
- 6. Reduce learning delays in elementary school.**
- 7. Reinforce the *New Approaches, New Solutions* intervention strategy, building on actions in more than 100 schools.**
- 8. Provide individualized support for secondary school students.**
- 9. Increase extracurricular sports and cultural activities.**
- 10. Set up community projects targeting at-risk secondary school students in the most disadvantaged areas of Montréal.**
- 11. Provide better support for Secondary IV and V students in order to help them reach graduation.**
- 12. Facilitate and encourage access to vocational training.**
- 13. Encourage the largest possible number of dropouts to go back to school.**

These 13 paths call for active participation by everyone involved and include the concerns and measures set out in the Youth Action Strategy. They are based on actions planned by all partners, so that student success is supported by a collective effort.



The proposed actions are designed to be implemented at four critical points in schooling:

- early childhood and the start of schooling, because prevention and early screening and intervention are the first actions to take to promote success
- the transition from elementary to secondary school, a time when the possibility of dropping out too often begins to take root
- Secondary IV and V, when too many students drop out just before reaching the finish line, in order to provide support for those who no longer find meaning in their studies
- when students leave school with no diploma or qualifications, in order to help them “drop back in” as quickly as possible and enable them to later make a successful transition to the job market

Student retention and the evaluation of knowledge

Staying in school enables students to acquire solid knowledge. MELS has just provided teachers with a document that will make their work easier by listing the essential knowledge an elementary school student must acquire in each subject by the end of each year. A similar document is being developed on the progression of learning in secondary school and will be available in the course of the 2009-2010 school year.

The evaluation of learning that teachers must do attests to students’ success. Changes must be made, and MELS will announce certain orientations in this regard in the course of the current school year. Beginning in September 2010, these changes will involve simplifying the evaluation process, making needed modifications to the examinations in order to evaluate the knowledge acquired by students, and making report cards still clearer for parents.



Creation of a Monitoring Committee

The ongoing improvement of student success rates demands close monitoring of the situation and the introduction of corrections if the objectives set are not being attained.

In order to provide the Minister with reliable, objective information on student retention and student success, and to propose adjustments to the paths to success based on the results observed, a monitoring committee made up of public personalities from various areas, teachers and researchers will be formed in the fall of 2009.

More specifically, the monitoring committee will:

- closely follow the evolution of the rates of success, graduation and qualifications in relation to the objective of 80 per cent by 2020
- analyze intervention measures developed by the school boards, data published annually by MELS and other data gathered
- propose adjustments to the paths to success based on the results observed

MELS will also set up, jointly with the Secrétariat à la jeunesse, an interministerial committee to improve the coordination of government actions to help students stay in school and succeed, and to support the implementation of the paths to success.

**I care
about school!**



13 Paths to success

1

PROMOTE EDUCATION THROUGHOUT QUÉBEC AND ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO STAY IN SCHOOL

The education community and all its partners will be asked to join forces to prevent more than one quarter of Québec's young people from leaving school without a qualifying education every year. Young people will receive an unequivocal message: School is essential and the knowledge and culture they acquire there are synonymous with growth, freedom of choice and accomplishment.

A province-wide Campaign

Several actions will be undertaken simultaneously to highlight the value of education, public schools and teachers. These actions will take the form of:

- a Web site stressing the value of education and staying in school
- messages in the electronic and print media aimed at mobilizing the general public
- theme campaigns focused on reading, staying in school, the teaching profession and access to vocational training

Bringing together parents, teachers and business people

In the fall of 2009, the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports will visit the regions to meet with teachers, parents and students. She will take advantage of these meetings to sensitize people in the business community about the need for mobilization on this issue.

Commitment of employers

Student retention and student success are of direct concern to employers, who are being asked to make a social commitment to hire graduates or qualified employees and to support a balance between work and study for employees who wish to continue their education. Employers are also asked, as part of this commitment, to limit the number of working hours for young employees so that they can give priority to their studies. To recognize employers' efforts in this direction, a standard will be developed in the context of an ISO-type certification.

In the effort to reduce the number of dropouts and help students succeed in school, several organizations and partners in the Lanaudière region have come together as CREVALE, a regional committee dedicated to the promotion of education. The committee carries out promotional campaigns and awards certificates to regional businesses that encourage people to obtain their first diploma or qualifications.

2

ESTABLISH TARGETS FOR EACH SCHOOL BOARD AND MONITOR THEM

MELS will come to an agreement with the school boards on measurable objectives for student retention and student success. They will make the results of this agreement public.

The objectives set for each school board will reflect the contribution required for it to attain a graduation rate of 80 per cent by the year 2020.

Firm commitments will also be made between the schools and the school boards. These commitments will take into account the special situation of aboriginal students.

Commitment of school boards

In the context of a partnership agreement with the Minister, every school board will make commitments concerning the following:

- the measures and actions that the school board will implement to help more students stay in school and succeed
- measurable objectives concerning:
 - the rate of student retention and student success, in particular for students with handicaps or social or learning difficulties
 - the graduation rate
 - English language competency
 - the health and safety features of its schools
 - greater access to vocational training for young people under 20 years of age
 - aboriginal students' opportunities to stay in school and succeed

By March 31, 2010, the Minister must be informed of the means to be implemented in the fall of 2010 to help students stay in school and succeed.

Before July 1, 2010, partnership agreements must be concluded in order to redefine the personality of the school and its school life.

MELS will engage in discussions with the special-status school boards in the northern regions about the objectives and means to be put in place to foster their students' ability to stay in school and succeed.

A person in every school board responsible for helping students to stay in school

The success attained through the paths proposed by the Minister will depend directly on the monitoring done. Rigorous monitoring will therefore be carried out.

Every school board will designate a person responsible for helping students to stay in school and succeed. This person will serve as a project officer or coordinator and have the job of sensitizing, guiding and mobilizing the various persons involved.

The school board representative will collaborate closely with the school principal in developing and implementing the school success plan and the paths to success.

Public declarations by school boards

Every year, school boards will make a public declaration of their actions and their results to parents, the public they serve and the Minister.

3

MOBILIZE KEY PLAYERS IN THE REGIONS

Student success rates cannot be improved without strong leaders in every school, in every school board and in every region. These are men and women with the will and the ability to :

- **mobilize their community to prevent student failure from the time a student enters school;**
- **support students in their transition from elementary to secondary school;**
- **help them to stay in school throughout secondary school until they obtain a diploma or qualifications.**

Regional action on student retention

MELS will intensify its actions at the regional level and continue, by means of specific agreements, to support regional organizations dedicated to student retention, such as the Comité régional pour la valorisation de l'éducation (CREVALE) in the Lanaudière region or the Comité régional de la prévention de l'abandon scolaire (CREPAS) in the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region.

Support from regional experts

The school boards will work jointly with support teams from MELS on various problems such as violence in the schools, disadvantaged areas, students with handicaps or learning difficulties, etc.

Support for the youth action strategy

The Secrétariat à la jeunesse and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation will continue their work implementing the initiatives set out in the Youth Action Strategy 2009-2014. This partnership aims to do the following:

- support the mobilization of the regions to implement innovative and sustainable actions that will have a significant effect on student retention and the graduation rates of young people
- support local projects rooted in communities, based on mobilizing key players who support young people in difficulty.

*Based on the guide **Bringing Families and Elementary Schools Closer Together**, the Commission scolaire des Rives-du-Saguenay, together with the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi and the Conseil régional de prévention de l'abandon scolaire (CREPAS), has developed an action strategy to support parents in helping their children stay in school.*

4

PREPARE CHILDREN IN DISADVANTAGED AREAS AND CHILDREN WITH DIFFICULTIES FOR STARTING SCHOOL

The developmental level of a child when he or she begins school has a major influence on the first stages of his or her education. The prevention of failure in school therefore requires prompt action during early childhood and at the time the child is starting school.

Early identification

The school boards will establish links with daycare services in order to facilitate children's transition to school. Teachers will thus be in a position to act as quickly as possible with children with special needs. Incidentally, in disadvantaged areas, many children attend kindergarten for four-year-olds half-time and the school daycare service for the rest of the day. It is important that close ties exist between the educators in these services and the teaching staff of the school.

Support for early childhood

In the plan to increase the number of places in daycare services (15 000 places by 2013), priority will be accorded to projects in disadvantaged areas.

- Measures to support daycare attendance by children from disadvantaged areas will be continued, including :
 - free access to five half-days of daycare per week for children whose parents receive income assistance;
 - additional funding for daycare services that have a significant number of children from disadvantaged areas.

Sharing of best practices

An inventory of best practices in supporting early childhood learning will be created and distributed to daycare centres and the preschool education sector.

Measures adopted by five school boards from the Montréal region have enabled them to use credible data to take quick and concerted action to better provide support to the young people who are most at risk of dropping out. The contributions of these school boards were invaluable to the investigation En route pour l'école carried out by the Direction de santé publique and the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal, allowing them to establish the extent to which more than 10 000 Montréal preschool children were prepared for school.

5

REDUCE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER CLASS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Reducing the number of students in the class is an initiative that provides for better learning conditions, improves the relationship between teachers and students and allows teachers to intervene as soon as difficulties are apparent.

Fewer students per Class

Over the next three years, the number of students per class will gradually be lowered to a maximum of 20 in disadvantaged areas and 26 in other areas. A comparison of present class sizes and the new levels proposed is shown in the table below, according to the year of implementation.

School year and areas	Current class size (average: maximum)	Proposed class size (average: maximum)
In the 2010-2011 school year		
Elementary 3 – Disadvantaged areas	22 : 24	18 : 20
Elementary 4 – Disadvantaged areas	22 : 24	18 : 20
In the 2011-2012 school year		
Elementary 5 – Disadvantaged areas	27 : 29	22 : 24
Elementary 6 – Disadvantaged areas	27 : 29	22 : 24
Elementary 4 – Other areas	27 : 29	24 : 26
In the 2012-2013 school year		
Elementary 5 – Disadvantaged areas	22 : 24	18 : 20
Elementary 6 – Disadvantaged areas	22 : 24	18 : 20
Elementary 5 – Other areas	27 : 29	24 : 26
Elementary 6 – Other areas	27 : 29	24 : 26

Promotion of the teaching profession

Québec is proud of having teachers that are competent, creative and committed. To attain its objective of raising the graduation or qualifications rate to 80 per cent by the year 2020, it must continue to recruit teachers of high calibre.

In order to attract more men and women willing to meet the challenge of a dynamic and enriching profession, MELS will intensify its efforts to highlight the advantages of the teaching profession in Québec:

- Review teacher training in collaboration with university education faculties in order to better prepare students to work with young people with increasingly diversified needs and demands.
- Broaden continuing education opportunities for teachers.
- Enlist the support of universities and CEGEPs in making the advantages of a teaching career more widely known.
- Develop a campaign to promote the teaching profession especially targeted to men.



6

REDUCE LEARNING DELAYS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Learning delays in elementary school significantly increase the risk of dropping out of school at the secondary level. It is clear that the school, especially the relationship between teachers and students in the classroom, can make a difference in terms of increasing the probability that young people in secondary school will stay in school and succeed. The right teaching practices, together with guidance for students and support for teachers, play a crucial role.

The collaboration of parents is essential in maintaining the student's commitment and supporting his or her progress.

Homework assistance

The *Homework Assistance* program will be improved in order to increase the number of students who benefit from it and to provide better support for parents, with special attention to boys who are experiencing difficulties. The schools will implement a variety of support measures on a three-year basis:

- introduction to working methods for students
- assistance for parents in providing better support for their children
- training for daycare workers in providing homework assistance
- training for students to become peer helpers

The help with school work provided by the organization Allô prof will be extended to all regions of Québec. Thus, students having difficulty with homework will be able to get help by telephone from teachers of mathematics, English, science or any other subject. This will be supplemented by chat rooms, discussion forums and a virtual library.

Individualized guidance in reading and mathematics

Every student who fails in reading or mathematics will be offered support measures. These can take a variety of forms and may be applied by regular or remedial teachers or other personnel.

As required, the school principal will develop an individualized education plan with the cooperation of the parents, the student and the personnel concerned. The principal will monitor this plan scrupulously and review it at regular intervals.

For students who have recently immigrated to Québec, the school will offer other opportunities in addition to the French, language of instruction, program to develop their reading skills, an essential element of student success.

Contribution of adult education centres

Support measures will continue to be offered in adult education centres and community organizations, especially in disadvantaged areas, to assist parents in helping their children on their educational path. These measures will take various forms, such as:

- a course on parenting skills
- the *Family, School, Community: Let's Succeed Together* program
- the *Assistance for emergent reading and writing in disadvantaged areas* program



7

REINFORCE THE *NEW APPROACHES, NEW SOLUTIONS* INTERVENTION STRATEGY, BUILDING ON ACTIONS IN MORE THAN 100 SCHOOLS

Despite the efforts of schools participating in the *New Approaches, New Solutions* intervention strategy, an examination of the graduation and qualifications rates of the past three years reveals that most of the schools involved in NANS remain among those with the lowest rates of student retention. It is important to gain a more precise understanding of the actions that schools and school boards must undertake in the context of this strategy.

Identification of 133 beacon schools in Québec

To accelerate reinforcement of the *New Approaches, New Solutions* intervention strategy and the *13 Paths to Success*, interventions such as diagnostic assistance and training activities will be carried out by resource persons from school boards and MELS in 69 elementary schools and 64 secondary schools.

These schools have been selected on the basis of the actions they have accomplished and their desire to do more.

The expertise developed in these schools will help to guide the implementation of the *New Approaches, New Solutions* strategy in all the other schools. A quarterly follow-up of objectives and deadlines will be carried out as part of the obligation of result.

TWO projects in target communities

Two school boards, Commission scolaire des Samares and Commission scolaire Saint-Hyacinthe, will create projects based on the *New Approaches, New Solutions* strategy and on tested methods, such as those applied elsewhere in Canada (*Pathways to Education*, which provides four forms of support—academic, social, financial and personal) or in the United States (*Check and Connect*, which offers an approach promoting student commitment, especially for secondary schools at risk).

They will also develop trend charts for managing student retention. These could be made available to other school boards in Québec to support them in implementing their own actions.

Reinforcement of the new approaches, new solutions intervention strategy

Just as the interventions and guidance of the 133 beacon schools begin, the other schools participating in the *New Approaches, New Solutions* strategy will be making improvements to their activities.

The *New Approaches, New Solutions* intervention strategy is aimed at changing school practices, particularly in the classroom, to ensure that students receive more personalized guidance, that greater contact is established between the school, parents and the community, and that the general atmosphere of the school changes, especially through the addition of extracurricular activities.

The strategy is being revised as follows:

- more precise expectations of school boards and their schools
- adoption by schools of a preventive approach for all students and a targeted approach for the students in greatest difficulty
- governance that relies on the leadership of administrators in the school and the community, as well as the essential involvement of members of the school staff
- an ongoing planning process involving the production of a quarterly rather than an annual plan
- an annual accountability report by school boards and their schools
- ongoing sharing of expertise and professional development on intervention in disadvantaged areas
- The person in charge of the *New Approaches, New Solutions* strategy for each school board will closely support the school principal in the following activities:
 - development and implementation of the success plan
 - mobilization of teachers
 - establishment of cooperative links between the secondary school and the elementary schools in its territory

To lower its dropout rates (from 31 per cent in 2001 to 6 per cent in 2003), the École secondaire Des Montagnes of the Commission scolaire des Samares achieved concrete results by implementing new actions and involving school staff, the students' community and their families. Among other measures, the school completely modified its organizational model in order to offer students more options and areas of study that were likely to meet their needs and interests.



8

PROVIDE INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Beginning secondary school is a crucial step in the educational paths of all students. The challenge is even greater for those who have experienced difficulties in elementary school.

Among all students who have repeated a year of elementary school, only one third will persevere until they earn a secondary school diploma or other qualifications. Support measures and personalized follow-up are therefore necessary as soon as students enter secondary school.

Welcoming students to secondary school

Principals of elementary and secondary schools will ensure that the teaching personnel of Secondary I have all the necessary information to welcome and provide appropriate guidance for all students indicated as having a learning delay in their file. Different methods may be used for this purpose, such as holding meetings between elementary school homeroom teachers and secondary school teachers.

quick action

A systematic identification of students with difficulties will be carried out by teachers of Secondary I and II, based on the results recorded in the second report card.

Students with learning delays may also be offered activities to support their success, such as mentoring, tutoring or peer assistance.

As required, the school principal will develop an individualized education plan with the cooperation of the parents, student and personnel concerned. The principal will follow this plan scrupulously and renew it at regular intervals.

The importance of early screening has been proven. MELS will reinforce its partnership with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. Each school board will evaluate and strengthen its links with the health and social services agency in its territory in order to ensure the complementarity of services to students with handicaps or learning difficulties in its schools.

Additional resource teachers

The number of resource teachers will be increased during the 2010-2011 school year, rising from 600 to 800, and their mandate will be redefined. These additional resources will enable schools to offer personalized support for every student who enters secondary school with a year's delay.

The main tasks of resource teachers are :

- to provide academic monitoring for these students every week;
- to support them in various aspects of their school life;
- to work in collaboration with other teachers and other professionals involved, according to the student's needs.

The École secondaire Samuel-De Champlain of the Commission scolaire des Premières-Seigneuries has started a project, *À vos marques*, which pairs Secondary Cycle One students with an academic delay with a "life mentor" (a teacher, a professional or a member of the support staff) who will help them become involved in activities and encourage them to surpass themselves.



9

INCREASE EXTRACURRICULAR SPORTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Participation in extracurricular activities enables young people to develop a feeling of belonging and can give them the desire to become involved with the school and stay until they receive their diploma. These activities are a source of motivation and pride for students.

more ExtraCurricular activities

In order to reinforce the sense of belonging to the school, the number of extracurricular activities offered to students, especially to boys and students at risk of dropping out, will be increased in secondary schools.

Whether it be a visit to a museum, seeing a play or the organization of a soccer or football league, various activities can make the school an attractive living environment for young people. Such activities may include physical activities (soccer, badminton, fitness training, etc.), community activities (community service groups, solidarity clubs, youth-seniors committees, etc.) or cultural activities (drama, choir or dance, etc.).

A number of special educational projects, particularly in sports and in the arts, will be made accessible to more students, including those with academic difficulties. The organization of these activities should have a connection with the school's success plan.

At École Jean XXIII of the Commission scolaire de la Rivière, students with an aptitude for music are encouraged to develop their talent by becoming involved in the Harmonie la Rivière. Their participation fosters a strong feeling of belonging to the school, which in turn has a positive influence on their behaviour and learning.

10

SET UP COMMUNITY PROJECTS TARGETING AT-RISK SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE MOST DISADVANTAGED AREAS OF MONTRÉAL

Community efforts and convergent actions on the part of several socioeconomic players will provide for better support for students at school and limit the number of dropouts.

Support for the Réseau réussite Montréal (Montréal Success Network)

The Réseau réussite Montréal,¹ which includes the principal partners of the school boards, will support the joint action of all those involved on the local level.

With the help of such support, all the school boards of the Island of Montréal will implement an action plan in close association with the community and all the schools' partners. To this end, MELS will join with the school boards in developing and signing a specific agreement outlining the contributions of the partners.

The targeted schools will work with parents and partners in the health and social services system, the municipality, community organizations and the employment and business sectors in order to:

- ensure that students at risk of dropping out stay in school
- encourage young people who have dropped out to return to secondary school

Within the framework of the Supporting Montréal Schools program, numerous schools are working with community partners such as artists, scientists and directors of cultural sites, so that in 2008-2009, there were 47 innovative models developed—reaching more than 36 000 students—to improve the success rates of these young people. One collaborative project saw 12 schools and eight libraries contribute to the social inclusion of young people by developing their reading skills and making it easier for them to access their local library.

¹ The Commission scolaire de Montréal has targeted the Centre-Sud area; the Lester-B.-Pearson and Marguerite Bourgeoys school boards have targeted the Ville LaSalle area; the Commission scolaire de la Pointe de l'Île and the English-Montréal School Board have targeted the Montréal-Nord area.

PROVIDE BETTER SUPPORT FOR SECONDARY IV AND V STUDENTS IN ORDER TO HELP THEM REACH GRADUATION

More than a quarter of students who drop out of school in a given year have reached Secondary V. Students who reach Secondary IV or V sometimes only need a helping hand to obtain a Secondary School Diploma or Diploma of Vocational Studies. In these cases, dropping out of school is most often related to a lack of commitment and the absence of concrete educational plans.

A helping hand to enable them to graduate

In all Québec schools, every Secondary IV or V student who fails in a subject required to obtain a Secondary School Diploma will be supported in order to help him or her succeed in the course or courses concerned. A resource teacher or a school professional will meet with the student and determine the type of support measures to be implemented.

A systematic identification will be made of students who, though not yet having failed, show signs of disengagement, especially in the form of absenteeism, a decline in academic performance or social withdrawal. The school administrators will see that these students meet with a resource teacher or a school professional to determine the measures to be implemented.

IDEO 16-17

School boards must develop partnerships with the Carrefours jeunesse emploi du Québec, with the collaboration of local educational organizations, the health sector and community organizations, in order to implement the IDEO 16-17 support program. This program is aimed at offering a range of services to enable young people in difficulty to persevere in school and develop social, occupational and personal autonomy.

The graduation rate has increased at Quebec High School ever since the implementation of Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in 2006. The graduation rate was 73.8 per cent in 2006, 81.8 per cent in 2007 and 90.0 per cent in 2008.

This success was made possible by a professional development project in which math teachers received additional support from consultants to help improve their teaching skills. History teachers were also entitled to assistance.

To ensure that students who are tempted to drop out of school during the summer continue their studies, the Commission scolaire de la Région-de-Sherbrooke has put in place several targeted initiatives, such as sending parents postcards to make them aware of the phenomenon of "summer dropouts" and to inform them of the existence of a summertime telephone hot line. Reminders are also sent to students in Secondary IV and V in August, as well as to students who do not attend open house.

Few students in general education—about one in five young people under the age of 20—take the educational path of vocational training. Parents and guidance counsellors play an important role in providing academic and vocational counselling. MELS will implement measures to provide better access to vocational training.

MELS and the schools are aware that vocational training is one of the major factors that will enable Québec to help more students stay in school and succeed, and enable us to meet our economic challenges, and they will continue and intensify their respective actions.

Promotion of skilled occupations and trades

MELS will continue to promote vocational training among young people, parents and players in the school system in order to combat the myths and prejudices that surround this training.

MELS will continue its actions to facilitate and accelerate the transition from general education to vocational training for young people under 20. Examples of this are the elective programs *Exploration of Vocational Training and Personal Orientation Project* in the second cycle of secondary school, and the support for activities developed by the school boards to enable students in general education and adult education to explore vocational training programs.

Furthermore, MELS and the school boards will help young people to gain access to the applied general education path at the secondary level.

School boards will act jointly to maximize a student's chances of being admitted to the program of his or her choice in vocational training.

Schools will be asked to make a special effort to provide academic and vocational counselling for students.

These measures will be included in a joint action plan developed by MELS and the school boards to increase access to vocational training for students under 20. This plan will be implemented in the 2010-2011 school year.

Training in a trade or occupation and continuing in general education

Financial support will be offered to assist students and teachers in educational paths that include both vocational training and general education. General education enables students to acquire the prerequisites needed for the selected vocational training program.

In school boards, the paths combining vocational training and general education will be more broadly implemented so that more students under 20 years of age can have access to them and obtain their diplomas.

Bridges between training programs

The recent adoption of temporary bridges enables a student enrolled in a training program leading to a semiskilled trade (for example, butcher's assistant) to gain access to certain vocational training programs leading to a skilled trade (for example, butcher).

Close links will be established among all the education sectors within the same school board (general education in the youth sector, vocational training and adult general education) so that young people can more easily transfer from one sector to another.

more services to support success

MELS and the school boards will work to better identify the complementary educational services required for students under 20 years of age in vocational training and will adopt measures aimed at increasing access to these services.

NEW approaches With the Workplace

Emploi-Québec and the business community will develop new approaches to training in response to labour shortages. These could involve short-term training, training focusing on work-studies balance or online training.

Within the framework of the *Pacte pour l'emploi*, young people under 20 who are unemployed and able to work can receive assistance to acquire qualifications or a training supplement to enter the job market.

School boards have met the challenge of offering vocational training programs to students while they are still completing their secondary education. Students spend some days in a high school or adult education centre pursuing their general education, and others in one of the vocational training centres, according to their chosen occupation.



13

ENCOURAGE THE LARGEST POSSIBLE NUMBER OF DROPOUTS TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL

In spite of all the support offered, some students will leave school before receiving a diploma or qualifications. Every effort will be made to encourage these students to return to school and complete their studies.

The joint action of several ministries and organizations is essential, in particular the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux.

A systematic return-to-school program

Adult education centres and their partners will intensify their efforts to reach all young dropouts and encourage them to return to school.

The SARCA services (Services d'accueil, de référence et d'accompagnement) of the adult education centres, with the help of community organizations and the Carrefours jeunesse-emploi (especially within the framework of IDEO 16-17), will offer services for young dropouts to help them envision returning to school and establishing a learning plan. These services will include:

- counselling and information services on programs of study and the job market
- counselling and support services provided by the school boards

Increased support for staying in school and student success

School boards will ensure the continuity of the educational and complementary services students need when they change educational sectors.

MELS will continue its implementation of complementary services in the adult education sector.

It will draw up an inventory of best practices concerning young people 16 to 24 years of age who return to school, and will publicize these practices.

Balance between work and studies

In collaboration with employers, school boards will undertake initiatives to facilitate work-studies balance for students in vocational training or adult education.

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