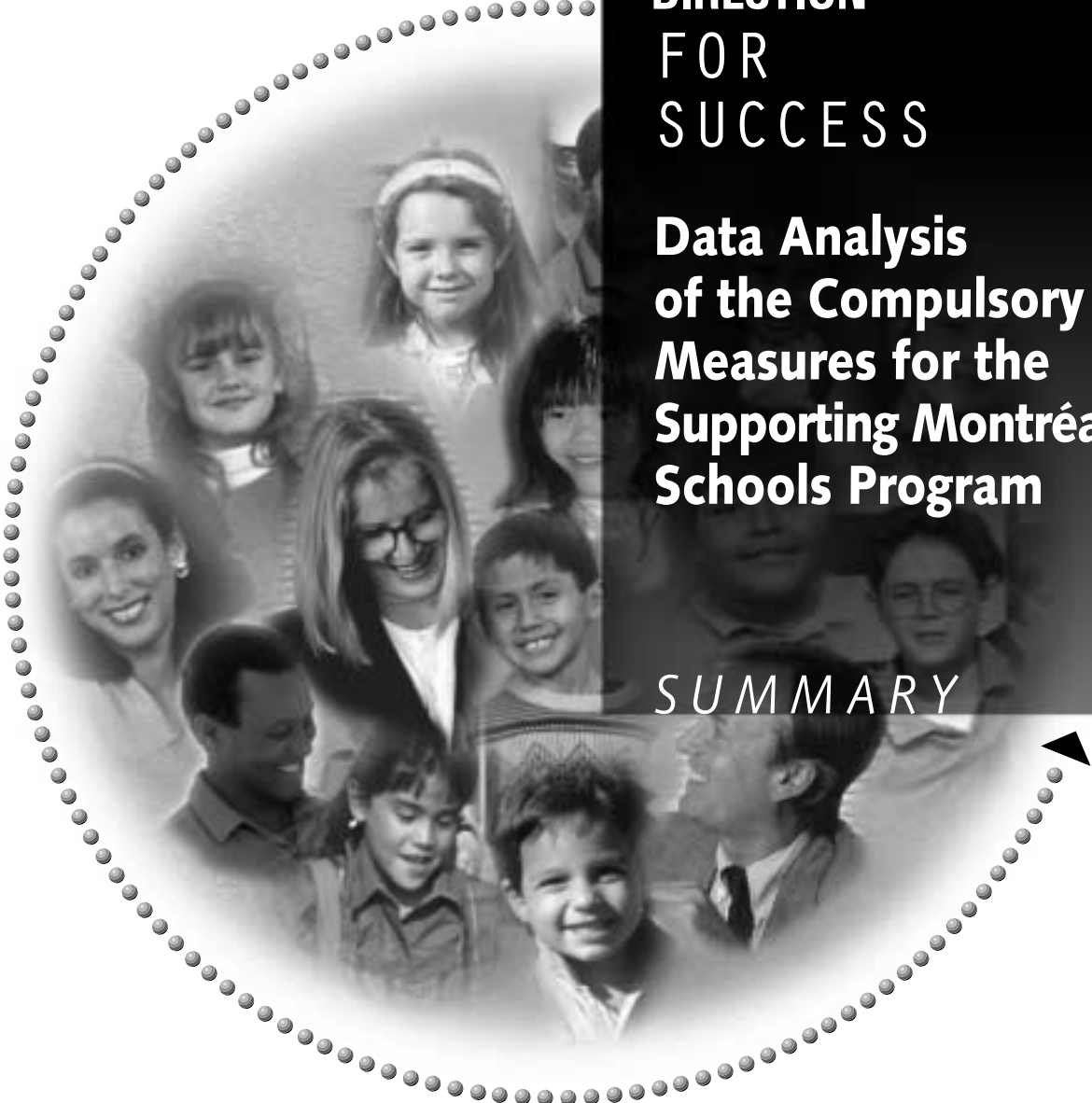




A NEW DIRECTION FOR SUCCESS

Data Analysis of the Compulsory Measures for the Supporting Montréal Schools Program

SUMMARY

1999-2000



Programme de soutien à l'école montréalaise

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SUMMARY

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Coordination of project evaluation	GILBERT MOISAN Direction de la recherche
Research, analysis and writing	SOGEMAP inc.
English translation	Direction de la production en langue anglaise Services à la communauté anglophone

We would like to thank the team of professionals involved in the Supporting Montréal Schools program for their contribution to this analysis.

The full text of this research report is available in French upon request.

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This summary describes the methodology used to gather and analyze data contained in the funding proposals submitted by schools participating in the Supporting Montréal Schools program, and provides an overview of the main results of the analysis. SOGEMAP inc. was commissioned by the Ministère de l'Éducation to collect and analyze the data.

MANDATE

The primary goal of this research initiative was to present a profile of the projects submitted by Montréal schools within the framework of the compulsory measures of the Supporting Montréal Schools program (1998-1999 school year). The compulsory measures involve pedagogical practices, cooperation between schools, families and communities, access to cultural resources and professional development for school administrators and school teams. SOGEMAP's data collecting mandate consisted in:

- . **analyzing all of the projects presented by schools for the 1998-1999 school year;**
- . **identifying important information and developing an effective data model;**
- . **validating the data model through consultation with program coordinators;**
- . **collecting, encoding and compiling pertinent data;**
- . **analyzing all data collected;**
- . **writing an analysis.**

The analysis is presented in five sections. The first section describes the methodology used to collect information related to the projects. The second section summarizes the main orientations of the Supporting Montréal Schools program. The third section presents the characteristics of the target schools according to various indicators. The fourth section provides information obtained through data collection. The fifth section presents the report's findings.

This mandate is the first step toward developing results indicators for the Supporting Montréal Schools program. Data contained in the report and the ensuing analysis will be used to develop a computerized chart that maps the initiatives undertaken by each of the schools within the framework of the project.

METHODOLOGY

To analyze the projects submitted by schools involved in the Supporting Montréal Schools program, SOGEMAP employed a three-step approach: data collection; validation of data by the coordinators of each of the program measures; and data processing and analysis.

Data collection

To assist SOGEMAP in analyzing and collecting administrative and descriptive data, the Ministère de l'Éducation provided the firm with the files for all of the schools that submitted projects under the Supporting Montréal Schools program for the 1998-1999 school year. In all, the Ministère provided the firm with 117 files, each containing a funding request application and, in some cases, supplementary documents describing the project implemented by the school. A data collection grid was then developed in order to encode the information contained in the files. The grid was submitted to the Ministère for approval. Each file was then analyzed and relevant information was encoded.

Data validation

Once the data was collected, the coordinators for each of the program measures validated the data. This provided them with an overview of the scope of the projects implemented, and enabled them to verify the accuracy of the information gathered and to consider whether or not they wanted to add information for the purpose of the analysis. Based on suggestions made by the coordinators for each of the measures, some data was in fact added. A second validation of the information collected was then carried out.

Data processing and analysis

After entering the information into a database, SOGEMAP conducted a statistical analysis in order to present the data in table form. The data for all of the schools is presented using ratios and comparisons between elementary schools and secondary schools on the one hand, and between English schools and French schools on the other. The data, analyzed using SPSS statistics software, will be reproduced in the form of a computerized chart using File Maker Pro.

RESULTS

The following is a description of the main data related to the compulsory measures or compulsory sub-measures of a particular measure for all of the schools (1998-1999 school year). Comparative data between elementary schools and secondary schools as well as between English and French schools is presented in the final report.

Measure 1: Pedagogical practices

Projects presented within the framework of Measure 1 must enable the school to provide support adapted to the students, with a direct impact on learning and motivation. In addition, pedagogical practices must promote the student's academic success. This measure targets the organization of teaching and student services as well as prevention, support and follow-up of students at risk. Data collected from the files for all of the sub-measures under Measure 1 focussed primarily on areas of intervention, teaching approaches, external resources and forms of support and organization offered to students at risk.

Area of intervention

The main areas of intervention cited in the files can be grouped into two categories: academic subjects and student attitudes and skills. The main academic subjects mentioned included: reading (74.3% of files), writing (54.0% of files), spoken language (49.6% of files) and math (37.2% of files). As for student attitudes and skills, the areas of intervention indicated in the files included: academic motivation (43.4%), social skills or behaviour (36.3%), information technologies (35.4%), student work methods (28.3%) and new teaching approaches (11.5%).

Teaching approaches

An analysis of the files revealed that project-based pedagogy is the favoured teaching approach (41.0%), followed, in order of importance, by the cooperative approach (29.0%), the workshop format (27.0%), collaborative work with partners (26.0%), assisted studies (25.0%), team teaching (16.0%), diagnostic and formative evaluation (12.0%) and the multidisciplinary approach (11.0%).

Resource persons

Special education teachers were by far the external resource persons most frequently mentioned in the context of the program. In fact, 61.8% of schools planned to enlist the services of special education teachers. Other resource persons whom schools planned to call on include resource teachers (32.7%), speech therapists (31.8%), psychoeducators (26.4%), education consultants (19.1%) and specialized education technicians (16.4%). Other resources, such as university students or student teachers, tutors, teaching assistants and guidance counsellors, represented less than 10.0%.

Forms of support and organization for students at risk

Two forms of support were mentioned in over 45% of the files examined: intervention by an external resource person in the classroom (50.0%), and intervention by an external resource outside the classroom (45.4%). Other forms of support and organization for students at risk included, in order of importance, planning intervention between teachers and external resources (33.3%), diagnosis of students at risk (30.6%), smaller classes (28.7%), remedial work (20.4%), support adapted by the teacher outside the classroom (13.9%) as well as support for parents (13.9%).

Measure 4: Cooperation between schools, families and communities

Measure 4 is designed to increase parent involvement in their children's educational path and to ensure greater community involvement as a whole. In order to implement its intervention, the school may, within the framework of this measure, make certain resources available to staff that promote parent involvement. The school may also work

with local partners on certain joint projects or on pilot projects that focus on student support, increased parent involvement or improved family living conditions.

Partnership ties

Based on the information collected from the files, 98 of the 117 schools (83.8%) would like to build partnership ties within the framework of Measure 4. More than 65% of schools placed community organizations at the top of the list as potential partners. Other partners mentioned, in order of importance, included public and parapublic organizations, such as government departments and police forces, (26.5% of schools), community centres (26.5% of schools), CLSCs (23.5% of schools), interpretation services (16.3% of schools), private enterprise (15.3% of schools) and sports or recreational centres (13.3% of schools). In addition, universities, parent volunteers, other schools, and educational and pedagogical resource centres are among the list of potential partners mentioned in at least 10% of cases.

Support for students

In all, 98 of the 117 schools (83.8%) mentioned certain forms of student support in their funding requests. The three main forms of support mentioned by schools were homework assistance, extra-curricular cultural activities and psychosocial support.¹ These forms of support were mentioned, respectively, by 37.3%, 30.1% and 28.9% of the schools that proposed support initiatives under Measure 4. The other activities proposed by schools were, in order of importance, extra-curricular sports (27.7%), motivation (22.9%), services related to specific problems² (22.9%), building self-confidence (21.7%), support for students who drop out (13.3%) and services to students in the integration process (12.0%).

Support for parents

In all, 83 of the 117 schools (71.0%) plan to organize activities for parents. The activity most often mentioned targeted support for parents' involvement in school life. This form of support for parents was mentioned in more than 80% of files, followed by information on how parents can become involved in the school, the school committee and the governing board (44.6%), information about Québec's school system (32.5%), workshops on parent-child communication (28.9%), workshops on values at school and at home (19.3%), services for immigrant families (18.1%) as well as translation and interpretation services (14.5%).

¹ For psychosocial support, an external resource, such as a social worker is often called on. This type of support is generally aimed at improving self-esteem, sense of self-worth, parent-child communication, etc.

² Specific problems include drug abuse, violence, dropping out of school and suicide.

Support for school staff

According to the data collected, 48 out of the 117 schools (41.0%) planned to organize activities for school staff. Calling on resource persons to attend school-family meetings was cited most often. In fact, over 84.0% of schools mentioned this form of support for school staff. These resource persons are generally experts, consultants or psychologists who provide school staff with the information they need. Three other activities mentioned by more than 10% of schools were interpretation services (25.0%), awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity (20.8%) and crisis management support (10.5%).

Measure 5: Access to cultural resources – *Jeune public* sub-measure

Given its general character and the funds allocated for visits to cultural venues, the *Jeune public* sub-measure does not present any particularities with regard to the nature of the projects. The only data available on this subject involves the number of student visits scheduled for March 1999. Compilations carried out by the coordinator for this measure indicated that as of March 26, 1999, a total of 95 670 student visits should have been conducted. In addition, all schools, both elementary and secondary, planned to participate in several cultural activities during the 1998-1999 school year. In 40 of the 117 cases examined, information on the nature of the projects was provided. Access to external cultural and scientific resources were mentioned in 97.5% of cases and long-term projects related to writing, arts, science, etc. were indicated in 22.5% of cases.

Measure 6: Professional development for school administrators and school teams

Measure 6 of the program is aimed at promoting autonomy and responsibility on the part of the school. Schools must therefore envisage sustainable changes that promote student success. The proposed initiatives require the pedagogical expertise of both the teaching staff and the school team. The compulsory sub-measure of this measure involves professional external support.

Areas of intervention aimed at school administrators in the area of external professional support

In all, 57 of the 117 schools planned interventions with school administrators, representing 48.0% of schools. More than half of the schools (54.4%) mentioned the development of an educational project as the main focus of the professional support envisaged. The other areas of intervention mentioned by the schools include pedagogical upgrading (26.3%), student supervision (17.5%), organization of services (14.0%) and communication with parents (10.5%).

Areas of intervention aimed at teachers and school staff

Support for teachers and school staff was mentioned in 100 proposals, representing 85.0% of schools. The main area of intervention mentioned by 38% of schools targeted information technologies and communication, followed, in order of importance, by

planning pedagogical activities (33.0%), improvement of class management (19.0%), the cooperative approach (16.0%) and strategic teaching (10.0%).

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the information contained in the funding requests provided a better understanding of the activities proposed within the framework of the Supporting Montréal Schools program. The flexibility of the program enabled schools to adapt their projects to the needs of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, who often experience learning problems related to their origin, their social context or difficulties in their family setting. The schools showed initiative by enlisting the external expertise needed to carry out projects or by building partnership ties that promote the students' educational growth.

Projects developed under Measure 1 (Pedagogical practices) made it possible to coordinate interventions aimed at students to help them overcome obstacles. The main areas of intervention with students involve academic subjects, as well as attitudes and skills such as motivation, social behaviour, work methods, school attendance, etc. In addition, most of the schools focussed on enlisting the expertise of external resource persons in order to promote academic success.

Under Measure 4 (Cooperation between schools, families and communities), schools were able to organize various activities designed to support students, as well as to help parents play a more active role in monitoring their children's progress at school. The schools also built partnership ties with various resource persons from the community.

Measure 5 (Access to cultural resources) contributed to enriching learning through the arts. Furthermore, the variety and diversity of venues listed for cultural and scientific visits encourage an openness to the world of the arts.

Lastly, under Measure 6 (Professional development for school administrators and school teams), initiatives were proposed to foster a greater sharing among schools of the pedagogical expertise of school administrators, teachers and school teams. Joint school-university projects were also set up in order to ensure the students' academic success.

