CLC Evaluation – The Quest for Sustainability & Best Practices

Final Report

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Community Learning Centre Initiative

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Overview of the CLC Initiative

This is the executive summary of the final evaluation report that presents the findings from the two years of data collection for the second evaluation phase (2012-2014) of the Community Learning Centres: An English Minority-Language Initiative.

The purpose of the Initiative is to help schools in Québec's English sector become "Community Learning Centres" (CLC schools) that serve as hubs for education and community development and as models for future policy and practice. The CLC approach is intended to contribute to community and school improvement through the establishment of mutually reinforcing partnerships between English schools and their communities (community-based organizations and non profits, local businesses, local and provincial government bodies and community members). In CLC schools, school-community partnerships are facilitated by a dedicated coordinator who joins the school staff on a part time or full time basis and works closely with the school principal. Partnerships maintained through the coordinator resource and school principal help local stakeholders to better leverage existing resources and generate new ones to meet ongoing needs. There are three key results anticipated from the initiative:

(1) Ongoing collaborative partnerships between schools, families and communities in all regions;

(2) Increased student engagement and success; and

(3) Enhanced access to educational services and lifelong learning opportunities for English-speaking communities.

In the long term, it is also hoped that CLC schools will contribute to the revitalization of English-speaking minority communities in Québec.

2. Evaluation Objective

The objective of the second evaluation (2012-2014) of the CLC Initiative is to provide timely and pertinent information to support the ongoing evolution and implementation of CLC schools in Quebec, and to identify strategies, practices, solutions and policies which allow for their sustainability. In this context, the evaluation is framed by four principal questions to guide the process:

- Improving educational outcomes[1]: To what extent and in what ways does the CLC Initiative contribute to improvements in the educational environment / climate?

- Enhancing community vitality: To what extent and in what ways does the CLC Initiative contribute to enhancements in community vitality?

- Ensuring sustainability: To what extent can the CLC Initiative (PRT, Network, and Individual CLCs) be sustainable?

- Theory of Change, as the primary framework for guiding the CLC Initiative towards successful outcomes: To what extent and in what ways do the Initiative`s Theory of Change, and individual CLC theories of change, support and guide the processes and outcomes of the initiative?

3. Summary of Findings

3.1. Where are CLCs in 2015?

CLC schools represent a cross-section of English schools across Quebec

- Each of the nine English language school boards has at least two CLC schools (the range of CLC schools per school board is between 2 and 6). There are four CLC schools in the Commission Scolaire du Littoral (a special status, non-linguistic school board serving the Lower North Shore region) and one private CLC school (Hebrew Academy) in Montreal.

- There are 12 CLC schools located in cities (within the boundaries of an urban conglomerate), 9 in towns, 11 in rural areas, and 5 are in isolated regions.

- There are 12 secondary schools, 11 mixed elementary/secondary schools, 12 elementary schools and two adult education centres designated as CLC schools.

This range of contexts explains why the CLC model adopted a "no one –size –fits-all" approach, allowing each CLC school to elaborate its own Theory of Change.

In 2010, the evolution of all 22 CLC schools was evaluated according to the Fixsen model of program implementation by WESTED. At that time, nine CLC schools had made the most progress in implementation, assessed as at the full operation stage, and none had yet made it to the innovation stage. Drawing on 2014 data, the PRT examined all 37 CLC schools, including the 14 more recent Phase 3 CLC schools. From this assessment, it was observed that:

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[1] Outcomes are usually expressed as knowledge, skills or attitudes and are measurable results of a specific, planned educational experience for students. "Educational outcomes" is being used in this report to represent improvement linked to a variety of commonly used terms such as student achievement, school environment, school climate, student engagement and perseverance.

- All but five CLC schools have moved past initial implementation

- Eight CLC schools are now solidly at full operation

- Seventeen CLC schools are now in the innovation stage and progressing toward the sustainability stage

- And finally six CLC schools, which can be considered exemplary, have reached the sustainability stage.

The rapid progression of Phase 3 CLC schools speaks to the strength of the network approach that has helped new CLC school leaders to learn from the lessons of Phase 1 and 2 CLC schools. Similarly, the network approach facilitated by the PRT encourages 'mutual aid' and fosters opportunities for peer-to-peer support. Since the last assessment of the Initiative's development in 2010, the network approach has significantly contributed to the positive, and often accelerated, progression and implementation of CLC schools in Quebec's English sector.

3.2. Educational Outcomes

The evaluation shows strong indications that the CLC initiative is having a positive impact on educational outcomes, a message that is consistent from all sources and all respondents to varying degrees. This is particularly so regarding school climate and student engagement, but also, according to interviews with principals and coordinators, to improved school attendance rates and increased participation in educational activities outside of the classroom, as well as the community's contribution to the school (especially through partnerships). The evaluation of the direct impact on student perseverance and success proved to be the most difficult sub-objective to examine. This can be explained by the need to consider the important work of teachers, staff and families in examining how well students are doing in schools. Nonetheless, it is clear that the CLC approach is contributing to improved learning conditions.

Collaboration within the School Network

In 2010, CLC schools could be divided into two categories: a parallel model, in which the CLC approach was developing in parallel to the schools', and another, in which the approach could be seen to be in the process of becoming integrated into the schools' day-to-day life, from community based service learning projects in the classroom to a significant increase in extra-curricular and cross-curricular activities whereby community members, students and staff can come together throughout the day and often into the evening. These two models are still in existence today, however, some CLC schools seem to be gaining ground in their degree of adoption with the approach, serving as an example of what a CLC school can become. More specifically, an important number of schools are including the CLC approach in their school

MESA (Management & Educational Success Agreement). The CLC concept and CLC schools themselves are only minimally included in school board strategic plans. Examples of boards that have moved ahead in integrating the CLC approach into board-wide planning are the Littoral School Board on the Lower North Shore and the New Frontiers School Board. The PRT is actively engaged in building support in school boards through school board representatives and progress is being made in this respect.

Improving the School Environment

A large majority of respondents, from principals, coordinators, teachers, students and their parents to school board representatives felt that the CLC approach had indeed contributed to improving the school environment. In the baseline interviews and focus groups, some of the important ways that CLC coordinators and being a CLC school have contributed to making the school environment more positive were identified and these include: having many more extra-curricular activities offered in CLC schools with growing participation rates, more collaboration amongst different stakeholders, improved student behaviours and a general perception of a safer school environment.

Supporting Student Engagement

There was agreement that the CLC approach is having a positive influence on student engagement, from motivating students who might otherwise be absent to come to school every day, through to greater participation in classroom and extracurricular activities. The large majority of those providing information for the evaluation were in agreement that resources, partnerships and increased community engagement at the school generated through the CLC approach had been an important factor in motivating students to be present at school, and to take part in activities once at school. Respondents talked about students who are benefitting from homework assistance and tutoring services, as well as lower levels of absenteeism, and generally improved engagement in school programs.

Students reported, during site visit discussion groups, being more engaged, more motivated and generally more involved in school activities. Student surveys (TTFM) supports findings from site visits.

A majority of the teachers interviewed during the site visits remarked that being a CLC school and having a CLC coordinator is of great assistance to them in organizing activities, providing students with the chance to enhance their skills and self-esteem, and generally contributing to a better learning environment.

Supporting Student Readiness, Perseverance

One of the ways that CLC schools are contributing to supporting conditions key to student achievement is through the large number of activities and programs put in place to support school readiness.   There are many early childhood education programs promoted through CLC schools aiming to engage families, often made possible through partnerships that have developed through the PRT and the CLC network.

 In many contexts, CLC schools have drawn on the services of the CLC coordinator and the partnership network built through the CLC network to bring support to specific at-risk student populations: boys, aboriginal populations, and potential drop-outs.

Many CLC schools are categorized as NANS schools, benefitting from extra resources through the NANS program to help the school team provide students in disadvantaged neighborhoods with more support. According to a report written in 2013 for the PRT based on two case-studies, having a CLC coordinator brings support to many goals in the NANS program and in particular, to building a school-community- family relationship.

There is some divergence of opinion as to the extent that CLC schools can impact "student success", which often seemed to be interpreted by stakeholders as academic achievement. Principals in the baseline interviews recognize how CLC schools contribute to student engagement and school environment, but were more hesitant to make links between the work of CLC coordinators and student success. There were a number of principals, however, who believed strongly that the CLC approach is having a positive impact on student achievement and have been tracking results and elements that reflect student engagement and success.

Improving Parental Involvement

CLC schools offer a large and diverse array of activities and programs that target parents' involvement in their children's schooling. All CLC school coordinators reported that engaging parents remains a challenge. Many CLC schools are working in indirect ways to build family involvement in education. By offering activities that draw parents into the school, such as family badminton nights, cooking classes, community gardening, they hope to build a more positive relationship with families and eventually use this as a bridge to discussion between educators and parents. Progress is being made in building parental support in CLC schools when compared to the findings from the WestEd evaluation in 2010.

Reaching parents and building support for the CLC approach would appear to be more challenging in urban and high school settings than in smaller rural or remote communities or elementary school settings.

Life Long Learning (LLL) and the Video Conferencing Network (VCN): Extending Access to Education

CLC schools offer an abundance of LLL activities and programs to people not normally served by schools, providing opportunities for training, health and social service information sessions and cultural activities.

Respondents to the baseline interviews were overwhelmingly positive about the videoconference network as an effective learning tool, with coordinators and principals citing regular use and few technical problems. The VCN allows CLC schools to connect to one another, as well as to various content providers from around the world. From a PRT online survey, many teachers reported that the VC opportunities made available to students were 'engaging', 'interesting', 'fascinating' and 'well animated'. All CLC schools use the VCN; however, the extent to which it is used for learning purposes linked to the school's educational program varies.

Improving the Community Link to the School

The most evident contribution of the CLC approach is with regard to community participation in the school – the approach is fostering a culture shift that helps rejuvenate the community's engagement with their schools and vice versa. For some schools, especially those in communities where the English population is a very small minority (<5%), this has been very important after many years of existing in isolation from one another. This aspect is more fully discussed in the Community Vitality section.

CLC schools have had a positive impact on the number of volunteers in the school. This report documents many examples of how the CLC school coordinators are helping support the bridge between the community and the school, one of the strongest being Community Based Service Learning (CBSL). CBSL is the notion of learning from the local community while providing a service to the community. One of the ways that CLC schools are connecting and anchoring education in their communities is through support to community based service learning (CBSL). The PRT has devoted considerable resources towards the development and implementation of the concept (there is a designated member of the team) and the holding of several CBSL Institutes (2 day training session) for teachers, principals, coordinators and other interested school board personnel. Teachers who have taken part in the CSBL activities supported by the PRT stated that these have increased and/or enhanced the offer of CBSL in their schools and that CBSL institutes have increased their understanding of the value of school-community partnerships.

The PRT conducted a survey of teachers in CLC schools who had been involved in a community based service learning (CBSL) project, which typically involved the CLC coordinator in some role (identification of community needs, logistics arrangements, fund raising, etc.) Of the responding

teachers (2014, n = 56), 80.8% indicated that students were more enthusiastic (more attentive, staying on task, energetic) on school days involving the project, and to a lesser degree students who were typically disengaged became more involved during the CBSL project.

3.3. Community Vitality

Value of the CLC as Community Resource

CLC schools are perceived in their communities as a valuable resource and "need to be maintained". The majority of respondents of an online parent survey indicated that they value the CLC and three-quarters of respondents (n=1119/1573) stated that it is important for their school to remain a CLC.

CLC schools are quickly being recognized as important in rural areas. In urban communities, findings are less clear: there is either less support, possibly tied to less need for the CLC approach, or and this is quite probable, support from parents in large urban communities is taking longer to build.

It would also appear that in communities where there are important needs to be met, parents are more likely to quickly recognize the value of the CLC approach. This can be seen in rural contexts as well as in schools designated as NANS (socioeconomically disadvantaged schools).

Building Community Identity

It is clear that many CLC schools are engaged in or supporting events, activities and programs that directly or indirectly serve to build community identity. Most CLC coordinators have helped schools organize an important number of activities that are important in building a local community and sense of belonging. There are also many events, projects and programs that connect seniors to students to the benefit of both populations. The work of the coordinator in supporting these programs and finding the funding to make events and programs possible is deemed critical.

The greater ability to offer programs outside of school hours, as well as to make outreach efforts into the surrounding community, has contributed to making CLC schools 'a more vital place' and clearly this contributes to community vitality. After-school programming provides students with quality activities that are not always otherwise available and create an incentive for parents to engage with the school. Many rural English-speaking communities have a high percentage of seniors and the CLC has acted in many cases as a conduit to enable seniors to act as volunteers within the school and for students to participate in reciprocal programs where they go to senior's residences or events to assist.

Lifelong learning is another way that CLC schools and the work of a CLC coordinator are helping to strengthen community identity and vitality.

Networking and Enabling Dialogue in and among English-speaking Communities

One of the most surprisingly successful and positive consequences of the CLC initiative is the emergence of new networking possibilities for English language communities. Networks not only include local partner organizations but also regional networks of community development organizations and social service and economic development agencies, mostly serving the Francophone population in the area. Networks benefit both schools and communities and are also serving to breakdown the traditional isolation of English communities and allow for more concerted efforts. The presence of a coordinator has allowed CLC schools to participate more in non-school networks and institutional tables (both French and English). This has raised the profile of the English-speaking communities in some regions and is clearly an important piece in building and strengthening the vitality of the community.

Community Conversations is an important example of how the CLC approach and the PRT are showing their potential in the area of networking. In this case, the CLC network went beyond a supporting or contributing role to take on an instigating and organizing role. The CLC network planned and held a series of "Community Conversations" in 2012 and 2013 with the aim of bringing representatives of English public schools, community organizations and community members together to discuss the relationship between schools and their communities.

A Community Resource Committee has also recently been created, an informal group of provincial organizations that often partner with CLC schools, or use their services and facilities. In June 2014, a meeting was held and focused on the notion of collective impact in the English-speaking communities and whether the CLC Initiative could work with these organizations as a 'backbone organization.'

The Community Conversations organized by CLC schools with support from the PRT are an excellent example of how the CLC network is promoting and enabling dialogue between English institutions and organizations, communities and the school sector. The topic of Collective Impact has emerged and deserves consideration among all those invested in community vitality in Quebec. The need/desire to connect with members of the French-speaking population emerged as a major concern and as directly related to the future vitality of English language communities and their institutions.

Improved Access to Services

When it comes to services[2] that are provided by partners or outside agencies, in many cases, CLC schools act as a place to get in touch with the English-speaking community, to distribute materials or facilitate referrals and provide a location for programs and videoconferences. CLC schools often act as a conduit with regards to service provision.

CLC schools are also clearly emerging as places where a much wider array of services, programs and activities are offered to students, teachers, families and the broader community. Thanks to the provincial partnership network that has emerged since the launch of the CLC Initiative, participating schools are becoming places that not only allow partners easier outreach to target populations who are often hard to contact, they are becoming places where an important number of new programs and services are being offered.

Parents in rural contexts, where services are often most needed, strongly felt that access to services had been increased thanks to the presence of a CLC school. There are in some cases, important challenges to providing services and programs to the local community. Distance remains an impediment to accessing services in rural areas, given that many students and their families do not live nearby. As a result, they find it difficult to return to the school facility on evenings and weekends outside of school hours. Some schools are not in a position to provide access to services given that space in the school is limited or configured in such a way that makes access difficult.

CLC schools, however, are clearly meeting this aspect of their mandate and are providing important services to the communities they are located in.

Involvement of CLC schools in the community

One of the most notable ways that CLC schools are becoming involved in their communities is through Community Based Service Learning (CBSL). The emergence of CBSL projects is proving to be an important vector for activities which take the school into the community. Projects have ranged from oral history to healthy eating activities and environmental clean-up campaigns out in the community.

A CBSL Institute was organized by the PRT for the first time in 2011 and has shown considerable increase in participation each year. According to teachers surveyed by the PRT, 80% of CBSL activities are tied to the broad areas of learning (BAL) in the Quebec Education Program.

According to 95% of principals and coordinators interviewed, being a CLC school has enabled connections or bridges between the school and the local English-speaking community. Among

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[2] Service being defined as something the service provider would ordinarily be doing itself but in this case is providing the service through the CLC as a point of access.

the changes observed are an improved image of the school in the community and more awareness of the school and its activities, (particularly with the French-speaking community and service providers), but also among partners and networks.

Who is the CLC School Community? Reaching out

Several CLCs exist in communities where the English-speaking population is less than 5% and the majority of students are Francophone (but have a 'Certificate of Eligibility' through one of their parents enabling them to attend an English school).

Other CLC schools draw students with aboriginal backgrounds. Even though only a few of the CLC schools have a substantial Aboriginal population within their school/community, the PRT estimates[3] that approximately 12.5 % of English-speaking students in CLC schools across the province are of Aboriginal origin. These Aboriginal communities (mostly Algonquin, Cree, Mohawk, Mi'kmaq and Inuit) have historically been less engaged with English-speaking institutions and their programs. The PRT and some CLC schools have been actively engaged in providing opportunities for aboriginal students. There have also been exchange activities between schools.

Sustainability

Ensuring funding to sustain the coordinator's position and other expenses, which are considered core funding, are only part of the issue of sustainability. Other dimensions, such as the development of partnerships and relationships between stakeholders, are also understood as key aspects, contributing to the sustainability and stability of CLC schools. The dimensions needed to arrive at sustainability in this large sense are identified and discussed in the PRT's Theory of Change[4].

Core Funding

The CLC initiative is now in its ninth year of operation. The original plan was that funding through the Canada-Quebec Entente would end in June 2013 for Phase 1 CLC schools and in June 2014 for Phase 2 and 3 CLC schools. The intent was that the initial funding provided annually for each CLC school would be gradually taken on by other sources, either school boards, partners or thanks to the provision of services. The initial deadline for attaining financial sustainability proved to be too optimistic. A May 2013 announcement by MELS confirmed that the Quebec-Canada entente would continue to provide funding for half of the coordinator's salary for the next 5 years (2013-2018). The issue of core funding still looms large in the coming years, given ongoing reductions in the school boards' regular budgets.

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[3] *TTFM 2012-2013 CLC report*
[4]. http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/#5

There is a large consensus amongst all stakeholders that continued core funding (whatever the source) will be necessary for CLC schools to progress and, for most, to survive. There were numerous comments during the stakeholder interviews during the evaluation that school boards should ensure their support for the CLC approach. This was often tied to comments about what adopting the CLC approach and having a CLC coordinator can bring to a school. Being able to show what the CLC approach can bring to schools and a return on investment on core funding can clearly help strengthen the sustainability of CLC schools and strengthen school board support.

School board support has evolved since the 2013 Mid-term evaluation and following recommendations made at the time. Notable effort has been made to strengthen school board engagement, which has evolved considerably since the launch of the CLC Initiative in 2006 and most boards are moving toward greater commitment and acceptance of the CLC approach. A school board representative committee now acts as the PRT advisory committee, providing direction particularly with regard to how to better integrate the CLC approach and orient CLC activities into the school's day-to-day life.

Generating funding to support CLC activities and programs

Early into implementation, the PRT provided coordinators with training in grant writing to help them find funding to run programs and activities. CLC coordinators, generally speaking, became successful at finding grants and other sources of funding to cover the cost of offering different programs, or finding in-kind contributions that made programs and activities possible.

Some CLC schools have, in effect, managed to generate several hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants, human resource allocations, materials and other in-kind contributions. It soon became apparent that CLC coordinators were able to generate a "return on investment", investment being understood as the core funding provided by MELS and the school boards (equivalent to $40,000 per CLC school per year).

CLC coordinators record annual data on partnership and in-kind contributions and the value of these contributions, but only in a more systematic manner as of 2010. For the period of July 2010 to June 2014, based on 124 out of a possible 132 annual reports available for review, CLC schools had arranged 4,102 partnerships over the four years (an average of 27.7 per CLC school per year), for a total estimated value of $10.55 million.

The basic assessment of return on investment (ROI), as determined by the total amount of recorded resources that have been raised by each CLC school, demonstrates that the CLC approach is able to generate interesting resources from external sources. A number of

significant observations emerge from the analysis of partnership and matching funds between 2010 and 2014:

- The CLC schools have generated an estimated 2.13 return on the investment (ROI) over the coordinator's salary for all CLCs (1.39 for the median) and the amount of financial resources as a proportion of all contributions (now 30%) continues to increase on an annual basis.

- The annual average ROI increased from 1.83 to 2.44 between 2010 and 2014, indicating that CLCs, as a group, have the capacity to sustain partnerships and matching contributions with the $40,000 base funding available each year;

- The amount of financial contributions has increased every year, with a total increase of 389% since 2010; the proportion of annual financial contributions has risen from 26.2% to 42.8% between 2010 and 2014 reflecting the CLCs' growing access to regional social programs such as *Quebec en forme*.

Stability

One of the major themes to emerge across the data is the great strides made by individual CLC schools and by the PRT in assembling a wide array and number of partnerships. This is a major component of success for the Initiative given that only a few of these partnerships existed prior to the adoption of the CLC approach. It is also fairly clear that these partnerships could not all be maintained without the presence of the coordinator.

Partnerships are to a large degree responsible for the "return on investment" shown in the previous section and for the "value added" that makes a CLC school attractive to school boards, educational stakeholders and their communities.

Formalizing the role of the coordinator and more fully integrating coordinators into the educational functioning of the school remain important and challenging areas.

Building support and awareness of the CLC approach among teachers and principal remains an ongoing process.

Relationships between the different actors in the school system and their buy-in to the CLC approach emerged as a key issue during the course of the evaluation activities. The coordinators' ability to act (plan and implement programs and activities, help link the community to the school and vice versa) is very much tied to the relationships that are developed with principals, teachers, students, partners and community members, and parents.

When there is a positive principal-coordinator relationship in place, the CLC approach is effective. Without such a positive relationship, or even if it is lacking in some respect, the CLC

approach tends to generate sub-optimal results. A CLC school principal is an integral advocate for the CLC approach, particularly in outreach to teachers.

Teacher engagement is an important and ongoing challenge, and an important one for full adoption of the CLC approach in a school. It was observed that teachers do not always see the link between the CLC approach and the classroom, and the coordinator and/or principal may not always be making this link. The CBSL trainings offered by the PRT are pertinent to building teacher engagement with the CLC approach.

Relationships between CLC school leaders and the school board representatives responsible for supporting them are described as positive. The school board representatives are highly supportive of the CLC initiative, but also identify a few challenges, particularly in the area of communications. The PRT has taken a strong leadership role in building stronger relationships between CLC coordinators and school board representatives, as well as between school board representatives from across the network.

A Board-wide Approach: The Example of the NFSB

As the CLC Initiative evolved since its inception in 2006, there has been interest by various school boards in the adoption of a regional or satellite model for CLC schools within their territory. The primary motivation for this is to be able to extend the CLC approach and its programs and services to more schools than just the initially designated sites, and to be able to integrate CLC-type activities into school boards at large. This model further integrates the CLC concept into school board operations and therefore points toward sustainability.

It would seem that a board-wide approach is worth considering for what it can contribute to community vitality and school improvement. This approach, and its impact on communication practices, collaboration and service delivery within an entire school board, seems to be helping "break down silos" which characterize Quebec's English speaking communities and institutions. It is also helping to support the implementation of programs in schools across the board, reaching more students and families.

This approach expands the scope of interaction with the community and its institutions (both government and private sector), both of which have the potential to contribute towards a sustainable program.

The main disadvantage of a board-wide approach is that it limits a coordinator's ability to integrate within an individual school, support principals' in championing the concept and facilitate optimal adoption of the approach.   While a board-wide approach helps to expand the range of program beneficiaries, it might also limit a coordinator's ability to meet individual school-specific needs(i.e., coordinators of regional or satellite models will understandably be

more focused on addressing the common needs and wants of multiple schools and regions). This is raised here as a question that requires more study.

Approaches which combine regional school board wide networking with a team-based approach, as well as having coordinators in place within schools to support the CLC concept locally, might prove an option worth exploring in the future.

3.4. Theory of Change (TOC)

A Theory of Change is a specific and measurable description of a social change initiative that forms the basis for strategic planning, on-going decision-making and evaluation. Adopted by the PRT as a potentially effective organizing tool in 2006, the ToC builds and supports the Framework for Action designed to guide CLC implementation prior to the launch of the initiative. As ToC proved to be a powerful organizing tool, the initial Framework for Action was modified to better fit with a ToC approach.

Almost all coordinators agree, the ToC is a good tool to have, regardless of the extent to which they use it. Most of the coordinators see a connection between the ToC and the organization and delivery of actual activities that are implemented as a consequence of the planning component of the ToC and share the outcomes/results linked to the ToC with other stakeholders. Less than half of the coordinators reported using it for measurement (evaluation) as well as planning purposes. Some coordinators feel overwhelmed and individually responsible for a school's ToC. In these cases, there is still work to do in clarifying the CLC concept and how it rests on a collaborative approach. It would also appear that there is still work to do, in some contexts, in clarifying the role of coordinators within this collaborative approach.

The PRT ToC, much like the ToCs designed by individual CLC school partnership tables, has a range of goals that reflect the multidimensional approach to change that lies at the heart of the CLC concept. The PRT now works with a reduced staff to meet these varied administrative, management and program delivery responsibilities. It is quite clear that the PRT is meeting its leadership role in guiding and supporting implementation of the CLC approach in schools. It is also quite clear that the PRT plays a critical role in building and supporting a CLC network which links schools and communities to major partners (like CSSHSN) and to each other. It is impossible to imagine the CLC approach gaining ground in Quebec's English sector without the leadership of the PRT.

Support from the PRT (and others) remains important with regard to the ToC. Guidance and support for measurement and evaluation of more complex change seems likely to be the next major evaluative step for the PRT. Up until recently, most CLC schools could only assess short-term outcomes. The next step, measuring longer-term goals, is yet to come.

4. Key Points from the Findings

The role of the CLC Approach in contributing to educational outcomes

Particularly the case for student perseverance and success, this needs to be explored and a common vision identified for each board and the network as a whole (the role of educational outcomes, what outcomes are desired, what the 1-3-5 year plans are, what indicators could be used for measurement, etc.) given its integrated role within the school; to this end, educational outcomes need to be better measured to demonstrate the value of having a CLC. This might include a common evaluation tool amongst school boards.

Partnership development

This has been a success, producing a wide range of new partners for the schools and an estimated 2.13 return over the investment in a coordinator's salary for all CLCs (1.39 for the median). Given the positive results, a more detailed examination of partnerships (which work best?), the costs associated with partnership contributions and subsequent activities and the potential for estimating social return on investment (SROI, or long-term impact) are well worth further exploration.

Relationships

These are key elements of success; they can't be assumed or taken for granted, particularly between the four major players within the school (principals, coordinators, teachers and school board representatives, director generals) and therefore measures to support and enhance these relationships are important.

Stability

This is a major component of sustainability, ("it's not just about the money"), so the institution of common practices, structures, procedures for operations and governance will be helpful in providing a more stable environment for functioning and development.

The CLC Initiative has been in constant evolution during the course of the evaluation, and numerous changes have been made since the Mid-term Report in June 2013. Interim reports on findings from data points like the parent survey have also been subsequently shared with the PRT and at CLC network meetings. In this context, where the recommendations are phrased as "continue to" it is because action has already been taken with regard to the particular suggestion emanating from the evaluation findings.

5. Key Points from Recommendations

5.1. Provincial level recommendations for the CLC network

Community-based Service Learning - CBSL offers the opportunity to address both educational outcomes and community vitality priorities, and so merits continued emphasis and support within the programming of the CLC Initiative. CBSL training events are proving to be an effective way of building teacher engagement in CLC schools.

School Boards - Findings indicate that a strong collaborative relationship between the school board representatives and the PRT is important to foster engagement and provide support at the school board level.

Working Conditions - There is a need for a provincial definition, or at least description, of the CLC worker (the present definition does not align with collective agreements) and attendant working conditions.

Best Practices - Continue to communicate and develop best practices, tools and protocols that will support the building and maintenance of effective working relationships: such as tools for reiterating (reminding) the players as to respective roles, responsibilities and lines of reporting, and (for the principal) to encourage a common principal/coordinator vision. A 'what to do' process when help is needed could be developed and offered to the CLC network.

Alternate Models - There should be more school boards/PRT exploration of alternate CLC models that differ from the current single school concept and that would contribute to the further integration of the CLC concept, including the board-wide model where appropriate.

Partnerships – The CLC initiative has developed a number of collaborative associations with other provincial networks and organizations. These are mutually beneficial in terms of achieving objectives as well as sharing resources. These types of partnership activities should be regarded as opportunities to do more with less and fostered and implemented as appropriate.

Community Conversations - Continue to take a leadership role in Community Conversations across the province as they are beneficial to overall community engagement with the network and individual CLC schools.

5.2. CLC school level recommendations

Planning - To the extent possible, ensure that the CLC ToC and any existing partnership agreements are aligned with the school board strategic plan as well as the the MESA, bringing support to the learning conditions of students.

Evaluation - Formalize and continue to support data collection activity within the CLC school to better evaluate progress and accomplishments (CBSL, student and community participation, volunteer hours, student attendance, etc.).

Teacher Engagement - In order to improve teacher engagement, coordinators could be offered some training sessions on the Quebec Educational Program at annual meetings – enough to be able to work more closely with engaged teachers and offer support (e.g., Riverview CLC school coordinator supports the cross-curricular Robotics program). They should also be present and reporting at staff meetings.

Communications - Each CLC school (or all CLC schools within a school board) should devise a comprehensive communications plan to raise awareness about the Initiative at the local level, and this in concert with outreach requirements/objectives of the school itself, especially in promoting volunteer engagement.

Governance - More formalization of and participation in CLC school governance structures and processes (e.g. ensuring that teachers and parents are on the CLC Stakeholder Committee). The coordinator should participate in Governing Board meetings and present on a regular basis, either reports of past activities or presentations on upcoming programs or ideas for programs.

5.3. Provincial Resource Team (PRT)

Data collection and evaluation –the PRT has taken a leadership role and has developed considerable expertise to assist CLC coordinators in compiling and analyzing collected data. The PRT should ensure that all CLC schools are already involved in collecting and recording data for this next phase.

School board representatives – These stakeholders play a key bridging role between the 'school system' and the CLC approach. The PRT should continue to take a leadership role in building school board engagement.

Alignment – the PRT's overview position enables it to assist CLC schools in the alignment of their ToC/action plans with the school MESA plan and community equivalents (where possible), and to develop a ToC for the CLC school in collaboration with school and community partners to better align its activities and anticipated results.

Community-Based Service Learning - Continue to build teacher engagement through Community –Based Services learning Institutes. Continue to disseminate best practices in CBSL projects and present CBSL CLC initiatives at annual teacher conferences.

Aboriginal Communities Initiatives – The PRT, along with partners like Kairos Canada, have helped to provide CLC schools with supported opportunities to engage in Aboriginal Awareness and Reconciliation projects. Teachers report positive outcomes, with over 1125 students from across the network participating in projects this year alone. The PRT should continue to help enable classroom projects with an Aboriginal focus and seek to enhance outcomes for the benefit of students and communities.

Roles and Responsibilities – The PRT has substantial documentation already prepared that could, with some adaptation, be communicated to showcase best practices in CLC schools across boards. Better communication of resource materials, activities and outcomes are required to build support for the CLC approach locally and across the province.

Communications – As the network of CLC schools becomes more mature and school boards continue to integrate the CLC concept into their facilities, operations and programs, communication practices will become more important to ensure that the right messages and information are conveyed to the right people at the right time. Greater coordination of (or support for) the communications aspect of the initiative by the PRT would assist in laying the groundwork for the long-term.

Partnerships - Formal agreements or memorandums of understanding should be signed to officialise the responsibilities of partners and CLC schools.