



Commission scolaire English-Montréal
English Montreal School Board



EDUCATIONAL PROJECT
LINKS HIGH SCHOOL
2019-2022

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The Educational Project

The educational project is a strategic tool for defining and making known to the educational community of a school the orientations, priorities for action and expected results to ensure the educational success of all students. It is developed in response to the characteristics and needs of the students attending the school and the community's educational expectations.

The goal of the educational project of a school makes it possible to share, with all its educational stakeholders (students, parents, teachers other school staff and representatives of the community and the School Board), a common vision of findings and challenges to create a mobilization around student-centered goals and objectives. The Educational Project describes what the school intends to do to ensure the educational success and well-being of all its students and the efforts that will be necessary to achieve it.

The Legal Framework

Article 36 of the Education Act states,

“In keeping with the principle of equality of opportunity, the mission of a school is to impart knowledge to students, foster their social development and give them qualifications, while enabling them to undertake and achieve success in a course of study.

A school shall pursue its mission within the framework of an educational project.”

The law describes:

- the principal content of the educational project (Article 37)
- the period covered by the project (Article 37.1, 459.3)
- the role of the governing board and the various stakeholders involved in the school community (Article 74)
- the communication of the educational project and its evaluation to the public, in particular the parents and school staff (Article 75)
- the role of the principal in the coordination of the process (Article 96.13)
- the role of the school board in ensuring coherence with the Commitment-to-Success Plan (Article 209.2)

Groups that Collaborated in the Development of the Project

- The governing board
- The school team, composed of a cross section of staff members, led by the principal

Groups Consulted in the Development of the Project

- The governing board
- The school's parent community at large
- Students
- All staff, including, teachers, professionals, support staff

School Profile

LINKS high school is a secondary school situated in the Eastern part of the Island of Montreal, in the Borough of Ahuntsic-Cartierville (9905 Papineau Avenue) and shares the facilities with St. Pius X Career Centre. LINKS School specializes in the education of students with special needs whose needs are greater than what a regular high school offers. All of our students have significant learning challenges related to cognitive impairment. Students with cognitive impairments usually acquire developmental milestones late, and have more difficulty learning self-help skills, social skills, and communicating with others. A cognitive impairment may be deemed to be mild, moderate or severe. A severe cognitive impairment implies that the student's intellectual functioning is below average. These students will need support for most activities in the classroom, but can learn basic skills and adaptive behaviour to assist with life skills.

The school welcomes 60 students that range in age from 12 to 21. The percentage of male students is 70%, while female students make up 30% of the population. Approximately 80% of our students were born in Quebec, and English is the main language spoken at home. Other students come from other provinces as well as various countries. Every year, we welcome a few Temporary Stay students from various countries. Some students travel independently to school while the remainder rely on school bus transportation or adapted transportation by Société de transport de Montréal (STM), or are brought to school by their parents/guardians.

The students come from varied socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, single parent families represent over 20% of our student population. The *Indice de milieu socio-économique* (IMSE) is an index given to a school by the Ministry that describes the socio-economic backgrounds from which the students come. The IMSE for our school is 8, with 10 being the lowest possible level. Schools with an index greater than 7 receive additional funding from the Ministry to support student success.

In 2012, the school name was changed from Paul VI High School to the acronym L.I.N.K.S. (Literacy, Interdependence, Networking, Knowledge and Success). In using this acronym, the school acknowledged the need for students to be literate, in both languages and in Mathematics. Students become independent, but also interdependent, fostering mutual relationships with peers, family and the community at large. Interdependence allows students to network, making use of the resources that are available to them. They acquire the knowledge to take what they have learned out of the classroom environment and apply it to real-life settings. The goal of this education is for students to be successful, reaching their full potential, whether it may be in obtaining a qualification or the necessary life skills to contribute to daily family life, working in the community or continuing their education. As a result, the students know that they are productive and contributing members of society. Educational success has different meanings depending on the abilities and needs of different students.

All new students who study at LINKS are admitted via case conference. At this meeting, the student, their parents/guardians and a representative from their previous school will meet with a team of LINKS staff, including our administration, guidance counselor and consultants from the Student Services Department. The goal of this meeting is to decide on a program that would be the best fit for the student, taking into account their cognitive function, academic ability and degree of autonomy.

LINKS provides students with a unique learning setting whereby their individual needs are met with differentiated programming in a safe, caring environment. Over the years, these programs have evolved to reflect changing profiles as well as incorporating new curriculum and courses developed by the Ministry. In fact, LINKS teachers have been an integral part of a team that has designed some of our unique, local programs.

The school is led by one full-time principal. The staff consists of 11 teachers, one secretary, two special education technicians, six childcare workers, a 60% guidance counselor, two tutors, and an after-school program coordinator. The LINKS staff is rich in experience and education. Staff members keep abreast with the

most relevant research, participate in professional development activities related to their domain, and attain certification in a wide variety of fields. Teachers have been certified in Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Related Handicapped Children (TEACCH) in North Carolina. Their classrooms and teaching practices have been transformed to accommodate our students on the autism spectrum. All staff has also been Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) trained, resulting in a unified approach to situations requiring behavioural interventions. Mental health awareness campaigns have been at the forefront of all career sectors, and so our staff took part in an intensive course on Mental Health First Aid, also receiving certification. The LINKS team is committed to delivering all the necessary support, resources, tools and heart to ensure the success of all our students. As educators, we won't know what gifts are hidden in our students until we unwrap their packages.

We presently have two behaviour technicians, one who works with our most severe cognitively impaired students and the other who works with individual students at both the intervention and preventative level. To support our students and families, LINKS has hired a social worker at 1.5 days per week. LINKS has also hired a community animator to provide students with the opportunity to experience the benefits of helping others less fortunate in the community. Our community SPVM officer visits our school and meets with our students. He also gives workshops on intimidation and bullying.

When students are in a crisis or need some quiet time to relieve anxiety, there are two rooms available for them, a calming room and a sensory room. The school is presently putting together a student lounge for our older students, a place to encourage communication, interpersonal skills and motivate them at their learning environment.

One has only to walk along our hallway to experience the spirit of commitment, engagement and collaboration that exists in our school. One will immediately witness sharing, supporting and mentoring at every level. Transitioning new students into our school life, as well as transitioning students leaving our school to the next phase of their educational or vocational experience is vital. Multidisciplinary meetings to review the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and Transition école vie active (TEVA) are organized regularly with all the relevant partners involved to ensure that our student strengths, talents and aspirations are validated and goals to achieve them are established. The IEP describes the goals set for each student for the school year, and any special support the student needs to help reach those goals. The IEP creates an opportunity for the school team, parents, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve the opportunities for each

student's success. TEVA is a program that provides guidance and support to students and their families to ensure a smooth transition from the youth sector to adult life.

Students have chosen collaboration as their House System theme, fostering teamwork, sharing and a sense of identity and belonging. On any given day, students are participating in Zoo Therapy, Music Therapy, Dance Therapy as well as girls and boys groups. The benefits include the encouragement of communication, an increase in socialization, relaxation, motivation, self-confidence and physical and emotional wellness.

Extra-curricular activities are numerous at LINKS. Teachers lead clubs such as sewing, film making, yoga, sports, botanical, and karaoke among others. A few years ago, we embarked on a new venture after families approached us looking for additional activities after school. The After-School Program was born and has grown to include a variety of specialized activities including adapted tennis, cooking, art, karate and music therapy. Not only do our students have a warm and safe place to go, but they also have a caring and nurturing staff listening with an attentive ear to their individual life experiences.

Some examples of our exciting ventures are growing herbs and vegetables using Nutritowers, an environmentally friendly system. The harvest is sold to the St. Pius X Culinary School and families. The school has collaborated with Youth Fusion, a community organization that supports students in the Entrepreneurship Class. Students are taught to create and sell a product or service, make a commercial, develop a business plan and finally, compete with other high schools at the Olympic Stadium for awards. In the spring of 2019, in a competition among 20 high schools in the province, LINKS won first prize. These numerous entrepreneurial projects provide our students with knowledge and skills.

LINKS has a comprehensive lunch preparation program, where students are engaged in every part of the process. They learn how to read recipes, prepare the ingredients, follow safety protocol, cook the meals and clean up. They also take orders and serve as cashiers. Several of our students go on to work successfully in cafeterias and restaurants.

Parental involvement is seen as important. Parents are involved in the Governing Board, in fundraising and special school activities. LINKS High School has an active Parent Participation Organization (PPO).

Finally, the school year culminates with a Variety Show that is the highlight for every student, family member and guest. Students participate in every aspect of preparing the show. They write the scripts, make props and

costumes, choreograph and star in the production. This occasion provides the opportunity for each student to shine, and celebrate their achievements together. This experience builds self-esteem and confidence. Our students are able to say, "Yes we can!" and move forward with pride in their abilities. Our goal is not only for our students to adapt to the world around them, but to sensitize others to the incredible value they bring to society.

PROGRAMS AVAILABLE IN OUR SCHOOL

LINKS offers two pathways in programming. In the first, students who have moderate to severe cognitive impairment are enrolled in the Competency-Based Approach to Social Participation (CASP). At age 16, these students continue to the DÉFIS program (in English, called Challenges). Challenges is an educational approach that facilitates social integration. The second pathway is for students who have mild cognitive impairment. It is a Modified Academic Program (MAP), that leads to the Work Oriented Training Path (WOTP) for either Pre-Work Training or training in a Semi-Skilled Trade. The Autonomy Preparation Program (APP) can be an option for WOTP students who wish to continue until age 21. The criteria for each program is dependent on each student's level of cognitive function, academic ability and degree of autonomy and age.

COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH TO SOCIAL PARTICIPATION (CASP)

The goal of the program is to help students with moderate to severe intellectual impairments begin to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be autonomous and to integrate into society. Students are between 12 and 15 years of age in this program.

DÉFIS (CHALLENGES)

The DÉFIS Program consists of courses focused on functional academic subjects, hands-on daily living skills and students are introduced to working life (universal job skills). This program is designed for students with moderate to severe cognitive disabilities, from age 16 to 21.

MODIFIED ACADEMIC PROGRAM (MAP)

The MAP program covers the Cycle One High School Curriculum (secondary 1 and 2), stretched out over a four year period.

WORK-ORIENTED TRAINING PATHWAY (WOTP)

The WOTP program consists of courses focused on functional academic subjects and work placements leading to the Pre-Work or Semi-Skilled Trade (SST) Work-Oriented Training Pathway Ministry Certification. Students may earn up to two SST certificates during their time at LINKS. Generally, students who enter the WOTP have the capacity to travel autonomously and work independently at their work placement. It must be stated that the Semi-Skilled Trade Program is only offered if there is a need depending on our student abilities.

AUTONOMY PREPARATION PROGRAM (APP)

APP is a local program (meaning that it only exists at JGHS and LINKS) that aims to teach students autonomy, self-advocacy and self-care skills, as well as academic progression in preparation for independence.

Students in the WOTP and APP programs are given Travel Training to allow them to increase their independence for daily-living and work situations. Our students are also proud to be integral parts of the LINKS Bistro, our student-run cafeteria service that promotes healthy-eating choices, meal-planning, and the standards of a commercial kitchen. Towards the end of WOTP and APP programs, the LINKS team will work with the students and their families in preparing for their transition from LINKS to the next phase of their lives.

Our Mission

The mission of LINKS High School is “to serve, support and educate our students within a safe and nurturing environment”. To fulfill our mission, LINKS will:

- Recognize and value the diversity of our school community;
- Ensure the maximum growth and development of each student academically, socially, spirituality and culturally;
- Provide a differentiated and individualized program tailored to meet each student’s strengths, interests and learning styles;

- Encourage the integration of students within their community and social environment;
- Commitment to ongoing staff professional development, networking and collaboration with specialists in the field.

Our Values

The LINKS HS community firmly believes in the value of each student's contribution to our school and to society as a whole. Above all, we aim to improve our students' feelings of self-worth, self-reliance, and independence all the while making incremental improvements in academic, life skill and social skill proficiency, at an individualized pace.

The Consultation

A staff meeting was held during which time the school principal animated a presentation regarding the Educational Project, the EMSB's Commitment to Success Plan and the MEES' Strategic Plan, and the relationship between each document. Teaching staff, support staff, as well as professional staff members were present during the presentation and ensuing discussions. The topic was also discussed during Governing Board meetings. Shortly after the Winter Break, a survey was distributed to stakeholders, and the results of such surveys were presented at a staff meeting, as well as at a Governing Board meeting.

Parents recognized the caring approach of the school towards their children and expressed an appreciation for the ongoing communication offered by the school, whether it be to apprise them of problems or keeping them abreast of activities and important dates.

Two main challenges were identified. The first was an increase of special needs students who require specialized services and one-on-one support. The second challenge is the lack of workplace practicums. It is important to find appropriate placements for certain students who are lower functioning, and thus, we have a need to build new liasons within the working community.

Alignment to the EMSB's Commitment-to-Success Plan

The school's educational project contains the specific policies of the school and the objectives selected for improving student success. These must be consistent with the school board's Commitment-to-Success Plan (Article 37). In what follows, the school will demonstrate how the selected objectives are coherent and consistent with those of the school board's Commitment-to-Success Plan.

EMSB Orientations, Objectives and School Objectives

Orientation: Improved Academic Success

EMSB OBJECTIVE

Graduation and qualification

To increase the percentage of students under the age of 20 who obtain a first diploma (SSD or DVS) or qualification after 7 years from 88.6% in 2016 to 91.0% by 2022

LINKS High School's contribution to the EMSB's success rate is based on the completion of the Work-Oriented Training Pathway (WOTP), Pre-Work program and Semi-Skilled Trade program.

Table 1: Qualification Ratio of Students Registered in Pre-Work 3 on September 30th

Year	Qualification Ratio (% Equivalent)
2017	3/ 3 (100%)
2018	3/ 3 (100%)

Source: GPI

The school's qualification ratio (percent equivalent) is determined by dividing the number of students who obtain a qualification (semi-skilled) by the total number of students registered in the qualifying year. Given that this population is small, the use of percentages in reporting on the qualification rate for this group can be misleading since a small change in numbers may produce a large fluctuation in percentages.

Table 1 shows that the qualification ratio of students registered in Pre-Work 3 (WOTP) on September 30th has been stable at 100%.

Table 2: Qualification Ratio of Secondary Students Registered in Semi-Skilled on September 30th

Year	Qualification Ratio (% Equivalent)
2018	2 / 2 (100%)

Source: GPI

The Semi-Skilled Trade program is offered to students on the basis of ability and interest, and is not offered every year. Typically, students in the Pre-Work 2 cohort are considered for transfer into the Semi-Skilled Trade (SST) program towards the end of each school year. Thus, such students are not registered in Pre-Work Program Year 3, but rather, transferred to SST.

School Objective 1: To have all students in the qualifying year of the WOTP who are registered on September 30 obtain their qualification through 2022.

School Objective 1.1: To have all students in the qualifying year of the Semi-Skilled Trade Program who are registered on September 30 obtain their qualification through 2022.

Subjects:

Orientation: Equity among Various Groups

EMSB OBJECTIVE

Equity

To reduce the gap in success rates between males and females from 8.2% in 2016 to 6.2% by 2022.

The school board's Commitment-to-Success Plan addresses the gap in success rates between:

- regular students and students with special needs
- advantaged and disadvantaged schools
- first generation immigrant students and non-immigrants
- males and females

Because of the nature of this school, this objective will not be addressed.

Orientation: Mastery of Languages

EMSB OBJECTIVE

Language Proficiency

English Language Arts

To maintain a global success rate of at least 95% in secondary 5 English Language Arts June MEES Examination through 2022.

To increase the average mark of secondary 5 students in English Language Arts June MEES Examination from 74.2% in 2017 to 76.0% by 2022.

Français langue seconde, programme de base et enrichi

To maintain the success rate of 90% in the secondary 5 FLS June MEES Examination (programme de base), Reading Component, through 2022.

To increase the success rate of students in the secondary 5 FLS June MEES Examination (programme enrichi), Reading Component from 81.8% in 2017 to 85.0% by 2022.

The MAP English Language Arts program is aimed at enhancing our students' reading, writing and communication skills by having them participate in lessons that require the use of different sources of information such as technology, magazines, novels, et cetera. Students build their oral and written communication skills by learning about proper content and structure for different situations, by expressing their thoughts, opinions and beliefs, and by being encouraged to always self-advocate. Students are exposed to written, spoken and media works to develop reading and listening comprehension strategies, and to evaluate the purpose of different texts.

Table 2: Successful Completion in the Final Year of MAP English Language Arts

	Number of Students Registered on September 30 th	Number of Students Successfully Completing Requirements
2017	2	2
2018	5	4

Source: Lumix, 2018

In French class, students complete reading comprehension activities, oral presentations, short written reflections and, above all, thematic projects. Group work is highlighted throughout the French learning process. Technology is integrated in the learning environment from Smartboard activities to Duolingo app on students iPads.

Please note: There is no data for the completion of French, given that it is a second language. While students participate in developing their understanding of the language, there is no formal evaluation.

Orientation: Well-being of the School Community

EMSB OBJECTIVE

A welcoming, safe, and caring living environment:

An educational living environment must be one that has a sense of safety and physical and psychological well-being for all. In this respect, a healthy and safe environment means that the educational setting must be free of bullying, discrimination, radicalization, intolerance and any other form of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological violence.

To decrease the rate of secondary students who report victimization resulting from bullying on the OURSCHOOL Survey from 16.0% in 2017 to 14.0% by 2022.

To increase the rate of secondary students who report feeling safe attending school on the OURSCHOOL Survey from 59.0% in 2017 to 62.0% by 2022.

To decrease the rate of moderate to high-level anxiety as reported by secondary school students on the OURSCHOOL Survey from 22.0% in 2017 to 20.0% by 2022.

Students Perception of Bullying, Perception of School Safety and Sense of Anxiety:

The healthy and safe school component will be monitored without the administration of the Our School survey. This survey is not a reliable data collection tool for our population, given the nature of the school.

We will collect data through administration-related interventions, as well as participation rates in healthy lifestyle choices related to extra-curricular activities. The vast majority of our students experience feelings of anxiety, due to their disabilities or difficulty in communicating their feelings, wants, and needs.

Implementation and Monitoring of the Project

The school will report to its community on the Educational Project on an annual basis. This has been determined in collaboration with the school board.

Signatory Parties

ON BEHALF OF THE SCHOOL

Patricia Petrecca
GOVERNING BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Angela Vaudry
PRINCIPAL

ON BEHALF OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Ann Marie Matheson
DIRECTOR GENERAL

GOVERNING BOARD RESOLUTION

LINKS HIGH SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL PROJECT 2019-2022

WHEREAS The Education Act requires that the school develops an educational project;

WHEREAS The Educational Project was developed with the participation of the various stakeholders involved in the school, including: the governing board, parents, school staff, students, community and school board representatives;

WHEREAS The Educational Project is coherent with the School Board's Commitment-to-Success Plan;

WHEREAS the period covered by the Educational Project is harmonized with the Commitment-to-Success Plan period covered by the School Board;

IT WAS MOVED BY Myriam Farley AND RESOLVED THAT the Educational Project of 2019-2022 be adopted by the Governing Board.

IT WAS FURTHER MOVED BY Samanta Dudok AND RESOLVED THAT a copy of the Educational Project be sent to the School Board for its adoption.

IT WAS FURTHER MOVED BY Patricia Petrecca AND RESOLVED THAT upon adoption of the Educational Project by School Board, the Educational Project will be made public and communicated to the parents and school staff.

Signed on April 2, 2019;

Patricia Petrecca
Governing Board Chairperson

Angela Vaudry
Signature, Principal

Appendix 1 Strategies for Implementation of School Objectives

Graduation and qualification:

School Objective 1: To have all students in the qualifying year of the WOTP who are registered on September 30th obtain their qualification through 2022.

School Objective 1.1: To have all students in the qualifying year of the Semi-Skilled Trade Program who are registered on September 30 obtain their qualification through 2022.

Indicator	Target	Strategies
<p>The number of students who obtain their qualification</p>	<p>To have all students in the qualifying year of the WOTP who are registered on September 30th obtain their qualification through 2022.</p> <p>To have all students in the qualifying year of the Semi-Skilled Trade Program who are registered on September 30 obtain their qualification through 2022.</p>	<p>In addition to actual work placements, students take courses that prepare them for the workplace and give them work experience within the school (travel training, woodworking, food preparation, etc)</p> <p>On-site visits by teachers to help and support students while at their work placements.</p> <p>On-site career-advisor to aid in work placement and employer-relationship building</p> <p>Appropriate work-related facilities in the school (woodshop, cafeteria/ kitchen, salon and grocery store areas)</p> <p>ETS WOTP consultant will be deployed to give workshops to teachers and give support throughout implementation of strategies</p>

Language Proficiency:

School Objective 4: To increase the global success rate in MAP 4 English Language Arts from a baseline of 80% in 2018 to 100% by 2022.

Indicator	Target	Strategies
<p>The success rate of students in MAP 4 English Language Arts.</p>	<p>To improve the success rate of students in MAP 4 English Language Arts from 80% in 2018 to 100% by 2022.</p>	<p>Teachers will use tools/ approaches such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced 5 • At level readers • Small group instruction • Local literacy program • Class discussion • One on one assistance • Material relevant to students own life and world <p>Students will be encouraged to actively develop their knowledge base through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • online simulations • Assistive technology <p>ETS ELA consultant will be deployed to give workshops to teachers</p> <p>Support measures from Board Speech Language Pathologist</p> <p>Ensuring that our school library has high interest – low level reading print material</p>