FORGING AHEAD
IN THE MOVEMENT FOR STUDENT RETENTION AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN QUÉBEC[1]

An updated vision of the priority orientations

2013-10-29

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INTRODUCTION

The first Interregional Conference on Student Retention and Academic Success was held in Mont-Sainte-Anne in October 2008 at the initiative of regional consulting tables on school retention (*insistances régionales de concertation – IRCs)*. In addition, instructed report of the *Groupe d'action sur la persévérance et la réussite scolaire au Quebec* was published in 2009.[2] Both the conference and the report paved the way for a mobilization movement that brought together many spheres of society, at every level, to meet the challenge of increasing the graduation rate (obtaining a first high school diploma) before the age of 20 to more than 80 per cent by the Year 2020. In 2006-2007, the graduation rate was 68.6 per cent.[3]

The interregional conferences held in 2008[4] and 2011, as well as the Task Force's report, have insisted on the fact that dropping out of high school leads to serious consequences for both individuals and society at large. Since many factors surround this problem, a variety of initiatives will be needed to meet the challenge at hand. Student retention and academic success must be everybody's concern.[5]

Since that first summit, concrete and concerted measures have been carried out in all of Québec's region. They have been based on initiatives already undertaken and by learning from the best practices stemming from research and experiments conducted in Québec and elsewhere. The progress has been very encouraging. We have gone from a high school graduation and qualification rate before the age of 20[6] of 68.6 per cent in 2006-2007 to a rate of 74.8 per cent in 2010-2011[7], and from an annual drop-out rate[8] of 20.7 per cent in 2006-2007 to a rate of 16.2 per cent in 2010-2011.[9] However, 25.2 per cent of 20-year-olds still have not graduated or received some accreditation from high school, and the problem is worse among boys, with a non-graduation rate of 30.5 per cent.[10,11] In certain economically disadvantages communities, this rate can surpass 50 per cent.[12]

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[2] Groupe d'action sur la persévérance et la réussite scolaire au Québec (2009). Savoir pour pouvoir : Entreprendre un chantier national pour la persévérance scolaire.

[3] Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport; Special compilation for CartoJeunes; October 2013.

[4] *Actes des premières Journées interrégionales sur la persévérance scolaire et la réussite éducative.* 30 et 31 octobre 2008. http://www.groupeactionperseverance.org/pdf/actes-1res-journees.pdf.

[5] Verville, M.-H. (2013). La communauté au service de la réussite éducative. *Kaléidoscope.* 1(1). 22-224.

[6] The graduation rate corresponds to the rate of students under 20 obtaining a first high school diploma or a first qualification. The rate of high school completion is calculated by dividing the number of first diplomas for each age group by the total student population. By adding the rate of each age group, we obtain the proportion (%) of a generation that obtained a high school diploma, both adults and non-adults.

[7] Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport; Special compilation for CartoJeunes; October 2013.

[8] The annual drop-out rate represents the proportion of high school students leaving general education in the youth sector who have not obtained a diploma or qualification in the year considered. A dropout is a student enrolled in a given academic year who corresponds to the following two criteria: a) has not obtained a diploma (DES, DEP, ASP) or qualification (CFER, ISPJ, AFP, CFMS, CFPT) in the year considered; b) in the following academic year, is not enrolled in general education (youth or adults), vocational training, college, or any Québec educational institution. (Source : Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, système Charlemagne, novembre 2012).

[9] Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport; Special compilation for CartoJeunes; June 2013.

[10] Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport; Special compilation for CartoJeunes; October 2013.

[11] Janosz, M., Pascal, S., Belleau, L., Archambault, I., Parent, S. et Pagani, L. (2013). *Les élèves du primaire à risque de décrocher au secondaire : caractéristiques à 12 ans et prédicteurs à 7 ans. Étude longitudinale du développement des enfants du Québec (ÉLDEQ 1998-2010) – De la naissance à 12 ans.* Institut de la statistique du Québec, vol. 7, fascicule 2.

[12] Réseau réussite Montréal (2012). *Rapport annuel 2011-2012.* http://www.reseaureussitemontreal.ca/IMG/pdf/RRM_Rapport_annuel_2011-2012_Fr.pdf.

Moreover, we believe that the gains realized over these past few years were made mostly among those students less at risk, and that the gains to come will require more efforts and the implementation of new types of interventions. Consequently, our collective determination will be required to build upon our achievements, address gaps, draw on the best practices and policies adopted here and elsewhere around the world, and continue to plan, implement, and evaluate our respective and collective efforts.

The *Grandes rencontres sur la persévérance scolaire* (*GRPS*) that will be held November 4-6, 2013, almost at the mid-point toward the target set for 2020, represent an ideal opportunity to take stock of the realizations and progress made thus far, as well as to update and share the vision of the policy priorities for the coming years. The 2013 GRPS' theme, "*Agir tôt, voir grand*!" (Act Early, Think Big!), attests to the importance of integrating early childhood to these orientations.

This document presents the priority orientations first formulated by a group of 19 experts and experienced stakeholders (see list in annex A), then evaluated and commented upon by more than 375 responders as part of an online consultation that took place between September 10 and October 17, 2013. This document deals primarily with:

    A.   The main factors behind student retention and academic success
    B.   The main achievements since 2008
    C.   The gaps to be addressed
    D.   The topics for debate
    E.   The priority orientations

This updated vision emanating from the GRPS will serve as a mobilization point of reference for the continuing collective effort towards school retention.

A. MAIN FACTORS BEHIND STUDENT RETENTION AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Many factors—personal, social, family-related, school-related, and community-related—affect school perseverance or the drop-out rate. Those elements occur as soon as early childhood, before starting school, as well as throughout the child's education, from elementary school to obtaining a first diploma or qualification.

- Social inequalities and inequalities in education

Children's well-being, their likelihood of staying in school and achieving academic success are linked to their place of residence,[13] as well as their living conditions. As evidence, according to the 2007 *Rapport sur l'état de santé de la population du Québec* (Report on the Health Status of the Population of Quebec), children of economically disadvantaged families or underprivileged communities are three to four times more at risk to experience academic delays in elementary and high school, two times more at risk to have learning disabilities, and three times more at risk to exhibit serious behaviour problems in high school. They are also less likely to obtain their high school diploma.[14,15]

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[13] Perron, M. et Veillette, S. (2011). Éducation, mobilisation des acteurs et persévérance scolaire : une affaire de société. *Le point en administration de l'éducation, 14*(1), 6-10.

[14] Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec (2007). *Riches de tous nos enfants : la pauvreté et ses répercussions sur la santé des jeunes de moins de 18 ans.* Troisième rapport sur l'état de santé de la population du Québec, 162 pages.

[15] See also Japel, C. (2008). Risques, vulnérabilité et adaptation – Les enfants à risque au Québec. Montréal : Institut de recherche en politiques publiques. *Choix, 14*(8).

Certain demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic characteristics (e.g., a mother without a high school diploma, low household income), as well as inadequate levels of security and cohesion in the neighbourhood, are among the risks facing such children in at least one sphere of their development at the Kindergarten level.[16]

In short, if academic success is a determining factor in combating poverty, social and territorial inequalities are, on the other hand, determining factors in creating inequalities in education. In accordance with principles of equity, democratization, accessibility to services, as well as equal opportunities,[17] aiming to foster the development and academic success of *all* Québec children is crucial.[18]

- Early childhood and school readiness

From early childhood on, many factors predispose children for successfully entering the school system. Those factors can be grouped around children, family, and community:[19]
- Children: oral and written communication skills, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills and healthy lifestyle.
- Family: socioeconomic level, parenting skills
- Community: neighbourhood's physical and social make-up, service accessibility and quality, mobilization towards early childhood.

Many factors influence the risk facing children in at least one sphere of their development at the Kindergarten level,[20] in addition to those mentioned in the social and schooling inequalities section:[21]
- unemployed parents
- low perception of the mother's impact
- lack of daily reading to the child
- little support from family and relatives
- recent separation of parents
- low birth weight
- more acute symptoms of hyperactivity or attention deficit

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[16] Desrosiers, H. (2013). Conditions de la petite enfance et préparation pour l'école : l'importance du soutien social aux familles. Institut de la statistique du Québec, Collection *Portraits et trajectoires*, n° 18 ; and Desrosiers, H, Tétreault, K et M. Boivin (2012). Caractéristiques démographiques, socioéconomiques et résidentielles des enfants vulnérables à l'entrée à l'école. Institut de la statistique du Québec, Collection *Portraits et trajectoires*, n° 14.

[17] Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (2010). *Conjuguer équité et performance en éducation, un défi de société,* Rapport sur l'état et les besoins de l'éducation 2008-2010, Québec, Le Conseil, 164 p.

[18] The Parent Report (1966) insisted on the necessity for a full recognition of not only everyone's right to receive the best education possible, but also a general acknowledgment of the validity of this right on the part of teachers, educators, and the population of Québec at large.
 (Source : Rapport de la Commission royale d'enquête sur l'enseignement dans la province de Québec (1966). *Tome III* (4)).

[19] Avenir d'enfants (2011). *Des facteurs de protection pour soutenir le développement optimal des enfants en vue d'une entrée scolaire réussie.* Outil de la démarche partenariale écosystémique. www.avenirdenfants.org/media/98502/Facteurs-de-protection-AE.pdf.

[20] The EDI (Early Development Instrument) measures 5 areas in children's development at Kindergarten:
- physical health and well-being (e.g., general physical development, motricity, eating habits, cleanliness) ;
- social competence (e.g., capacity to interact harmoniously with others, self-confidence, self-control) ;
- emotional maturity (e.g., social skills, helping others, expression of emotions) ;
- language and thinking skills (e.g., reading, writing, and math skills) ;
- communication skills and general knowledge (e.g., capacity to speak, understand, communicate).

[21] Perron, B. (2013). *Production de connaissances sur la préparation à l'école et la réussite scolaire : l'apport des enquêtes de l'Institut de la statistique du Québec.* 3e rencontre scientifique de VISAJ, 12 avril 2013.

- School years

There are many determining factors in the course of a child's education, as early as the first years of elementary school:

- Personal factors:
    - motivation and school engagement
    - sense of personal efficacy
    - discipline and class participation
    - academic performance (reading, writing, language skills, and mathematics skills)
    - self-esteem
    - social behaviour and interpersonal relationships
    - attention deficit and hyperactivity
    - educational and professional aspirations
    - work/life balance
    - healthy lifestyle habits

- Family factors:
    - importance given to education
    - parental support and guidance
    - absence of domestic violence
    - relationship between parents and various stakeholders, services, and organizations geared toward children
    - autonomy and economic well-being (housing, employment, transportation, purchasing power to buy essential goods and services)

- School-related factors:
    - support for struggling students
    - teacher-student relationship
    - teacher motivation and professional self-worth
    - initial and on-going training of teachers
    - pedagogical and educational practices
    - teamwork
    - educational context, as well as quality of school experience and climate
    - complementary services offered
    - successful transition between one academic level to the other, from one school to another

- Community and societal factors:
    - importance given to school by children, parents, and society at large
    - protection against various threats (criminality, accidents, discrimination, (cyber-intimidation)
    - help for parents and peer support
    - neighbourhood's resources, as well as its community, sociocultural, and socioeconomic contexts

This list of desired gains and factors lead us to conclude that a successful integration into school life, as well as eventual student retention and academic success, are contingent upon stakeholders working at every level and in every milieu. Such a mobilisation will produce numerous human, social and economical advantages. It is therefore imperative to foster a close collaboration between parents, child-

care services, schools, the community, municipal, governmental, union, economic, and philanthropic sectors, as well as health and social services, paying particular attention to the economically disadvantaged communities. It will be important to also make available the professional and financial resources needed to reach those objectives.

B. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2008

The drop-out rate has decreased by about one per cent annually over the course of the past five years. Though there are no studies that identify the causes of those gains and that they can be attributed, in part, to the application of modifications put in place to measure school retention, it seems most legitimate to attribute a significant part of this improvement to the combined efforts of many our of society's stakeholders. Without any claim to be exhaustive, here are some hypotheses often evoked to explain this progress, while recognizing that many of them should be evaluated. They are presented in no order of priority:

1. Greater emphasis on education and student retention
    1.1   The priority given to school retention by the population and the decision-makers, as evidenced by media coverage and the discourse of public agencies and civil society alike.
    1.2   Activities to emphasize the importance of academic success, such as the *Journées de la persévérance scolaire* (Student Retention Days), which mobilize an increasing number of people and stakeholders in all regions of Québec.

2. Measures taken as soon as early childhood and throughout the child's academic career
    2.1   Since 2009, 2,000 local partner agencies (municipalities, child-care services, health-care facilities, social services, schools, and community organizations), united in more than 126 local coalitions, have launched projects aimed at the global development of 0-5 year-olds, so that every child starts school with the tools which will enable him to complete his schooling successfully. Supported by "*Avenir d'enfants*," those groups reach more than 286,000 children.[22]
    2.2   A recognition and integration of protective factors as key elements of school perseverance in a "0-20 years" continuum perspective: concretely, 32 per cent of the regional consulting tables' budgets are spent on measures targeting children aged 0-12, as part of the actions co-financed by *Réunir Réussir*.
    2.3   Progress has been observed in day-care, educational services offered to young children, and family-friendly measures (note that their effects on the high school graduation rate will only be measurable in a few years).
    2.4   A recognition of the contribution and unique approaches of community groups in supporting parents in the development of pre-school children.[23]

3. Measures in the school environment, especially in economically disadvantaged areas
    3.1   The adoption by the *ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport*, from a perspective of partnership between the education community and society at large, of more systematic plans and programs.
    3.2   The on-going contribution of school boards, notably, of holding regional meetings on student retention across Québec.[24]

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[22] http://www.avenirdenfants.org/a-propos/a-propos-de-nous.aspx
[23] See : Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (2012). *Mieux accueillir et éduquer les enfants d'âge préscolaire, une triple question d'accès, de qualité et de continuité des services,* Québec, Le Conseil, p. 80.
[24] Notably by taking advantage of the unique characteristics of the two different linguistic public systems.

3.3 The daily commitment by teachers and school board employees to their students' academic success.

3.4 Partnership agreements between the *ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport* and the school boards, as well as management and educational success agreements between the school boards and each of their schools.

3.5 The implementation in certain schools and school boards, or in certain sectors, of prevention programs against learning difficulties in reading and behavioural problems, as early as Kindergarten. This implies a common objective of prevention, training and support for teachers, resource teachers and other stakeholders, including school principals.

3.6 Measures geared toward children who experience learning difficulties or live in economically disadvantaged communities. For example, 75 per cent of the measures of the regional consulting tables' first action plans target children from economically disadvantaged areas and young people with learning and/or behavioural difficulties, or who are recent immigrants.

4. Community projects and partnerships
   4.1 A greater recognition of the role of community organizations involved against in school retention and academic success.
   4.2 The implementation and evaluation of further community initiatives.
   4.3 Some 20 work/life balance initiatives overseen by the regional consulting tables, in partnership with employers and business people.[25]

5. Regional and local mobilization
   5.1 There are currently 20 regional consulting tables on student retention, covering the entire territory of the 20 regional *conferences régionales des élus* across the province. These bodies increasingly solicit representatives of all sectors with an interest in student retention. Moreover, there are at least 96 other local partnerships active in student retention and success.
   5.2 Between September 2010 and October 2013, the regions and *Réunir Réussir*[26] have invested $74.3 million on student retention ($42.2 million by the regions[27] and $32.1 by *Réunir Réussir*, which provides, apart from regional co-financing, support and tools to regional initiatives and their local partners). 73 per cent of those funds have been dedicated to the co-financing of local measures. 71 per cent of the measures directly targeted students, while in 29 percent aimed at guiding families and community leaders in engaging their efforts towards student retention and success.
   5.3 In the same spirit of mobilization, 10 regional early childhood councils and 126 local partner groups are active in the development of young children in preparation for school.[28]
   5.4 New players are mobilizing around school retention and success (e.g., a growing number of regional meetings of elected officials have been held over recent years).

6. Proven practices and more rigorous evaluating
   6.1 The increase in interest and the predisposition of all stakeholders in student retention and success to adopt proven successful practices and evaluation techniques in order to achieve continuous improvement is ongoing. For example, we are witnessing a growing

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[25] See www.perseverancescolaire.com/travail-etude/.

[26] *Réunir Réussir* is a non profit organization founded in December 2009, following a partnership agreement between the Quebec government and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation.

[27] Including the regional consulting tables and the local partners.

[28] Those regional consulting tables and local groups are supported by *Avenir d'enfants*, an organization born from a partnership between the Québec government and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation.

commitment from universities and CEGEPs to development, research, transfer of knowledge, innovation, and support.

C. GAPS TO BE ADDRESSED

Though progress has undeniably been made, there remain important gaps preventing what is still an unacceptably large contingent of students from getting a first qualifying diploma. These gaps can be observed (again, in no particular order):

1. In the graduation rate:
    1.1 Progress observed in boys remains well short of that of girls; the non-graduation rate reaching 30.5 per cent in the case of boys, as opposed to 19.7 per cent for girls.[29]
    1.2 Few changes are observed in the graduation rate within the prescribed time period, which is to obtain a high school diploma in five years. For example, 61.0 per cent of the students of the 2001 class obtained a diploma after five years in high school, while 61.2 per cent of the students of the 2004 class obtained a diploma five years later.[30]
2. In people's perceptions: many students, families, and school practitioners have a negative perception toward technical and vocational training.

3. In day-care and early child-care services: despite the availability of additional places, difficulties remain in matters of access, quality, and continuity.[31]

4. In the school environment:
    4.1 A frequent lack of effective integration of survey data and of effective dissemination of educational indicators at different levels (macro and micro) in order to foster, for example, more reliable diagnostic information, and the development of more efficient prevention strategies.
    4.2 The slow pace in repeating and multiplying best practices for the prevention of learning difficulties, while rigorous studies have demonstrated the efficacy of such programs.[32]
    4.3 The sector of continuing education is attended by an increasing number of students less than 20 years of age, but it still doesn't have the necessary resources to provide the type of support to help those students to remain in school.
    4.4 The application of the Policy on Students with Special Needs must be continued and improved.[33]
    4.5 The challenge of establishing a respectful and open relationship between parents and teachers, in order to create a climate that will improve the children's educational experience.
    4.6 Within the context of the application of Bill 21,[34] the rules set by the *ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport* noting that no identification or diagnosis of a learning

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[29] Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport; Special compilation for CartoJeunes; October 2013.

[30] Source : Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Direction des statistiques et de l'information décisionnelles, Services d'intégration socioprofessionnelle, compilations spéciales, mai 2013.

[31] Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (2012). *Mieux accueillir et éduquer les enfants d'âge préscolaire, une triple question d'accès, de qualité et de continuité des services,* Québec, Le Conseil, 141 p.

[32] Dion, É., Brodeur, M., Gosselin, C., Campeau, M.È. et Fuchs, D. (2010). Implementing research-based instruction to prevent reading problems among low-income students: Is earlier better? *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 25*(2), 87-96.

[33] Gaudreau, L., Legault, F., Brodeur, M., Hurteau, M., Dunberry, A., Séguin, S. et Legendre, R. (2008*). Rapport d'évaluation de la Politique de l'adaptation scolaire. Rapport déposé au ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) du Québec.* Faculté des Sciences de l'éducation, Université du Québec à Montréal.

disability is required before targeted services are offered to the student must be respected. If need be, it is important to give the child access to technological aids through his Individual Education Plan.

5. Among the targeted groups of students: an increasing number of students with adaptation or learning disabilities has been noted (in Kindergarten for five-year-olds in 2010-2011, 2.9 per cent of the students so identified in 2006-2007, the proportion was 2.0 per cent).[35]

6. In partnerships, continuity, and transitions:
    6.1 Local measures and family-school-community partnerships must be increased and made more fluid.
    6.2 An approach based on the totality of the "0-20 years" continuum still needs to be systematized and formalized, particularly as it pertains to transition issues (school integration, transition from elementary to high school, and transition during high school, e.g. from 3rd to 4th year).

7. In the training and support of instructors, teachers, and administrators:
    7.1 We must increase the level of in-service training of instructors and teachers on student retention and best practices towards improvement.
    7.2 We must optimize transfer of knowledge, particularly in identifying best practices and reducing the duplication of literature reviews and educational tools development.
    7.3 The challenge of updating orientations and programs in light of new studies is ongoing.
    7.4 There is a need to further develop our capacity to evaluate the implementation and the real benefits of new practices.

8. In the adequate, increased, and sustainable financing of community initiatives to meet the needs of the more vulnerable students and families.

9. In the maintenance and support of government orientations, resources from the communities and consultation bodies of various levels dedicated to childhood development and school retention.

D. TOPICS FOR DEBATE

There are other issues that will necessitate on-going dialogue, among them:
- What are the consequences to school retention and student success of the competition between the public and private education sectors, as well as the competition observed between public schools that offer special programs in order to attract certain a clientele, often the most talented?
- What would be the advantages and disadvantages of focusing on graduation in the "prescribed time period" instead of before 20 years old?

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[34] Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2013). *Projet de loi n*[o] *21, information concernant les difficultés d'apprentissage.*
[35] Source : Indicateurs de l'éducation, Éditions 2012 et 2008.

E. PRIORITY ORIENTATIONS

The group (see Annex A) that participated in the creation of this document proposed a list of priority orientations that could be adopted with a view to further mobilizing all stakeholders in the effort to increase the high school graduation rate of young Quebecers these next few years. The original list has been enhanced by the addition of two orientations following the online consultation to which 375 stakeholders participated.

The list below is not an action plan and it is not prescriptive. It is nevertheless formulated in light of the progress made and the gaps that still need to be addressed. Here is a list of potential orientations that you can comment on and prioritize.

1. **Emphasize early childhood development**

    1.1 Support concerted initiatives that contribute to the development of children's affective, social, motor, language, and cognitive skills.
    1.2 Improve access, quality, and continuity of day-care and education services offered to young children, especially in underprivileged communities.[36]
    1.3 Ensure a more successful transition from home to daycare or services offered by community groups or schools.
    1.4 Identify children in difficulty; support those children and their families by offering them activities and services, steering them, if need be, to specialized services within an acceptable timeframe; transmit the pertinent information to the various partners that could be involved.

2. **Encourage and support parents throughout their children's education (0-20 years)**

    2.1 Contribute to a greater recognition of the role of the parents, and the value of parenting.
    2.2 Improve the relationship between parents, teachers, instructors, and the various school and community-based organizations.
    2.3 Develop a strategy aimed at a greater social and financial recognition on the state's part of the unique role played by community groups in support of students, as well as parents in their commitment to their children's schooling.

3. **Promote the adoption of best practices and the implementation of effective measures in the school environment**

    3.1 Implement sustainable and coherent administrative and pedagogical measures throughout the school boards and schools specifically designed to favour student retention and success, such as the training and development of teachers, professionals, child-care and specialized educators, and administrators. Engage in dialogue with union representatives, improve resource teachers' interventions, and facilitate the adoption by all teachers of proven best practices.
    3.2 Ensure a more successful transition from home to daycare and Kindergarten, Kindergarten to first grade, elementary school to high school, as well as during high school, from year to year.
    3.3 Decrease student-teacher ratios.

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[36] Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (2012). *Mieux accueillir et éduquer les enfants d'âge préscolaire, une triple question d'accès, de qualité et de continuité des services,* Québec, Le Conseil, 141 p.

3.4   Through the implementation of efficient pedagogical practices as early as Kindergarten, identify in timely fashion students with adaptation or learning difficulties (especially in reading and mathematics), and provide them with personalized and continued assistance, as well as appropriate professional resources at all school levels (elementary, secondary, continuing education).

3.5   Implement procedures to heighten student education and professional aspirations.

3.6   Enable students to register in career training and general education concurrently with their vocational training, thus putting value on career training, while making higher education accessible.[37]

3.7   Facilitate the return to school of dropouts by targeted and personalized intervention, notably in collaboration with community organizations.

3.8   Provide all stakeholders with firm orientations on the development of adult education through the elaboration of an action plan agreed upon by the network.

3.9   Create conditions to increase teacher retention during the first years of practice, which can also contribute to reduce drop-out rates.

3.10 Integrate the notion of student retention and academic success in initial and ongoing training of teachers, school administrators, and day-care personnel.

3.11 Provide quicker and easier access to proven practices and initiatives; ensure knowledge transfer activities in a more systematic and sustained manner.

3.12 Support the development of local and regional capacities to evaluate the implementation and true impact of measures.

3.13 Encourage the implication of universities and colleges in student retention and success initiatives of various institutions.

4. Create favourable learning conditions

4.1   Place a high value on early childhood, education, literacy and numeracy, educators, teachers, and career training in order to best inspire and motivate students as well as educators and community stakeholders.

4.2   Promote family-school-community collaboration through concrete measures around extracurricular activities (including tutoring and homework assistance), school child-care services, and initiatives in partnership with community organizations, health and social services.

4.3   Adopt measures that promote education/work balance by enhancing employer and business people mobilization.

4.4   Maintain the mobilization and collaboration of partners from all sectors of society, at every level.

4.5   Involve youth in the governance of various organizations.

4.6   Enhance links with stakeholders in social and workforce development.

4.7   Encourage colleges and universities to get involved in student retention. It is in their own interest, as a higher graduation rate surely translates into an increase in access to higher education, particularly students who might have had difficulties during their schooling.

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[37] Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (2012). *Pour une formation qualifiante chez les jeunes de moins de 20 ans, lever les obstacles à la formation professionnelle au secondaire,* Rapport sur l'état et les besoins de l'éducation 2010-2012, Québec, Le Conseil, 108 p.

5. **Increase intervention in economically disadvantaged areas**

    5.1 Take into account the geographic disparities when allocating resources and elaborating measures in order to respond on a priority basis to the needs of students in economically disadvantaged areas (particularly Montreal); take into account the presence of the children of immigrants, and the specific realities of the Aboriginal communities.

    5.2 Ensure that the implementation of full-time Kindergarten for four-year-olds in economically disadvantaged areas takes place in optimum conditions, particularly the planning phase, staff training and support, and evaluation.

    5.3 Maintain the adoption and implementation of measures to fight poverty and social exclusion.

The online consultation participants were asked to evaluate the importance to be given to each priority according to the following scale:
- Not at all important (1)
- A little important (2)
- Quite important (3)
- Very important (4)

The following table summarizes the mean values obtained (on a scale of 4). Please note that this consultation, undertaken for information purposes, is not statistically representative of all stakeholders in Quebec, the participation having been done on a voluntary basis. However, we noted that, on average, the participants thought that all the proposed orientations were important, some more than others:

N°	Priority Policies	Importance Given (on 4)
	Early childhood	
1.1	As soon as early childhood	3,8
1.2	Childcare	3,6
1.3	House-childcare-community organizations-school transition	3,4
1.4	Children in difficutly - services	3,9
	Parents	
2.1	Recognition of parents' role	3,6
2.2	Parents-educators-teachers relationship	3,7
2.3	State recognition of community organizations	3,3
	School environment	
3.1	Administrative and pedagogical measures (school boards and schools)	3,3
3.2	Transitions throughout schooling	3,5
3.3	Decrease student-teacher ratio	3,4
3.4	Students in difficulty–professionnal resources	3,7
3.5	Education and professional aspirations	Not evaluated
3.6	Career training and general education concurrently	3,4
3.7	Return to school	3,6
3.8	Adult education	3,0
3.9	Increase teacher retention	3,0
3.10	Integration of school retention in training programs	3,3
3.11	Knowledge transfer and support	3,2
3.12	Regional and local capacity to evaluate	3,0
3.13	University and college involvement	2,9

	Favourable conditions	
4.1	Placing a high value on education, literacy, educators, teachers, career training, etc.)	3,6
4.2	Family-school-community	3,7
4.3	Education-work balance	3,2
4.4	Mobilization and collaboration of partners	3,4
4.5	Youth involvement	Not evaluated
4.6	Links to social and workforce development	3,0
4.7	School retention of university and college students	3,0
	Disadvantages areas	
5.1	Geographic disparities	3,6
5.2	Kindergarten for 4-year-olds in economically disadvantaged areas	3,1
5.3	Fight against poverty and social exclusion	3,7

The online consultation participants formulated valuable recommendations to be taken under account during the implementation of the proposed orientations. They can be found here: http://poursuivons.groupeactionperseverance.org/orientations-a-privilegier-au-cours-des-prochaines-annees/.

ANNEX A

EXPERTS AND STAKEHOLDERS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS WORKING PAPER

The writing of this document would not have been possible without the participation of many stakeholders from a variety of sectors, which is what gives it its strength. As the choice of being inclusive was made, it is important to note that the various sections of this document, particularly the one titled *Priority orientations*, do not necessarily reflect the **views and opinions of each its participants**:

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