

**EDUCATIONAL PROJECT 2023-2027**  
**MACKAY CENTRE SCHOOL**  
**English Montreal School Board**

The educational project is a strategic tool for an educational institution that defines its policy orientations, priority actions and expected results. It is a tool to inform its community with a view to ensuring educational success for all students regardless of age. The educational project reflects the characteristics and needs of the students who attend the educational institution, as well as the community's expectations regarding the education they receive. The educational project is prepared and implemented through the collaborative efforts of the various school stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, and other school staff members as well as community and school board representatives.

The educational project is part of a process designed to promote coordinated action and synergy among the various levels of the education system (MEQ, school boards and educational institutions), with due regard for their specific areas of autonomy and characteristics. This educational project must align with the English Montreal School Board's Commitment to Success Plan.

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

According to the Education Act, Sections 37 and 97.1, an educational institution's educational project must include:

- a description of the context in which the institution acts and the main challenges it faces, particularly with respect to educational success and, in the case of a vocational training centre, the relevance of the training to regional or provincial labour market needs,
- the specific policy orientations of the educational institution and the objectives selected for improving educational success,
- the targets to be achieved by the end of the period covered by the educational project,
- the indicators to be used to measure achievement of these objectives and targets,
- the intervals at which the educational project is to be evaluated, determined in collaboration with the school service centre or school board.

The educational project must:

- respect the students', parents' and school staff's freedom of conscience and of religion (EA, Section 37),
- cover a period that is harmonized with the period covered by the school service centre or school board's Commitment to Success Plan and the period covered by the MEQ strategic plan (EA, Section 37.1, 97.2 and 209.1),
- comply with the terms established by the Minister to coordinate the entire strategic planning process between the educational institutions, the school service centre or school board and the MEQ (EA, Section 459.3),
- be consistent with the school service centre's or school board's Commitment to Success Plan (EA, sections 37 and 97.1).

## COMPOSITION OF THE SCHOOL TEAM

This educational project was created by a school team that included the principal, vice-principal and teachers.

### SCHOOL PROFILE

Mackay Centre School is a Social Affairs school, under the mandate of the English Montreal School Board. As a social affairs school the Mackay Centre School works in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Program in Specialized School (RPSS) team of the Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre (LLMRC), CIUSSS du Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal. Mackay Centre School has a supra-regional mandate and accepts children from the island of Montreal, Laval, West Island, and the South and North Shores.

Mackay Centre School services a total population of 125 students. Children who are admitted must meet specific criteria of the Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre and coding specifications for Mackay Centre School as per the Ministry of Education guidelines:

- Severe Apraxia of Speech
- Developmental Language Disorder (severe expressive and moderate to severe receptive)
- Neurological condition (ex: cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy or genetic diagnosis) presenting with a significant and persistent motor and/or communication impairment
- Significant and persistent hearing loss where the child would benefit from sign language support.

The school has augmentative communication classes for non-verbal students with or without severe physical disabilities. The purpose of these classes is to provide students with the technology and skills to enhance their communication and participation in school, at home and in the community. Language classes are provided in K-5 and cycle 1 for students with severe language disorders. There is one class for Deaf students.

Most of the students are between the ages of 4 and 12. A satellite class at Westmount High School and a Senior augmentative communication class at Mackay for students with physical disabilities over the age of 12 have been established.

An additional 10-15 children attend Mackay as part of the Reverse Integration Program. These students come from various EMSB schools. The purpose of the Reverse Integration Program is to offer Mackay students role models, friends and socialization opportunities in a suitable educational environment. Furthermore, the program provides the reverse integration students with the opportunity to take on a leadership role as well as being sensitized to their peers with disabilities. This helps them develop a sense of acceptance and empathy.

Our education staff is composed of 31 teachers, 2 behaviour technicians, 15 attendants, 2 daycare staff, professionals from the Student Services department of the EMSB (psychologist, speech and language pathologist, special education consultant), and our RPSS partners.

### **OUR STUDENTS' MEDICAL PROFILES**

Over and above their physical disability, communication disorder and deafness, some of our students suffer from serious medical conditions such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, heart conditions, seizures, etc. The team of RPSS nurses provides medical care and attention to students' medical needs. Many of our students utilize specialized equipment throughout the day under the supervision of RPSS therapists and PABs. A significant number of students are dependent for activities of daily living (ADL) i.e. dressing, undressing, toileting, transferring and feeding. They require one on one support for swimming, for physical education, for communication and any other unstructured activities.

### **PROGRAMS**

The following programs are available in our school:

- *Therapy services provided by RPSS to Mackay students: physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy (until the end of cycle 1), music therapy, psychology services, social worker.*
- *QEP regular or modified programs, Competency-Based Approach to Social Participation Program (CASP)*
- *Pre- Kindergarten (full day program)*
- *Kindergarten and Cycle 1 Language classes*
- *French as a Second Language*
- *Music*
- *Swimming Program*
- *Reverse Integration Program*
- *Resource support and small group instruction*
- *Daycare services with breakfast program*
- *All classes are equipped with FM Systems*

The school also hosts special events and activities for students throughout the year. In addition to monthly Positive Growth Assemblies and various field trips, the school also offers athletic activities such as Défi Sportif, the Terry Fox Run, the Halo Road Race and a biking program.

## **INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLANS (IEPs)**

Students at Mackay Centre School often have complex profiles that can affect their academic progress and performance. Additionally, since students attend the school to receive regular in-house services from the rehabilitation centre, their time in class is somewhat reduced, which could further impact their progression through the QEP curriculum.

It is important to note that students at Mackay must continually be provided with specialized teaching resources and strategies to learn the skills that will allow them to navigate the curriculum content and to continue to progress. Many of their diagnoses do not disappear over time but remain a lifelong condition. By providing students tools and specialized instruction, the aim is to allow them to function and succeed to their maximum potential. Each student's "potential" is unique to them and future outcomes or placement are dependent on their rate of progress. For many students, the Ministerial program of Instruction cannot be completed in the prescribed time and be accommodated in terms of instruction, assessment and evaluation. In these instances, individualized goals and outcomes are established in their IEP which reflect their level of functioning in the specific subject or overall program of study. The aim is to move them further along, eventually allowing them to meet the criteria of their grade level when possible.

Several years ago, discussions between EMSB teachers and the EMSB evaluation consultant resulted in the decision that the students on modified programs would not write the ministerial End of Cycle (EOC) exams; which explains why there is very little data for the Mathematics, French and English EOC exams. Instead, the students are evaluated according to the modifications and goals specified on their IEP's, developed specifically to meet their unique needs and abilities. These students' exam results would not be able to provide grade- equivalent scores and would not reflect the student's abilities accurately.

## **PREPARING FOR TRANSITION**

One of the key objectives of Mackay Centre School and RPSS is to assist families in finding the most appropriate educational setting for their students once they reach high school, turn 21, or have received all the necessary services to transition back to a regular setting.

The staff must evaluate the student's most optimal time to be integrated. Discussions with many partners, for example, teachers, rehab staff, parents, outside resources and programs, other school boards and other specialized settings, allow for decisions to be made based a multitude of factors and more pertinent and student-centered information. For some students, their medical conditions override their integration process until their health is stabilized. In these instances, if the school can continue to provide more intense services, a decision regarding the student's integration will be reached in consultation with all the partners. For others, reintegration into a regular setting is possible very quickly.

## MISSION AND VALUES

### **Our Mission:**

The mission of the Mackay Centre School is to provide a safe, caring and enriching environment which empowers learners to achieve their potential with a curriculum that is dynamic and responsive to students' needs.

### **Our Values:**

- All students have the right to learn in an environment adapted to their needs. This could range from a small self-contained class to an integrated setting.
- The educational setting of a student should provide them with the tools necessary to access the curriculum and to participate in activities of daily living.

## GROUPS CONSULTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

- The school's parent community at large through a survey
- All EMSB staff at the school including teachers and support staff
- Students

## THE CONSULTATION

In order to determine appropriate goals for this Educational Project, the school team conducted a consultation of parents and staff using an online survey. A focus group of students were also consulted to reflect on what the school does well and where we could improve.

From the consultation, we learned that parents appreciate receiving individualized care for each student, noting that the school environment is safe. Students echoed that they feel welcomed and safe, and that there are always adults on hand to help meet their needs and navigate social challenges. Staff commented on the collaborative nature of the relationships between the rehab and the EMSB staff.

Parents would like to see more psychological support (for students), and more rehabilitation services after grade 2. Students expressed that they enjoyed extra-curricular activities and hope that the school will continue to offer them new opportunities in this area. All staff reported a desire to continue receiving professional development in specialized areas that will help with the various needs of students.

## ORIENTATIONS

The academic section of the educational project is designed to align with the school board's Commitment to Success Plan. While the Board acknowledges the importance of all subjects and grades in student development, the primary focus for reporting is on core subjects in most schools. For schools that have a greater number of students with special needs and or a unique student population, it is recognized that each school must establish objectives that assist parents and or caregivers in understanding the progress of each student's learning journey. While all students receive provincial report cards, it is important to note that our students have diverse and often complex needs, which can be reflected in academic marks below grade level. The objectives outlined in this educational project aim to provide more comprehensive feedback to parents and caregivers regarding the progress, strengths and challenges of each student.

## COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is fundamental to the well-being and development of all individuals, particularly for students with special needs. The ability to express one's needs, wants, and thoughts is not only a basic human right but also a cornerstone of meaningful education and social interaction. For students with special needs, communication challenges can significantly impact their ability to participate fully in educational activities and engage meaningfully with others. Recognizing this, the Board is committed to ensuring that all students have access to the necessary tools and support to communicate effectively. Where appropriate, the Board is working to provide students with communication devices and assistive technologies to enhance their ability to express themselves and engage with their environment. By empowering students to communicate their needs and wants, we are fostering their independence, self-advocacy, and overall quality of life.

**GOAL: To ensure that all students have access to devices and equipment and receive guidance and encouragement to use them appropriately and effectively to communicate their needs and desires.**

Regular and meaningful communication with parents is essential, particularly for students with moderate to severe special needs. Parents play a crucial role in supporting their child's development and education. Keeping them informed about their child's progress is key to this partnership. While all students in the province receive a provincial report card, our school recognizes that these report cards are unable to take into consideration the wide array of needs, strengths and challenges that affect student performance. We aim to provide regular updates to parents throughout the year, ensuring they are informed about their child's achievements, challenges, and overall development. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of each student's progress and enables us to work collaboratively with parents to provide the best possible support and learning experiences for every student.

**GOAL: To provide parents with regular feedback concerning student progress in addition to report card marks.**

## **ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

In Quebec, all elementary and secondary students receive a provincial report card three times a year, providing parents with feedback on their child's progress in relation to the competencies outlined in the Quebec Educational Program. However, these report cards do not provide a template that addresses the specificity needed to accurately reflect the progress of students in a special needs setting.

At Mackay, teachers maintain regular communication with parents. Despite this, there is a need for more precise diagnostic tools to establish a realistic, appropriate and accurate baseline of student learning. These tools also facilitate differentiated instruction.

Over the next three years, the focus will be on implementing diagnostic literacy assessments several times per year. This initiative aims to establish benchmarks for student literacy skills, allowing educators to plan more effectively and provide targeted feedback for student improvement.

**GOAL: Implement diagnostic testing in literacy at regular intervals throughout the academic year to assess student literacy skills and provide targeted feedback for improvement.**

## **SCHOOL CLIMATE**

Creating a positive school climate is essential for the holistic development of all students, especially in a special needs setting. At Mackay, we understand that a nurturing and inclusive environment significantly impacts student learning and well-being. One of the critical components of fostering a positive school climate is actively seeking and incorporating feedback from our students. Their insights are invaluable in shaping a supportive and responsive educational experience. When students feel accepted, respected, listened to, and connected to their school community, their confidence and motivation to learn increases. By prioritizing these elements, we aim to create an environment where every student feels valued, heard and empowered to reach their full potential.

EMSB schools use a survey tool to gather feedback from students about their school experiences. Alternative schools, because of their small student populations, use an annual focus group format with questions for students about their school life and what improvements can be made from their perspective.

**GOAL: To implement an annual focus group for students concerning their well-being at school and identifying areas for improvement.**

Building strong community partnerships is essential for special needs schools to foster equity and create meaningful opportunities for diversity and inclusion. By collaborating with local organizations and other schools, we can provide our students with enriching experiences alongside their peers from various backgrounds. These partnerships can open doors for our students to participate in a wide array of activities, enhancing their social skills and broadening their horizons.

Currently, Mackay has a reverse integration program where students from other schools attend Mackay for a year. Reverse integration helps to build a more connected, and supportive school culture.

Through these heartfelt collaborations, we ensure that our students are not just included, but cherished and celebrated as integral members of the broader community.

**GOAL: To explore opportunities for student exchange and collaboration with other schools and community groups.**

## **DIGITAL COMPETENCY**

In 2018, the MEQ launched its Digital Action Plan which was its blueprint for the integration of digital technology and associated innovative pedagogical practices into the education sector. In 2019, the MEQ published its Digital Competency Framework with 12 dimensions, which was derived from the Digital Action Plan.

The Digital Competency is not only for students, but also for teachers. Teachers will continue to receive professional development to increase their grasp of the 12 dimensions.

**GOAL: To continue building capacity in the digital competency.**



**APPENDIX: OBJECTIVES AT A GLANCE**

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>Specific Initiatives Towards Improvement</b>
<p><b>To ensure that all students have access to devices and equipment and are efficient in using them to appropriately and effectively communicate their needs and desires.</b></p>	
<p><b>To provide parents with regular feedback concerning student progress in addition to report card marks.</b></p>	
<p><b>Implement diagnostic testing in literacy at regular intervals throughout the academic year to assess student literacy skills and provide targeted feedback for improvement.</b></p>	
<p><b>To implement an annual focus group for students concerning their well-being at school and identifying areas for improvement.</b></p>	
<p><b>To explore opportunities for student exchange and collaboration with other schools and community groups.</b></p>	
<p><b>To continue building capacity in the digital competency.</b></p>	