EDUCATION

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE FUTURE

SUPPLEMENT TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

September 2016

ENSEMBLE
on fait avancer le Québec

Québec
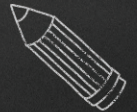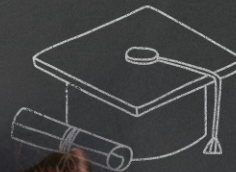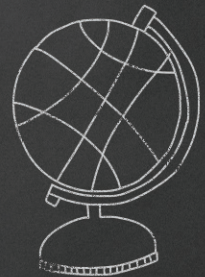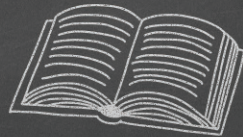
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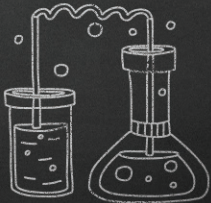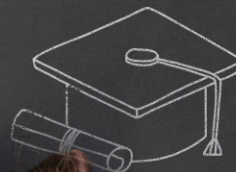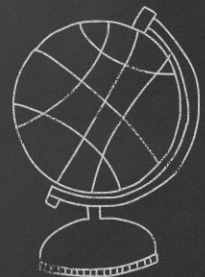# Table of contents

SECTION 1

MAJOR MILESTONES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUÉBEC SCHOOL SYSTEM

1.1 The democratization of access to education

Today's public education system was born in the 1960s around the rallying cry of *Qui s'instruit, s'enrichit* (Education brings prosperity)—personal prosperity, of course, but also collective prosperity for Québec at the social, cultural and economic levels. Instituted in 1961 and chaired by Mgr. Alphonse-Marie Parent, the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education in the Province of Quebec, known as the Parent Commission, sat for five years. It received more than 300 briefs and visited a number of educational institutions in Québec, as well as in other provinces and countries. The Parent Report reflected the new values that were taking hold in Québec, and it is considered to be the basis of today's education system. From that point on, education would be considered a right, and everyone would have the same access to it. At the same time, the Comité d'étude sur l'éducation des adultes, chaired by Claude Ryan, tabled its report, emphasizing the importance of special programs for adults.

The Parent Report came in the wake of the report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Constitutional Problems, chaired by Justice Thomas Tremblay. The 1962 Tremblay Report contained several principles and objectives, in particular with respect to vocational training in the youth sector. It stated that "no child should leave school without receiving at least some vocational training, and the school system should be set up so as to be able, at the appropriate time, to offer each student vocational training suited to his or her aptitudes and ambitions."[1] The ideas set forth in the Tremblay and Parent reports would have a significant impact on education, since they proposed "a new vision of career training, with the same status and perceived value as regular education,"[2] a vision founded on the principles of accessibility, success and occupational qualification.

Free education and the construction of new schools were the main vectors of development in the immense expansion of Québec's public education system. To achieve its goals, the State took charge of the education system, embarking on an initial phase of secularization. Created in the midst of the Quiet Revolution, at the recommendation of the Parent Commission, the Ministère de l'Éducation became a major lever for the Québec State and played a key role in the modernization of Québec society. The effects of the democratization of education were almost immediate, including an impressive increase in enrolments.

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[1] Québec, Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, *Rapport annuel sur l'état et les besoins de l'éducation (2003-2004) – L'éducation à la vie professionnelle: Valoriser toutes les avenues* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2005), 7 [free translation].

[2] *Ibid.*, 8 [free translation].

In 1977, the government launched a widespread public consultation by publishing a green paper on elementary and secondary education in which it defined the main problems and offered avenues for solutions. More than 50 000 people answered the survey sent out by the Ministère de l'Éducation, 400 briefs were submitted, and provincial hearings were held. Two years later, the government published *The Schools of Québec: Policy Statement and Plan of Action*. The plan defined the aims of education in Québec, set objectives for elementary and secondary education and established measures for implementing them in Québec schools. The plan was followed by a reform of all preschool and elementary and secondary school programs.

In 1982, after 20 days of regional consultations, 244 hearings and 276 briefs, the Commission d'étude sur la formation des adultes, better known as the Jean Commission, tabled its report entitled *Apprendre: Une action volontaire et responsable; Énoncé d'une politique globale de l'éducation des adultes dans une perspective d'éducation permanente*. Chaired by Michèle Jean, the Commission recommended that the government exercise its constitutional responsibility, repatriate the federal funds for adult education and manage them in accordance with its own priorities. The Commission further recommended that adults' right to education be enshrined in the *Education Act*, which was achieved in 1988 through the creation of an autonomous administrative body separate from the youth sector. The Commission further recommended that measures be taken to implement and manage employment training, including the allocation of a percentage of companies' payrolls for this purpose. Lastly, it reiterated that adult education is an integral part of a person's overall development—in other words, that it is essential to the balance between vocational training and sociocultural education.

Two years later, in the wake of the Jean Report, the Ministère de l'Éducation published a policy statement entitled *Un projet d'éducation permanente: Énoncé d'orientation et plan d'action en éducation des adultes*. Basic education, literacy, access to adult education, workforce training and cooperation with workplace partners were at the heart of the government's concerns.

In 1986, the Ministère undertook a vast reform of vocational training at the secondary level and published its ministerial action plan, better known as the Ryan Plan or the Ryan Reform. The reform was largely aimed at improving the image of vocational training, encouraging more young people to enrol and harmonizing vocational training for young people and adults. The reform was intensive, and vocational training centres were created outside secondary schools. The result was the creation of new branches of education, the revision of programs of study along the lines of a competency-based approach, a new geographical distribution of programs based on the socio-economic conditions in each region, and major investments in fixed assets and equipment.

1.2 From universal access to success for all

In the 1990s, after having overcome the challenge of access to education, the government set its sights on success for all. The Estates General on Education, launched in 1995, was undoubtedly the culminating point of the decade, reaffirming society's interest in education: 2 000 briefs were submitted, and 10 000 people weighed in.

After the final report of the Commission for the Estates General on Education, the government announced the areas of reform it wished to address in its document *A New Direction for Success: Ministerial Plan of Action for the Reform of the Education System*. This reform, aimed at greater equality of opportunity, focused on the key school subjects, school autonomy, Montréal schools, vocational and technical training, higher education and access to continuing education and training. At the same time, educational services for young children from disadvantaged areas were increased, both in childcare services and kindergarten classes for 4- and 5-year-olds.

The Estates General on Education paved the way for a number of government measures and strategies aimed at educational success that have been put in place since the end of the 1990s. These initiatives were intended to ensure success for all students by helping individuals, groups and communities overcome personal, family, cultural and socio-economic obstacles. Moreover, the principle by which no child should leave the school system without a diploma or qualification led to the diversification of vocational training paths, opening the way for more young people, as well as the promotion of work-study programs. The Ministère de la Famille was also created in the 1990s, together with State-subsidized educational childcare services that had the aim of facilitating children's entry into school and promoting equal opportunity.

The secularization process begun in the 1960s continued with the ending of the denominational system and the creation of linguistic school boards in 1998. In 2008, an Ethics and Religious Culture program for all elementary and secondary school students was implemented. Since 2011, religious teaching has been prohibited in subsidized childcare services.

THE CHALLENGES FACING QUÉBEC SCHOOLS: PROFOUND CHANGES, HIGH EXPECTATIONS

2.1 Demographic changes, diversity and inclusion

The aging population, immigration, ethnic and cultural diversity and geographic mobility are the main vectors of change transforming the demographic profile of students in schools and children in childcare centres. These changes vary in intensity depending on age group, ethnic origin, cultural community, large urban centre and region.

The aging population is having a tangible impact in Québec schools. For example, children aged 14 and under made up 29.3% of the population in 1971, 19.1% in 1996 and 15.5% in 2012. Young people between the ages of 15 and 29, who made up 27.7% of the Québec population in 1971, made up only 18.9% in 2012. According to the projections of the Institut de la statistique du Québec, in 2030, Québec will have 1.42 million young people between the ages of 15 and 29, representing 16.1% of the population, while people aged 65 and over will make up 25% of the population. A decrease in the working population, combined with a shortage of labour, could exert considerable pressure on certain population groups to enter the workforce, in particular young people between the ages of 16 and 18. This trend has already begun, and could intensify.

Several regions are experiencing a population decline, which affects the client base of several school boards and could cause a drop in enrolments in general education and vocational training. The anglophone community is particularly hard hit by this phenomenon.

Moreover, the immigrant population is growing in Québec, up from 8.7% of the total population in 1991 to 12.6% in 2011. In the Greater Montréal Area, the proportion of immigrants increased from 16.8% in 1991 to 22.6% in 2011.[3]

Living together in a society that strives to be pluralistic, inclusive and respectful of fundamental democratic values presents a complex challenge. For its part, the school system faces particular challenges given the central role it plays in the socialization of students and the wide range of ethnic backgrounds represented in the student population.

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[3] Québec, Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, *Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2016).

2.2 Education in a digital world

The integration of digital technology into the school system is a priority for the international community. Digital technology opens a vast array of possibilities for students and teachers, and requires the acquisition and mastery of new competencies and the adaptation of learning, teaching and classroom management. For students as for teachers, the use of digital technology for learning purposes is a challenge. Although most young people use digital technology on a daily basis, many of them are not accustomed to using it for school. Their digital competencies are generally in the areas of entertainment and networked communication.

The rate of deployment of digital technology in school is constantly accelerating. The challenge is largely pedagogical, since it affects the school's very mission: to provide instruction, socialize and provide qualifications. Digital technology must not only help ensure success for all students, it must also strengthen the values governing the school system: equity, universality and accessibility. Although it offers amazing opportunities, digital technology raises a number of legitimate questions concerning the school's role in a digital world.

Digital technology could become an aggravating factor for social and economic inequality. Since the first digital gap—access to technological equipment and the Internet—has been virtually closed, a second gap has appeared: the ability to use digital technology autonomously with a view to acquiring knowledge and developing competencies and the power to act. This gap is a particular threat for employed and unemployed adults with few qualifications or digital competencies. For these adults, distance education could be a particularly useful and effective means of ensuring balance with respect to work, family life and studies.

The presence of digital technology in every area of human activity has an impact on social behaviour and civic engagement. Schools must inculcate ethical and responsible behaviour in communications and the use of new technologies, while helping prevent Internet addiction. The use of digital technology in schools must respect the values, principles and civic obligations set out in the legislation concerning privacy, personal information, copyright and intellectual property, as well as those concerning cyberbullying and child pornography set out in the *Criminal Code*.

2.3 Evolution of needs and expectations with respect to the school system

Changes in school demographics have resulted in a wider diversity of clienteles and, consequently, a wider variety of needs that differ depending on the region and community. This makes it more difficult to plan and manage services that set out to meet every student's needs. Large variations can also create imbalances in the transition of cohorts from one year or one level of education to the next. In addition to demographics, the diversification of needs is also related to the specific conditions of certain groups of students such as students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, students from disadvantaged areas, Aboriginal students and newly immigrated students.

Parents' expectations with respect to the school system are constantly growing. Parents demand quality services, as they should, and are more inclined to ask that services be adapted to their children's needs, characteristics or talents, and that these services follow their children from one branch of education to another. These demands often mean additional costs that can constitute a source of inequity or economic discrimination. Offering highly specialized services involving a larger number of special projects or "personalized education" can be a threat to the principles on which the school system is based: universality, equity and accessibility.

Various socio-economic stakeholders, governments and citizens have their own expectations, which are no longer exclusively educational, but societal as well. In addition to providing instruction, socializing and providing qualifications, schools must promote and foster social equity, ensure equal opportunity, counter exclusion, poverty and violence, integrate newly arrived immigrants into the community, contribute to sustainable development and promote healthy lifestyle habits.
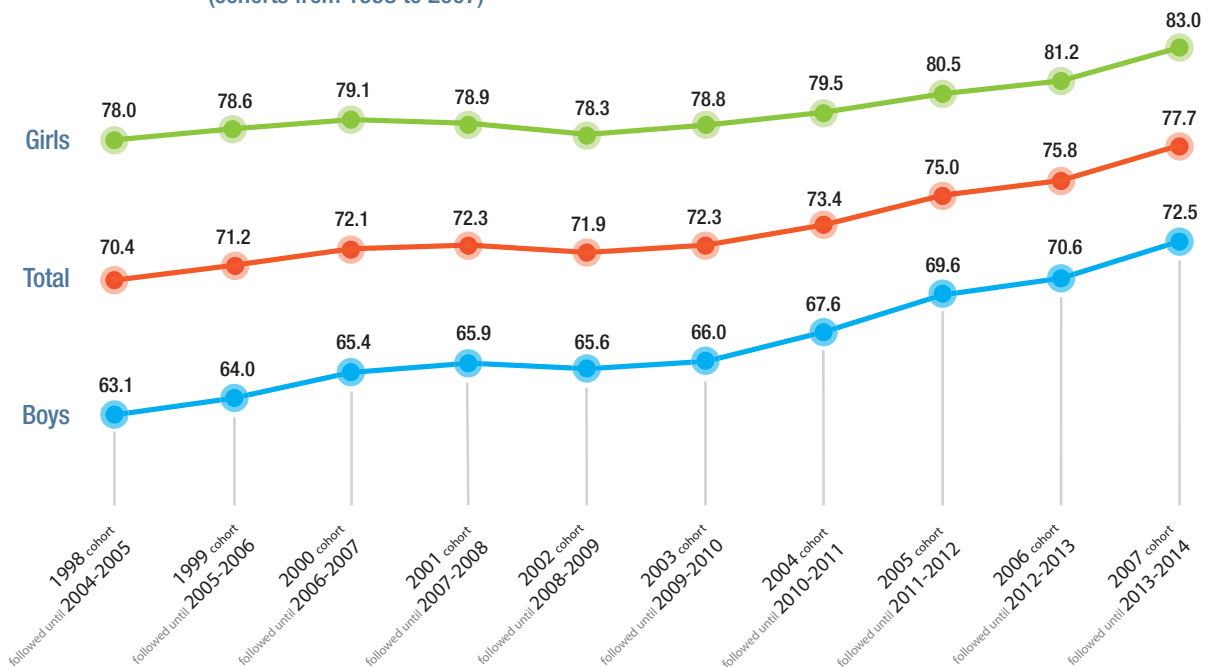
GRADUATION AND QUALIFICATION RATE: A BRIEF PORTRAIT OF SUCCESS IN QUÉBEC

3.1 Educational success by the numbers

YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 20

The graduation and qualification rate for Québec students under the age of 20 has improved in recent decades. For new students enrolled in Secondary I, the graduation and qualification rate before the age of 20 increased by 7.3 percentage points between 2004-2005 and 2013-2014, rising from 70.4% to 77.7%. The increase for boys (9.4 percentage points) was more pronounced than the increase for girls (5 percentage points). These advances mean that since 2008-2009 over 5 000 more young people have graduated each year in Québec than would have if no efforts had been made to increase the success rate.[4] However, the higher the graduation and qualification rate, the harder it is to gain new ground, particularly owing to the lower success rate of at-risk students such as students from disadvantaged areas, immigrant students, students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, and students with academic delays.

Graduation and qualification rate by cohort after seven years, Québec as a whole (cohorts from 1998 to 2007)

Source: MEES, *Taux de diplomation et de qualification par cohorte,* May 2016.

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[4] Québec, *Budget 2016-2017: Plan for Success in Education and Higher Education* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2016).

The graduation and qualification rate in secondary school increases with cohort observation time. For example, the percentage of students who started secondary school in 2007 who earned a diploma or qualification was:

- 65.2% after 5 years
- 73.8% after 6 years
- 77.7% after 7 years

The graduation and qualification rate by cohort presented in this document is the percentage of students who earn a first diploma or a first qualification before the age of 20 within 7 years of starting secondary school, either in general education in the youth sector, adult education or vocational training.

ADULTS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Not all adults enrolled in general education are interested in obtaining a diploma or qualification, and their success cannot be measured solely in these terms. For example, some adult learners wish to obtain the prerequisites needed to enter vocational training or post-secondary education, while others enrol in francization classes or undertake training to enter the workforce. Schooling begins at the most appropriate time for the adult learner, and the schedule is established based on the learner's availability and educational goal. Many adults enter adult general education to have their academic or experiential learning recognized.

In the past 10 years, the Ministère, in collaboration with the network of school boards, has developed student retention and academic success indicators for general education in the adult sector. In a context of non-mandatory attendance where adults begin their education at any given time of the year, the retention and academic success rates for the four secondary-level instructional services has remained consistent at about 75% since 2007-2008.[5]

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

After the vocational training reform in 1986, the percentage of students earning a diploma or qualification increased substantially. In 2011-2012, it reached 74.9% in programs leading to a Diploma of Vocational Studies, compared with 54.4% in 1990-1991, representing a gain of more than 20%.[6] Unlike the graduation and qualification rates normally observed in secondary school in general, in 2011-2012, the success rate among boys in vocational training was 5.5 percentage points higher than that of girls (77.3% and 71.8%, respectively).

Vocational training is crucial, since it enables many students to earn a first diploma qualifying them for the workforce and to continue working toward achieving their full potential.

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[5] Secondary-level instructional services: Secondary Cycle One and Cycle Two, Vocational Training preparation services, preparation services for post-secondary education. People enrolled in secondary-level instructional services during a given school year fall under the retention or academic success rates when they achieve their training or education objective or obtain a diploma or qualification over the course of the school year, as do people who are continuing their education or training in the subsequent school year.
Source: MEES, DEAAC, Information portal (consulted August 2014), Charlemagne system, report 4 of 5 for 2013-2014.

[6] Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, *Education Indicators – 2014 Edition* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2014), s. 3.2, 39.

3.2 Students most at risk

POSITIVE EVOLUTION

The dropout rate in general education in the youth sector[7] declined sharply between 2001-2002 and 2013-2014, from 22.3% to 14.1%. At the same time, the gap between the rates for boys and girls decreased considerably, falling from 12 to 6.4 percentage points. The dropout rate among boys was 17.4%, and among girls, 11.0%.

Secondary school dropout rate in general education in the youth sector, by sex, Québec as a whole, 2000-2001 to 2013-2014			
Year	Total	Boys	Girls
2001-2002	**22.3**	**28.5**	**16.5**
2002-2003	22.2	28.6	16.3
2003-2004	21.8	27.8	16.1
2004-2005	21.2	27.1	15.6
2005-2006	20.7	26.2	15.6
2006-2007	20.7	26.0	15.6
2007-2008	20.3	25.2	15.6
2008-2009	18.4	22.6	14.3
2009-2010	17.4	21.5	13.6
2010-2011	16.2	20.1	12.6
2011-2012	16.2	19.8	12.9
2012-2013	15.3	18.8	11.9
2013-2014*	**14.1**	**17.4**	**11.0**

Source: MEES, Charlemagne system, November 2015.
*: Unpublished data.

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[7] The dropout rate is the proportion of students who, during the year, do not obtain a diploma or qualification and who are not enrolled anywhere in the school system at any point the following year, among all those leaving secondary school.

The dropout rate remained high in 2013-2014 among certain groups, including:

- students from disadvantaged areas: 21.1%
- immigrant students:[8] 26.8%
- students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties: 35.9%
- students with academic delays: 40.9%

In special status school boards, which cater largely to Aboriginal students, the dropout rate was 68.4%.[9]

Several of these categories of the most at-risk students have grown considerably in the past decade. For example, between 2003-2004 and 2013-2014, the number of students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties increased by 29%. The increase was 88% for students with handicaps and 20% for students with social maladjustments or learning difficulties. The number of immigrant students[10] grew by 62% between 1998-1999 and 2013-2014, rising from 160 185 to 260 034.

Not all students have the same needs, because their situations and characteristics differ. The table on the following page illustrates the substantial differences between the dropout rates in various groups of students.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM: A LIFELONG RESOURCE

Educational success is the goal for all young people entering the school system. However, despite all efforts to provide students with support, many students will inevitably drop out. The school system can help these students by offering adult education services that will enable them to improve their competencies, give them access to information, and ensure their civic engagement and employability. Educational success for adults is doubly effective, since improving parents' competencies will foster greater involvement and more guidance for their children throughout their schooling.

Adult education is also provided in the autonomous community action sector, whose educational mission focuses on overall personal development, the improvement and maintenance of basic skills, the fight against the dropout phenomenon and educational upgrading. Together, these two adult education systems offer a wider variety of options with a view to providing sustainable education and continuing education and training.

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[8] Students born outside Canada, i.e. first-generation immigrants.
[9] Most Aboriginal students attend schools in special status school boards, i.e. the Cree and Kativik school boards.
[10] First- and second-generation.

Distribution of enrolments with respect to total graduates and dropouts, by characteristic, Québec as a whole, 2013-2014 (unpublished)	Enrolments		Outgoing students			Dropout rate
	Number	%	Number	Dropouts		%
				Number	%	
Québec as a whole	*400 738*	*100.0*	*70 861*	*9 993*	*100.0*	*14.1*
Students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties	**92 162**	23.0	**13 061**	**4 392**	47.0	35.9
Students without handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties	308 576	77.0	57 800	5 301	53.0	9.2
Students with academic delays	**91 121**	22.9	**16 211**	**6 632**	66.4	40.9
Students without academic delays	309 017	77.1	54 650	3 361	33.6	6.2
Immigrant students	**43 087**	10.8	**8 083**	**2 167**	21.7	26.8
Non-immigrant students[1]	357 651	89.2	62 778	7 826	78.3	12.5
Students from disadvantaged areas[2]	**92 872**	23.2	**15 495**	**3 272**	32.7	21.1
Students from non-disadvantaged areas[3]	307 866	76.8	55 366	6 721	67.3	12.1
Students in special status school boards	**2 921**	0.7	**566**	**387**	3.9	68.4
Students in other school boards and systems	397 817	99.3	70 295	9 606	96.1	13.7
Students in the public system (72 school boards)	**315 031**	78.6	**54 183**	**8 767**	87.7	16.2
Students in other systems[4]	**85 707**	21.4	**16 678**	**1 226**	12.3	7.4

Source: Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, GIR, DGS, DIS, information portal, Charlemagne system, November 2015, special compilation, unpublished data.
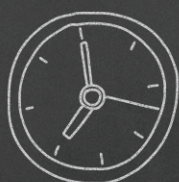Notes:
1. These students include second-generation immigrants born in Canada of at least one parent born in another country.
2. Students in public schools with a socio-economic decile rank of 8, 9 or 10.
3. Students in public schools in non-disadvantaged areas and students in all private and government schools.
4. Students in private schools. Few of these students (approximately 1 000) attend government schools.
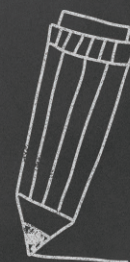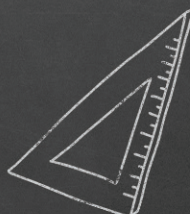
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