



CLC Evaluation – The Quest for Sustainability & Best Practices

Final Report

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LEARN

By

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 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.

1.2 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 outcomes¹: 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?

¹ Outcomes are usually expressed as knowledge, skills or attitudes and are measurable results of a specific, planned educational

- 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?

1.3 Summary of Findings

1.3.1 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:

- 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.

1.3.2 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 neighbourhoods 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.

1.3.3 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 services² 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

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.

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 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 estimates³ 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.

³ TTFM 2012-2013 CLC report

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 Change⁴.

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.

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

⁴. <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/#5>

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.

1.3.4 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.

1.3.5 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.

1.4 Key Points from Recommendations

1.4.1 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.

1.4.2 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.

1.4.3 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.

2 INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT AND CLC INITIATIVE

This report presents the findings from the data collection for the second evaluation phase (2012-2014) of the Community Learning Centres: An English Minority-Language Initiative. The report provides an overview of the CLC Initiative, the methodologies carried out for the evaluations activities, the findings from the evaluation along with conclusions and recommendations. Given the large amount of data collected and reviewed over the course of the two years, the annexes containing the detailed data sets are not physically included in the report, but are available through links on the CLC website – and indicated in footnotes throughout this document.

The following section provides the reader with background on the Initiative's conception and development through the first seven years. This includes a conceptual description of the initiative, its foundational elements, implementation process and the gleanings from a first evaluation conducted over the 2007-2010 period. There is also a summary description of the Provincial Resource Team (PRT), the CLC Framework for Action and Theory of Change (ToC).

2.1 Overview of the CLC Initiative

The purpose of the Initiative is to help schools in Québec's English sector become "Community Learning Centres" (CLCs) that serve as hubs for education and community development and as models for future policy and practice. 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.

The fundamental aim of the Community Learning Centres initiative is to enable English schools to secure their future in the regions in which they are located. The strategy for realizing this aim is to create sustainable "hubs" as the focal point for both education and community development throughout the regions⁵. "Community Learning Centres: An English Minority Language Initiative for the Province of Quebec", is made up of CLCs located in English schools across Quebec to help meet existing needs by facilitating access to a broad range of services and activities intended for learners, their families and the wider community. CLCs establish services and activities by building or strengthening partnerships between English schools and their community (citizens, community-based organizations, and businesses). In the long term, it is anticipated that the CLCs will contribute to the revitalization of English-speaking minority communities in Québec.

⁵ Project parameters presented by Noel Burke in June 2006, the then Assistant Deputy Minister, Services à la communauté anglophone, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport
http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc_documents.html

The initiative began in 2006 with the selection of 15 schools, referred to as Phase 1 schools, followed by Phase 2 in the spring of 2007 with 8 additional schools being selected to become CLCs; 22 of the 23 schools were included in the first evaluation from 2007-2010. In 2011 another 14 schools were added as Phase 3 CLCs, bringing the total to 37, with all three phases being included in the second evaluation. The 37 CLCs are found in every English school board in Québec, as well as in the Littoral School Board⁶ and the Association of Jewish Day Schools.

Funding consists of resources to hire a site coordinator and purchase videoconferencing equipment. Start-up funding for Phase 1 and 2 CLCs was initially planned to decrease gradually until 2013 when each of these CLCs would become self-sustaining, as would the Phase 3 centers thereafter. Funding was also allocated to a Provincial Resource Team (PRT) for strategic development and capacity building. Given that many of the Phase 1 and 2 CLCs would not be able to continue without some form of operational funding (see section on Sustainability), MELS funding for half of the coordinator's salary was confirmed for the next 5 years (2013-2018) in May 2013 with school boards expected but not obliged to match the other half of the coordinator's salary.

2.2 Description of CLC Initiative & CLCs⁷

A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and the larger community (Melaville, 2000). The community school model is built upon an ecological view of school and community as one integral entity (Smith, 2006). Community schools supplement the usual academic function of schools by bringing together various stakeholders in partnerships for youth development, lifelong learning, community engagement, family support, and community health and safety. Community schools have been shown to improve student learning and to contribute to better-functioning schools, increased family engagement with students and schools, and more vital communities (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003; Dryfoos, 1994).

In the Québec context, schools serving the English-speaking community take on special significance. Students attending English schools account for less than 10 per cent of all students in the Québec education system, and many of the 320 plus English schools are small and isolated. These schools—often the last remaining English institutions in their communities—are increasingly being turned to as community centres, “responsible not only for the students’ academic performance, but also for the development of their language and culture” (Advisory Board on English Education, 2000). If these schools were to disappear, it would “have a devastating effect on communities already dealing with a delicate sociolinguistic balance” (Berger, 1999, in Advisory Board of English Education, 2000). The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) strategic plan for 2009-2013 included supporting the development of a diverse group of community schools that serve as “hubs” for English-language

⁶ The Littoral School Board is a special status school board providing educational services in both English and French to the Lower North Shore region of Quebec.

⁷ Adapted from first evaluation report, WestEd Learning Innovations Program: Evaluation of the Quebec Community Learning Centres: An English Minority Language Initiative, Final Evaluation Report, Volume 1, 2010.

education and community development in their respective communities and serve as models for future practice.

MELS support is provided through the Canada-Québec Agreement for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction (the “Entente”) through the Secteur des services à la communauté anglophone (SSCA). The CLC initiative is the first large scale community school initiative of its kind for English schools in Quebec, though other initiatives for both French and English schools in the province have incorporated some of the ideas of community schools, such as “Montreal School for All”, an initiative for low-income elementary schools on the Island of Montreal, as well as New Approaches New Solutions (NANS) for all other schools in disadvantaged areas in Quebec. The CLC initiative fits into the overall MELS strategy of school improvement but also addresses unique issues of English language schools in the province, which are under pressure from the declining Anglophone population and the declining school age population as well as declining resources.

Schools participating in the CLC initiative were those ready for comprehensive change and they were selected using various criteria including (but not limited to):

- Priority to “last English institution” in the community
- Priority to schools with high potential for community involvement and benefits
- Representation of primary and secondary schools, and adult centres
- Range of urban, rural, and remote locations
- Variety of anticipated agency partnerships
- Diversity in approaches to the development of a CLC

2.3 Provincial Resource Team

The initiative is led by the independent Provincial Resource Team (PRT) based at the offices of the Leading English Education and Resource Network (LEARN), a non-profit educational foundation offering e-learning services and support to the English sector in Quebec. Part of the resources available for the CLC initiative funds the PRT to provide training and technical assistance, and to develop materials to support the development of the CLCs.

The PRT consists of a Director, an Assistant Director (with additional responsibility for Communications and Partnership Development), a Community-Based-Learning Coordinator and a Developmental Evaluation Coordinator, who form the core leadership for the initiative in collaboration with the SSCA. In addition, various consultants are engaged to assist with a variety of support requirements such as helping teachers in the CLCs implement aboriginal strategies. The PRT coordinates their work in partnership with the Secteur Services à la communauté anglophone (SSCA) and the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) and other provincial-level advisory groups on policy, community-based programs, and research and evaluation. The PIC is presided over by the Assistant Deputy Minister at the SSCA and includes staff of the PRT and SSCA.

The PRT's main role is to support the capacity development of CLC leaders and help them seek ways of ensuring the sustainability of CLCs through the provision of technical assistance, training, support and guidance. This is carried out through a variety of different activities including direct support for individual coordinators and principals, site visits, network development, workshops for teachers (e.g. Community-Based Service Learning) and principals, semi-annual conferences for the various school stakeholders in the CLCs such as coordinators, principals and school board representatives, and the facilitation of an external evaluation of the CLCs. The PRT is also responsible for developing a Theory of Change and implementing the Framework for Action for the overall initiative (see following section), and to assist each CLC to develop and monitor their own plans.

2.4 CLC Framework for Action and Theories of Change

A Theory of Change (ToC) is a specific and measurable description of a social change initiative that forms the basis for strategic planning, on-going decision-making and evaluation and can refer to either the process or the result⁸. The ToC requires participants to be clear on long-term goals, identify measurable indicators of success, and formulate actions to achieve goals.

The PRT's Theory of Change suggests that CLCs will be led by their principals with support from a coordinator, who works with stakeholders to establish a vision, mission and direction for the CLC. They work in partnership with other organizations and businesses to meet their goals and serve the English-speaking communities in which they are located.

Guidance for implementing the ToC for the initiative and the CLCs can be found in the Framework for Action⁹ and accompanying resource kit, which is a tool designed to help schools transition from a regular school to a CLC by following five steps: explore, initiate, plan, implement, and evaluate. In general, the CLCs have developed action plans that focus on student success and community development supported by the Framework that is more of an open-ended guide rather than just a blueprint, structured to be comprehensive but practical; to work with existing policy and practice; to respond to the needs of all partners; and to be advisory, not prescriptive.

2.5 Summary of Previous Evaluation: 2007-2010

Learning Innovations at WestEd was contracted to conduct the first evaluation of the CLC initiative. The evaluation had three purposes:

- 1) Support the implementation of the project and the individual CLCs;
- 2) Assess the attainment of the short- and medium-term expected outcomes and the longer-term impacts of the project and the CLCs; and
- 3) Examine and identify the processes that impact the attainment of expected results of the project and the CLCs.

⁸ Adapted from <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/#5>

⁹ http://www.learnquebec.ca/export/sites/learn/en/content/clc/documents/framework_phase_3.pdf

2.5.1 General reflections from WestEd

The evaluation indicated that the CLC initiative had launched the majority of CLC sites beyond the initial implementation stage of community schools and had turned several of them into true hubs for the English-speaking communities they serve. All of the CLCs had begun to identify positive impacts on their students and their communities that can be deepened through further institutionalization of the CLC approach and services.

The challenge and opportunity for the initiative would be to ensure that each CLC progresses through initial implementation to full operation and beyond, to innovation and sustainability.

The feedback from CLC coordinators, principals and board representatives indicated that the PRT's work was essential to the CLCs' implementation and success, particularly its professional development sessions, the time provided at these sessions to work as school teams, the strategy planning documents and templates it had designed for CLC teams, and the facilitation of communication with the school boards. The PRT was noted to be flexible and responsive to formative feedback, and individual members were deemed instrumental by coordinators and principals in supporting implementation.

Although all of the CLCs largely exhibited similar organizational structures, community partnerships and funding streams, and had for the most part completed the same implementation steps outlined in the Framework, some had developed further and more completely than others. It was therefore suggested that it would be important for all stakeholders to learn from the CLCs that have become fully operational as well as from those sites that have become hubs for their English-speaking communities.

Another salient finding was that effective management and leadership, as well as shared vision and commitment from key stakeholders, such as teachers, school boards and community partners, were critical to the success of community schools. CLC sites with high levels of coordinator and principal leadership, teacher buy-in and school board support were more likely to have reached the full-operation stage of implementation. Principal leadership appeared related to teacher buy-in, though there were examples of some CLCs with strong principal leadership and low teacher buy-in.

WestEd stated that a critical feature of CLCs as they enter the innovation stage will be continued self-evaluation of programs and practices, to ensure that intended outcomes are being attained and that the activities and services provided are effective, as well as impact measurement—a key sustainability strategy. The PRT has provided guidance to CLCs on how to conduct ongoing internal evaluation, adjust programming according to evaluation findings, measure impact and share findings with stakeholders, and given many CLCs struggled with developing theories of change, it was suggested that this tool be reviewed given that early impacts had been identified.

As MELS originally planned funding for the CLC initiative to decrease as the initiative progressed, it has been considered critical for the CLCs to engage in sustainability planning as they bring their sites into full

operation. Sustainability involves much more than simply obtaining additional grant funding. To become sustainable, a program must have a clear, shared purpose and strong fit with the mission of the institution, strong internal systems, broad-based community support and key supporters championing the cause. In many cases, the culture of the institution must change in order for the initiative to be sustained. In addition, program activities must be evaluated regularly to determine whether they are worth sustaining, and the scale or scope of the Initiative to be sustained must be considered.

Sustainability also requires the development of a financial strategy that includes identifying how much funding is needed to sustain the initiative at a given level of implementation, and identifying and systematically pursuing the necessary types of financial resources. Initiatives often pursue sustainability either through institutionalization (e.g. support from school/school board to continue all or some of former grant-funded activities) or through external support (obtaining support from outside the institution to continue some or all of the former grant activities). CLCs will likely need to pursue both sustainability strategies.

Finally, as mentioned previously, CLCs have found professional development and technical assistance to be fundamental in achieving their intended outcomes. Professional development addressing various aspects of CLC management and leadership should not only be continued, but also be expanded to include teachers and school principals. The PRT will need to explore ways to include principals and teachers without taking them away from schools for long periods of time – perhaps by using the VCN technology to reach constituents across sites.

3. OVERVIEW OF THE 2012-2014 EVALUATION

3.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the second evaluation (2012-2014) of the CLC initiative was to provide timely and pertinent information to support the ongoing evolution and implementation of CLCs in Quebec, and to identify strategies, practices, solutions and policies which allow for the sustainability of CLCs.

Building on the previous evaluation reports (where possible), the principle objectives for the 2012-2014 evaluation were to document and assess the implementation of Phase 3 CLCs, as well as the continuing evolution of Phase 1 and 2 CLCs and the CLC network, specifically:

For Phase 1, 2 and 3 CLCs, the evaluation aimed to provide:

- a continued observation on the Theory of Change (TOC) as an institutional philosophy, as a means to attain desired outcomes and to measure those outcomes;
- an assessment of the Strategic Plan (Theory of Change) developed by the Provincial Resource Team;
- an assessment of “return on investment” to identify the efficiency and efficacy of the investments in terms of new services, new programs, and new sources of funding and in-kind resources;
- information on :
 - exemplary models of partnerships and the outcomes of these partnerships;
 - how the CLC concept is being integrated into teaching practices and curriculum projects, professional development for teachers, student engagement and success, and the use of videoconferencing;
 - the leadership role of stakeholders and on policy development;
 - The role of the CLCs in the context of the vitality of English-speaking communities.

For Phase 1 and 2 CLCs, the evaluation aimed to provide information on the element of sustainability, in particular the identification of successful models and strategies. For Phase 3 CLCs, the evaluation aimed to provide data on the development of these CLCs in relation to the Revised Framework for Action and Guidebook for Collaborative School Community Partnership.

3.2 Evaluation Questions Addressed in this Report

(Objectives & indicators, areas of inquiry)

The second evaluation (2012-2014) of the CLC initiative was framed by four principal questions to guide the process:

- Improving educational outcomes: 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?

These main questions were viewed in a context of:

- The emergence of strong individual CLCs
- The presence of a strong network between individual CLCs
- The strength and mutually beneficial nature of partnerships
- The strength of support for CLCs from major stakeholders, including school boards
- Integration of the ToC as an institutional philosophy, its use as an effective strategic planning tool, for defining and measuring outcomes

And with particular consideration for:

- Lifelong learning
- Community-based service learning
- Presence of Aboriginals in the community, school and CLC
- Schools designated as NANS
- Presence of French (FOLS – first official language spoken) in the community, school and CLC
- Video Conferencing Network
- Return on Investment

The primordial issue for this evaluation was the question of sustainability (and effective practices that lead towards sustainability), so a large part of the observations in the mid-term report relate to this point and bring forward some considerations to focus the evaluation going forward.

The detailed sub-objectives, indicators and data sources for the evaluation questions can be found in Annex 6.1.

3.3 Methodology

The research methodology has been organized around the four objectives and directed by the evaluation framework. In addition, this is not the first evaluation of Quebec's Community Learning Centres and so it is therefore important to build upon the previous evaluation process even as the evaluation objectives are composed and the evaluation framework structured somewhat differently.

3.3.1 Approach

The approach to the evaluation work was segmented into five stages:

Stage 1	Preparation	April to September 2012
Stage 2	Evaluation Engagement 1	October 2012 to March 2013
Stage 3	Review-Reflect-Report 1	April to September 2013
Stage 4	Evaluation Engagement 2	October 2013 to March 2014
Stage 5	Review-Reflect-Report 2	April to June 2014

The titles and timelines for each stage are generalized for the purpose of description, and the types of activities have shifted and overlapped to some extent in attempting to follow the school year given that during the spring and summer months there is less activity to measure in the schools and learning centres. In addition, the CLC Network event in May 2013 was a ‘connecting point’ between the stages, acting as an opportunity to present findings and receive feedback.

Sequence and linkage between data collection methods

Given the complexity of the data gathering process (over two years, three phases, five data gathering methods, and at least nine principal target groupings) the detailed sequence (i.e. which data gathering method will occur precisely when) has been revised from the initial plan contained in the evaluation submission. The revisions were judged as appropriate to accommodate the greater emphasis on data collection through the baseline interviews at the beginning of the evaluation and the change from case studies of individual CLCs to data from site visits based on the themes of the evaluation. This being said, at all stages of implementation, the following sequence and linkages have been maintained in the data gathering process:

Baseline data – established through dataset analysis and documentation review to inform the development of the other data gathering processes;

Exploration – carried out through key informant interviews, focus and discussion groups, and site visits, to build upon and to dig deeper into questions raised by the baseline data;

Validation/Clarification – carried out through online surveys and additional rounds of key informant interviews using common interview and focus group protocols, which included confidential memos (initial findings) after site visits and interviews.

Specific elements of the data collection were:

- **CLC portrait** which includes:
 - a community profile for each CLC that was used to revisit local ToCs
 - salient information gleaned from the evaluation output (document review, key informant interviews, focus groups and web-based survey procedures)

- **Baseline Interviews** with CLC coordinators and principals, and members of the PRT, to prepare a base of information on the overall initiative, and in terms of:
 - The particular situation of each CLC (activities, successes, concerns, etc.)
 - Best practices, relationships, reporting, etc.

- **Focus & Discussion Groups** were utilized to explore issues in-depth which, in turn, contributed to developing the survey tools:
 - Focus groups were held with homogenous groupings (e.g. coordinators, principals, students, parents, teachers, etc.) with 8-12 target participants for each group along with a representative distribution between Phase 1, 2 & 3 CLCs.
 - The discussion groups were carried out in conjunction with network and other meetings and/or site visits, or by teleconference where necessary.

- **Surveys**¹⁰ were utilized to gather feedback and perceptions of CLC implementation, activities and impact from a broader group of people than can be gathered from any one focus group or site-visit:
 - The aim was to reach a minimum of 15% of each target group in order to have a representative sample.
 - The student survey used the “Tell Them From Me” data already collected in the schools to elicit any student insights regarding the contribution of the CLC or CLC programming to educational outcomes.

- **Key Informant Interviews** were utilized to complement the baseline data, to follow up on questions emanating from the data (baseline and as it emerges from other data gathering processes), and to complete gaps in data gathering where necessary. Those interviewed were PRT personnel, school board and ministry officials, school principals, CLC coordinators and key community stakeholders.

Various evaluation efforts undertaken by the PRT were also use as a source of data for this report. These include:

- the assessment of the individual CLCs using the Fixsen model undertaken by the PRT team;
- vignettes to illustrate best practices compiled by the PRT and drawing on CLC reports written by coordinators;
- a report written by Patricia Lamarre on NANS CLC schools¹¹
- a teacher survey following training sessions on Community-Based Service-Learning undertaken by the PRT. <http://clcpresents.blogspot.ca/>;
- Community Conversation Reports written by the PRT.¹²

¹⁰ See “*Specific Notes Regarding Survey Results*” at the end of this section.

¹¹ See Lamarre Report on NANS available through the PRT.

¹² Ditto

3.3.2 Observations and document review

Observation is a complementary methodology that allowed for the contribution of additional information, particularly anecdotal. This occurred during site visits, conferences, workshops and other community activities associated with the CLC schools.

The PRT and the 37 CLCs generate an impressive array of planning and training documents as well as activity and financial reports and briefing documents available through the LEARN server. To facilitate the tracking and analysis of this body of material, the Evaluation Team developed an online repository and classification system. The various documents were examined for the information they can convey on the scope and the nature of various CLC activities and on the challenges and solutions encountered in their implementation especially as it reflects on the Theory of Change.

3.3.3 Data analysis

For qualitative data analysis of interviews and focus group notes, the evaluation team segmented data by the major evaluation questions (education, community, sustainability, ToC) and by groupings (coordinators, principals, teachers, parents, school board representatives, stakeholders), and identified themes and categories based on the documentation and evaluation questions, as well as additional themes and codes that emerge from the data (inductive approach). The data has been presented in the evaluation report in both narrative and tabular formats.

Data from partners and activity inventories as well as other qualitative data from interviews and documents was also organized and categorized and used to contribute to the findings section. For each of the online surveys, descriptive statistics will be calculated for each variable as appropriate

After each case study site visit, the evaluator team completed a case report template organized around the key questions as well as important CLC themes such as organization and leadership, implementation progress and challenges, partnerships, activities and services, outcomes, and service to the English-speaking community. Evaluators used the case reports, along with earlier interview and site visit data, documents and survey data, to create a portrait of the CLC. To produce the final evaluation report, the evaluator's cross-referenced findings from site visits, interviews, document reviews and surveys to confirm, support and challenge findings and refine understandings.

3.3.4 Role of the PRT

The Provincial Resource Team (PRT) oversees the implementation of the CLC initiative with a general mandate to offer high-quality professional development and capacity building at the local level to support successful implementation of the CLCs across Quebec. As with the initial phase of implementation of the CLCs (2006 to 2010), the evaluation team provided information to the PRT to improve its ability to support individual CLCs and strengthen the CLC network. In this context, the PRT:

- Offered support with the logistics and protocols for the evaluation process, and generally facilitated the implementation of the evaluation
- Worked with the evaluation team to access appropriate and pertinent data
- Offered support and collaboration in developing indicators for the evaluation
- Provided insight into the Theory of Change and its application within the initiative
- Provided feedback on the evaluation process and outputs.

Specific notes regarding survey results

While the two main surveys carried out during the evaluation (parents, and students through TTFM) both contained a sufficiently large sample of respondents, there are several limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting results.

- Parent Survey – although the response rate was almost 23% of parents with children attending CLC schools, it should be noted that:
 - between 20-40% of parents responded “don’t know” where the option was available, or did not reply to the question at all;
 - nearly half the respondents came from four of the 33 CLC schools where parents had responded to the survey.
- TTFM – although the survey is the largest of its kind in Canada, with students responding anonymously online, not every school allows its students to complete the survey every year:
 - As a result, while the results examined cover four years (2009-2013), it was not possible to ensure that the same CLCs were present in the data set every year;
 - The general set of TTFM datasets allowed access to findings for grade 3, 4, 5 and 6 in elementary schools. For the NANS sub-set for elementary schools would only provide access to grades 4, 5, and 6 (no explanation offered).

3.4 Evaluation Activities

Details on specific activities can be found in Appendix 6.1.

The gathering of information and data for the evaluation was carried out through a broad range of activities that included:

Preparations

At the beginning of the evaluation process, at an annual meeting, focus and discussion groups were held with principals, coordinators, school board representatives and the PRT in preparation for the evaluation. This was followed by the compilation of Community Profiles for all CLCs and the carrying out of baseline interviews with principals and coordinators.

Community profiles

The community profiles were compiled to provide background information for the evaluation, to illuminate the aspects of community vitality, social engagement and perspectives on education issues as well as to provide the CLCs a contextual understanding of the community situation. The profiles were drawn from the Census of Canada (2011) for key demographic, demolinguistic, socio-economic and socio-cultural variables to situate the potential CLC clientele with respect to the neighbouring Francophone majority and with respect to the provincial Anglophone population; the CHSSN/CROP Survey on Community Vitality (2010) and the administrative datasets from the website of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisirs, et du Sports (MELS), along with the indice de défavorisation and fiche école which contribute to the understanding of the school context.

Focus & discussion groups

Following the 'establishment' activities, focus groups were held with teachers to discuss their perspectives on CBSL, and with Provincial Association Partners on the CLC initiative in general.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant Interviews were held with director generals (or their delegate) of school boards, school board representatives responsible for the CLC dossier, and a discussion group was held with members of the MELS - SSAC team involved with the initiative.

Site visits

Site visits were carried out at nine CLCs using a standard protocol developed for the purpose of being able to contribute more in-depth data and insights for the evaluation. The nine were selected based on criteria framed from the four principle evaluation questions (educational outcomes, community, vitality, sustainability and ToC), as well as the elements considered important to the context of the evaluation (e.g. CBSL, Aboriginal communities). These were chosen in consideration of some key characteristics for CLCs (e.g. type and size of school, location, NANS, etc.) to ensure the best possible representation of the different types of CLCs across the province. In addition, the New Frontiers School Board's (NFSB) "regional model" was added to the list in order to address the concept of satellite schools or regional models for CLCs, a recent initiative not covered in the WestEd evaluations, which has drawn increased attention by the school boards in the last year.

The nine CLC schools visited were:

- St-Paul's School (Lower North Shore)
- Grosse Ile (Magdalen Islands)
- La Tuque High School (Central Quebec)
- Richmond High School (Eastern Townships)
- Princess Elizabeth elementary School (Magog, Eastern Townships)
- St-Willibrord Elementary School (Chateauguay, South Shore)
- St-Lambert Elementary (South Shore Montreal)
- James Lyng High School (Montreal)
- Val d'Or Adult Education Centre (Abitibi-Témiscamingue)

Surveys

A survey was sent to parents given that these are one of the groups of stakeholders that are more difficult to reach for face-to-face sessions. The survey asked a variety of questions related to both the particular school and the CLC initiative, providing useful information for the CLC coordinators in terms of their local program, as well as for the evaluation.

The PRT conducted a survey with teachers who had carried out a CBSL project in their classroom as a consequence of involvement with the CBSL coordinator at the PRT. Several of the questions included in the survey related to interaction with the CLC for the organization and carrying out of these CBSL activities. These findings are drawn upon in this report.

Finally, an analysis of the “Tell Them From Me” survey for students was carried out to compare the student responses from CLC schools with various other groupings. The Tell Them From Me (TTFM) Effective Schools Student Survey is aimed at helping schools to improve the learning outcomes of their students by measuring 40 factors that are known to affect academic achievement and other outcomes. Offered through The Learning Bar company (www.thelearningbar.com), TTFM collects student perceptions through an online survey (over 900,000 responses since 2004) which is the largest survey of elementary and high school students in Canada.

TTFM was selected as part of the CLC Initiative evaluation because the survey includes a number of indicators and performance measures aligned with the main evaluation objectives and therefore useful in assessing progress related to enhancing educational outcomes. The TTFM surveys analyzed contained responses from 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 in most but not all cases (not every school completes the survey every year), allowing a perspective on the progress of CLC’s in meeting their objectives for educational outcomes and engagement as well as school climate over time. The survey also allows comparison to the Canadian norm, along with some limited comparison of CLC and non-CLC schools, and replica schools¹³.

Document review

Extensive document review was carried out of the documents deposited on the LEARN server, such as CLC sustainability plans, partnership and matching fund reports, evaluation reports, ToC/Action Plans and Journal/Activity Reports. External documentation about the CLCs was reviewed, as well as the previous evaluation documents produced by WestEd. A review of documentation on the VCN within the CLC initiative was carried out resulting in a short summary of resources available to the CLC network regarding the videoconference network.

¹³ Replica schools are virtual schools comprised of students with similar socio-economic backgrounds.

Observations

The evaluation team carried out observations throughout the evaluation period. This information allowed for a better overall understanding of the CLC initiative. Notable was the participation in several CLC events including a teachers' meeting, a teachers' conference on CBSL, an ACFAS conference panel discussion, and a number of the Community Conversation events for which summary reports for these events were produced by the participating evaluation team member. In addition, an evaluation team member participated in the CLC Community Resource Committee, the "Breakthroughs and Reinvestment" working groups at the May 2013 CLC conference and the principal/coordinator panel discussion at the October 2013 CLC conference for which the PRT produced reports.

Presentations

Presentations were made on the mid-term results of the evaluation to the May 2013 CLC conference and the second ACFAS conference in May 2014.

Limitations

The evaluation accessed a substantial amount of data and information in compiling the findings. The analysis leading to the findings were principally based on the baseline and key informant interviews, focus and discussion groups, the parent and TTFM surveys and journals, activity logs and other CLC documentation. The community profiles, site visits and observational activities were used as complementary sources of information to provide context and support the analysis from the primary data gathering activities.

4 FINDINGS

Community-based programs in education have a long history in many countries pre-dating the introduction of compulsory universal education. Today the CLC model, as a more modern form of this tradition, is found throughout countries across the globe (UNESCO, 2011). In the case of Quebec, the CLC Initiative is aimed primarily at supporting the development of a diverse group of CLCs, located in educational institutions, that will serve as “hubs” or “focal points” for English language education and community development in their respective communities¹⁴.

The CLC Initiative is unique within Quebec, and ground-breaking to some extent within Canada. In many respects, the initiative is on the leading edge of innovation within an educational setting that is often institutionalized, bureaucratic and systematized. The CLCs were established by design yet without a formula, which is to say without a standardized structure or format. The only commonality has been the provision of a coordinator and the elaboration of a Theory of Change to guide development of each CLC. Otherwise, the CLCs were given latitude to develop their own identity, relationships and programs accompanied by resources from the PRT and support from the network of CLCs.

In this context, each CLC has been a flower trying to find its place in a multi-species garden, engaging school, community, teachers, students, parents, principals, partners, and school boards into something loosely-defined as a community school. The benefits of school-community collaboration are anticipated to be reciprocal such that the school’s impact on students is strengthened by the support of family and community and the social networks and agencies of the community are strengthened by the school.¹⁵

Given the distinct nature of the CLC Initiative (as well as its component parts), the strategy of creating centres that serve both the educational and community development goals of Quebec’s English-speaking population requires examination to ensure that, beyond the innovation there is a model that has an impact proportionate to the allocated resources and that, amongst the diversity engendered by the approach, there are success stories and best practices that can be emulated throughout the CLC network and elsewhere. To this end, this section reports on the findings of the evaluation based on the analysis of data collected, observations, document review and datasets explored by the 2012-2014 evaluation team to offer insight into the perceptions and experiences of those engaged with the elementary and secondary level CLC schools both as key determinants and beneficiaries of CLC planning and activities. The successes of Quebec’s CLC Initiative cannot be reproduced, nor challenges identified, without an evidence-base that offers a point of reference to use in establishing expectations for action designed to bring about positive change.

¹⁴ There is variance among the 37 CLCs in the degree to which they organize around the concept of a “hub”.

¹⁵ See Community Learning Centres documents at www.learnquebec.ca

Introductory notes

This report is a combination of the findings that were presented in the Mid-term Report (April 2012 to June 2013) along with additional material from the evaluation activities carried out in the second year (July 2013 to June 2014). The second phase of the evaluation involved more direct inquiry with stakeholders (e.g. site visits) to gather perspectives on the initiative from a wider range of stakeholders to further build upon and validate what was learned in the first year of the evaluation. The first year focused on establishing a thorough understanding of the context – profiles, evolution, successes and challenges, as well as best practices.

Overall, the findings of the second phase of the evaluation were largely consistent with those of the first phase. The insights gleaned from the second part of the evaluation did not change the picture portrayed in the Mid-term Report but did indicate a shift from the interim findings (e.g. progress in addressing identified issues) and/or revealed an important nuance from what was originally reported. The findings are reported as one set and, where it is considered noteworthy, there is mention of the change that has occurred from an initial finding over the course of the evaluation period.

The findings are presented in two main groupings, the first being those related to the four principal evaluation questions (educational outcomes, community vitality, sustainability and Theory of Change). The second covers general observations that are not specific to just one of the principal evaluation questions, as well as emerging issues that will have to be given some consideration in the near future. Both these groupings are preceded by a listing of the important characteristics that frame the school and community contexts in which the CLCs operate. This section on findings also includes mention of ‘best practices’ as they relate to the particular findings which were observed through the course of visiting numerous CLCs, as well as through interviews and document review. These are not intended as recommendations given that the circumstance of each CLC is different; they are, however, suggestions of programs, activities and approaches that were observed to be working well and therefore may be helpful to other CLCs.

In addition, a major focus of the first part of the evaluation was on the question of sustainability given that funding was due to end for Phase 1 and 2 CLC schools before the end of the evaluation, and there was some anticipation regarding the evaluation findings that might assist these CLC schools to maintain (sustain) their program. However, funding was renewed for the CLC Initiative for another five years (2013-2018) starting in July 2013, albeit on a reduced and re-structured basis. While this removed the immediate concern about sustainability, the question continues to be of concern to the future of CLC schools given the increased obligation of school boards for contributory funding at a time when they are facing significant budgetary cuts to other programs and services.

4.1 Descriptive Data on the CLC Schools

The CLCs in Quebec have been implemented in three different phases starting in 2006. In Phase 1, 15 Centres were implemented from 2006-2009, with 8 more Centres added during Phase 2 between 2007 and 2010. Phase 3 was launched in 2011 with an additional 14 CLCs, bringing the total of CLC schools to 37. Over time, a few CLCs have expanded to include other nearby schools in their service territory and one school board (New Frontiers) has adopted a regional model where the coordinators at the schools officially designated as CLCs work as a team to serve all schools within the board's territory. A section further in the report is devoted to this concept of a board-wide or regional model as other boards are considering such an approach.

From the CLC community profiles, baseline interviews, key informant and stakeholder interviews, surveys and other data sources, the following table was generated:

Table1: Descriptions of CLC Schools

*School population figures may not be up-to-date.

Name of CLC school	Phase	School board	Urban Rural Remote	Elementary Secondary Combined Adult Ed.	School population
Baie Comeau High School	2	ESSB	town	Elementary/secondary	58
Centennial Regional High School	3	RSB	urban	Secondary	850
Chateauguay Valley	3	NFSB	rural	Elementary/secondary	753
Pope Memorial	1	ETSB	rural	Elementary	68
Gaspe Elementary	1	ESSB	remote	Elementary/secondary	99
Gault	3	NFSB	town	Elementary	209
Gerald McShane	3	EMSB	urban	Elementary	276
Grosse Ile	3	ESSB	remote	Elementary/secondary	75
HAEC/ CVCEC	1	NFSB	rural	Adult	160
Harrington	3	LSB	remote	Elementary/secondary	39
Hebrew Academy	2	Canadian Accredited Independent Schools	urban	Elementary/secondary	505
James Lyng	1	EMSB	urban	Secondary	204
Joliette	3	SWLSB	town	Secondary	332
La Tuque	2	CQSB	town	Elementary/ secondary	161
Laurentian Regional	2	SWLSB	town	Secondary	750
Laurier MacDonald	1	EMSB	urban	Secondary	988
Laval-Liberty	1	SWLSB	urban	Secondary	988
Mecatina	1	LSB	remote	Elementary/ secondary	62
Metis-sur-mer	1	ESSB	rural	Elementary/ secondary	58
Netagamou	1	LSB	remote	Elementary/ secondary	42
New Carlisle	3	ESSB	remote	Elementary/secondary	120
New Richmond	3	ESSB	remote	Elementary/ secondary	93
Parkdale	3	EMSB	urban	Elementary	305
Pierre Elliott Trudeau	3	WQSB	urban	Elementary	325
Portneuf	3	CQSB	rural	Elementary	71
Princess Elizabeth	3	ETSB	urban	Elementary	234
Quebec	1	CQSB	urban	Secondary	387
Mountainview	2	RSB	urban	Elementary	216
Richmond Regional	3	ETSB	rural	Secondary	404
Riverdale	1	LBPSB	urban	Secondary	683
Riverview	3	LBPSB	urban	Elementary	214
St. John/ Jean-Paul II	1	WQSB	rural	Elementary	118
St. Lambert	1	RSB	urban	Elementary	450
St. Michael's	2	WQSB	urban	Secondary	83
St. Paul	2	LSB	remote	Secondary	54
St. Willibrord	1	NFSB	urban	Elementary/ secondary	357
Val d'Or	3	WQSB		Adult	24

Name of CLC School	Languages at home	NANS École montréalaise	CLC mentioned in MESA	Single or multiple school model	Community based activities	Lifelong learning activities
Baie Comeau High School	English, French			single	Yes	Yes
Centennial Regional High School	English, French			single	Yes	Yes
Chateauguay Valley	English, French	NANS		multiple	Yes	Yes
Pope Memorial	English, French	NANS		single	Yes	Yes
Gaspe Elementary	English, French	NANS		multiple	Yes	Yes
Gault	English, French	NANS		single	Yes	Yes
Gerald McShane	English, French	École montrealaise	YES	single	Yes	Yes
Grosse Ile	English, French	NANS	YES	single	Yes	Yes
HAEC/ CVCEC	English	NANS		multiple	Yes	Yes
Harrington	English, French, Other	NANS		single	Yes	Yes
Hebrew Academy					Yes	
James Lyng	English	NANS	YES	single	Yes	Yes
Joliette	English, French	NANS	NO	single	Yes	Yes
La Tuque		NANS	YES	single	Yes	Yes
Laurentian Regional	English, French		NO	single	Yes	Yes
Laurier MacDonald	English, French, Other		YES	single	Yes	Yes
Laval-Liberty				single		
Mecatina	English	NANS		single	Yes	Yes
Metis-sur-mer	French	NANS		single	Yes	No
Netagamou		NANS		single	Yes	Yes
New Carlisle	English, French	NANS		single	Yes	Yes
New Richmond	English, French, Other	NANS		single	Yes	Yes
Parkdale	Other		YES	single	Yes	Yes
Pierre Elliott Trudeau	English, French, Other			single	Yes	Yes
Portneuf	English, French			single	Yes	No
Princess Elizabeth	English, French, Other		YES	single	Yes	Yes
Quebec	English		YES	single	Yes	Yes
Mountainview	English, French, Other		YES	multiple	Yes	Yes
Richmond Regional	English, French	NANS	NO	single	Yes	Yes
Riverdale	English, French, Other			single	Yes	Yes
Riverview	English, French, Other	NANS, École montrealaise		single	Yes	Yes
St. John/ Jean-Paul II	English			single	Yes	Yes
St. Lambert	English, French, Other		YES	single	Yes	Yes
St. Michael's	English	NANS		single	Yes	Yes
St. Paul	English, French	NANS	YES	multiple	Yes	Yes
St. Willibrord	English, French, Other		YES	multiple	Yes	Yes
Val d'Or	English, French, Other		NO	single	Yes	Yes

As can be seen in this table, *CLC schools represent a cross-section of English schools across Quebec*

- Each of the nine English language school boards has at least two CLCs (the range of CLC schools per school board is between 2 and 6). There are four CLCs in the Commission Scolaire du Littoral (a special status, non-linguistic school board serving the Lower North Shore region) and one private school (Hebrew Academy) in Montreal.
- There are 12 CLCs 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.

About one-third of CLC schools have a substantial French language population (as first official language spoken) in the school/community. This reflects the reality of English schools in Quebec, which have a large number of students with French as the language of the home. The presence of students from the Francophone majority in some CLC schools, particularly in the regions, has enabled the schools to maintain enrolment and the CLCs have been active in engaging the French-speaking community in support of the school as an English language institution. Often located in the regions, the needs of these CLC schools will be somewhat different from those in urban environments.

Almost one-half of CLC schools are classified as New Approaches, New Solutions (*NANS*). The NANS program aims to adapt practices at both the school and classroom levels to ensure greater success for students from disadvantaged areas and to decrease the academic gap these students often experience. The CLC approach is complementary to the NANS program and they each provide resources that contribute toward the program objectives of the other¹⁶.

About half of CLC schools report having community-based service learning (CBSL) activity in the community. Community Based Service Learning in schools uses the local community as a classroom learning resource, and allows student activities to be a potential resource for the community. CBSL contributes towards student engagement, academic improvement, skills development and stronger community ties.

About half of CLC schools report lifelong learning (LLL) activities that promote intergenerational contact. LLL activities are instrumental in helping to engage the segments of the community outside of the formal classroom setting of the CLC schools, in particular seniors and families.

Some CLC Schools have Aboriginal students. While only a handful of the CLC schools report a significant number of Aboriginal students amongst their enrolment, these CLCs are very much engaged in working with the Aboriginal community to address the numerous issues particular to this segment of the population.

¹⁶ See Lamarre Report on NANS available through the PRT.

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 by following, however, a clearly set out process that goes from gathering information on assets and local needs to evaluating action plans put in place. This means that each CLC school has designed its own Theory of Change and set of goals. Not all of these goals are perfectly matched with the evaluation undertaken. For example, an Adult Education Centre could not be assessed like other CLC schools when it came to educational outcomes.

Each CLC school, however, has launched its own process of implementation. To assess this, a Fixsen scale was adopted by the WestEd team to see where phase 1 and 2 CLC-schools were in the process of implementation in 2010. The same process was undertaken by the PRT, based on 2013-2014 data. The next section presents their findings, offering a portrait of the evolution of CLC schools across the province.

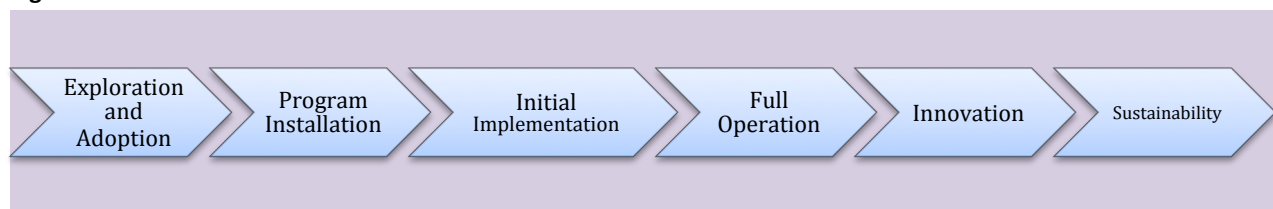
Assessing Progress in CLC Implementation

In this section, the evolution of all 37 schools according to the Fixsen scale of program implementation, initially used by WestEd in 2010 will be presented.

The Fixsen Scale: Stages of Implementation

Fixsen and colleagues (2005), drawing on a model developed in the healthcare setting, developed a typology to describe program implementation. Fixsen and other research teams have since used this scale to understand the implementation of innovations in educational settings. In 2010, WestEd, the team contracted to evaluate how well the CLC model was being implemented in the first years of the initiative, modified the Fixsen scale and then applied it to analyze CLC implementation at the local level. The modified typology used by WestEd includes six stages in the implementation of an initiative or new program. The stages, depicted in the figure below, include, in increasing order of development: exploration and adoption, program installation, initial implementation, full operation, and innovation and sustainability. Whereas Fixsen and colleagues consider these stages separate categories, in the WestEd evaluation (following discussion with the PRT), the stages are understood as markers along a continuum of achievement, as depicted in the figure below. There are however, as noted in the 2010 WestEd report, different categories within the stages (characterized as beginning of the stage, solidly in the middle or at high implementation, i.e. almost at full operation).

Figure 2: The Fixsen Scale



The factors that were used to categorize the CLC schools according to their stage of implementation include:

- whether the CLC school experienced a change in principal over the period of the evaluation
- whether the CLC school experienced a change in the coordinator
- whether the CLC school experienced an uninterrupted period of momentum during initial implementation
- the level of School Board support
- the level of principal leadership
- the level of coordinator leadership
- the level of teacher support for the initiative
- whether the CLC completed the key steps or actions in the Framework for Action
- the level of steering committee activity

Portrait of the evolution of CLC schools in 2010

Based on these factors, WestEd reported that, in 2010, all of the 22 Phase 1 and 2 CLC sites all but one had moved beyond the adoption and program installation stages. In 2010, one CLC was still at the program installation, five were in the initial implementation stage while seven were moving out of initial implementation (evaluated as high within this category). Nine CLC schools were assessed as at the full operation stage and none had yet made it to the innovation stage. By the WestEd definition, full operation means that the change after a CLC has started up becomes common practice and the benefits or intended outcomes of the program begin to be realized along with the capacity within the organization to sustain operation.

By examining the CLCs by factors such as phase or implementation stage, certain patterns emerged. Sites that were in higher levels of implementation were more likely to have high coordinator leadership, principal leadership and teacher buy-in. Sites that were less advanced tended to be in boards with low or average school board support, and/or had struggled with leadership support at the school level, perhaps due to principal and coordinator turnover. In 2010, some of the Phase 2 CLCs at the lower stages of implementation are still developing, whereas the Phase 1 CLCs in initial implementation were struggling with their development in some way, either because of high CLC leadership turnover, or because they had not identified a focus for their activities, programs and services. Almost all 22 Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites, regardless of their phase or implementation stage, completed most of the steps in the Framework¹⁷.

¹⁷ For a more complete portrait of where CLC implementation in 2010, see WestED evaluation Volume 1 (2010). http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc_res_eval.html

Table 2: Number of CLC schools in different phases according to the Fixsen Scale

Fixsen Model	Exploration and Adaptation	Program Installation	Initial Implementation			Full operation			Innovation			Sustainability		
	3	1-2 or 3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Phases of 37 CLCs														
# of CLCs per phase in each stage	1	0	2	0	3	4	1	3	4	5	8	4	2	1

Portrait of the evolution of CLC schools based on 2014 CLC coordinator reports

In 2015, the PRT once again turned to the Fixsen scale to assess the development of CLC schools from Phase 1 and Phase 2 since 2010, as well as to assess how Phase 3 CLCs were evolving.

The factors that were used to categorize the CLCs according to their stage of implementation were slightly modified to reflect the evolution of the CLC approach by 2015, and included:

- whether the school experienced a change in principal over the period of the evaluation
- whether the CLC experienced a change in the coordinator
- whether the CLC experienced an uninterrupted period of momentum during the 3 years of the evaluation
- the level of school board support
- the level of principal leadership
- the level of coordinator leadership
- the level of teacher involvement
- level of partner's engagement
- shared outcomes with partners
- monitoring and evaluation took place
- results from self- assessment Rubric completed by PRT in 2013-2014

Analysis of results

Using the criteria described above and drawing on 2014 data, the PRT examined all 37 CLC schools, including the 14 more recent phase 3 CLCs. From this assessment, it was observed that:

- 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.

One Phase 3 CLC school was unable to move forward. The school board therefore tried again within a new school after a first year of implementation, where they made a fresh start with a new principal and coordinator. They are now at the exploration phase. Two Phase 1 and two phase 3 CLC schools, because of lack of principal involvement and poor cross boundary leadership skills¹⁸, have not yet passed the initial implementation stage.

At this point in time, almost half of CLC schools are considered advanced and in the innovation stage and six CLC schools are considered exemplary and are in their first year of becoming sustainable. It is interesting to note that of the six CLC schools at the sustainability stage are from all three phases – showing that it is possible, when all the conditions are right, for a CLC school to move very quickly towards sustainability. Within all 6 of these CLC schools are found the following: strong principal and coordinator leadership, high levels of teacher engagement, highly engaged and collaborative partners and high levels of activities for youth, and to a lesser, but still significant extent, community involvement.

Phase 3: Rapid implementation

Review of the baseline interviews conducted in 2012 regarding the implementation of Phase 3 CLCs were reminiscent of the preliminary observations by WestEd (2008) as the CLC network developed in the first couple of years. By 2014, however, what can be seen is the rapid progress for the Phase 3 CLC schools. This speaks to the strength of the network approach that has helped the new CLCs develop through lessons learned from the Phase 1 and 2 CLCs and the ‘mutual aid’ approach embodied in the network and the support structure of the PRT.

This trend was also consistent in other data and observations during the evaluation. Analysis of different aspects of the parent survey (2014) and review of the partnership contributions over 2010-2014, for example, revealed the same indications of Phase 3 CLCs being situated lower or behind the Phase 1 & 2 CLCs for a particular measure but increasing or improving rapidly in a short time span such that it can be assumed that the Phase 3 CLCs will catch up with their peers at an accelerated pace.

¹⁸ Cross boundary leadership refers to effective collaboration with leaders from multiple sectors. For example, in sustainable CLC schools, principals and coordinators have established generative partnerships with health leaders, educational leaders, economic development leaders, arts and culture leaders, local business leaders, municipal and regional leaders...

Conclusion

The assessment made using the Fixsen model allows for a very positive evaluation on the progress in implementation of CLC schools being made in Quebec’s English sector since 2010. Progress remains ongoing and in some cases has been challenged by different factors that slow or hinder progress. This said, the experience acquired since the CLC launch has allowed Phase 3 schools to make rapid progress, showing what can be possible when the right conditions are in place. The 2010 and 2014 assessment using this model also makes clear what factors contribute to the development of a CLC school or slow its progress – not only in specific school contexts, but across contexts.

4.2 Educational Outcomes

One of the key evaluation themes in this evaluation was to look at what extent and how CLC schools are contributing to conditions that can impact educational outcomes. Educational outcomes are not only important given that the CLCs are part of a school, but also regarding the question of sustainability: beyond contributing to community vitality, the CLC approach needs to be aligned to educational outcomes in order for the school system to justify its support for the initiative. Multiple factors contribute to the learning outcomes for students, as well as other associated and complementary educational objectives, such as preparing for an appropriate occupational role, the responsibilities of citizenship, social and personal development and engagement in leisure and recreational activities¹⁹.

The PRT has used the term “educational outcomes” to refer to a number of student-oriented goals within CLC schools, including:

- The establishment of a positive school climate
- Student Engagement
- Teacher engagement (CBSL)
- Academic Success
- Student health (physical) and wellbeing (socio-emotional)
- Students’ sense of belonging to the school
- Civic engagement

In designing this evaluation with the PRT, a number of sub topics were identified for each of the four key themes. In this section, the theme “educational outcomes is addressed through the following sub-topics: collaboration within the school network, school environments, student engagement, student perseverance and success, parental involvement, access to educational services and the community’s contribution to the school. Each of these will be discussed separately in this section, but these topics need to be understood as overlapping and sometimes difficult to tease apart. It is also difficult, or even impossible, to tease the CLC out from other factors that affect schooling. A successful CLC is one that is

fully integrated into the school, contributing and supporting the school's traditional mandates. Ideally, it should over time, be increasing difficult to separate CLC from school. It is possible, however, to look at what CLC schools are succeeding in doing and whether there is evidence that this is contributing to positive change and improved educational outcomes. In this part of the evaluation, for each topic we draw on a range of data collected since 2012. Annex provides a description of each sub-topic and the data used to generate findings.

Generally speaking, 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, teachers and other staff during site visits, 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 partnerships). The evaluation of 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 and other members of school teams in examining how well students are doing in schools. We will return to this point in the conclusion to this section.

4.2.1 Improving Collaboration within the School Network

The data used to examine ***the extent to which CLC schools are included in school board and school planning*** were drawn from baseline interviews, key informant interviews/discussion groups and general review of CLC documentation.

The earlier evaluation undertaken by WestEd showed that CLCs could be divided into two categories: a parallel model, in which CLCs were, for different reasons, developing in parallel to schools, even if located within the school building, and another, in which CLCs could be seen to be in the process of becoming integrated into schools. These two models are still in existence today, however, some CLCs seem to be gaining ground in becoming integrated into schools, serving as an example of what a CLC school can become. Evidence of headway towards becoming an integrated CLC school, as can be seen in Table 1 where in 12 of 16 cases the school MESA is mentioned or a commitment is made to the CLC, and some even describing the CLC as an integral part of the school.

As the Table in section 4.1 shows, an important number of schools are including the CLC approach in their school MESA (Management & Educational Success Agreement). The CLC concept and CLCs themselves are only minimally included in school board strategic plans. An exception to this is the Littoral School Board on the Lower North Shore and New Frontiers School Board.

In interviews and focus groups, school board representatives made suggestions to improve communication between CLCs and school boards. It was noted that CLC coordinators and principals plan with and report to each other, but that this information does not necessarily make it to the school board representative. Suggestions were that some form of bulletin or briefing note be sent to school board representatives on a regular basis, and that more of the PRT communications to CLC schools be sent or summarized for the school board representatives. The PRT initiated in 2014 more regular meetings with the school board representatives to address this situation and build stronger school board support.

At this NANS-CLC school a two way relationship is evident in the school success plan, which describes the CLC as the bridge between school and community. “Riverview School is supported by our school board, in collaboration with the MELS, in our Community Learning Centre or CLC. The goal of the CLC is to foster a reciprocal sense of cooperation by bringing resources from the community into our school and, in turn, extending our school services and talents into the community.” (School success plan, 2010-2015)

4.2.2 Improving School Environments/School Climate

School environment is generally understood to refer to environmental conditions at the school that help or hinder student learning. Common indicators include disciplinary climate (i.e., how clearly are school and classroom rules/norms understood, internalized and conformed to), expectations of students (are they high? Are they well understood?), relationships with adults (do students have access to an adult they trust at the school?), peer relationships, sense of belonging to the school, sense of safety at school, social engagement, participation/opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities, parental engagement.

The student survey “Tell Them From Me”, developed by Douglas Willms in 2007, has been used to help assess the school environment in CLC schools. It has since been adopted in other schools in the English sector. A positive and vibrant school environment is understood by educators like Willms as a major contributing factor to student engagement.

The parameters for assessing school environment for the evaluation were based on the recognition by diverse participants that their CLC school has contributed to school environment, through health and safety initiatives in the school, efforts to make the school more socially inclusive, the presence of positive relationships with peers, a sense of belonging and safety and generally speaking, a more engaging place to be.

A sub-topic addressed by the evaluation here is “how and to what **extent has being a CLC school been beneficial to the school environment**”?_In response to this question, a large majority of respondents,

from principals, coordinators, teachers, students through to school board representatives, felt that the CLCs had indeed contributed to improving the school environment. This assessment was consistent for activities that were directly aimed at improving the school climate, such as anti-bullying programs organized through the CLC, and also when it came to more indirect benefits of being a CLC school, such as new partnerships that have helped put in place many new programs, which contribute to improving the school's environment.

In the baseline interviews, 90% of principals and 95% of coordinators said that their CLC has been involved in activities beneficial to "improving school climate" (e.g. feeling safe, sense of belonging, positive relationships). Following are two quotes from principals in the baseline interviews that typified their assessment of whether the CLC had been involved in activities beneficial to improving school climate:

"We had the problem of smoking and bullying among the girls. We now have lowest incidents of problems in last five years."

"The teachers used to leave at 3 pm now they are here at 5 pm. Students (and teachers) are having more fun."

How would you explain CLC to another group of teachers in another school that doesn't have one:

« Moi ce que je trouve, c'est que les enfants sont beaucoup plus occupés à faire des activités après l'école. Ça aide avec la discipline parce que les enfants sont occupés à faire des choses et ils n'ont pas le temps de penser à qu'est-ce qu'ils pourraient faire de pas correct ».

« Ils sont plus détendus quand ils reviennent en classe aussi, ceux qui avaient la danse le midi, ils ont bougé en masse et j'sais pas, ils sont plus disposés à travailler l'après-midi ».

« Je trouve aussi que c'est un bon moyen enraciné davantage l'école dans son milieu comparé à d'autres écoles. Je trouve qu'il y a plein de gens autour qui entre dans cet édifice qui autrement ne rentrerait pas donc l'école est vraiment enracinée dans son milieu ».

"I think it's just that opportunity to come to school and partake in activities that are reasonable for them, they seem to offer a variety, non-threatening, variety of things."

"And it makes our job easier because ... they bring it back to our classrooms."

"There would just be so much less for the children."

- From Teachers focus group, Report Lamarre 2014, When two initiatives meet.

The responses in the parent survey offers a similar assessment with 86.1% of parents who responded to the question agreeing or strongly agreeing that that their child's²⁰ CLC school is a safe and inclusive environment. Nearly half of the surveyed parents (48.2%) responding to the question regarding the benefits of CLC activities agreed or strongly agreed that their child had a greater sense of belonging as a result of CLC activities (although half of all survey respondents chose not to answer this question).

When students' answers to TTFM surveys were compared in CLC and non-CLC schools, generally a positive difference was found between CLC schools and other comparable schools on questions related to school environment. When surveys within CLC schools are looked at over time, respondents to the 2012-2013 survey indicated that 85% of elementary school students (slightly higher percentage than period 2009 to 2013) and 81% of secondary school students (slightly lower percentage than period 2009 to 2013) feel physically safe attending school.

If we look to data provided across Canada thanks to the TTFM survey, the reported levels of bullying and exclusion (26%) for CLC elementary schools are similar to the Canadian norm and slightly below the average for elementary schools with comparable school populations. These schools showed consistent scores (7.4 out of 10) across the 2009-2013 time span when assessed for their achievement of a positive learning climate. For CLC secondary schools, the reported levels of bullying and exclusion (21%) were somewhat lower than they were in 2011 and currently about equal to the Canadian norm. All three phases of CLC schools achieved scores (ranging from 5.5 to 5.9) for positive learning climate that were similar to the Canadian norm and to schools with comparable student populations.

This data can be interpreted as CLC schools being quite successful at contributing to positive school environments. This data can serve as a baseline for looking at how well school environment of CLC schools into the future.

When coordinators, principals and parents were surveyed, responses show that these key stakeholders have positive perceptions of their school's environment.

²⁰ The term "child" is used in this report, particularly with regard to responses by parents during the surveys and site visits, to represent both the singular and plural forms (children) for parents with more than one child in the school.

Table 3: Perspectives of CLC coordinators, parents and students about their CLC

Percentage	Perspective
95.0%	Coordinators feel their CLC has been involved in activities beneficial to “improving school climate”
90.0%	Principals feel their CLC has been involved in activities beneficial to “improving school climate”
86.1%	Surveyed parents agreed or strongly agreed that that their child’s CLC school is a safe and inclusive environment
85.0%	Students at CLC elementary schools in the TTFM survey feel physically safe attending school
81.0%	Students at CLC secondary schools in the TTFM survey feel physically safe attending school
48.2%	Surveyed parents agreed or strongly agreed that that their child had a greater sense of belonging as a result of CLC activities

Sources: CLC evaluation baseline interviews, 2012; online parent survey, 2014; analysis of TTFM 2009-2013 responses, 2014.

Succinctly put, CLC schools are good places to attend, and typical student comments gleaned from the site visits tell the story:

“I feel like going to school every day.”

“The school is more alive.”

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.

4.2.3 Improving Student Engagement

The next subtopic addressed was “to what extent are CLC schools contributing to student engagement”? Educational theory proposes that a more positive school environment contributes to student engagement.

Student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education (reference). It is predicated on the belief that learning improves when students are inquisitive, interested, or inspired, and that learning tends to suffer when students are bored, dispassionate, disaffected, or otherwise “disengaged”²¹. Student ‘disengagement’ is

²¹ <http://edglossary.org/student-engagement/>

manifested through high levels of absenteeism and, ultimately, through students dropping out of school before completion of Secondary V studies. While there has been improvement at the Canadian level, Quebec's high school dropout rate has remained stubbornly high at 37-40%²². The high school dropout rate in Quebec's English school system is considerably lower (24-28%)²³ but still points to a very real and continued need to address the question of student engagement as key to support student success and achievement.

Elements that were reviewed to assess the extent of student engagement in the CLC schools were the student's attitudes toward going to school, their effort in and completion of school work and participation in school activities, as well as perceived support from teachers and other adults, in particular in dealing with personal/interpersonal problems, and whether there were positive student-teacher relations.

NCHS Teacher: "The CLC "keeps students active and engaged and keeps them attached to their school."

Grosse Ile Teacher: "Students are actually participating in school activities. They never did this before. They would either not show up or quit."

86% of staff respondents said they feel the CLC has played a role in student engagement at Centennial, which includes developing a sense of community, developing confidence and skills, sparking their interest in specific areas and offering courses and programs the teachers do not have the resources or time for.

Generally, there was agreement between the respondents that the CLCs are 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 to the evaluation were in agreement that the CLC had been an important factor in motivating students to be present at school, and in activities once at school. A minority of respondents were not sure to what extent this increased presence of students in schools was actually having on their achievement, whereas a large majority of coordinators, as well as school board representatives, perceived that the CLC was having a positive impact on educational outcomes. More specifically, they talked about students who are benefitting from homework assistance and tutoring services, lower levels of absenteeism, and generally improved engagement in school programs.

²² Diplomation et Qualification par commission scolaire au secondaire. Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2013

²³ Ibid.

Students reported, during site visit discussion groups, being more engaged, more motivated and generally more involved in school activities:

“More people show up at the school.”

“I feel more involved in the school. Not just sitting there... so I listen more. I can concentrate better.”

“There are fun learning experiences with lots of stuff to do.”

The 2012-2013 Tell them from me (TTFM) survey responses showed that students in CLC elementary schools expressed higher levels of interest and motivation as compared to non-CLC schools, 69% to 62%. CLC secondary school students also reported somewhat higher levels of interest and motivation in language arts, mathematics and science in 2012-2013 (35%) as compared to those reported by students in same schools in 2009) and this exceeded the Canadian norm by 9%.

“The Robotics program has educational goals, it fits into our school success plans, because it has component for boys. It fits into math skills part, in technical part. Teachers loved it, kids loved it. It started out with grades 4, 5, 6, but then we also did grade 3. (...) The coordinator applied for the grant, got the kits, really orchestrated whole thing. I was just the resource person. I mean I do all the contracts, but she organized it with the teachers” School principal

The CLC coordinator described the experience as follows:

“It’s a great program; I’ve heard only nice things from teachers and students. The Ministry outlines certain priorities for school boards to implement, and one of them is getting boys more engaged because they have a much higher drop-out rate. And this was a « boy program » that was envisioned at getting boys more engaged and it really has, I mean engaged all of the kids. These are kids that can’t really sit still for more than 10 minutes and after 2 hours of working on robotics, they’ll say ‘no, no, we don’t want to stop can we keep going?’ And they picked it up like that. And these are kids who are slow learners, but anything that’s hands-on, computers, they just get it. There are no formal computer classes so...”

- From report Lamarre (2014), When Two Initiatives Meet

A greater proportion of CLC elementary school students reported more positive homework behaviour (81%) as compared to non-CLC schools (76%), as well as to the Canadian norm and to schools with comparable student populations. In terms of homework time, students in CLC schools report spending a somewhat greater number of hours than students in these same schools in previous years (2009-2013). Students in CLC schools (all three phases) reported more homework hours relative to the Canadian norm and to the average for students of comparable school populations.

The percentage of CLC secondary students participating in school clubs reached the highest level, at 54%, since 2009. All CLC schools, (regardless of phase) exceeded the Canadian norm for participation in school clubs as well as the level calculated for comparable school populations for this measure (25%). Overall, participation levels in clubs in CLC elementary schools in 2012-2013 dropped somewhat as compared to what was indicated in previous years for these same schools at 48%. This remains well over the Canadian norm however. Levels for isolated (52%) and urban (51%) CLC schools surpassed the levels recorded for the Canadian norm and comparable school populations.

CLC elementary schools report a larger proportion of students participating in school sports (this excludes gym class) (71%) as compared to 67% in non-CLC schools. CLC secondary schools had slightly higher levels of participation in sports (55%) than indicated by the Canadian norm, with the highest levels concentrated in the earlier high school grades.

In 2012-2013, CLC elementary schools reported a greater percentage of students with positive school relationships (80%) compared to non-CLC schools (75%). With respect to positive teacher-student relationships over time in CLC schools, the average score for CLC schools was similar to previous years (8.1 out of 10), and to the Canadian norm as well as schools with comparable student populations. Phase 1 CLC schools, as compared to phase 2 and 3, received the highest score for positive teacher-student relationships, at 8.6.

Parents were asked through an online survey whether, in a general sense, their child's participation (in school activities) had changed over time. Nearly a quarter responded that their child was more involved, two-thirds indicated that their child's participation was about the same and only a small minority indicated that their children were less involved than previously. The response to this question is interesting because it is one of the few in the parent survey where all sub-sets (urban/rural, elementary/high school) were very similar (<5% variance).

Table 4: Parent responses to the survey question of whether their child's participation in school/CLC activity had changed over time

Percentage	Level of Participation
24.2%	More involved
66.5%	About the same
9.4%	Less involved

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

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. The following catches the type of comments made by teachers:

"It's a huge component to (the students) wanting to be here every day."

"Kids don't want to leave the building."

"It gets them to school and keeps them in school."

A small number of principals in the baseline interviews in 2012, and teachers interviewed during the site visits in 2013-14, were more ambivalent about how being a CLC schools affect classroom activities, the curriculum and student success. They generally recognized the high level of student participation in extra-curricular activities and acknowledged that this was a good thing, but felt that these activities were sometimes disconnected from the teachers and the classroom; some of the comments made by teachers during the site visits were:

"I don't always have all the knowledge of what is available. The CLC is not the first place I go to develop curriculum."

"There seems to be activity going on because we see parents with strollers, and there's a seniors group, but I, as a teacher, am not that involved. We co-exist, and we do get notices, but it seems minimal."

"We need a fit with the curriculum."

As we have just seen, a large majority of respondents reached by this evaluation, and covering a range of stakeholders in schooling including students themselves, felt that being a CLC school had contributed to student engagement in direct and less direct ways. Student engagement is without a doubt an important component of student perseverance and success, our next sub-topic.

4.2.3 Student Readiness, Perseverance and Success

In this section, we examine how and the extent to which CLC schools have contributed to student readiness, student perseverance and success. The PRT understands student success as the development of the whole child, including academic competencies, socio-emotional development and physical health. In CLC Schools, it is hoped that students will acquire the knowledge, life skills and attitude considered essential for full participation in society.

Success is defined as a favourable or desired outcome, which for students can be generally indicated by some or all of the following: student retention (persistence), educational attainment, academic achievement, student advancement and holistic development (characterized as any or all of intellectual, emotional, social, ethical and physical development).

Success, however “[...] in the field of education, is a constantly evolving concept. Rather than academic success, reflected essentially in the awarding of diplomas and certificates, the emphasis is now on educational success in terms of knowledge, social development and qualifications.”

MELS - http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/adaptation_serv_compl/19-7053A.pdf

Assessing how being a CLC school contributes to student success is a challenge. It is obvious that no clear cause and effect relationship can ever be established between the presence of a CLC coordinator and student perseverance and success, as there is the all-important ongoing work of teachers and other members of the school team to consider. Furthermore, the CLC approach is based on making the CLC concept an integral part of the school. This means that the more successful the integration of the CLC concept, the more difficult it should become to tease the CLC out of the work of the school. Being a CLC school and having a CLC coordinator to help a school be a CLC can, however, be examined and questions can be raised as to whether this contributes to putting in place the conditions to improve student readiness, student perseverance and success.

Support at the transition points and school readiness

Many CLC schools have looked for ways to help students with key transition points in their schooling, kindergarten, the move from grade school to high school and high school to post-secondary studies. School readiness has become a major concern for the MELS:

“In Québec it is estimated that between 25% and 35% of children are vulnerable in terms of their physical, cognitive or socio-emotional development at the time of school entry (Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal, 2008; Desrosiers, Tétreault and Boivin, 2012). This is of great concern because it has been demonstrated that children who are less ready for school are more likely to face future problems related to health, social and academic adjustment (Desrosiers, Tétreault and Boivin, 2012; Forget-Dubois et al., 2007; Kershaw et al., 2010; Lemelin et al., 2007; McCain, Mustard and Shanker, 2007).” Institut de la statistique Québec, 2013

“School readiness refers to a number of skills, particularly cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional, and behavioural, as well as to the core knowledge that facilitates learning and adjustment among children when they start school (Forget-Dubois et al., in press). The existing literature reports that the level of school readiness among children is closely linked to performance and adjustment to school later on. For example, children with lower levels of school readiness at school entry are more likely to experience difficulty in school, as well as problems related to behaviour and social skills (Connell and Prinz, 2002; NICHD, 1999).”

Institut de la statistique Québec, 2007

By opening the school to families of preschool children, CLC schools are helping parents and toddlers prepare for kindergarten and elementary schools. One of the ways that CLC schools are contributing to supporting conditions that are recognized as 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 aim to engage families in exercises that promote language development and communication skills. The training is also directed at parents, with the aim of increasing their confidence and encouraging them to create a home environment where the child(ren) can continue to develop literacy skills. A popular program in many CLC schools is Mother Goose (<http://nationalpcmgp.ca/about/history/>)

In this area, the many new or strengthened partnerships that have been established thanks to the provincial CLC network and the work of the PRT play an important role. Offering programs to support parents of young children and to stimulate and prepare pre-schoolers for school fits well with the LLL mandate of CLC schools.

One of the surprise benefits revealed by the evaluation of CLCs is that by opening school doors to the community, many small children (and their parents) are already familiar with the school prior to starting kindergarten. They have participated in intergenerational activities within the school building such as use of the gym for family sports or the conversion of a school library into a community library with books on loan to preschoolers and to the elderly. This positive experience of the school is all the more pertinent for families in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, where many parents have bad memories of schools and can feel intimidated by school staff and the school as a place.” (Taken from NANS report, Lamarre, 2014)

“In NANS, there is a strong focus on helping prepare children in disadvantaged areas for school, in other words, promoting school readiness in preschool children, a factor increasingly understood as having a long term impact on the success of students and on their life chances. This is not an easy task for schools in their current mode of operation to take on, with a school team already working fulltime with school aged children. This, however, is an area where CLCs can easily align with NANS thanks to their mandate to encourage lifelong learning – from tot to grandparent. The 2010 evaluation of CLCs reveals that many already offer activities for moms and tots and many are successfully providing programs to promote early literacy, such as Mother Goose programs, Born to Read. Partners with CLC schools have supported these early literacy programs through help with grant writing and human resources. Many CLCs have either provided a stable home for early literacy programs and other parent/child activities already in existence, or have helped set up programs for the first time in their communities.

Some CLC schools have been involved in looking for ways to build bridges between elementary and secondary schools.

Another important transition point comes when students make decisions about post-secondary education or obtaining further training and education (adult ed., etc). CLC schools are involved in many Life Long Learning activities which reach out to adults in the communities (see section in Community Vitality).

NANS schools and economically disadvantaged student populations

To help support its educational program, Quebec's *Ministère de l'éducation, du Loisir et du Sport* (MELS) has put in place the *New Approaches New Solutions* (NANS) program, which specifically target schools that are economically disadvantaged. The English School sector in Québec, at the present time, has roughly 80 schools that are considered disadvantaged – representing nearly a third of the 300 schools in this sector. As noted by Lamarre in her report on NANS CLC schools: “many of these schools are in outlying regions and most also face the challenge of offering a quality education in an official minority language when resources are not necessarily close at hand.”

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 so that they too can do well and achieve in schools.

A report written in 2013 showed how the CLC approach and programs to support students in disadvantaged neighborhoods are in synch and how CLC schools and the presence of a coordinator supported the NANS program. The following paragraphs are taken directly from this report:

Once the measures for Montreal Schools for All (MSFA) and NANS are examined, it actually becomes difficult to imagine these programs being implemented in schools that have not opted for some form of community school approach. In effect, it seems that there is a new paradigm for schooling emerging in Quebec's educational system, which moves the school from an institution functioning in isolation, to a school that is rooted in its context (as in MSFA and NANS), to a school that engages in an interactive relationship with its community (the CLC model). This new paradigm looks at student success from a holistic perspective, recognizing that there is more to take into account than what teachers can do in classrooms. Essentially what is being proposed is that to create a level playing field for children requires thinking outside of the traditional limits of schools and schooling. This emerging paradigm is clear in the following quote from a MELS online document:

“(…) it has become clear that schools alone can no longer assume the entire responsibility for helping students to stay in school and succeed: the reasons students leave school are often outside the school, and it is impossible to make progress without close cooperation from parents, the community and the working world. Furthermore, improving the situation

requires that everyone involved share a common vision and that they forge links in order to work together, school by school and region by region. » from: “All Together for Student Success: I care about school”/Tous ensemble pour la réussite scolaire: L'école, j'y tiens!”²⁴

To gather data for this report, two case studies were undertaken in NANS CLC schools. From the 22 CLCs operating at the time, these two CLC schools, considered exemplary, were identified, located however in quite dramatically different contexts.

From Lamarre report 'When Two Initiatives Meet' (2014)

“When asked how having a CLC changed things in their school, teachers felt quite strongly that an indirect benefit of having a CLC is that kids are happier and more relaxed thanks to the physical activities offered as lunchtime programs organized by the CLC coordinator. Some teachers commented that kids that were busier at lunchtime made discipline in the afternoon less of a concern. They also felt that these activities make the school an easier place for kids to engage in. One of the strengths of CLCs is their capacity to bring rapid and important changes to the larger school environment.

Another benefit of CLC, is that it has brought a community traditionally intimidated by the school in, as well as having opened the school to the community. They describe this as a two-way phenomenon. Many teachers felt that they were more aware of the community than prior to CLC and that the CLC is building a good relationship between the school and the community and rooting the school to its community. This CLC and others that are also becoming hubs for their communities are showing their capacity to build the bridge between an educational team, the community and also, not to be forgotten, partners, such as pre-school literacy associations, whose mandates require that they reach the populations.”

During the focus group conducted to gather data for this report, one NANS coordinator explained:

“We know that students will be more successful if community is more engaged. We (educators) are not readily able to do that. We aren't effective at doing that. The coordinator answers that part of the NANS project that we are not able to get at. (...)”

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, potential drop-outs. (See Robotics program and section on Improving Student Engagement 4.2.3) .

²⁴ http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/sections/reussitescolaire/index_en.asp (consulted November 2011)

Check and Connect

Programs that engage students in learning outside of the classroom appear to be a successful way to improve student engagement. Numerous CLCs mentioned such activities as small motors, cooking and nutrition workshops that were not just fun but had a learning component. The “Check & Connect” program, explained during the site visit to St-Paul’s School (Lower North Shore), takes this approach a step further as it aims to enhance student engagement through relationship building and problem solving in a systematic manner. The program is implemented by a trained mentor whose primary goal is to keep education a salient issue for disengaged students, often through the types of extra-curricular activities offered by CLC schools as the medium of engagement. In addition to engaging students in conversations while participating in activities, the program facilitates the capturing of information and measurements to track the students’ progress.

Perceptions of stakeholders on CLCs and student achievement

A homework club started by the CLC coordinator with high levels of participation certainly not only demonstrates a positive outcome for student engagement, but is also helping put in place the conditions for student success. Making a correlation between recorded data on activities put in place in CLC schools with the help of a coordinator, and student achievement, however, is difficult. Let’s take for example, increased participation rates in a homework club, resulting in improved homework completion and hopefully having an impact on student achievement on exams. Measuring this to show a clear cause and effect relationship is almost impossible. Yet there remains a call for hard quantitative data to show just this, including from those heavily engaged in the CLC approach. The following observation from a focus group with school board representations typifies the situation when it comes to a desire for hard evidence that teases out the CLC “variable”:

All but one of the respondents reported a positive impact on educational outcomes. The school board representative who did not report an impact further explained that this was not the intention for their board as the CLCs were about community. There was general agreement that there is a need for quantitative (hard) evidence to link CLC success to the classroom. One respondent emphasized the need for longitudinal evidence and that data collection activity should be formalized within the school.

Part of the problem with trying to establish a cause and effect relationship between CLCs and student achievement is that the better a school has integrated the CLC concept, the harder it should be to isolate CLCs as something separate from the school.

What can be looked at, however, is what a CLC school has succeeded in putting in place in terms of conditions that are recognized as supporting student achievement. This requires shared responsibility and engagement among key players in school settings and the larger community.

Clearly the CLC appears to have had an influence on “student engagement”. There is, however, some divergence of opinion as to the extent of this impact with regard to “student success”. Only 55% of principals in the baseline interviews said that the CLC had had a positive impact on student success. There were a number of principals, however, who believed strongly that CLCs are having a positive impact of student achievement and have been tracking results and elements that reflect student engagement and success. Student achievement, reading levels, absenteeism and graduation rates were the most noted and believed to signal the successful influence of the CLC, however most indicators were largely from qualitative assessment, observations and anecdotes. Other principals, however, commented that it was just too early to tell or that there was no direct link to be able to attribute the positive results to the CLC only.

What emerges from this evaluation is that how to evaluate the impact of a CLC approach on student achievement remains a challenge for the future. This said, there is a fair amount of agreement on those involved in CLC schools that there is an impact, but one that is difficult to catch.

For example, coming back to student engagement, principals generally noted that students "seemed" happier and therefore were more likely to be engaged and have an increased sense of belonging at the school. Most principals then noted in the same comment thread that there didn't seem to be a way to directly link this to the CLC. It "seemed" evident to the principals that by being involved in more hands-on activities and learning practices, and having a space that was open and welcoming, that students (especially marginalized students), have more motivation to attend school and are less likely to "miss the action" in terms of all of the things going on in the school and the CLC.

The CLC "has contributed to students as they have more of an engaging environment . . . they are taking what they are learning and going a step further, i.e. video conference, especially as a rural area." Principal

The TTFM analysis shows that CLC schools rate well on most indicators relative to other comparable Schools (size, location, socio-economic status, etc.) for student perseverance and success, exceeding the norm for numerous indicators such as students who value school outcomes, trying hard to succeed, and hours per day spent doing homework, even if the measures examined were not specifically about grade averages. Particularly for high school students in CLC schools, the TTFM survey indicated (over the four years examined, 2009-2013) a decline in truancy, and an increase in effort and aspirations for further studies.

The parent survey indicated that 61.6% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child was more motivated to complete school, a figure rising to 69% for smaller and rural CLC schools. Two-thirds (67%) of parents who responded to the question reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that their child had performed better academically (although 22% of respondents said they didn't know and another quarter skipped the question).

There was, however, consistent commentary during the second part of the evaluation, particularly by key informants, that improving educational success was not the main purpose of the CLC approach. The point was made that it was never intended to be a program just to improve student success. One respondent went so far as to say that the main factor in a student's school success relates to the teacher and that programs (such as the CLC initiative) can only be a contributor to or influencer on the educational component. While others were more nuanced in their comments, the general sentiment was that the impact of a CLC on school climate (students want to come to school) and community engagement (people are more involved with the school and the school is more a part of the community) were more important considerations related to CLC activities. The following quote from a student during a site visit typified the perspectives on the question of improving educational achievement:

"It has not helped directly with my grades, but I am more interested in school."

While there is insufficient data to state the exact extent to which CLC schools have contributed to student readiness, student perseverance and success, it is clear that the presence of the CLC approach in a school supports the conditions for improving these important educational aspects. The prevalence of pre-school programs in the CLCs, where none existed before, is an important contributor to school readiness that benefits the school in later years. The additional activities organized through the coordinator, both in and out of the classroom, support the participation of students in educational activities, both those at-risk of becoming detached or even leaving school, as well as those who want to get more out of their educational experience. The limitations on data collection in this evaluation would point to the importance of a more systematic measurement of the impact of being a CLC school and having a CLC coordinator on the extent to which this approach contributes to improving student readiness, student perseverance and success and to reflection on how to move forward to a collective impact approach and evaluation.

Improving parental involvement

The next topic moves out of the school environment and into parental involvement in education. The question raised is: to what extent are CLCs schools encouraging /enabling parental activity within the school and at home with the student (see section on school readiness above).

Parental involvement in their children's education has long been recognized as one of the key factors contributing to student achievement. Teachers are well aware that the support of parents is a critical element in student success, but they have little time to help build bridges between families and schools – their main focus and task being on what goes on in classrooms. This is one very important area where CLC schools are showing their potential. A new type of collaboration between schools and families is emerging in many of the communities served by a CLC school. In effect, by opening schools to the community for LLL and extracurricular family activities and programs, the school is not only being anchored in its community, it has brought families into the school. For families in many disadvantaged neighbourhoods, this can represent a major shift in their perception and relationship with schools. Many have negative memories of the school and are hesitant to interact with school staff.

“Many parents and staff members have commented that students love having their parents and younger siblings in the school, for example, for Born to Read and Mother Goose Rhyme Time. The students feel supported because their family is involved in school life, valorizing the school and lifelong learning. It also allows students of all ages, even in kindergarten, to be role models for younger ones. One staff member comments, “[...]Parents are in school for Mother Goose, the kids love it, love seeing the little ones, [the program] helps prepare young families for starting school.”
(from the coordinator’s 2010 report).

Taken from report Lamarre (2014) When Two Initiatives Meet

CLC schools offer a large and diverse array of activities and programs that target parents’ involvement in their children’s schooling. The parameters identified for assessing parental involvement were the number and results of CLC initiatives directly engaging parents, the self-reported parental involvement in their own students’ educational progress and comparison of parental involvement in school programs over 2-3 years attributed to CLC initiatives. Overall the data did not paint a clear picture with regard to these questions. While approximately 23% of the parents at CLC schools made the effort to respond to the online parent survey, which is quite satisfactory given the number and different kinds of schools involved, many of them indicated that they infrequently volunteered at school for any activity. This was consistent with the responses from coordinators in the baseline interviews who generally felt that volunteerism in the schools had increased due to the CLC, but that parents were particular in their continued lack of engagement of all kinds. Both the parent survey and the coordinator responses indicate that parental involvement is usually and repeatedly by a core group of the same parents.

Gaspe’s Project of Heart was a very successful example of community-wide engagement. After students completed the normal project steps, they were supported by the principal and many teachers to create art projects based on a study of the styles of several prominent Aboriginal artists. The art was displayed in the gym one evening - transformed into an art gallery. The students gave tours to their parents and other community members (who attended in record numbers for a school event), explaining what they had learned about Aboriginal artists, as well as Indian Residential School history. The event was so popular that CBC was in attendance, resulting in a fabulous interview including some impressively articulate students!

The project strengthened a relationship with an organizer in the Aboriginal community, Andrew Lavigne. He helped the CLC Coordinator to make contact with an Elder who led a gathering ceremony and smudged the Project of Heart tiles in the presence of all those who were there. The students were very happy to share that moment with their families. Andrew set up a table with native artifacts and stayed to help those present learn about his culture. The entire project, culminating in the Art Gallery night was reported to be a very powerful learning experience for students, staff and parents alike.

All CLC coordinators reported that engaging parents remains a challenge, with commonly cited explanations being that most families have both parents working, some live a distance from the school and other parents had a poor experience at school as students themselves and so are unwilling to engage as a parent. Typical of comments from coordinators were:

“Students respond well but parental involvement is lacking. Parents are working and transportation is an issue.”

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.

Parents who responded to parent survey seem fairly positive about their involvement in CLC schools. Of those who responded to questions in the parent survey about their involvement in the school/CLC, two-thirds to three-quarters agreed or strongly agreed that they were informed. The online survey also showed that according to parents, their attendance in the CLC school was increasing and that they felt that parents were involved in planning and decisions making. Consistent with the other analyses of the rural/urban and elementary/high school categories, rural and elementary school parents responded more positively to these questions. What follows is a breakdown of parent responses according to type of CLC school (rural/urban, elementary/secondary).

Table 5: Parent survey about their involvement in the school/CLC

Percentage according to category					Response
All	Rural	Elementary	Urban	High School	
76.1%	86.3%	85.3%	72.7%	59.6%	Parents who agree or strongly agree that parents are informed about the school/CLC
68.6%	75.8%	77.1%	66.0%	52.8%	Parents who agree or strongly agree that their attendance at school/CLC activities has increased in recent years
68.6%	68.0%	76.3%	68.4%	56.1%	Parents who agree or strongly agree that parents are involved in the planning and decision-making around school/CLC activities and events

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

Reaching parents in large urban high schools is clearly a major challenge, as can be seen when we removed the two largest schools from the total. These two schools had already been identified as a challenge for CLC coordinators to work with parents.

Table 6: Parent survey about their involvement in the school/CLC comparing the two largest schools and without the two largest schools

Percentage according to category			Response
All	2 largest	w/o largest	
76.1%	57.1%	81.8%	Parents who agree or strongly agree that parents are informed about the school/CLC
68.6%	51.4%	73.7%	Parents who agree or strongly agree that the attendance of parents at school/CLC activities has increased in recent years
68.6%	56.0%	72.2%	Parents who agree or strongly agree that parents are involved in the planning and decision-making around school/CLC activities and events

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

Parent respondents were also quite aware of the presence of the CLC in their school, but less so about whom to contact for CLC activities. This was particularly the case for parents of students in high schools, where less than a third knew who to get in touch with.

Table 7: Parent survey about the presence of the CLC in their school

Percentage according to category						Response
All	Rural	Elementary	Urban	High School	Two largest	
66.6%	80.3%	71.2%	62.1%	57.1%	49.9%	Those who said they were aware that their child's school is a Community Learning Centre
48.5%	68.8%	55.6%	42.4%	31.2%	22.3%	Those who said they knew who to contact to get information about the CLC or CLC activities

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

Parental involvement is a challenge in the modern day school setting, CLC or no CLC. The CLC approach, however, is well placed to support both school staff regarding parental involvement and anything the CLC can do to address this will also help draw teachers toward CLC activities and so teachers should be an integral part of any strategy to increase parental engagement.

“The most important impact of CLC is... school spirit and allowing the parents to have a place where they can come together and participate in activities.”

“opening the doors to families who in the past were intimidated by our building”

From Focus group meeting with teachers. Taken from report Lamarre, 2014, When Two Initiatives Meet.

While CLC efforts cannot overcome such challenges as families with both parents working and extended distances for parental participation in rural areas, maintaining contact with parents on a regular and frequent basis would appear to be the most important step in fostering parental involvement. Communications are essential (newsletters, email, Facebook, etc.) but have their limitations amongst the multitude of communications that flow daily in the digital era. Less formal outreach efforts, such as family activities and meals at the school (Wednesday’s at St-Will’s for example), appear to be important complements to regular communications and formal parent-teacher meetings in terms of involving parents. The availability of the CLC coordinator to assist with these types of activities is a great advantage in this regard.

Educational services and life-long learning

The extent to which the CLC has contributed to increased access to LLL opportunities (including early childhood opportunities).

We have already seen how CLC schools have contributed to school readiness by offering a range of programs and activities for preschool children and their parents. Educational outcomes are not just confined to preschoolers and school-aged children, but also include the adult population in continuing education programs and lifelong learning (LLL) activities. Two of the CLCs are adult education centres and another has started to be included in CLC activities through the New Frontiers School Board regional model.

The parameters identified for assessing educational services are the view of CLCs as a provider of LLL opportunities for the larger community, the increase in access to and number of learning opportunities enabled by the CLC, and the frequency, range, duration, and type of extended learning opportunities.

LLL is the continual pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons, contributing to the enhancement of social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, as well as

competitiveness and employability²⁵. The term recognizes that learning is not confined to childhood or the classroom but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations and has recently come to replace other terms such as adult or continued education that were more familiar in the past.

While the CLCs offer an abundance of LLL activities and programs, of those interviewed few made the connection or deliberated upon these as elements of LLL *per se* and, in a few cases during interviews, an explanation had to be given about what LLL meant in the CLC context (generally, once explained, respondents were able to give lots of examples of LLL activity in the CLC). As with CBSL, nearly half of the principals in the baseline interviews had no response to the question of whether there was any LLL activity in their CLC. This might be due to unfamiliarity with the term, or might be because the LLL activities are so integrated in the CLCs programming that they are not seen as such.

Given that continuing and vocational education is an increasingly important component within the school boards, the further exploration of the role of CLCs in this regard would be an important consideration for future development of the initiative (see following section 4.4.3).

During baseline interviews and on-site visits, the most frequent mentions of educational services related to after school and recreational programs. The indications in the parent survey were consistent with this as parents selected these two types of activities most frequently.

Table 8: Parents' knowledge about the types of activities and services currently offered at the school/CLC

Activity	Percentage of those aware
After school	50.4%
Recreation	41.9%
Videoconferencing	29.8%
Computers	29.0%
Lifelong Learning	28.4%
Don't know	23.7%
Pre-school	24.7%
Health	21.5%
Volunteering	21.1%
Literacy	17.9%
Language	15.4%
Intergenerational	13.0%
Employment	4.5%

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

²⁵ Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong_learning..

Expanding access to education services through the VCN

Each CLC school is equipped with video conferencing (VC) equipment that both links the CLC network through a bridge, and provides access to educational programming through television transmission and the Internet. The provision of the VC equipment and network was one of the key parts of the CLC Initiative from the outset, and considered particularly important for the rural CLCs to become better connected with the other CLC schools and the wider world.

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 PRT was complemented frequently for the technical support that they had put in place.

[The VCN is an important teaching tool –] “...it makes it more real for the students and is a tool to engage with other teachers.”

The 2011-2012 report on VCN usage indicated a 20% increase in usage of the system by CLCs, partly due to the increase in numbers of CLCs (addition of Phase 3 CLCs), to the point where the system is operating near to full technological capacity according to the CLC video conference coordinator. Training has begun with school board technicians as the VCN is beginning to be utilized beyond just the CLC schools and is increasingly offered to other schools. The predominant use of the VCN within schools is for professional meetings and collaborations (60.5%) followed by students activities and programs (28.5%) and teachers for professional development (7.0%). The report noted that teachers are using VCN to enrich curriculum and that the conversion from telephone lines to IP has enabled the video conference facility (room and equipment) to become a multi-media tool for teachers to access learning materials and programs for their students via the Internet.

In 2014, the PRT conducted an online survey of teachers in eleven CLCs to assess the value of how video-conferencing enhances student learning in the classroom. A total of 39 separate video-conferences were evaluated. In-class use of VC accounts for the most frequent usage of video-conferencing across the network. In total, there are 29 VCs in Elementary schools and 12 VCs in Secondary Schools. The satisfaction level with these videoconferences appears to be quite high. Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed disagreed with the following statements:

Table 9: Teacher survey about the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the following statements

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Students listened actively during the videoconference	58.97% 23	35.90% 14	2.56% 1	2.56% 1	0.00% 0	39
The videoconference helped trigger students' curiosity	56.41% 22	35.90% 14	7.69% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	39
The videoconference helped students to understand the course content	43.59% 17	43.59% 17	10.26% 4	2.56% 1	0.00% 0	39
Students asked many questions	41.03% 16	28.21% 11	17.95% 7	10.26% 4	2.56% 1	39
The videoconference helped students to understand how course content can be applied to the real world	30.77% 12	48.72% 19	12.82% 5	7.69% 3	0.00% 0	39

Source: 2013 – 2014 Community Learning Centre Provincial Resource Team Year-End Report, page 10

Most teacher comments were positive, many providing helpful hints as to how the VC's could be improved, with only one negative comment reported. Many comments emphasized the high levels of student engagement and positive responses towards the facilitators of the VCs. For the content providers, such as provincial network organizations, that provided material for pre and during conference activities, all comments were positive and referred to the material as helpful and concrete for the students. Many teachers reported that the VCs were 'engaging', 'interesting', 'fascinating' and 'well animated'.

Quebec Federation of Home and School Association partners with the CLC network to offer the Youth Exploring Science program. This is a science activity held on Saturdays for elementary students by videoconference. In its 5th year now, this series of workshops aims to create interest and nurture scientific curiosity in the student, while also having fun.

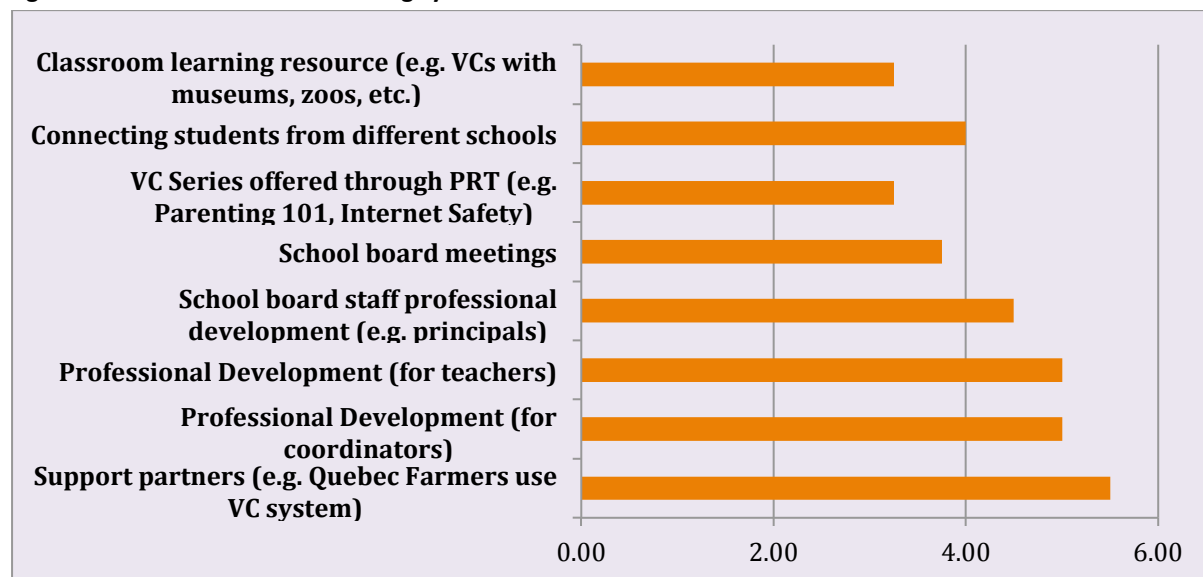
(Source: <http://www.qfhsa.org/science.htm>)

While the VC network has not met initial aspirations at the beginning of the CLC initiative as a revenue generator, it has contributed to reducing travel costs for participation of school staff in meetings and professional development sessions (not quantified), as well as becoming an important communications resource for provincial and regional organizations serving the rural areas (CHSSN, QFA, etc.) which could also be considered as a contribution towards enhancing community vitality.

CLC Coordinators were also surveyed to assess their videoconferencing usage over the past year (2013-2014). The chart below indicates that videoconferencing systems were used from everything from

supporting partners, PD for Community Development Agents, teachers and school board staff, to a classroom learning resource for teachers. A ranking of 1 signifies the most common use and 6 is the least common use. Classroom learning resource and PRT supported VCs were most common usages.

Figure 2: How the videoconferencing systems are used



Source: 2013 – 2014 Community Learning Centre Provincial Resource Team Year-End Report, page 17.

A series of thirteen community-oriented video-conferences (19 broadcasts in total) were offered to CLC network and their communities in 2013-2014 by a variety of partners, see examples in the table below. Many of the sessions were offered more than once to accommodate the high level of interest from the community. Evaluations were completed for most of the sessions, and even though feedback from participants was limited, it was for the most part very positive. Topics and partners for these community VC sessions provide insight into the variety of ways VCN is being used:

Table 10: Topics and partners for community videoconferencing sessions 2013-2014

Topic	Partner
Homework in Peace or Homework Police	OMETZ (2 sessions)
Facilitation - CLC Style	Cindy Elston, CLC Community Development Agent
Everything you wanted to know about Schizophrenia	Ami Quebec
Keeping CLCs on the Radar: Practical Promotions	Ana Osborne, CLC Community Development Agent
Parenting 101	OMETZ (3 sessions)
Getting Started in Fundraising - PART I	Kim Klein (2 sessions)
Fundraising Forever - PART II	Kim Klein (2 sessions)
Wills and Estates	Educaloi
Internet Safety & Digital Citizenship: Disconnect in a Connected World	OMETZ - 2 sessions
Seniors: Protection from Exploitation and Abuse	Educaloi / FADOQ
Grant-writing Refresher Workshop	Kim Buffitt, CLC Community Development Agent
Obesity	Dr. Ed Monaghan
So You Have a Mental Illness, but you can still have a life, and a good one	Ami Quebec

As an example of VC usage, the following is an extract from the log of sessions from several schools from the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board that were organized with the assistance of the CLC coordinator at Laurentian Regional High School. A total of 90 VC sessions were run from September 2011 to June 2012:

- *Story Time on Fire Safety, Halloween, Christmas, Read to K's, Farm Animals*
- *Class exchanges with other schools for poems, sing songs and virtual visits*
- *Wax museum project* *Lorraine Coulter & MIRA puppy*
- *QFHSA* *Science Workshop*
- *Ami-Quebec* *Laughter - Albert Nurenberg*
- *The Story peddlers* *Pieces of Other Places*
- *Royal Tyrell Museum* *Up Close & Paleo Jr*
- *East Central Ohio Educational Service* *Ocean Commotion*
- *Indianapolis Zoo* *Tuxedo Junction: Penguins*
- *Mote Marine Lab* *Coral Reefs*
- *East Central Ohio Educational Service* *Ocean Commotion*
- *Alaska Sealife centre* *Beaks Bubbles Burrows*
- *Valerie Marsh* *Storytelling is Empowering*
- *Royal Botanical Gardens* *Creatures with Wings and Crawly Things*
- *Ontario Science Centre* *LiveLink: Structures*
- *LEARNco* *Space and the Solar System*
- *Texas State Aquarium* *Surviving Earth's Eco-system*
- *Cleveland Institute of Music* *Let's Go to the Movies*
- *Reef HQ* *Introduction to the Great Barrier Reef*
- *The Elephant Sanctuary* *Virtual Visit*

Implementation of the CLC approach in a school has always been accompanied by VCN equipment to allow schools access to resources not available in their regions or locality. All the CLCs use the VCN, however the extent to which it is used for learning purposes linked to the school's educational program varies. The systems are increasingly used to access educational programming available on the Internet (as compared to a synchronous video conference between two points). Particularly in rural and remote areas, the video conferencing network is becoming a useful tool for community development purposes, for example the annual meeting of the Coasters Association is held using the video conference network to allow other locations on the Lower North Shore to join the meeting which otherwise would be prohibitively expensive given that there is no road between the communities.

4.2.4 Improving the Community Link to the School

The most evident contribution of the CLCs with regard to community participation in the school is fostering a culture shift that helps rejuvenate the community's engagement with their schools. For some schools, especially those in communities where English is a very small minority (<5%), this has been very important after many years of existing in isolation from the surrounding community.

This shift to improve access to the school and re-engage with the community was noted in several of the site visit conversations, especially by partners who remarked that these types of changes take time (“*Ça prend du temps*”) but once they start to take place, things do start to happen.

“I can’t believe how the programs took off.” CLC Partner

The baseline interviews indicated the CLCs have had a positive impact on the number of volunteers in the school, as reported by 77% of both principals and coordinators. Changes that were observed as a result of this shift were more parent and student involvement, particularly high school students participating in activities with elementary students, as well as support from community groups.

A number of CLCs reported “a new generation” of parents volunteering, reflecting a cultural shift in participation; this represents a significant change for some schools given that they noted many parents did not have a ‘good school experience’ and consequently stayed away for a whole generation.

“There are a lot of volunteers, the evening classes for adults (125 adults registered) are full, at night you see all the lights on- and the parking lot is full so you see the participation. The French population is involved as well - and there is a strong connection with the partners. I judge the success based on how many lights are on at night.” CLC coordinator

While there are lots of compelling stories around community engagement related to volunteerism that were provided by respondents, it was noted in the Mid-term Report (2013) that only half the CLCs were actually recording volunteer hours. As a result, the PRT incorporated a column into the year-end summary report for each CLC so that volunteer hours could be recorded for each registered activity and as a total for the year. This reveals that volunteer contributions to CLCs are the equivalent to almost 90% of the value of a CLC coordinator working full-time for 10 months of the year. Since there was no breakdown of types of volunteers, and given that parents self-declared a low level of volunteer engagement (see next section), it would be interesting to see what proportion of those volunteering at CLCs are non-parents and therefore likely a response to the CLC coordinators efforts to engage with the community.

Table 11: Volunteer hours recorded by CLCs in 2013-2014

Number of CLCs reporting	30
Total hours recorded	42,833
Average hours	1,429
Mean	833
Working days equivalent	178 per CLC

Source: CLC activity logs, 2014

Obviously, not all parents in CLC schools volunteer. On the online parent survey, two-thirds of parents say they don't volunteer and over half never volunteer. This data includes urban high schools, where the tradition of parental volunteering is weakest. In effect, high school parents were much less likely to have volunteered (only 12% compared to 44% for Elementary Schools), and much more likely to have never volunteered (83% compared to 46% for Elementary Schools). For urban schools to increase the offer of extra-curricular activity that can be organized through the CLCs, parental engagement will need to be an important component in future planning.

Table 12: Parent responses to the survey question: "Do you volunteer at your school/CLC?"

Percentage according to category			Response
All	Elementary	High School	
32.5%	44.2%	11.7%	Yes
6.0%	7.0%	3.2%	1-2 times per week
9.4%	11.9%	3.8%	1-2 times per month
7.6%	10.7%	2.1%	1-2 times every 6 months
17.5%	24.0%	8.1%	1-2 times per year
59.4%	46.4%	82.7%	Never

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

What is clear is that substantive hours of volunteer contribution can be mustered through the presence of a coordinator and increased communication with parents might facilitate more engagement in contexts where volunteers are needed.

A large majority of the parents who responded to the survey indicated that they felt welcome as a volunteer (one has to suppose that they just don't act upon this), with high schools rating much lower than elementary schools in this regard.

Table 13: Parent response to the survey question: Parents feel welcome as volunteers at the school/CLC

Percentage according to category			Response
All	Elementary	High School	
85.8%	91.5%	75.4%	Parents agree or strongly agree that they feel welcome at the school/CLC as volunteers

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

This being said, there were also a few comments, both in the survey and from other interviews, that some schools don't welcome volunteers. Some rural CLC schools also noted that distance remains an impediment to parental involvement given that many of the school's families do not live nearby and so find it difficult to return to the school facility on evenings and week-ends for activities outside of school hours. In these cases the school day is very much determined by the bussing schedule and so extra-curricular activities tend to be at lunch and break times when parents are least likely to be available.

Parents were also asked in the survey what kind of activities they contributed to. For parents who did volunteer they did so most frequently assisting at an activity, which would be chaperoning, serving refreshments, etc., followed by donations of materials and other resources. Again, parents of high school students were much less likely to volunteer, and very few assisted teachers in the classroom or helped organize an activity (e.g. committee member).

Table 14: Parent responses to the question of what role they have had in helping with a school/CLC activity?
(Respondents could choose all apply)

Response	Percentage according to category	
	All	High School
I have not helped with any activities	54.8%	78.7%
Volunteered for an activity/event	33.1%	11.2%
Donated materials, knowledge or other resources	23.6%	11.2%
Assisted a teacher with a classroom activity	13.1%	2.5%
Helped organize an activity/event	13.0%	4.5%

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

There are clear indications that easy access to the CLC coordinator and/or the CLC room within the school contributes to the success of a CLC school. Since access is largely dependent on the physical layout of the school, there's not always a lot that can be done about the amount and location of appropriate space that the school has available. One coordinator, asked what would be the 'one thing' that would help improve the CLC program in her school, replied without hesitation: *"Put a door right there!"* (pointing to a wall that would provide outside access for the CLC activity room without having students/participants walk through the entire school as is currently the case).

However, where access can be facilitated, it should be given every consideration, and the following are some examples that were observed:

- The St-Lambert Elementary School CLC has a separate entrance into the basement where the CLC rooms are located. This provides access for participants in the pre-school program, seniors visiting for their day program and other activities without disturbing the school's daily routine;
- The St-Willibrord Elementary School CLC has an office for the coordinator which adjoins the main lobby, facilitating immediate contact with the coordinator and access to the CLC room in the adjacent corridor. The school secretary and principal's office also adjoin the lobby so that if the coordinator is otherwise busy, there is someone nearby to respond to any inquiries/arrivals.

The move of the CLC room at James Lyng High School to a more central location within the school was mentioned several times during site visit interviews as having reinforced the feeling of *"home away from home"* that facilitated greater access to the students by the coordinator, and vice-versa.

Bringing the community into the school

Thanks to the generous donations of partners, the NCHS CLC opened a fitness centre at the school in 2011. The gym is open to both students and community members and is operated exclusively by dedicated volunteers. Since its inception, over 40 community members have joined. In a survey conducted in 2013, members said that the low cost and proximity of the gym enabled them to adopt healthier habits. Just over 25% of members never exercised prior to joining the gym and 55% say they exercise twice as much as they used to.

A secondary teacher commented that he and his colleagues were “starting to notice that their students are more motivated to be in school during the afternoon because they now had something to look forward to – access to the CLC fitness centre.” Another teacher added that the centre “helps [students] to blow off steam and come back to class refreshed.”

In 2014, the Salaberry-de-Valleyfield CLC began hosting a monthly Community 5 a 7, bringing English speaking families together with local service providers and community groups. Schools within the region take turns hosting the event each month. With an average participation rate of 105 adults and over 90 children, the initiative is considered a great success. Community partners, who help to organize the event and set up information kiosks, explained that their ongoing relationship with the CLC has not only provided them with an informal and welcoming space to reach out to families, but has also helped to ensure that the Gault Institute and the needs of the broader English speaking community are integrated within various action plans at the organizational and municipal level.

PETES CLC hosts Community Sports Evenings five times a year. These evenings are designed to bring families and community members together for friendly, non competitive games where the focus is firmly on fun for all! These evenings are intended to promote healthy and active lifestyles through fun games. Bringing families back to the school to play sports together with teachers, support staff and the school principal has also led to some great relationships being forged.

Community-Based Service Learning

One of the ways that CLC schools are connecting and anchoring education in their communities is through support to community-based service learning (CBSL).

Community-based service learning is a teaching strategy that uses the local community as a classroom learning resource, and allows students the opportunity to apply what they learn in the classroom by addressing local community issues.

CBSL benefits students while contributing to the development of the local community through project-based activities. It is a well-suited educational framework for CLC schools as it combines the two priority areas of educational achievement and community vitality. The PRT has devoted considerable resources towards the development and implementation of the concept through a designated member of the team, the holding of several CBSL Institutes (2 day training session) for teachers, principals, coordinators and other interested school board personnel. Participation in these PRT-organized activities has

increased over time with 80 participants (mostly teachers, some principals and coordinators) attending the most recent conference in January 2014.

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 school and have made a positive impact on service learning projects in the classroom. Teachers participating in the November 2012 CSBL Institute took the time to also participate in a focus group with the evaluation team and offered the following insights into CBSL and the CLC initiative:

- There was unanimous agreement that the CBSL Institutes have increased and/or enhanced CBSL in the school and have made a positive impact on service learning projects in the classroom.

"I always did a lot but having the CLC in our school is like a dream come true and it gives a vehicle for the work and the institutes give value for the projects."

- The Institutes provide support (from the PRT and the CLC coordinator) that is not otherwise available – especially given the principal's focus on "inside" the school. The initiative also helps promote the concept of CBSL to the principals.

"When the principals are here, hearing about everything, it has more impact."

- In terms of impact on student success and engagement, the teachers described CBSL as triggering student curiosity and interest as well as providing the opportunity for self-discovery.
- In terms of impact on the community, CSBL has had a positive impact on student involvement in social justice and volunteering. CBSL has also opened the doors for the community to come into the school.
- The CLC coordinator is perceived as an important resource to identify community needs. The role of the coordinator is perceived as paramount in CLC promotion and is a serious weakness given the part-time nature of the position.
- Teachers were described as being wary of a potential increased workload and have a fear of losing control of projects or curriculum. This is seen as a key challenge for teacher engagement in the CLC initiative.

Despite these positive observations, it is interesting to note that nearly half of the principals in the baseline interviews at the beginning of the evaluation had no response to the question of whether there was any CBSL activity in their community. And, at the risk of generalization, observations during the CBSL 2014 conference and from interviews during the site visits, the younger teachers appeared to be more enthusiastic about CBSL than their older colleagues. One young teacher (3rd year, not yet full-time), reflecting on how much the students enjoyed learning activities outside of the classroom, stated she was frustrated in trying to get her colleagues to engage in CBSL: *"I feel a little alone."*

CBSL would appear to be a ready-made vehicle to enhance teacher engagement. 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 community needs, 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 activity.

Table 15: Teacher responses regarding student engagement related to their CBSL project

Response	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed
Students demonstrated more enthusiasm (e.g. more attentive, staying on task, energetic) on school days involving projects	80.8%	19.2%	0.0%
Students typically disengaged participated more in class discussions	76.0%	20.0%	4.0%
Students typically disengaged took more initiative	69.2%	26.9%	3.8%
Students typically disengaged completed more course work	48.0%	52.0%	0.0%
Students went above and beyond what was required of them (e.g. volunteered extra time, completed extra work)	76.9%	19.2%	3.8%
Students expressed interest in continuing the project outside of class time	80.8%	15.4%	3.8%

Source: PRT survey of teachers involved in CBSL, 2014

Engaging with the community surrounding the school takes time to organize appropriate activities, which makes it difficult for teachers to research and make arrangements in a sustained and systematic manner without some help. The presence of a coordinator in CLC schools has made a difference in enabling the teachers to link with communities outside of the classroom and, combined with the CBSL framework, ensures that teachers are able to align their community activities with their learning objectives for their students.

Challenges in moving ahead

Challenges that were commonly noted with regard to CLCs and the capacity to engage in activities that might positively impact educational outcomes were available resources, effective communications with students (and parents), bussing (transportation and distances), competition for space, and lack of teacher and other unionized employee engagement. Indeed, all phases of CLCs report continuing struggles with teacher engagement, which given the important role of the teacher in advancing educational outcomes speaks to the need to focus on best practices and success stories (e.g. CBSL) that will assist CLCs in increasing the levels of teacher engagement.

Improving teacher engagement was also cited as an important aspect in further engaging school boards, which had frequently been cited in the first phase of the evaluation as being the least engaged player with regard to the CLC initiative (see following section on sustainability) and still striving to find the best ways to support their CLCs in the context of a very difficult budgetary situation. This reference is not simply about the institution but also about the various personnel who have some responsibility for or interaction with the CLC, from board office staff to school janitors. Everything from accessing supplies and equipment, inflexibility in transportation arrangements and getting doors unlocked after hours were commonly cited as on-going challenges (mostly by coordinators).

4.3 Community Vitality

One of the aspirations for the CLC initiative is that it will make a contribution to improving the vitality of the English-speaking communities in which it is present, particularly with regard to social outcomes such as a healthy and educated population, a safe and stable human environment, community support for residents' needs and a sense of belonging and place. For the purposes of this evaluation, 'community vitality' is defined as:

A community's ability to take charge of its development based on several types of resources (demographic, political, legal, social, economic and cultural), that are transformed for the benefit of the community through dynamic leadership.²⁶

For some communities, particularly rural and remote ones, CLC schools could already be seen to be making an important contribution towards maintaining and vitalizing English schools after only three years of implementation (WestEd report, 2010). This is significant, given that, in a number of locations, English minority language schools are very small and isolated and face major educational challenges. CLC schools, however, are doing much more than bringing new life to schools, as we will now discuss. This section looks at CLC schools' engagement in building community identity, improving access to services and lifelong learning, and improving student/school participation in the community and strengthening the school-community relationship. This section will also look at how CLCs are taking a very active and dynamic role in promoting networking of many different sorts and contributing in this very major way to community vitality and organization.

4.3.1 Value of CLC Schools as Community Resource

A first question raised in this section is: Are CLC schools valued by the communities they serve? Do different stakeholders in communities see value and benefit in having a CLC school?

One of the questions asked to all respondents in both the site visits and online parent survey was whether the CLC should be continued in the respondent's school. The answer was a strong "Yes". CLC

²⁶ Vitality Indicators for Official Language Minority Communities, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2007.

schools are perceived in their communities as a valuable resource and “need to be maintained”. This was made clear in the parent survey: The majority of respondents indicating 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.

The following table offers a breakdown of how parents responded to three different questions on the value of having a CLC

Table 16: Parent responses to the survey question: “What is your perception of your CLC as a community institution?” (All schools compared with Rural schools)

Percentage according to category		Response
All	Rural	
78.8%	90.6%	Those who agree or strongly agree that it is important for the school/centre to remain a CLC
60.9%	81.6%	Those who agree or strongly agree that the CLC has increased access to the school/centre as a community resource
57.1%	76.1%	Those who agree or strongly agree that the CLC has improved the connection between the school/ centre and other organizations serving the English-speaking community

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

In addition to reflecting the strong support by parents regarding the presence of a CLC in their school, the analysis of the responses to this question support what had been expressed by numerous respondents in interviews: that the 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 CLCs, or and this is quite probable, support from parents in large urban communities is taking longer to build.

Findings show that 90.6% of parents from rural schools agree or strongly agree that their school should remain a CLC, compared with 74.8% for urban schools (which is still quite high in its own right). Attachment and support for CLCs are not only higher among parents in rural or remote areas (as compared to urban), this is also the case for parents of students in elementary as compared to high schools, and for parents with students in smaller versus larger schools. What might be affecting the difference observed in responses from parents of students in rural and urban schools, and elementary and high schools, is that larger urban high schools, given their large student populations and the size of the territory they cover, are generally speaking less connected to their communities and the families of students, making it harder for CLC schools to reach parents and build awareness of its existence in the local community. When parents are aware that their school is a CLC school, support is strong. It would seem that when a school is close to its local community and a key institution for that community (whether because of the community’s size, the student population served, geography or some combination of these characteristics), the more quickly the value of being a CLC school is being recognized by parents. This was already evident in the earlier evaluation of 2010, with very positive

responses to CLCs coming from rural and remote communities. What can be observed since 2010 is greater awareness of the existence of CLCs among parents of urban and high school students.

Table 17: Parent responses to the survey question: “What is your perception of your CLC as a community institution?” (All Schools compared with Rural, Elementary, Urban, & High schools)

Percentage according to category					Response
All	Rural	Elementary	Urban	High School	
78.8%	90.6%	82.1%	74.8%	68.9%	Those who agree or strongly agree that it is important for the centre to remain a CLC

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

It would also appear that in communities where there are important needs to be met, parents are more likely to recognize the value the CLC, as indicated by rural parents who typically have access to fewer services and programs, particularly in English. This also holds true, however, when we look at responses from parents from schools designated as NANS (socioeconomically disadvantaged schools): In these schools²⁷, 89.9% of parents were in favour (agreed or strongly agreed) of maintaining the CLC.

Some typical comments from parents during the site visits and the online parent survey were:

“I think having the various programs at the school enables many members of the English speaking community access that they would not have ordinarily. Providing services at the school means many people have access to these services in a location they are familiar with, therefore giving them more chance to attend. It brings the community and school together as a partnership.”

“The CLC has increased access to the school facility as a community resource. The CLC is a great idea and needed in our community. I would like to see more community partnerships within the CLC.”

“The CLC has a reputation as a ‘go to place’ for the school, seniors, even for drug problems.”

Some parents are recognizing the role of the coordinator:

“The CLC has been the most comprehensive way of reaching out to parents and the community... I am grateful for the activities provided and the support given by the CLC coordinators.” Parent, Centennial High School

²⁷ Only three of the eighteen CLC schools designated as NANS are located in the city, all the others are in isolated, rural or small town-rural locations.

At least three CLC schools have experienced increased student enrolment at their schools, which parents have attributed directly to the programming and activities that the CLC has put in place, a lot of this through working with local partners. Local partners also reinforced the notion that CLCs are a valuable resource for the communities they serve, especially as a conduit for community organizations to engage with target populations through the schools, for example literacy, social integration and pre-school programs. One participant in a partner discussion group during a site visit noted that working with the school board had been a “tricky exercise” prior to the establishment of the CLC, and that the partnership table created as a result had played an incubator role for activities and programs offered by community partners. As a consequence, they felt that the school now gives more weight to the CLC schools, which provides credibility when working with the community. Typical comments from the local partner discussions were:

“Every kid in this school can go to French school, but they chose to come here (because of the CLC activities).”

“I’ve seen three programs born in my time (as a partner), I can’t believe how the programs took off.”

Local partners working with CLCs

As will be discussed in the section on networking, the value of CLCs for partners is more than strongly recognized. CLC schools are perceived as a key and important piece for reaching the English population of Quebec.

4.3.2 Building Community Identity

From the CLC reports submitted by coordinators, 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. There are many examples of how CLC schools are involved in community building activities. The following are just a small sample of examples:

When parents were asked about questions about the English-speaking community, there were mixed responses to the question about whether the CLC had enhanced the identity of the English-speaking community. Those who know of the CLC speak very favourably – even passionately – about it. It is difficult, however, to gauge what those who are less familiar with the CLC think, given that the question attempting to measure ‘identity’ was limited to the level of the community’s awareness of what the CLC had accomplished in this regard.

In the parent survey, a little more than half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the CLC had increased awareness of the English-speaking community. To this question, in all sub-sets, however, there were high rates (25-50%) of respondents who ‘didn’t know’. This might be because the concept of

community identity is simply not as easy to assess for parents, as compared to questions that are much more direct such as whether their child participates in more or less activities through the CLC. Also, approximately one-third of parent respondents declared themselves as French mother tongue and so would presumably be less aware or concerned about questions regarding the state of the English-speaking community.

Once again, parents with children in rural and elementary schools responded more positively than urban and high schools.

Table 18: Parent responses to the survey question: “What is your perception of your CLC as a community institution: Overall awareness of the English-speaking community is enhanced through our CLC?”

Percentage according to category		Response
All	Rural	
54.5%	71.1%	Those agree or strongly agree that overall awareness of the English-speaking community is enhanced through our CLC

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

This response level seems to reflect perspectives garnered through interviews and site visits. Typical comments from the site visits and survey were:

“Those who are aware are very happy (with the CLC).”

“As parents (involved in the CLC) we see it, but the community...?”

“I can't answer as I am not aware of the CLC in the community.”

The parent survey was either largely positive (or neutral) in terms of responses and comments with regard to the CLCs and community identity so it can be assumed that the CLC (as with educational outcomes) is at least a contributor towards community identity and therefore community vitality. To what extent is hard to ascertain given the high number of parents that didn't know or didn't answer this question. This speaks to the continuing need to raise awareness of CLC schools and what they are offering to the school's surrounding community.

Parent and community awareness of CLCs put aside, most CLC coordinators have helped schools organize an important number of activities that are important in building a local community and feeling of belonging. There are many examples of community events organized in CLC schools that showcase the history of the local community and its heritage.

There are also many events, projects and programs that connect seniors to students to the benefit of both populations. For example, in 2011, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary CLC school began an intergenerational project with a group of local seniors. The 'Senior Buddy' program pairs local seniors

with students facing reading and writing challenges. During monthly visits, students receive one-on-one help with writing projects. In its first year, the project culminated in the development of a book called “Family Treasures.” Teachers observed that the relationships students built with seniors coupled with the goal of publishing a book proved to be a huge motivational factor for the students:

“Our group allows students and seniors to interact and break down the barriers and myths about each age group. I believe one student expressed his appreciation for our intergenerational day very well when he said “I never knew seniors could be so much fun!” I look forward to many more future projects that Friday Friends can share with the Community Learning Centre.” Lynne Scott, President of Elder Help of Lanaudière (Joliette CLC school)

The work of the coordinator in supporting these programs and finding the funding to make events and programs possible is deemed critical:

“Without the coordinator, most activities would not be able to occur. Though the same financial resources were available in the past, I did not have the opportunity amid my various responsibilities as principal to take advantage of them. It takes a lot of human resources to find, develop, plan, carry-out and report on activities.” CLC school principal

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 – student activity demonstrations were the most frequently cited way of getting parents to come into the schools. 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 housing or events to assist. Aside from benefitting the students directly with supervised and structured programs, they have helped improve the sense of community as well as increased community engagement in the schools.

The changes that were most strongly emphasized were those in the students’ attitudes towards the school and community. It was mentioned on several occasions that an improved school/community relationship had occurred because the students were more active in their community and their parents were more active in the school. The most positive changes noted by most coordinators were an increased sense of belonging and a strong sense of empowerment from participating in activities. The school spirit in general was observed as being more energized and increased participation and positive behaviour were often observed as results.

(Summary from coordinator interviews)

Lifelong learning

The mandate of CLC schools is not only to look for ways to link communities and schools, but provide the adult population with continuing education programs and lifelong learning (LLL) activities. Two of the CLCs are adult education centres and another has recently started to be included in CLC activities through the New Frontiers School Board regional model.

The parameters identified for assessing educational services are the view of CLCs as a provider of LLL opportunities for the larger community, the increase in access to and number of non-formal learning opportunities enabled by the CLC, and the frequency, range, duration, and type of extended learning opportunities.

LLL is the continual pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons, contributing to the enhancement of social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, as well as competitiveness and employability²⁸. The term recognizes that learning is not confined to childhood or the classroom but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations and has recently come to replace other terms such as adult or continued education that were more familiar in the past.

While the CLCs offer an abundance of LLL activities and programs, of those interviewed few made the connection or deliberated upon these as elements of LLL *per se* and, in a few cases during interviews, an explanation had to be given about what LLL meant in the CLC context. Generally, once explained, respondents were able to give lots of examples of LLL activity in the CLC. Nearly half of the principals in the baseline interviews had no response to the question of whether there was any LLL activity in their CLC. This might be due to unfamiliarity with the term, or might be because the LLL activities are so integrated in the CLCs programming that they are not seen as such. In either case, the place of LLL in the CLC is worth further exploration given that, *de facto*, it is very present in the programming and seems, from its definition, to be at the heart of what the CLC initiative is all about.

While the major focus of the evaluation has been on the CLCs in elementary and high schools, two of the CLCs are designated in adult education centres (Huntingdon and Val d'Or) and these offered a glimpse into an area that could have potential for CLCs to expand programming given the important role of school boards in vocational education, adult completion of high school and the offer of post-secondary programs. The now-terminated CEGEP courses at Huntingdon in collaboration with Champlain College, the pilot offer of seminars by videoconference to High School students in collaboration with Vanier College and the provision of various kinds of technical or job training (e.g. cruise ship guides) at other CLCs are all indications of the possibilities for not only increasing the offer of educational programming but also the contribution to community vitality given that these types of educational programs are more focused on improving the job prospects of students - and employment is one of the underpinnings of a community's vitality. In addition, these types of programs lend themselves to delivery by videoconference, further utilizing this already established CLC resource.

²⁸ Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong_learning

Assessment of Lifelong Learning in CLC schools - written by Christie Huff

PRT THEORY OF CHANGE GOAL: CLCs establish a culture of lifelong learning by introducing models and practices that can be implemented to meet community needs and interests

STRATEGY: Build coordinator capacity to assess needs and address with appropriate programming.

ACTIVITIES:

- Videoconference on lifelong learning strategies: How to create a learning climate in communities including local LLL and distance (VC) initiatives – co-presented with QALL
- National Seniors Day Kiosk – provided information on CLC LLL activities at event hosted by QCGN/Seniors Action Quebec
- VC Series organized and funded by the PRT addressing a variety of community needs including parenting topics (homework help and understanding the adolescent brain), topics supporting schools' anti-violence plans (bullying, digital citizenship, peer pressure), and community support for health, nutrition, and arts & culture development.
- Community profiles produced by Qu'anglo - a starting point for exploring needs and opportunities in communities with local and provincial partners
- Participatory Lifelong Learning Symposium sponsored by the McGill Community for Lifelong Learning (MCLL) to introduce peer to peer learning model as fall pre-conference event
- Magog Community Night School visit during May conference
- Presentation to Canadian Association of University Continuing Education on the implementation of the McGill Community for Lifelong Learning's peer learning model in CLCs
- Lifelong learning webinar – co-presented with QALL; this webinar provided training on the assessment of lifelong learning needs and the development of programs to correspond to those needs in English communities - more than 20 sites participated.
- Evaluation support and review – Memphremagog, St. Lambert, and Valleyfield CLCs focused on lifelong learning initiatives in their evaluation reports, including findings on outcomes and implementation practices.

Models in use in CLCs

- Peer to peer learning based on MCLL model (St. Lambert, Lachute)
- Volunteer-driven community night school (Magog/Cowansville model)

- Social entrepreneurship –pilot initiative based on a model from Brooklyn, NY where community members are compensated for their time in delivering courses based on knowledge/expertise they have to share (Richmond)
- Adult education offering English Second Language (Valleyfield)
- VC Series initiated by Partners (Ami Quebec, QFA)
- VC Series organized and funded by the PRT addressing a variety of community needs

RESULTS:

- The majority of CLCs offer at least one successful Lifelong Learning initiative using a variety of models.
- VC series on anti-violence topics by the McGill Centre for Educational Leadership was fully subscribed – participants were highly satisfied with the content quality.
- Schools benefit from CLC lifelong learning programs by building relationships with community members who would not interact with the school otherwise – for example, engaging learners in other school/board activities including volunteering or taking adult education courses.
- Community members report social, intellectual, and health benefits of participation.

Success in Creating a Culture of Lifelong Learning to Date

CLCs' lifelong learning programming varies considerably. Sites with the strongest outreach to date are clustered in three boards: RSB, ETSB and NFSB. NFSB and RSB work very collaboratively with their adult education departments. Riverview CLC (LBPSB) launched a family workshop series that achieved levels of participation and engagement that make it interesting to consider as a model for other sites in future. CLCs with strong lifelong learning programs report success in achieving the desired outcome of creating a perception that learning is lifelong and are inspiring elementary students through the participation of adults and seniors.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- If this aspect of the initiative is to continue and ideally to grow, we need coordinators, and it has to be one of the priorities established that some kind of LLL happen in CLCs.
- Continue to support CLCs by sharing best practices and successful models.
- Engage partners to co-present and co-apply for funding to support community outreach to specific populations. In particular, work actively with Agence Ometz and Quebec Home & School Association to develop capacity of CLCs to offer engaging parent programs.

Work more collaboratively with adult education to develop programs, particularly addressing the need for English and French second language. Training all CLC coordinators in SARCA would enable them to support adult education's goals as the CLC coordinators' relationships with parents and community members make them ideally positioned to refer to SARCA/adult ed.

4.3.3 Networking and Enabling Dialogue in and among English-speaking Communities

One of the most surprisingly successful and positive consequences of having CLC schools 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.

Table 19: Networking activities of CLC coordinators for 2013-2014 (note – with 27 out of 37 CLCs reporting)

Participation Activity	Number
Partnership Tables	74
Tables de concertation	145
Total	219
Average per CLC	8.1

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

As a result of this regional level networking, a number of CLCs have become delivery partners in such social programs as *Quebec en forme* and *Enfants Avenir* which not only provides a complete program to offer to the school and community, but is also accompanied by funding for animators and to cover other activity expenses – an important addition to a school’s resources when the student population is small and to communities, where because of size or geography, services, programs and activities are rare.

These added resources would likely not have become available to a school or community, without the participation of a coordinator at these regional network tables, where the information on programs is available. It is interesting to note here that the vitality of English speaking communities and schools are partially tied to their ability to network with service providers and regional associations that are generally working in French. Having a CLC coordinator take a place alongside other community development representatives has increased the flow of information about opportunities for collaboration and funding. This was cited by many coordinators and principals as a major benefit for supporting CLC coordination and has helped open the doors to new partnerships, as well as raised the profile of the English-speaking community in some regions.

Coordinators felt that sitting on the French language tables and boards had a significant impact in raising awareness (about the CLC and the English language school). Some CLC schools are sharing facilities with French schools so the French schools are seeing the increase in services and activities. Summary from coordinator interviews

Even though the CLC programs and activities are targeted at the English-speaking community, acting as a bridge between the French and English-speaking communities provides an essential link to address the potential isolation of the English-speaking community. Evidence of this can be found in CLC schools in

Richmond and La Tuque, to name two. In this regard, a bilingual coordinator is a key asset to develop connections with the Francophone community.

Community conversations

Community Conversations is an important example of how CLCs are showing their potential in the area of networking. In this case, CLCs 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 November and December 2012 and in the fall of 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. The desired outcome of these Conversations was to determine how CLC coordinators can continue their important work as liaisons, fostering collaboration between schools and their communities. The initiative resulted in over 800 community members, partners and stakeholders across the province participating in an afternoon or evening session to give their input regarding CLCs, their programs and their future. These conversations offered important insights as well as questions about the value, visibility, governance, and sustainability of CLCs and provided feedback reflecting that the CLC model has become a valuable vehicle for building community involvement and cohesion across the province. This was the first network-wide initiative designed to engage with the wider community for the purpose of further developing the institution; a number of the CLCs noted that, given the success of this series of events, they would like to repeat it as a community engagement exercise in the future.

Engaging parents in the school through Community Learning Centers is more than a major force in student success...it has caused a ripple effect in the community. In disadvantaged neighbourhoods where people were disengaged from the schools, the CLCs have drawn them back in not just to schools but to the community.

Comment from participant in provincial community partner conversation

As a follow up to the Community Conversations process, a focus group conducted with provincial partners and stakeholders was held in March 2013, to validate some of the findings and provide feedback on the state of the CLC initiative from the perspective of those who engage with the network (as compared to individual CLCs)²⁹. In summary, these stakeholders stated that the CLCs:

- improve the lives of individuals and communities through their presence and programming,
- facilitate the work of other organizations and networks,
- that disappearance of the CLC network would have an (negative) impact,
- that the partnership approach is a good one
- and there are untapped assets to be explored in moving forward with the initiative.

²⁹ Community Learning Conversations, Community Learning Centres Focus Group with Provincial Association Partners, Laval, March 15, 2013. Recap by Joanne Pocock.

In June 2014, a meeting was held with the Provincial Resource Committee, an informal group of provincial organizations that often partner with CLCs, or use their services and facilities. The discussion 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’³⁰.¹ Collective Impact is the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration. The concept of collective impact hinges on the idea that in order for organizations to create lasting solutions to social problems on a large-scale, they need to coordinate their efforts and work together around a clearly defined goal. A backbone organization provides ongoing support. While the discussion was open and wide ranging on the topic, the general feedback was that:

- CLCs are an important actor with regard to community development;
- the initiative could play the role of backbone organization for certain areas of activity; and
- there needs to be improved communications (both ways) in order to partner more effectively and frequently. Examples given were the need to hear success stories and how adversity was overcome, and organizations need to better promote the services they offer to the CLCs.

CLC schools and collective impact – an example

In the Gaspé-Magdalen Islands region, a collective impact movement has been developed to mobilize English-speaking stakeholders and to explore the possibilities of mounting shared, regional development initiatives. The Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), the movement's backbone organization, has been supported by the CRE-GIM to organize partners at a regional table in order to work together to develop a shared vision for the English-speaking populations of the area. The movement, since named Synergy, includes community organizations, the school board, the CLC and CEDEC, and is being reinforced with professional support from Communagir, an organization mandated to support collective action in Quebec. Though the final outcomes and goals of Synergy are not completely defined, the movement is a first step in collectively examining the possibilities for the region and exploring how to create a collective impact movement in the necessary areas. This initiative builds upon the past collective impact work sponsored by LEARN and the CLC initiative. It continues to bring together the education sector (CLC coordinators, principals and School Board) as a way to support their strategic objective.

The backbone staff tends to play six roles to move the initiative forward: Guide Vision and Strategy; Support Aligned Activity; Establish Shared Measurement Practices; Build Public Will; Advance Policy; and Mobilize Funding. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_impact

To sum up this section on networking, 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. The Community Conversations organized by 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 directly related to the future vitality of English language communities and their institutions.

4.3.3 Improved Access to Services

“Our partnership gives students access to services they normally don’t have access to. We have more access to youth. The CLC strengthens our links with the school.”

Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders

In many community schools in the USA, offering services refers to providing students with access to dentists, nurses and other health care and social workers. CLC schools, generally speaking, help to improve access to health and social services by acting as a conduit, but they are not necessarily becoming sites where health and social services are offered and they do not fall into the “full service model” of American community schools.

In a review of the CLC coordinator’s partnership and activity logs, and during the course of interviews during site visits, when it comes to services³¹ that are provided by partners or outside agencies, in many cases, the CLC acts 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. Indeed, there are many examples that demonstrate the importance of the CLC as a conduit with regards to service provision. This was already becoming apparent in the 2010 evaluation and many service providers and organizations described having a CLC as the equivalent of having an arm into the community.

*The QCGN can be considered one of the key partners to the CLC network. **Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN)**¹ is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 43 English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.*

Source: www.QCGN.ca

³¹ 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.

Among the key partners to the CLC provincial network are the **Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN)** and **Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN)**. There are many collaborative projects and programs now available in partnership with CHSSN for English schools. In 2012-13, for example, CHSSN provided core funding to help target health outcomes for English-speaking seniors in Quebec.

“These types of activities are a great way to support the emotional and social needs of seniors, and at the same time, youth are engaged in positive experiences where they can practice their ever so important social and communication skills and gain a sense of community service. All this contributes to healthier individuals and healthier communities.” Russ Kueber, CHSSN

CHSSN is a network of community organizations, resources and public institutions aiming to ensure access to health and social services. CHSSN was formed to support Quebec's English-speaking communities in their efforts to promote access to English-language health and social services to redress health status inequalities. They have been actively collaborating with the CLC Initiative since 2009 and is a member of both the CLC Advisory Committee as well as the CLC Community Resource Committee.

*The CHSSN **Networking Partnership Initiative²** (NPIs) partners with CLCs across the province to improve the overall well-being of minority language youth. Strategies implemented by NPIs and CLCs promote an increase in inter-sectoral partnerships between schools, families, local service providers, and community organizations which brings additional resources into the school and increased the commitment that institutions and community organizations made to youths' health, well-being and educational success.*

Source: Partnering for the Well-Being of Minority English-Language Youth, Schools and Communities (2014)

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 CLCs, 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. The services available on-site where organizations use the CLC facilities to offer their courses or program (as in the CLC being a location) were mostly for:

- videoconferencing (meetings, some training)
- literacy programs
- fitness/recreational activities
- rehabilitation services

Quebec Writers Federation - Writers in the Community (WIC) program: This is an adaptation of the existing program, but held by videoconference in an effort to reach students that are otherwise unable to participate in the WIC program. It is a series of writing workshops that were held at the Val d'Or (2012) and La Tuque (2013, 2014) CLCs. The program pairs the youth with 2 professional writers who work with the students by videoconference to motivate them to use language to express themselves in productive ways and improve their language and literacy skills. The writers worked virtually with the students on a variety of creative writing and spoken word activities, and the project culminated with the production of a 'zine' of their work.

The brief that emerged following the Community Conversation, organized by the PRT, provides a large array of examples of meaningful school–community partnerships facilitated by the coordinator resource, from 'Healthy Community' initiatives to building Community Action Plans.

Although conversations with local school and community partners (as opposed to provincial partners) on the subject of services were more limited, those that did participate in site visit discussion groups were both appreciative and supportive of the opportunity to work with the CLC, and often described the CLC as a "bridge" between the school board and the organization given the challenges of an outside organization being actively present within a school. Without having a coordinator in a CLC, it is less likely that the schools would become points of access.

When parents were surveyed (online survey), half to three-quarters of respondents in the parent survey agreed or strongly agreed that services had been enhanced or access improved. A large number of parents, however, indicated that they 'didn't know' or skipped the questions completely. For all respondents, 28.7% didn't answer, and of those who did, 38.2% said they "didn't know"; for urban schools, 29.8% didn't answer and 44.8% said they "didn't know". This would seem to indicate that in some communities, more needs to be done to raise awareness of the CLC school and what is being offered and organized.

Table 20: Since the introduction of the CLC in your school, have you noticed an increase in activities and services available to you through the school?

Response	Percentage according to category	
	All	Rural
Yes	40.4%	57.0%
No	15.0%	10.0%
Don't Know	44.7%	33.0%

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

It is possible that some parents had trouble answering this question and there might have been some confusion over what is a service versus an activity or a program. A pre-school or after-school program is 'of service to the community', yet because most of these types of programs are offered directly by the CLC or the school (in conjunction with the CLC), they may not have been viewed as services per se when parents were surveyed. As a consequence, most parents who responded to the survey are aware of after-school and recreation activities (mostly in the 40-60% range), with fewer (5-20%) acknowledging the presence of health and employment services in the CLC school.

Parents in rural contexts, where services are most needed, strongly felt that access to services had been increased thanks to being a CLC school.

Table 21: Parents response to survey question about whether they agree/disagree that the CLC has increased the amount of English services available in my community

Percentage according to category					Response
All	Rural	Elementary	Urban	High School	
53.8%	73.8%	58.3%	47.0%	39.1%	Parents who agree or strongly agree that the CLC has increased the amount of English services available in my community

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

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 of a school's families do not live nearby and so find it difficult to return to the school facility on evenings and week-ends outside of school hours. Moreover, 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.

There also appears to be some work still to do in reaching all parents and more community members. This might perhaps be more the case for CLC schools that are urban high schools, where reaching the community is always more of a challenge.

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

4.3.4 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). Simply put, Community-Based Service-Learning is a teaching strategy that helps students to acquire academic and social education goals while meeting an authentic community need, essentially an amalgamation of Community Based Learning and Service Learning, CBSL uses the local community as a classroom learning resource, and allows students the opportunity to apply what they learn in the classroom by addressing local community needs and not an add-on to curriculum.

The emergence of CBSL projects is proving to be an important vector for activities that 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.

To help support CBSL, in 2011, a CBSL Institute was organized by the PRT for the first time, drawing 25 teachers. By 2014, the CBSL Institute attracted over 80 teachers and principals, a considerable increase in participation. This indicates a growing interest not just in the approach to learning embodied in the CBSL framework but the realization by teachers of the benefits of engaging with the surrounding community as both a learning process and as a way of presenting curriculum and learning in a way that helps to engage students. Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of the teachers in the PRT CBSL survey said their project contributed to community vitality in some manner (economic, social or cultural). The following is a breakdown of responses from teachers on this survey:

Table 22: During your CBSL project, what genuine community need did the project address?

(Responding teachers selected all that applied to their project, n=26)

Percentage	Community Need
73.08%	Contributing to community vitality
50.5%	Supporting seniors
50.5%	Leadership development
46.15%	Celebrating local heritage
46.15%	Environmental and local sustainability
38.46%	Healthy living and safety in school
30.77%	Mentoring
7.69%	Aboriginal reconciliation

Source: PRT survey of teachers involved in CBSL, 2014

Music through the decades is a service-learning project addressing the authentic community need of reducing isolation of seniors from the Mary- Elizabeth Residence in Châteauguay while being integrated into the music, math, and English and French curriculum. The project was lead by two teachers from the New Frontiers School Board, Moira Lemme from Centennial Park Elementary School and Melissa Ianniciello from St. Willibrord.

The project started with students interviewing seniors and taking notes about music they loved throughout their lives. The students took the information back to the classroom analyzing the results with surveys, bar graphs and answered questions using the information. Perhaps not surprisingly, some students less engaged by math, “took the assignment very seriously as we were analyzing data. They wanted to understand - what the averages were and most common answers” Ms. Lemme noted “Projects like this lead to better understanding for students, especially typically lower scoring students who can make connections and be excited about the work they are doing”.

The project didn’t stop there, students responded to what they had learned by working hard to put together a set of songs that would appeal to seniors. Inter-generational projects like *Music through the generations* are not without some challenges, even with the support of a great CLC Coordinator. There was difficulty in finding time to visit the seniors and the arranging transportation logistics. After some back and forth with the seniors’ home, it became apparent the seniors did not want to leave their home to see the show in the school gym so the class brought the concert to them (with a cold buffet, props, and costumes).

A lot of work went into this project, and we have a few clues that the event was successful for the seniors and students.

After the concert, Ms. Lemme was proud to say she had received 4 calls from seniors at the residence “to thank us for our show, the flowers and the snacks!” She also said the “students wrote a journal today about their experience and many of them noted that they felt really good doing something for their community. They also loved learning songs that they don’t hear every day. (A few also said their parents were happy to hear some classics when their child practiced at home)”. “I was very pleased! The kids were happy and the seniors seemed very happy!”

Source : [http://clcpresents.blogspot.ca/search/label/Centennial Park Elementary](http://clcpresents.blogspot.ca/search/label/Centennial%20Park%20Elementary)

An increasing number of CLC schools are venturing outside the classroom via CBSL. Activities being, organized in the community through the CLC schools, as reported in coordinator journals and reports. This includes :

- students visiting senior’s homes for reading and singing
- community gardening
- students submitting articles in community newspapers
- student participation in public markets, community festivals and fundraisers.

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 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), but also among partners and networks.

Parents were asked whether their child’s knowledge about or participation in the community had increased due to CLC activities. Two-thirds agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case, with response rates in NANS, rural and elementary schools once again coming in as more positive, and urban and high schools being less so. The number of parents who said they didn’t know or who didn’t answer the questions was also similar to other questions on this survey (20-40%).

Table 23: Parent responses to the survey question: “What is your perception of your CLC as a community institution?”

Percentage according to category					Response
All	Rural	Elementary	Urban	High School	
57.1%	76.1%	62.3%	43.6%	50.5%	Parents who agree or strongly agree that the CLC has improved the connection between the centre and other organizations serving the English-speaking community
64.7%	74.1%	72.3%	61.6%	49.9%	Parents who agree or strongly agree that the CLC has increased their child’s knowledge and participation in his/her community

Source: CLC evaluation online parent survey, 2014

4.3.5 Who is the CLC School Community?

FOLS (First Official Language Spoken)

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.) Based on the responses from the parent survey, 63.7% of students at all CLC schools speak English at home, 20.9% speak French while 11.0% speak both English and French. However, it is the opposite in a few of the CLC schools located in predominantly French-speaking areas: in Baie Comeau (North Shore region), only 16.6% speak English at home while 70% speak French; similarly in Portneuf (just west of Quebec City), only 14.7% speak English at home while 76.5% speak French. Without a sizeable English-speaking community left to engage with, these CLCs have made concerted efforts to engage with the French-speaking community through English courses, recreational activities, network participation and partnership development. The English-speaking community may not be more ‘vital’ than before (in terms of size) yet such efforts help raise awareness that there is an English-speaking community present, fosters a sense of identity for those remaining, and

contributes to keeping the school, which is often one of the last remaining English institutions in the area, open even if there are macro factors (employment, out migration, etc.) at play in places such as La Tuque, and Val d'Or that will ultimately determine the status of these schools.

As an interesting side note, the parent survey also showed a difference in the number of students and the language spoken at home between elementary and high schools. In elementary schools, 52.8% of the students speak English, and 29.4% speak French, while in high schools 77.0% of students speak English and only 10.4% speak French. This would seem to bear out the claim that has been made by various representatives of the English school system (i.e. Quebec Association of English School Boards, QESBA) that approximately 15% of English-speaking parents with children eligible to attend English schools are sending their children to French schools in order to be better able to speak French before coming back to secondary studies in English. Conversely, it was noted in a discussion group with stakeholders in Val d'Or that French-speaking parents with children eligible for English school send them to elementary school to improve their children's English but then revert to the French secondary school in order to ensure better grades for admission to French post-secondary education, therefore threatening the continued existence of the nearby English high school (not a CLC school).

Aboriginal student population

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 estimates³² 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. They have never been given much attention in discussions on the challenges facing the English sector in Quebec.

To counter this situation, CLCs have made efforts to engage the local Aboriginal populations with programs and activities. The PRT has organized:

- a 2-day Training Event for CLC staff and partner organizations,
- included Aboriginal workshops in various conferences,
- generated \$45,330 cash funds for Project of Heart and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission fieldtrips (from National Day of Healing & Reconciliation and Canadian Teachers Federation) that resulted in twining with on-reserve schools, and the participation of 500 students in the project's activities (such as writing classes and video conference sessions on Aboriginal culture).

The Aboriginal Initiatives in the Community Learning Centre (CLC) Network Report compiled by Sabrina Bonfonti for the PRT in 2013 revealed two primary long-term goals need to be addressed: improve the success (e.g. perseverance, matriculation) of Aboriginal students and support for all CLCs to serve as sites of positive relationship building (e.g. anti-bullying) and reconciliation (e.g. community vitality)

between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. According to this Report, nine CLC schools received Aboriginal Supplementary Grant funding in 2013 and more schools were on the list for funding in 2014 and sixteen teachers, who had never worked on this topic, have become involved in Aboriginal related projects. Furthermore, two Aboriginal Elders or Partner organizations have been drawn in to CLC initiatives and three new curriculum resources were made available to CLC schools (*100 Years of Loss Edu-Kit, Project of Heart, the Blanket Activity*).

KAIROS Canada Blanket Exercise

This interactive theatre activity helps to provide better knowledge about how land was removed from First Nations and to understand more about the Indian Residential School system. Although this is not yet in the curriculum, it was quickly obvious how important this history was to students and their families. One teacher, when doing the Blanket Exercise, was asked by a student why she didn't teach her the history learnt during the activity during usual class time. Now this teach wants to incorporate it into her teaching in the next years to come! Everyone was blown away by the information we learned."

St. Willibrord Elementary

The 2013 report undertaken by the PRT identified four main types of actions:

- Cultural Awareness through contact with an Aboriginal person or organization (7)
- Knowledge of Aboriginal history and/or contemporary issues through curriculum (5)
- Reconciliatory relationships established (3)
- Extra-curricular projects to expand or share knowledge developed (2)

CLC school initiatives are not solely aimed at students with aboriginal background. For example, activities were proposed to all students where they first learn historic facts based on the findings of the Royal commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP 1996) and then through interactive play, take on the roles of indigenous peoples.

This report provides some pertinent recommendations for the future, including moving beyond hosting activities led by Aboriginal leaders to helping organize cultural exchanges with on-reserve schools and field trips to significant sites or events.

Métis - CLCs increasing awareness / reconciliation activities / Aboriginal neighbours & culture

Cross-cultural understanding and reconciliation was very tangible at Métis Beach School (MBS) CLC in 2013. After several months of planning and correspondence, including a Skype call between students, Helene Sims grade 5-6 and Erin Ross's sec 1-2 travelled to Listuguj First Nation to meet the enrichment class of Alaqsite'w Giptu School (AGS).

Twenty-five MBS students made the journey May 14-15th, and were greeted by the AGS school and community drummers and dancers. The students were paired with eighteen AGS enrichment class students. Together they enjoyed a tour of the community, sharing skills in traditional cultural crafts and a traditional Mi'gmaq meal was prepared. They also were introduced to some of the community elders. On the second day they also travelled to a local Heritage Site and Museum called Metepenagiag. This is the oldest village in New Brunswick, located near the city of Miramichi.

The trip was a huge success. Not only a good time was had by all, teachers felt that this trip went a long way towards the goal of cultivating an appreciation about the significance of the Mi'gmaq people. Teacher Erin Ross explains, "This project was a first step in our process to eliminate the stereotypes of First Nations people that we still hear our students repeat in the classroom setting. We (the staff) felt that our students needed to visit a First Nations community to see those perceptions shift towards something more positive." The students only spent two days together but when they left the Listuguj reserve, there were many hugs and tearful goodbyes. "They attached to one another so quickly" Ms. Ross said.

As an unexpected learning she went on to observe that several students who were typically disengaged were the most excited about the experience, "What I realized is that the project helped meet social needs that are not necessarily met with our smaller classes."

During the CLC site visits, the evaluator was able to participate as an observer in two activities that involved Aboriginal students and community members, one being an interactive workshop on Canadian history from a native perspective at the St-Willibrord CLC (Chateaugay, serving the Mohawk community of Kahna'wake), and the other a graduation ceremony at the Val d'Or Education Centre CLC, which serves the Algonquin reserve in Lac Simeon and numerous other Algonquin and Cree communities in the southern James Bay area. It was evident that the CLCs were a significant contributor to the school and the adult education centre's ability to offer these activities, and that the Aboriginal students appreciated the opportunity to engage in activities that reflected their background and culture, and that recognized their achievements. Schools serving native populations continually struggle with higher levels of disengagement and disaffection, and the CLC appears to be a good framework to contribute towards the efforts of the schools to address and resolve these challenges and therefore contribute towards a more vital community.

Conclusions

The findings from this section allow for a certain number of statements. CLC schools are clearly showing that they can meet their community development goals and are revealing, at what can still be considered a fairly early date, their strong potential in supporting and promoting the vitality of English speaking communities across the province. CLC schools are offering activities and programs that help build local English-speaking identity but also foster intergenerational connections and a sense of belonging. The CLC approach is clearly showing its ability to anchor a school in a community, and build bridges between school, community and partners. The approach can be seen to be evolving and those involved in the CLC network are working together and looking ahead to strengthen the community building aspect of CLCs. This is in evidence through activities such as the Community Conversations and discussions on the possibilities of Collective Impact.

CLCs have been particularly successful in their capacity to promote and build networking in many different forms, and as enablers of dialogue across communities, institutions, the school sector and service providers that benefit English-speaking communities and their schools. The role of the PRT in this networking capacity is important and needs to be recognized. Some partners are clearly emerging as key to the CLC initiative – the QCGN and the CHSSN being examples.

In addition, CLCs have enabled schools to venture further out into the communities that they are designated to serve as an educational institution. The CLC schools with a significant Aboriginal population have made connections on both the educational and community levels that have until recently remained elusive, or have at least been minimal.

Where distance is not an impediment, the activities run from CLC schools have attracted community participation, ranging from new mothers all the way along the spectrum of life to seniors' choirs. These may seem basic to the vitality of any community, but for many English-speaking communities these types of activities had declined or even disappeared until being rejuvenated through the CLC approach. The CLCs will not alter the macro forces of politics or the economy, but they will at least provide options and opportunities for a vital community life that were not necessarily available before.

4.4 Sustainability

This section examines the sustainability of CLCs. Similar to when the term is applied to development (being comprised of economic, social and environmental components), sustainability for the CLCs comprises not only financial but also other critical factors. As will be discussed, 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. All of the dimensions needed to arrive at sustainability in this large sense are identified and discussed in the PRT's Theory of Change³³.

³³. <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/#5>

It is important to underline here that the CLC approach has always made room for trying out different solutions in different contexts (no “one-size-fits-all”). Some school boards are looking at different models through which to operate their CLCs, both from a perspective of improving program delivery and to ensure that CLCs are viable over the long term. An example of a board-wide model being implemented will be presented at the end of this section.

Core Funding

The CLC initiative is now in its eighth year of operation. The original plan was that funding through the Canada-Quebec Entente would end in June 2013 for Phase 1 CLCs, and in June 2014 for Phase 2 and 3s. The intent was that the initial funding provided annually for each CLC would be gradually replaced by other sources, either from school boards, partnerships or thanks to the provision of services. At the outset, there was some hope that a business model might be a way to cover part or all of core funding. In this model, CLCs would charge user fees when possible and rent out the VC equipment to local businesses and organizations. For a number of reasons, the business model did not prove viable in all CLCs. In some CLC schools in remote areas, however, the VCN is being used and generating funding (ex: by the regional court system in the Lower North Shore).

The initial deadline for attaining financial sustainability also proved to be too optimistic. It was proposed by some school boards that coordinators should find funding to cover the cost of their salaries. For many coordinators, the early years of implementation were marked by a keen awareness of all that needed to be done to get a CLC off the ground while watching the deadline for “financial” sustainability quickly approach.

The immediacy of the June 2013 deadline with regard to the Phase 1 CLCs, the first to be impacted by the cut-off of core funding, was dissipated however with the May 2013 announcement by MELS that funding for half of the coordinator’s salary was confirmed for the next 5 years (2013-2018), starting in July 2013, with school boards expected (but not obliged) to match the other half of the coordinator’s salary. This said, the issue of core funding still looms large in the coming years, given further reductions in the school boards’ regular budgets (estimated as being at least \$17 million a year for all the English boards).

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

School board support has evolved since the 2013 Mid-term evaluation and following recommendations made at the time, effort has been made to strengthen school board engagement. School board support has evolved since the inception of the CLC Initiative in 2007 and most boards are moving toward greater commitment and acceptance of a CLC approach. The most significant indication of this evolution is the fact that the school boards, despite significant general budget reductions by the provincial ministry of education, committed to a matching share of CLC funding when it was renewed in for another five years in May 2013. The main revision from the original plan is that MELS now funds half of the coordinator's salary with school boards expected (but not obliged) to match the other half.

In addition, there has been interest by various school boards in a 'regional or satellite' model or approach for the operation of the CLC s within their territory. The primary reasons are to be able to provide 'CLC services' to more schools than just the initially designated sites, and to be able to integrate CLC-type activities into school board programming so that it is more content-driven than location specific. It is also a model that further integrates the CLC concept into school board operations and therefore points towards sustainability.

Both these changes are indications that the school boards see the value in the CLC approach and want to take steps to ensure continuity. A number of recommendations were made in the 2013 mid-term evaluation to strengthen school board engagement at the management level and these were pursued by the PRT in the following months. This led to the school board representative committee becoming the PRT advisory committee in 2013, 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. The advisory structure also allowed the PRT to advise on the feasibility of actions, such as the school board representatives meeting with coordinators on a monthly basis to discuss CLC orientations and the support needed from the school board. This has helped give the CLC approach a broader reach beyond just the individual school.

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.

Having to generate funding to cover the cost of programs and activities is seen by some as an extra responsibility. For some coordinators, this marks them out as different from other staff in the school:

"No other component of the school sector is expected to find its own funding, yet CLCs are expected to go above and beyond".

This quote from a coordinator conveys a sentiment encountered amongst some coordinator respondents who, in addition to working conditions (often non-permanent, part-time) that differ from many other personnel in the school system, feel the added pressure of generating funds to run activities and programs.

Some CLCs 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 per year).

As noted in the mid-term report for the 2010 evaluation³⁴, “in calculating the cost/benefits of a CLC, the number of hours a school is being used by the community and the low cost of this use should be considered: CLCs may or may not be generating great amounts of new funding, but they do appear to be providing important services at relatively little cost—relying on volunteer hours and a space that is being heated whether used or not. In the same vein, rental of VCN equipment might not be pulling in large amounts of money, but it might be saving school boards travel money and person-hours as staff use the VCN for meetings without leaving their communities. It also allows students in remote areas, where a school outing to a museum or a science centre would be extremely costly, if not impossible, to now have access to virtual visits. It would be beneficial if these types of benefits could be calculated and considered in reporting on what is generated by CLCs”.

In the early years of evaluation, it very quickly became apparent that having a coordinator in a CLC school could make possible a number of activities, events, programs and services that were previously not available to schools and communities and also, that keeping track of “return on investment” through some form of record keeping would make more apparent just what was being brought into a school. To better calculate “return on investment”, the PRT designed a spreadsheet to record partnership and financial information into one set of records for each CLC, information that would be useful for planning and reporting purposes.

CLC coordinators began recording annual data on partnership and in-kind contributions and the value of these contributions at the beginning of the initiative, but only in a more systematic manner as of 2010. For the period July 2010 to June 2014, with 124 out of a possible 132 annual reports available for review, it showed that the CLCs had arranged 4,102 partnerships over the four years (an average of 27.7 per CLC per year), for a total estimated value of \$10.55 million.

There are few external benchmarks to situate this figure, so a simple comparison with the \$40,000 provided in core funding each year for each CLC (from the Canada-Quebec Entente and the school boards) has been used. The CLC schools generate an average annual value of \$85,060 which, when compared against the \$40,000 in core funding represents a 2.13 gross return on the value of

³⁴ From the addendum by Dr. Patricia Lamarre, Université de Montréal, to the Midterm Evaluation Report on Community Learning Centres, by Learning Innovations at WestEd; November 2008.

³⁴ <http://www.learnquebec.ca>

partnerships and financial contributions for the period July 2010 – June 2014 (up from 2.05 in the Mid-term Report). In this respect, CLC schools are not unique. In the United States, a recent cost-benefit analysis of individual community schools also found a positive return on investment. More specifically, for every dollar invested at “Elev8” sites in Oakland, CA, the Bright Research Group found that the coordination team was able to leverage \$2.27 dollars in services from other partners.³⁵ While this is not an exact comparison, it does demonstrate that the CLCs are performing comparably when it comes to providing resources for their programs and activities.

Each CLC completes a monitoring report based on information from data collected through a monthly spreadsheet at the end of the school year. This report compiles data for volunteer hours (which are then converted into an estimated value for in-kind human resources), an estimated value for donated materials and resources, and the amount of financial contributions received (grants, donations, etc.) for all the different activities carried out by the CLC. The financial contributions do not include revenues generated from a particular activity (i.e. registration fees, sales of goods such as meals, etc.) The three categories are further broken down by types of activities and classified under the following headings: student engagement/student success, lifelong learning, health and well-being, and community engagement/development.

The following table provides a breakdown of partnership contributions and matching funds for two typical CLCs. CLC School 1 is close to the average for all CLCs, while CLC School 2 is one of the top five in ROI for 2013-2014.

Table 24: Partnership contributions and matching funds

Types of activities/ programs	Volunteer hours (hrs)		In-kind Human Resources (\$)		In-kind Materials & Resources (\$)		Financial Contributions (\$)		TOTAL (\$)	
	CLC school 1	CLC school 2	CLC school 1	CLC school 2	CLC school 1	CLC school 2	CLC school 1	CLC school 2	CLC school 1	CLC school 2
Student Engagement / Student Success Examples: Literacy camp, student leadership; Pre-K, after school homework & anti-bullying programs; Scouts & Guides	624	162	15,712	4,050	1,844	2,450	1,475	15,900		
Lifelong Learning Examples: Educational & cultural VCN sessions, intergenerational activities, computer courses, tours	23		1,200		4,900	1,150	2,000	1,331		
Health & Well-Being Examples: Social service provision, cultural & recreational activities (dancing, exercise, sports), school breakfast program	216		5,525			11,000	5,272	2,540		

³⁵ “Scaling the Community School Strategy in New York City: A Systems-Building Guide”. The Children’s Aid Society and the Center for New York City Affairs, September 2014, page 3.

Types of activities/ programs	Volunteer hours (hrs)		In-kind Human Resources (\$)		In-kind Materials & Resources (\$)		Financial Contributions (\$)		TOTAL (\$)	
	CLC school 1	CLC school 2	CLC school 1	CLC school 2	CLC school 1	CLC school 2	CLC school 1	CLC school 2	CLC school 1	CLC school 2
Community Engagement/Development Examples: Partnership Table, community and public events, community support activities (fundraising walks), career events, community gardens, visits by community leaders (professional athletes, politicians)	1437	4,770	36,126	170,750	5,331	16,150	2,468	109,750		
	2,300	4,932	58,563	174,800	12,075	30,750	11,215	129,521	81,853	335,071

Source: 2014 CLC journal reports

ROI for School 1 \$81,853 divided by \$40,000 base contribution to the CLC = ROI 2.05

ROI for School 2 \$335,071 divided by \$40,000 base contribution to the CLC = ROI 8.38

The basic assessment of return on investment (ROI), as determined by the total amount of recorded resources that have been raised by each CLC, demonstrates that the CLCs are able to generate some interesting resources from external sources. The analysis is, however, limited to direct financial contributions (from partners and matching funds), and an estimate of in-kind contributions for human resources. This includes volunteers, staff seconded from other organizations (etc.) and donated materials, and does not include an analysis of the costs incurred from running the activities, events and programs. Nor does it reach into an analysis of the social return on investment (total payback to society in the long-term), which is often cited as a monetary value several times higher than the direct contributions³⁶. For example, if increased student engagement from CLC activities results in a lower drop-out rate, then society recoups an estimated \$120,000 in lost revenue attributed to every high school drop-out, not to speak of the costs.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Knowledge is Power - Report of the Action Group on Student Retention and Success in Quebec, 2009. P. 12

The following table provides the analysis of ROI for all of the CLC schools from 2010 to 2014.

Table 25: Analysis of partnership and matching funds from years 2010 - 2014

Type of Matching Funds	# CLC reports 2010-2014	2010-2014	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Human Resources	124	\$5,058,359	\$646,287	\$1,515,285	\$1,537,453	\$1,361,334
Material Resources	124	\$2,307,219	\$373,676	\$666,406	\$740,209	\$537,928
Financial Contribution	124	\$3,155,711	\$373,919	\$505,317	\$862,325	\$1,422,150
Total		\$10,542,290	\$1,393,882	\$2,687,008	\$3,139,988	\$3,321,412

Return on investment

Based on \$40,000 per CLC	2.13
Based on the median	1.39

Over the 2010-2014 period, this total average annual contribution for a CLC of \$85,060 is made up of human, material and financial resources generated for the program activities for each CLC. While the human and material resources were in-kind contributions, 30% of this total amount was direct financial contributions, up from the 24% reported in the Mid-term Evaluation Report (2013). Of particular interest is the fact that the financial contributions rose by 64% in the fourth year of the systematic recording (2013-2014) over the previous year, which indicates that many of the CLCs are just beginning to hit their stride in generating returns from their partnership development efforts.

When we look at individual CLCs, NANS schools fared slightly better with an average ROI of 2.39, which reflects the additional funding available through the NANS program; this appears to enable the CLCs to leverage the NANS funding to secure additional matching funds from partnerships and, in turn, led to the ROI reaching 2.63 in 2013-2014 for these schools. For these schools, financial contributions increased 497% from 2010-2011 to 2013-2014. It should be noted that when school populations are very small, the actual amount of NANS funding does not necessarily represent a large amount of funding. Nevertheless, financial resources in these schools is observed to grow quickly when a CLC approach is adopted and a coordinator is present to support NANS efforts.

Since the partnership and matching fund records provided for evaluation do not always indicate whether the resources come directly from NANS, or a contribution of a partner has been made because the CLC had matching resources available through NANS, it is difficult to ascertain the specific relationship of the NANS designation in terms of additional resources except that it appears to give the CLC access to other streams of funding. What is clear is that CLC-NANS schools have been able to generate an average of 28% more resources (in-kind and financial) over the four years of analysis.

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

- 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;
- One-quarter of CLCs have managed an average ROI of 3.0 or higher;
- 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*;
- Although Phase 3 Schools had a slightly lower average ROI of 1.93, progress has been rapid as the ROI increased from 1.36 in 2011-2012, to 2.74 in 2013-2014. This again indicates the benefit of the experience acquired by Phase 1 & 2 Schools and the network support, and is an evolution also supported by the fact that financial contributions increased 373% in one year (from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014);
- Non-NANS Schools (roughly 50% of the total number of CLCs) fared slightly less well with an average ROI of 1.87, although these schools also experienced the same pace of increase between 2010 (1.76) and 2014 (2.09).

This, of course, does not take into consideration such things as the expenses incurred to run the activities that these funds contribute towards, but does indicate that the CLCs are providing 'value' above and beyond their basic costs.

4.4.1 Stability

CLCs are not stand alone entities and in their current configuration are mostly dependent on the attachment to and integration within a school or schools. Since CLCs are not independently incorporated organizations (i.e. they are not a non-profit organization), nor recognized as a formalized structure/program within the school boards, their stability remains precarious (as a funding model) as well as somewhat person dependent: their stability within a school can still be greatly affected by the turn-over of principals and coordinators. Sustainability is also about buy-in from stakeholders and evidence that the CLC approach can contribute to schools and to communities. One principal summed it up thusly:

"Sustainability is not just about the money."

As the initiative matures and many of the CLCs move along the WestEd continuum to “Full Operation” (see earlier section of this report) and beyond, a certain number of conditions to provide stability en route towards sustainability can be identified. Specifically, we can identify:

- aspects of hiring, conditions of work, and performance evaluation for coordinators
- CLC formalization and participation in governance structures and processes,
- and inclusion of the CLC concept and approach in the operations of schools and partners.

When it comes to school board commitment, it was not clear from the key informant interviews that this is likely to happen, at least in most school boards and not in the short-term. The main reasons given were that either the school board didn’t view the initiative as a long term program (with too many other priorities to be concerned about) or that the organizational effort would not be made unless it was clear that the initiative would become a permanent part of the school board landscape (and therefore worth putting the effort into organizational aspects). The exception to this sentiment is those school boards which have or which are contemplating operating their CLCs on a board-wide basis (rather than as individual CLCs linked to a particular school institution (see section on board-wide model).

Formalizing the role of the coordinator and more fully integrating coordinators into the educational functioning of the school also remain important and challenging areas. Briefly, to move forward some immediate action can be taken in the following two areas:

- The coordinator should participate in Governing Board meetings of the school and present on a regular basis, either reports of past activities or presentations on upcoming programs or ideas for programs. At a minimum, the coordinator should submit a monthly report or summary to the Principal/Governing Board; and
- The coordinator should also participate in staff meetings to raise awareness of the CLC among the educational staff (this in particular in urban high school settings), to better understand the educational issues preoccupying teaching staff, and to allow when opportune the exchange of ideas and more alignment between teaching staff and the CLC coordinator.

4.4.2 Partnerships

One of the major themes to emerge across the data is the great strides made by individual CLCs 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 establishment of the CLCs. It was almost clear both in the earlier WestEd report and during this evaluation that not very likely that these partnerships could all be maintained without the presence and participation of the coordinator.

Partnerships require time and energy from a CLC coordinator but are recognized as important and appreciated by school principals. The following summarizes data from coordinator and principal interviews:

There was a very extensive list of challenges that coordinators listed when pursuing and maintaining partnerships. In the beginning (and for each new partner) it is a challenge to grasp how they can help (and make them see how they can help) and get them involved. It was suggested that finding common ground and common interests was a solution for this obstacle, but that it was not always simple. Other strategies noted for succeeding with partners were open and regular communications, being able to find a win-win solution and including the partner's visions and goals when considering activities and planning. Finally, the simple notion of expressing gratitude should not be overlooked - several principals noted that there were never enough opportunities to express appreciation to partners.

Building partnerships was always an important goal for the CLC initiative, however, few could see at the time of the launch to what degree the success of these partnerships would impact CLC schools and their communities. Local partnerships and the partnership network that has emerged at the provincial level, with key organizations such as QCGN and CHSSN are a major piece in the sustainability of CLCs into the future. Partnerships are therefore 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.

From the partnership focus group held in March 2013 and from Community Conversations, it is now very clear that partners have recognized the value of the CLC approach and are actively engaged with the CLC network and with individual CLCs. This, on its own, can be considered a major success story and an important one in Quebec where networking and “concertation” between English speaking communities, organizations and service providers has not been very strong in the past. We have also seen how partnerships contribute in a very major way to “return on investment” and that both partners and stakeholders in education find this new relationship mutually beneficial.

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

“[Teachers] were open to the idea of becoming a CLC and by extension a community school. It has meant change, it has meant sharing space and it has required adaptability but overall most teachers have embraced the CLC as a way to complement the good work that is being done in the classroom.”

- Coordinators Evaluation report

A number of best practices and conditions for engaging teachers were identified through interviews:

- Working with teachers on “project-based learning” positively impacts school climate and student engagement and so therefore appears to be a good way to facilitate teacher engagement.
 - A strong working relationship with a few teachers (“catalysts” for change) can reassure the concerns of other teachers (imposition of and an increase to their workload) and creates opportunity to further expand this base of support. Coordinator identifies one or two teachers already committed to the CLC concept and organizes meetings with these teachers every few weeks to review ideas and projects, and to acquire a better understanding of the curriculum.
 - Pick subjects with the best fit as some subjects are easier to fit than others;
- Coordinators who present themselves to teachers as a “go to” resource (What can I do for you to help you support your teaching projects?) have higher success in teacher engagement:
 - Promotion of the successful impact of the CLC on student engagement and well-being will help to better inform teachers and administrative staff; this could be done through blogs or other documents to promote best practices and examples of previous projects for coordinators and teachers.
- Teachers are also unsure how to integrate the CLC in the classroom; some of their suggestions:
 - Offer an information session on a pedagogical day at the beginning of the school year (perhaps along with a PRT representative) with the aim to clarify the CLC concept and explore opportunities that would impact students in the classroom. Make it easy, make it super clear. Show how the activities/projects are RELEVANT to the school (curriculum/classroom) and community. Show how the project can be assessed/evaluated so that the results are linked to the classroom; LEARN should help the CLCs focus on projects that are cross-curricular.
 - Circulate a brief electronic newsletter to the teachers to keep them up to date with CLC activities.

4.4.2 Relationship and Buy-in

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.

Coordinator-Principal relationship

"It's a tango between the two."

This quote from the baseline interviews is an eloquent demonstration that when there is a positive principal-coordinator relationship in place, the CLC is effective. Without such a positive relationship, or even if it is lacking in some respect, the CLC tends to operate below potential.

For the most part, coordinators, principals and school board representatives report positive and effective coordinator-principal relationships. Communications between the principals and coordinators are considered to be effective or very effective, as cited by 90% of coordinators, and most principals were very positive about their working relationship with the coordinator. This was reinforced during the site visits where the level of collaboration/communication between the two main actors in a CLC was evident.

A few CLCs are experiencing less than satisfactory principal-coordinator relationships. This can sometimes be linked to the challenges inherent in building a new type of relationship within a school system, but also can happen following a turn-over in one or other of these two positions. Ongoing, and sometimes frequent, staff turnover means new players, new working styles and new visions, which makes it a challenge to maintain a common coordinator-principal vision for the CLC. Sometimes roles and responsibilities are not always clear (as reported in a few CLCs), and the principal may feel inadequately informed and/or involved in CLC decisions/activities (often the case when a new principal comes into a CLC school). The importance of clear and respected lines of reporting and communication between the coordinator and the principal (coordinator reports to the principal) in order to ensure that the CLC is 'in sync' with the school and vice-versa emerged during interviews.

A coordinator may feel lack of principal support for a variety of reasons, an important one being ineffective communications and reporting which some coordinators attributed to a lack of time. This seems particularly the case for coordinators in a part-time position, a situation which also makes them susceptible to accommodating activities over a wide time span (during school days and also evenings and week-ends), such that they frequently reported working more hours than their allotment.

There appears to be no consistent practice across the school boards on the role principals should play in hiring a coordinator. In some cases, the principal may not always be present in the process, and this was considered a problem in some CLC schools. A suggestion that can be made: The school board representative could be present to facilitate the first meeting with a new coordinator or a new principal (bring them together), also providing an opportunity for the school board representative to be more involved in the CLC.

Other rubrics for guidance in establishing effective relationships are to use the job description and performance evaluation for the coordinator and have an agreement on effective modes of communications (what works for the principal and coordinator – regular 'chats' and weekly meetings to

update and plan were reported as sufficient and effective by many CLCs). Documentation on what makes a successful CLC (in the view of those involved), and the importance of being school and community minded, would be useful for new staff coming on board to a CLC or CLC school. The coordinator will benefit from participation in staff and school meetings, governing boards, etc., not only dispelling any sense of isolation but also providing the CLC with exposure and building credibility. This is an area that requires principal leadership. Essentially, a CLC principal should be an advocate for the CLC particularly in outreach to the teachers.

The coordinator job profile, provided by the PRT as a guideline for the position, is not necessarily used, even though it could be adapted for the particular situation of the CLC. This is partly due to the fact that the title of the position (“coordinator”) used in CLCs has led to confusion because, within the labour agreements of the educational system, the official designation for ‘coordinator’ has different and higher levels of responsibilities than that of an actual CLC coordinator; this might require a change in the official title for a CLC coordinator if the position becomes formalized within the school board’s labour agreement. In addition, coordinators from a non-educational background seemed to have less understanding of the many and often complex school protocols, which they need to acquire quickly to maintain effective relationships.

“At first there is some extra work but once it is up and running - there is less prep time for the teacher, less time dealing with discipline, the teachers are enjoying teaching. Life becomes just much easier.”

-Coordinator comment, baseline interviews

Teacher engagement is an important and ongoing challenge, and an important one if full adoption of a CLC approach in a school. Some teachers are not only open to the CLC approach but are now promoting this approach in their schools, others remain resistant or unaware of what involvement with the CLC approach entails. Two comments from the interviews and discussion groups, each reflecting different ends of the spectrum on this issue, fairly sum up the situation: Some teachers “*are champions of the CLC concept.*”, while others perceive that there are “*A lot of mental obstacles with teachers, they are wary and defensive.*”

A number of helpful practices with regards to improving teacher engagement were identified in discussions with coordinators, such as an “open door” attitude, holding regular meetings, producing frequent communications, and “building trust”. Challenges in building successful relationships within the CLC/school setting were also identified. More specifically, many teachers dealing with larger classes and other educational pressures, have expressed concern that the CLC will increase their workload. This would seem to be ‘fear of the unknown’ as most principals report that the impact of the CLC on school staff workload has been negligible or minimal, with even a few reporting that it has relieved staff of workload, particularly teachers. A few principals noted that where it had increased workload, it was a positive impact, getting teachers more involved, for example. Some noted that the biggest workload

increase was for janitors as the inevitable outcome of more activity within the school and that this was also a relationship that coordinators and principals needed to pay attention to.

It was observed that teachers do not always see the link between the CLC and the classroom, and the coordinator and/or principal may not always be making this link. A coordinator without any knowledge of the educational system or curriculum may also have less credibility with teaching staff, making it more difficult to establish a good working relationship.

Amongst best practices to assist in improving CLC-teacher relationships, an approach that fosters engagement is considered the most important by those interviewed. Schools have a well-structured hierarchy between the principal, the teachers and other support staff. Commitment by the principal to provide the necessary support for teachers to engage in the CLC sets the tone for participation and provides assurance to others on the school staff. For example, ensuring that coordinators and teachers are on the CLC Partnership Table is an important relationship-building step and the principal is instrumental in facilitating such participation. Like all relationships within the CLC approach, bi-directionality is important and coordinators must be available to teachers. The coordinator should also expect to work with teachers' need to teach the curriculum, and with teachers' projects, rather than proposing CLC activities that can be understood as an imposition or extra work for the teacher.

CLC-School board representatives

Relationships between the CLCs and the school board representatives with responsibilities for the CLCs are described as positive. The school board representatives are highly supportive of the CLC initiative, but also identify a few challenges. They note that there is often minimal CLC information available at the school board level. Some school board representatives felt "out of the loop" because of this and also because they have many other dossiers to look after. The school board representatives suggested tightening and refining is required in the planning and reporting processes as CLC reporting to the principal and in turn to school board representative doesn't happen systematically. Some school board representatives commented that CLC planning is not always tied to the school's MESA.

The PRT has organized different opportunities for school board representatives to connect/share with each other, which might lead to the sharing of best practices across the school boards for reporting, measuring, planning and so forth. More of these opportunities appear to be pertinent into the future.

As previously mentioned, some school boards are looking into alternate models, in particular the CLC as a concept or approach rather than just as a physical facility (two or more schools with the same coordinator, or a regional structure such as NFSB that includes schools, adult education centres and off-site activities). We end this section on Sustainability with a description of a board-wide approach as a possible option for some school boards.

4.4.3 Board-wide Approach:

Looking at the Example of the New Frontiers School Board (NFSB)

As the CLC Initiative evolves since its inception in 2007, there has been interest by various school boards in a regional or satellite model for the operation of the CLC s within their territory. The primary reasons are to be able to provide CLC programs and services to more schools than just the initially designated sites, and to be able to integrate CLC-type activities into school board programming so that the CLC approach is more content and program driven, than location specific. This model further integrates the CLC concept into school board operations and therefore points towards sustainability.

The New Frontiers School Board (NFSB) has, since 2008, pursued a regional model as a component of its participation in the CLC Initiative. Even though it has four schools designated as CLCs ³⁸, NFSB has adopted a 'team' approach with its CLC coordinators: Coordinators are responsible for more than one school or cover a sector, and the team itself is, anchored by a coordinator (development officer) located at the school board office.

The NFSB model was included as a case study in the first evaluation of the CLC Initiative by WestEd (2007-2010) and, given the interest by other school boards in pursuing a similar setup for their CLC programming; it was considered worthwhile to re-visit the NFSB model with the aim of capturing any insights that may be of value to other boards. A half-day discussion group was organized with the NFSB CLC team, which assembled three CLC coordinators, two school board representatives and a school board resource person (community outreach) with partial responsibility for CLC programming.

The first item of discussion was about what a school board model should be called. A common term of reference for the NFSB approach has been "regional model", although several other terms have also appeared during the course of the evaluation (satellite, super CLC, etc.).The description used within the NFSB is "board-wide regional approach" which reflects the geographic reality of NFSB, which has three regions within its territory³⁹): the Town of Chateauguay (urban), the Chateauguay Valley (rural) and Valleyfield (urban). The board territory also covers four regional municipalities (MRCs). In a board-wide approach, the name "community learning centre" is perceived as an impediment, creating confusion between the person (operating on a spatial or sector basis) and the centre (operating as a facility) and limiting options for marketing programs.

The participants were less concerned with the name of the approach and more so with not being able to use the moniker "community school" which they felt better reflected the type of approach they were implementing. They expressed the opinion that the term "community learning centre", which they are required to use as part of the CLC Initiative, kept the program captive to the facility rather than being able to leverage the concept for the program's implementation and promote integration within the

³⁸ Huntingdon Adult Education and Community Centre (HAECC) and St-Willibrord Elementary (Phase 1), and Gault Institute and Chateauguay Valley Regional High School (CVR, Phase 3)

³⁹ All English school boards with territory outside of the Montreal Island are in a similar situation.

school board's systems. With no specific indication from the group vis-à-vis a name for the regional model, it will be referred to in this report as a "board-wide approach" when pertaining to the implementation of the CLC Initiative on a school board rather than individual school basis.

THE NFSB board-wide approach: Examples of success and challenges

Participants in the discussion group were asked to describe the notable successes achieved since the adoption of the board-wide approach, as well as challenges still facing this model.

One of the major areas of success associated with a board-wide approach is its ability to contribute to the "**breaking down of silos**", a term that refers to the isolation that characterizes English communities in Quebec. The first success mentioned was the ability to break down the silos between schools, school boards and communities due to the board-wide approach. An example of this is the pre-school program that has been able to expand and in the process has enabled dialogue between the schools in organizing and offering this type of programming. Another example is the "Wednesday@St-Will's", a recurring event that opens the school to community associations and the general population. This event has since been successfully exported to other schools, and has even caught the attention of the French school board. This "cross-fertilization" was understood by participants in the focus group as being directly linked to the board-wide approach.

The board-wide approach has also helped to bridge the geographic and administration "disconnect" between the different levels of schooling: elementary, high school and adult education centres. For example, the Howard S. Billing High School and the Nova Career Centre are physically located in the same building, but prior to the implementation of the board-wide approach communicated separately with the school board. The CLC coordinators described their ability to connect with many educational levels within the school board and act directly as brokers' for various activities. An example cited was the Gault Institute elementary students visiting the greenhouses at Huntingdon Adult Education and Community Center (HAECC) for a gardening project. This example underlines the fact that there are resources within the community that often go untapped.

Isolation can also be geographic. The Chateauguy and Chateauguy Valley communities are both substantial English-speaking communities within the same Conseil Regional des Élus (CRÉ). They were, at one time before amalgamation, separate school boards and are still geographically separated by corridors of predominantly Francophone communities to the south and west, and politically exist in four different MRCs. The board-wide approach has helped to bridge the gap between these two communities at least in terms of the activities and programs offered via the CLCs. Video-conference facilities now exist in all schools in the NFSB, with extra revenues having been invested in extra units and better equipment. This has resulted in better connectivity between all the schools and the school board office.

Finally, a board-wide approach helps to break down barriers between coordinators as they meet once a month. The "team" approach also helps build bonds with other principals and staff. Due to the board-

wide approach the coordinators know all of the principals, and many of the teachers.. This helps to sustain programming and activities over the longer term as school personnel are familiar with the concept and the CLC team and therefore don't need to re-start working relationships every time there is a staff change.

The **Quebec en forme program (QEF)** is another example of success within a board-wide approach. The QEF program aims to mobilize Quebecers to favour and maintain active living and healthy eating, essential for the full development of Québec youth. The result of a partnership agreement between the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation and the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, the program provides funding for regional communities to carry out healthy lifestyle activities. Several English-speaking organizations have been successful in accessing funds through this program for their communities, some in partnership with local CLC schools.

With the board-wide approach in place, the NFSB was able to coordinate across four MRCs with one person to sensitize the system to the needs of the English-speaking communities and pool funds for one project. This enhanced partnerships for local CLC coordinators and ensured that all the regions within the school board territory were able to benefit. Participants in the focus group stated that this would never have been possible as individual CLCs and demonstrated the benefit of the board-wide approach because “engagement doesn't fall on the head of just one person”.

One of the challenges facing CLC schools is how to open up the facility after school hours to the community while staying within the limits of labour agreements and funding resources, as well as finding ways not to impose on custodial staff which is often ‘a person’ (the janitor) in small schools. With a board-wide approach in place, NFSB was able to include after-hours school access as part of the overall negotiations with blue-collar workers. This enabled the school board to reach an agreement on school access from 6:30-9:30 pm at no extra cost to the CLC, so that activities could be offered in the evenings. NFSB can now also handle grievances related to CLC activities (i.e. loans and rentals of equipment) as part of the collective agreement, which means these functional items are not just the problem of an individual CLC.

In the NFSB, different strategies to handle funding for activities at the local level are also being tried. CLC schools can receive up to 25% of project revenues for local re-investment according to their priorities. This provides a measure of decentralized power within the board-wide approach and allows for holistic management at the same time:

“This is exciting for schools that they have some money for their own purposes.”
(Focus group participant)

The adult education centre has much greater flexibility in its use of funds compared to the youth sector. By re-allocating the development officer budget (for the CLCs) from the youth to the adult sector it took the pressure off the operational constraints currently afflicting the youth sector. The CLCs have reciprocated by helping the Continuing Education programs and the SARCA program has been used for relationship building. This also allowed the St-Willibrord coordinator to become 'sub-regional' (covering several schools in Chateauguay instead of just one) and emphasized the benefit of the team approach as a "culture of operation" that allows personnel to collaborate.

The participants in the focus group also noted from their experience that there needed to be an adaptation for reporting and evaluation related to the adoption of the board-wide approach. The procedures would allow for more integrated reporting so that there is one main report on the Theory of Change, accompanied by three sub-set reports (a board-wide focus with sub-regional aspects). More integration in regard to planning, reporting and evaluation between the school board, the schools and the CLCs would make a lot of sense in a board-wide approach. The PRT has adopted some of these changes to simplify the reporting process and allow for more effective planning in less time. In addition, this allows for attribution to be labeled as "contributions by" the CLC rather than as primarily or only a CLC event in order to leverage local branding and marketing campaigns.

The focus group felt that the following were the strengths of a board-wide approach:

- Holistic or global approach that meets the needs of different regions and is able to match resources when needed (i.e. continuing education)
- Creates a "bigger team" and a sense of belonging within the CLC network
- Able to reach more people and have a wider impact
- Fosters a better understanding of the CLC approach by the community
- Better supports diversified programming and enables 'cross-fertilization'
- Promotes sustainability (not so dependent on one person, engages people who care about their region)
- Provides a support network in place at the regional level

Challenges within a Board-Wide Approach

The board-wide arrangements that benefit the CLCs take time to establish within the collective agreement process that frame employment positions within the educational system because the CLC Initiative is an 'Anglo only' program, and so not included in the overall labour agreements that are developed as part of the collective bargaining process across the province. Therefore the CLC coordinator position is unrecognized amongst the official designations and "undervalued" in the collective agreement process. This poses more of a challenge within a board-wide approach than it does for a single CLC school.

Success has added to the demands on coordinators as they have become more widely known as 'school board' coordinators as well as for their schools and sub-regions. Success fosters demand and there is an expectation that successful events will be repeated regardless of other priorities or funding. This can be challenging for coordinators who may only be in schools one day a week. An example cited was the Santa Claus video conference which brings 'Santa' into all the schools for the younger children just before Christmas, which has become tremendously popular. Regardless of the resources available, there is an expectation that this program will be offered each year by the CLCs. The board-wide approach means that coordinators are not necessarily in the same school every day so they cannot devote the same level of attention to the individual school. This has been particularly noticeable where the coordinator has become (in a positive way) involved in supporting the teaching staff in the school. The diminished presence of coordinators in local schools is considered a weakness of a board-wide approach. It was also felt that this might diminish principal involvement in the integration of a CLC approach within a local school.

This focus group did not include principals, so their perspective on a board-wide approach is not included in this discussion. Over the past year, however, a member of the PRT has been working with this board and with principals to help develop this "extended" model and find new ways of working with the community within this model. The NFSB has also chosen to send two teachers from each school to the PRT organized teacher conference to help build support for the CLC approach.

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

The board-wide approach seems well suited to both the operational culture of the NFSB and the geography of its territory (maximum 1.5 hour drive to any location, most less than an hour). The board-wide approach also offers some creative options to address a number of the budget and personnel issues school boards face when CLCs are only individual schools. In particular, the 'expansion' beyond the youth into the adult education sector not only offers budget and program alternatives, but also 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 the integration of a CLC concept into a local school and might impact the work of a coordinator in bringing support to educational outcomes. This is raised here as a question that requires more study and reflection and will of course depend on local school board contexts.

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

worth exploring. This model has been proposed in other contexts. The Coalition of Community Schools in the United States proposes a “scaled-up version of community schools”, referring to: “a vertical network of schools from pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 in a single attendance area with all schools linked horizontally across one or more school districts⁴⁰.” Perhaps a model of this sort could be considered as a possibility for Quebec’s English sector in the future.

Conclusion to this section on Sustainability

Sustainability is a broad term in any context and difficult to define in a precise way beyond the notion of continuation into the future. For CLCs, however, the question of sustainability is framed by not only the financial aspect, but also the question of stability and relationships.

There is general agreement from all the different constituencies involved with CLCs that some level of core funding will be necessary into the future in order to maintain the CLC coordinator in place. Yet it is also clear from the ROI analysis that the contribution of core funding is an investment rather than just a cost, an outcome that justifies the support necessary to sustain the coordinator’s position.

With regard to stability, a number of practices were mentioned that could contribute to sustainability such as job security and salary levels for the coordinators, inclusion and alignment with other board-wide planning and programs (it was noted that there was minimal inclusion of CLCs in the school board strategic plans) especially with regard to the ToC for the CLC and the MESA for the school, along with more formality to partnership agreements (promoting longer-term relationships).

Lastly, the notion of relationships, particularly between the school principal and the CLC coordinator, were noted as being important to the continuation of the CLC, as well as between the coordinator and teachers, school board representatives and partners. Positive and successful relationships hold added importance for sustainability given that the CLCs are not stand alone organizations nor are they (yet) a formalized component or program within the educational system.

4.5 Theory of Change

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. The methodology used to create a Theory of Change is also usually referred to a Theory of Change, or the Theory of Change approach or method. So, when you hear or say “Theory of Change”, it can mean either the process or the result.⁴¹

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. As ToC proved to be a powerful organizing tool, the initial Framework for Action was modified to better fit with a ToC approach.

⁴⁰ <http://www.communityschools.org//resources/introduction.aspx#>

⁴¹ <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/how-does-theory-of-change-work/glossary/>

The Theory of Change (ToC) is one of the central organizational underpinnings and has been the principal planning, decision-making and evaluation tool⁴² of the CLC initiative. The ToC requires participants to be clear on long-term goals, identify measurable indicators of success, and formulate actions to achieve goals. A ToC also differs from other planning tools in that it should describe a causal pathway that specifies what is needed for goals to be achieved and an articulation of underlying assumptions which can be tested and measured. Each CLC has an individual ToC, as does the PRT, which also provides resources to the CLCs to establish, monitor and renew their respective ToCs.

Planning and measurement are considered important aspects of the CLC Initiative and are important contributors toward determining the impact and sustainability of the initiative. In addition to this overall evaluation of the CLC Initiative, the PRT has provided evaluation advisors for some individual CLCs.

⁴² <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/> - 5

What is a Theory of Change?

Essentially, a Theory of Change defines all building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks—interchangeably referred to as outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change/change framework, which is a graphic representation of the change process.

Built around this pathway of change, a Theory of Change describes the types of interventions (a single program or a comprehensive community initiative) that bring about the outcomes depicted in the pathway of a change map. Each outcome in the pathway of change is tied to an intervention, revealing the often complex web of activity that is required to bring about change.

Theory of Change was designed for social change organizations and initiatives to achieve their goals and demonstrate their impact. It grounds planning and strategy in the reality and evidence base of what is necessary to achieve change. Theory of Change is also critical to evaluation, providing a framework that allows organizations to know what to evaluate and when. It builds on – and can usefully incorporate data gathered through – other approaches that have been developed to improve planning and evaluation, including ‘logic models/log frames’ and ‘results frames’.

Theory of Change is a rigorous yet participatory process whereby groups and project stakeholders identify the conditions they believe have to unfold for their long-term goals to be met. These conditions are modeled as outcomes, arranged graphically in a causal framework. Like any good planning and evaluation method for social change, Theory of Change requires participants to be clear on long-term goals, identify measurable indicators of success, and formulate actions to achieve goals. It is distinct from any other method of describing initiatives in a few ways:

- it shows a causal pathway from here to there by specifying what is needed for goals to be achieved.
- it requires you to articulate underlying assumptions which can be tested and measured.

It changes the way of thinking about initiatives from what you are doing to what you want to achieve and starts.

Taken from <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>, consulted May 15, 2015

Using ToC to guide planning and evaluation

Coordinators were asked to what extent they use the ToC. Interviews with coordinators revealed that the use of ToC to plan and evaluate is uneven across CLC schools: some use it more, some use it less. For some coordinators, ToC is very present:

“It is stuck with post-its to my wall. I use it all the time.”

Other coordinators commented on how it provided a long term perspective:

[the ToC is] *“good for global vision”*

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 the coordinators reported using it for measurement (evaluation) as well as planning purposes. As not all coordinators have both planning and action skills, since 2007 the PRT has provided training in using the ToC. The PRT has also provided coordinators with training in evaluation (data gathering, analysis and report writing and coordinators for Phase 1 and Phase 2 CLCs to write evaluation reports every three years. A series of evaluation tools were developed to facilitate evaluation (needs assessment surveys, focus group questions for stakeholders, a report template to guide writing, etc). For Phase 3 CLC schools, a team of consultants have been assigned to assist with completing and implementing an evaluation plan. The resulting evaluation reports are available for separate consultation via the CLC website.⁴³

The evaluation findings (baseline interviews, site visits) suggest that the ToC is sometimes regarded as more of an action plan than a Theory of Change. In fact, some coordinators refer to them as “their action plan”. However, all of the ToCs/action plans contain a comprehensive framework of results/indicators/activities etc. The CLC ToCs reviewed in detail during the site visits generally did not include the causal pathways and underlying assumptions that are an essential part of composing a ToC. These exist in separate documents but were not in evidence as part of the plan itself. All CLC received support from the PRT in ensuring that the steps to developing a ToC were understood.

The ToCs/action plans also appear to be very ‘charged’, reflecting the multidimensional goals of the CLC approach. Most of them contain at least 4 or 5, if not more areas of major results. Each of these broad goals translate into multiple outcomes, indicators, strategies and activities. The responsibility for reaching these goals does not rest solely on the coordinator’s shoulders, though some coordinators seem to feel that they bear this weight. While coordinators are there to support and help move implementation of a ToC, it remains a collaborative action plan that engages all partners and stakeholders in CLC schools. Assessing how well a CLC school is meeting the goals determined through the process of designing a ToC, comes down to assessing how well all partners and stakeholders with the help of a coordinator are moving forward collaboratively. Some coordinators, however, clearly 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. Some support in prioritization or delimitation might benefit coordinators who are feeling overwhelmed, but it is quite likely that greater use of the Framework for Action is required to guide and clarify implementation would also benefit some coordinators.

⁴³ http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc_res_eval.html

Assessing how well each CLC school is meeting the goals determined in a “strategic plan” is required and is part of a coordinator’s responsibilities. Using ToC to do this has become part of CLC reporting requirements and critical to showing the return on investment of core funding for CLCs. Coordinators need to continually monitor and address this aspect and ensure that sufficient time is given to assessment and reporting. Given that coordinators have many different tasks and responsibilities, and that many are in part-time positions, the PRT has worked to consolidate and streamline how coordinators report activities (i.e. a single activity report in the form of a spreadsheet now includes partnership and volunteer contributions, amongst other aspects).

The ToC results are not being shared as much as they could be in some CLCs. This raises the question of the role of the Steering Committee/Partnership Table that is perhaps not always engaged in the evaluation/results once the ToC for planning purposes has been developed. In general, it was observed that local partners and/or stakeholders did not seem to be aware of the ToC to any great extent. Evaluation results help build support for the CLC approach across the province, as well as locally for individual CLC schools. Translating the content of reports and data collection, in particular based on the key elements of the ToC, into a format that enhances communications with the school community, school board personnel and partners is an effective way to facilitate further engagement with the CLC and its programs. The PRT is already taking action in this respect and helping CLC coordinators share this type of information. Some of the Phase 3 CLCs that carried out individual evaluation plans during the winter of 2013-2014 produced documents that can be considered exemplary, containing the results of the evaluation, including a mix of descriptive material, graphics and data to relay the ‘story of the CLC’ to stakeholders and others. Strategies and best practices for more effective sharing of this type of information in easily communicable ways should continue to be addressed at the annual CLC conference and other development sessions. Partners sitting at partnership tables could eventually be asked to identify what information was most helpful to them in understanding the evolution of their CLC and which formats for acquiring this information were most pertinent.

It has been suggested that ToCs be better aligned to the school’s Management and Success Agreement (MESA). Schools must develop a MESA in relation to the school board’s strategic orientations which, given the minimal or general mentions of CLCs in these documents, doesn’t seem to provide much opportunity for CLC priorities in the ToC/MESA alignment. Ideally, alignment between CLC ToCs, MESAS and school board strategic plans should be a multidirectional process – with links in each of these planning documents being made to other strategic planning documents. At the moment, there is not much evidence of this. This would not only allow the development of a comprehensive vision for all stakeholders affiliated with the school but would also facilitate individual actors, including the CLC, in their development and implementation of more targeted, collaborative and measurable action plans.

The PRT has taken the first steps in this direction by developing its own comprehensive ToC to guide how the team plans and evaluates their support to the CLC network (current iteration 2012-2015⁴⁴). The PRT

⁴⁴ http://www.learnquebec.ca/export/sites/learn/en/content/clc/documents/TOC_snapshot_2012-2015.pdf

ToC sets out the assumptions and causal pathways leading to elements of change already identified by the Ministry of Education, providing an example of alignment and in so doing, strengthening the sustainability of CLCs into the future. It also serves as an example of how to move from planning to action to assessment of results, identifying the indicators/for this assessment in the four areas that they have targeted through the process of designing their CLC:

- evaluation findings to strengthen policy and practice,
- school board policies to support CLCs,
- collaborative partnerships between school, families and communities,
- holistic learning opportunities adapted to communities (in particular intergenerational and lifelong learning), with special attention given, over the time frame, to the sub-goal of Aboriginal student success.

The PRT ToC, much like the ToCs designed by individual CLC partnership tables, has a range of goals that reflect the multidimensional approach to change that lies at the heart of the CLC concept. Meeting these varied administrative, management and program delivery responsibilities at the PRT now relies on a team with a reduced staff. Different members of the PRT are assigned responsibility for actions to be taken in meeting these goals, but the team also works tightly in collaboration. It is becoming quite clear that the PRT is meeting its leadership role in guiding and supporting CLCs. It is also quite clear that the PRT plays a critical role in building and supporting a CLC network which links school and communities to major partners (like CSSHSN) and to each other. It is also clear that the PRT is meeting its responsibilities in supporting CLC schools move forward with the implementation of the CLC approach. It is impossible to imagine the CLC approach gaining ground in Quebec’s English sector without the leadership of the PRT.

It is clear that another form of collaboration and partnership is emerging between the PRT and individual CLC schools. For example, the PRT has as one of its sub-goals, the following:

“To support holistic learning opportunities, teachers should contribute to CLC development and sustainability, adopt/adapt teaching practices that utilize community based resources, understand the CLC concept and work with coordinators, and community minded teachers are identified and collaborate with CLC coordinators.”

This can only happen by reaching teachers through the coordinators and principals in CLC schools. Simply put, the CLC approach is built on collective and collaborative efforts, some of which are new to the English school system, but are already showing their potential in supporting English schools and English language communities.

Support by the PRT (or other resource) 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 evaluation step for the PRT. Up until recently, most CLC schools could only assess short-term outcomes. The next step is yet to come.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

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 (i.e. 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.

5.1 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. Opportunities for school board representatives to connect and learn from each other (share models and best practices on such topics as information sessions with teachers and union employees, developing teacher champions/advocates) and should continue to be included in PRT programming.

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

NANS - The impact of linking NANS programs to the CLC approach is worth further exploration given that it provides resources and addresses issues that are part of the CLC initiative, and appears to be contributing to supporting the goals of NANS as well as the success of CLC schools.

Adult Education - There should be more school boards/PRT exploration of further CLC involvement in adult education and post-secondary programming.

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 towards community schools, including the board-wide model where appropriate.

Board-wide Approach - The NFSB experience with the board-wide approach has provided a positive balance of benefits over challenges and so could be considered as a model that other school boards could consider. Other school boards should, however, first carefully consider their own situation before adopting such an approach:

- School boards with greater travel distances between schools may not find the model as suited to their situation, as may also be the case with urban schools for reasons of density and higher populations that require a coordinator per school to be effective;
- The school board's operational culture and support for the presence of a team-approach to the type of program delivery that is currently coordinated through individual CLCs are important ingredients for success;
- Also, if a school board chooses to adopt a board-wide approach, there should be a formal acceptance of the model and therefore accommodation/adaptations for nomenclature, agreements, reporting processes, etc. given the operational and program differences between the board-wide approach and that of the current majority of CLCs in the initiative as individual schools.

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 (i.e. working with CHSSN and health programming for youth) 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 beneficial to overall community engagement with the network and individual CLCs.

5.2 CLC school level recommendations

Planning - To the extent possible, ensure that the CLC ToC and partnership agreements are aligned with the school board strategic plan and the MESA, supporting the learning conditions of students. When the time comes for renewing or updating the CLCs ToC, the CLC could consider the opportunity of developing a ToC for the CLC school and community to which the CLC can then link and better align its activities and anticipated results (rather than just a ToC for the CLC school).

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.) It would be beneficial if the non-academic benefits of the VCN (e.g. increased

access to professional development, reducing travel time and costs) could be calculated and considered in reporting on the value generated by CLCs.

Hiring - The principal should be involved/present in the hiring process for the coordinator, along with more formalization and common practices for the hiring, conditions of work and performance evaluation of coordinators.

Teacher Engagement - In order to improve teacher engagement, coordinators could be offered some training session on the Quebec Educational Program at annual meetings – enough to be able to work more closely with engaged teachers and bring their support, for example, to cross-curricular learning situations (example: coordinator support for the cross-curricular Robotics program at Riverview).

Community Conversations - Continue Community Conversation type activity as beneficial to overall community engagement of the individual CLCs.

Communications - Each CLC (or all CLCs 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.

Facilities - The coordinator's office/CLC space should be centrally located, accessible to students (open door concept). This promotes strong coordinator-student and student-student connections. It also creates awareness in the school of the CLC and the Coordinator. Where possible, the CLC space should also have exterior access to promote community access, especially during the school day.

Governance - More formalization of and participation in CLC 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. At a minimum, the coordinator should:

- Submit a monthly report or summary to the Principal/Governing Board (these need not be lengthy and can also be used to keep school board representatives informed);
- Be invited to sit at staff meetings to promote familiarity and be more aware of the school's needs and educational challenges and objectives;
- Also be invited to present short updates on coordinator assisted activities, partnerships and community initiatives as this type of participation and interaction at the school level will also support integration.

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 the collected data. To build capacity in evaluation, they have provided training and tools to coordinators and this should remain an important focus for the PRT. Discussion with key stakeholders in the CLC approach should be held to plan for the next type of evaluation: the longer-term goals of the CLC approach. The PRT should ensure that local CLC schools are already involved in collecting and recording data for this next phase. This requires advance planning on what needs to be evaluated and what types of indicators will be needed.

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

Alignment – the PRT’s overview position enable it to assist CLCs to align their ToC/action plans with the school and community equivalents (where possible), and to develop a ToC for the CLC school in collaboration with school and community partners and better align its activities and anticipated results (rather than just a ToC for the CLC).

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 – Having demonstrated the potential and opportunities for the CLC schools of working, respectively, with teachers in the community and Aboriginal communities. The PRT should continue to play a supporting role for both these elements to augment the level of activity and enhance the outcomes for the benefit of the immediate stakeholders (e.g. teachers, students, Aboriginal associations) and the communities they come from or serve.

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

Communications – Maintaining effective communications within such a diverse network will always be a challenge, not to speak of the external audiences in associated communities. As the network of CLCs becomes more mature and school boards continue to integrate the CLC concept into their facilities, operations and programs, communications 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.

6. Annexes

Annex 6.1

Evaluation Questions addressed in this Report (*objectives & indicators, areas of inquiry*)

Table 1: Enhancing Educational Outcomes – Sub-objectives & Indicators	
<i>To what extent and in what ways does the CLC Initiative contribute to improvements in the educational environment / climate?</i>	
Sub-objective	Indicators
A. Improving collaboration within the school network	1. The extent to which the CLC is included in school board and school planning
B. Improving school environments	2. The extent to which the school having a CLC (integration of the CLC concept) has been beneficial
C. Improving student engagement	3. The extent to which the CLC concept has influence over/impacted student engagement
D. Improving student perseverance & success	4. The extent to which the CLC has influenced/ impacted student readiness, perseverance and success
E. Improving parental involvement	5. Extent of CLC role in encouraging, enabling parental activity within the school & at home with the student.
F. Expanding access to educational services	6. The extent to which the CLC has contributed to increased access to lifelong learning opportunities (including early childhood)
G. Improving community contribution to the school	7. Extent to which the CLC has assisted the community to contribute to the school

Table 2: Enhancing Community Vitality – Sub-objectives & Indicators	
<i>To what extent and in what ways does the CLC Initiative contribute to enhancements in community vitality?</i>	
Sub-objective	Indicators
A. Building Community Identity	1. Level of engagement in Building Community Identity
B. Improving access to services	2. Provision of information about English language organizations and their services as a result of CLC activities/programs
	3. Use of services offered by English language organizations as a result of CLC activities/programs
C. Improving community participation in the school	4. Level of involvement of the community in the school (including the CLC)
	5. The community's capacity for shared governance of the CLC
	6. Level of volunteerism in the school (including CLC)
D. Improving school/student participation in the community	7. Level of school engagement with the community
E. Promoting networking and linking	8. Use of the videoconference network
	9. Extent of engagement in Partnership Tables/Networks
	10. Media

Table 3: Ensuring Sustainability – Sub-objectives & Indicators	
<i>To what extent can the CLC Initiative (PRT, Network, Individual CLCs) be sustainable?</i>	
Sub-objective	Indicators
A. Improving school and community participation in and ownership of the CLC	1. The level of integration among school and community stakeholders
	2. Level of volunteerism in the CLC
	3. Scope and effectiveness of partnerships
B. Improving operational efficiency	4. Level of the CLC workload
	5. Level of perceived leadership in CLC
	6. Level of resource sharing between CLC, school and community
C. Improving support for the CLC	7. Support role of PRT
	8. External stakeholders (Non-school community, partners, potential partners) view of the CLC
	9. Potential for future partnerships
	10. Extent of development and implementation of a sustainability plan
	11. Capacity to promote and market the CLC concept
	12. Extent of external financial and in-kind support
D. Assessing 'return on investment'	13. Calculation of the socio-economic value created during the investment time frame.

Table 4: Implementing Change (ToC) – Sub-objectives & Indicators	
<i>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?</i>	
Sub-objective	Indicators
A. Fostering leadership	1. Level of engagement in the planning and assessment process
B. Improving operational effectiveness	2. Extent to which ToC is incorporated as institutional philosophy in CLCs

Appendix 6.2

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