

# CLC Extended Model: Learnings & Next Steps from the first 4 years



A report prepared for LEARN by  
Estuaries Learning Consulting Group,  
Fall 2018



---

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
The Benefits of the Extended Model	4
The Project: Extended Model of the CLC Initiative	10
Who is this report for?	11
Methodology of the Evaluation Process	12
Snapshot of Participating CLCs	13
Limitations of this study	14
How to read this report	14
Part 1: Seven Keys to Success	15
1. Unified vision about what an extended model IS (and can do!)	15
2. Harmonized Framework and Structure	16
3. Proper support and resources for the CDA	17
4. Communication, communication, communication	20
5. Active Support of the School Board	21
6. Active Support of a Third-Party Facilitative Partner	21
7. Time, time and more time	22
Part 2: Looking to Extend? Six Recommendations	25
Documents Consulted	28
Appendix	29

---

## Executive Summary:

From January to March of 2018, LEARN undertook an evaluation of the CLC extended model that looked to answer two key questions:

- 1) Has the CLC extended model been a success, and;
- 2) What *best practices* can schools and school boards adopt to effectively introduce the CLC extended model?

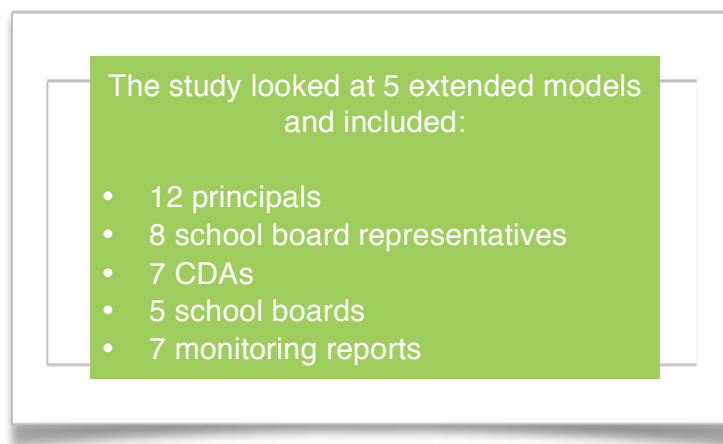
In asking these questions, LEARN was looking to support two specific types of stakeholders:

- 1) Schools and school boards wanting to understand the **benefits** and **outcomes** of the extended model; and,
- 2) Schools and school boards wanting a deeper understanding of **how to extend** effectively.

The majority of school boards currently have CLCs that have been extended models for a short duration. The data presented here reflects this, as it responds to question two more fully. It will be useful to do a further evaluation in a few years' time to gather more precise data on the success of the model, once schools have engaged with it for a longer period.

This executive summary highlights the **six key benefits** of the extended model, alongside **six key recommendations** about how to best support the introduction and implementation of the model.

For a detailed breakdown of the recommendations and benefits, please look to the full report immediately following this summary.



---

## Why Extend? The Benefits of the Extended Model

This executive summary and the report that follows identifies key benefits, best practices, challenges, and subsequent recommendations regarding the success of the CLC extended model initiative.

Overall, findings show the importance of the extended model project – 20 out of 27 Community Development Agents (CDAs), administrators and school board representatives interviewed indicated that despite some challenges, the extended model has benefitted school sites and English-speaking populations through an increase in access to resources and an enhanced sense of community.

The following **six key benefits** were noted from CLC activity reports, where CDAs track outputs, and in discussion with participants.

### 1. Increased access to partners & service providers

A clear benefit of the extended model is the school board's ability to offer increased access to community partners for all schools involved. ***When CDAs support multiple schools, partnering organizations impact two or more schools on average.*** While some partnerships remain site specific, many have expanded to include multiple schools.

The extended model therefore:

- Connects partners to more schools thereby widening external stakeholder support and understanding of the larger needs of the school board and its territory; and,
- Increases the schools' and school board's understanding of the resources/programs/services that exist for students and parents in the community.

### 2. Increased access to programs

With the extended model, CLC programs can run at more schools, ***benefiting significantly more students and community members.***

For example:

- 
- At one extended CLC, **partners saw their reach grow from 230 students to 780 students**. In June 2018, the CLC reported **76 activities across all three schools** over the school year, supported by 24 unique partners. **Over half of partners (13) were involved in programs at two or more schools**. For comparison's sake, the CLC reported 35 activities, supported by 16 partners, at the originating site in 2015.
  - At the same CLC, a partner providing homework help reported **twice the number of enrolled students** because of the extended model. Similarly, **114 students from across all three sites** came together to participate in a workshop on socio-emotional learning.
  - At another extended site, a workshop on ecology and birding **reached over 169 students across five schools**. That number would have stayed at 23 students at the originating site if not for the extension.
  - At an extended model with four elementary schools and one high-school, **342 students from across three schools** participated in a *Jeunesse en Forme Rurale* program.
  - Finally, an extended model offering community events has seen participation rates practically triple. For example, community movie nights are now attended by a **large number of participants (433), especially when compared to attendance rates logged prior to extension (154)**.

### 3. Increased visibility and presence in the larger community

A unique aspect of the role of the CDA is their ongoing presence on community tables and forums. These spaces are vehicles for identifying key issues and advocating for appropriate resources for school and community sustainability. To this end, CDAs have traditionally sat on local or regional tables de concertation, acting as a voice for the English-speaking educational sector.

The extended model enhances the value of CDA's participation on these committees in several ways:

- They now speak to the **realities of multiple schools**, articulating a broader picture of English school board realities;

- 
- *They are stronger advocates* for the needs of their constituents, as they represent a greater population; and,
  - *They are able to speak with greater authority* on behalf of the English-speaking populations in their regions, promoting a deeper understanding of these communities within the larger cultural context.

#### 4. Increased ability to work at a systems level

Several school boards that participated in this evaluation spoke to *the benefit of collectively planning as a larger team*, with multiple administrators, board representatives and CDAs together. This type of networked approach for planning can benefit schools by:

- Creating a theory of change/strategic plan for the CLC initiative that includes multiple voices and perspectives;
- Engaging a collective lens to identify issues and opportunities;
- Focusing on endemic themes across schools; and,
- Ensuring the participation and buy-in of a broader range of school leaders.

#### 5. Increased access to grants and financial resources

CDA reports show *increased access to financial resources for schools and school boards* that have extended models, as more funding opportunities (in the form of grants, and program-based revenue) become available when more schools become involved.

Examples of this trend from reports produced in June 2018:

- An extended model of four schools reported a total of \$61,500 in grants, of which **\$24,560 came from supporting schools new to the CLC initiative.**
- Another extended model of six schools reported grants totaling \$48,000. Of these monies, **\$23,000 came from grants in support of schools new to the CLC initiative.**
- An extended model of three schools reported a total **in-kind contribution**, which represents the value of material donations and volunteer time (valued at \$25/hr.), of **\$187,000.** This includes close to \$75K, or 3000 hours, worth of volunteer time.

#### 6. Increased retention and support to parents transitioning their children to high school

---

Four out of the five school boards that participated in this evaluation had extended models that included both elementary and high schools. The majority of associated participants stated that the extended model has been a crucial element in transition planning, by:

- **Connecting younger students** to the experience of high school in advance;
- Running specific programs with the **mandate to support transition** from one level to the next; and,
- Running programs where **younger students get to interact with high school students** acting as mentors.

For schools that struggle with retention, this approach offers children and parents a clear pathway to stay within the same school board as the student grows. This could potentially result in less attrition and more students remaining in the school board as they transition to high school.

## How do you extend? Best practices in getting started

The first section of this executive summary focused on our initial research question, *is the extended model successful* by considering some of the major benefits this model offers school boards.

This next section focuses on our second question, *best practices for extension*. What do school boards and schools need to put in place to ensure they extend their CLC in the most beneficial manner possible?

**The following six recommendations** emerged from the data as the keys to the sustainability and healthy growth of this specific CLC initiative.

## Six recommendations for extending a CLC

### 1. Choose what type of model fits best

There is no “one size fits all” approach to extending a CLC - each school board has scaled up the initiative differently.

Some examples of the various avenues taken:

- The “single CDA, multiple site” approach, where one CDA works at various sites that do not have much interaction with one another;

- 
- The “two CDAs, one region” approach, where several CDAs divide programming (usually based on grade level) and work together to ensure continuity. The various school sites do not have much interaction with one another; and,
  - The “fully integrated” approach, where one CDA works with multiple sites, who are simultaneously working together across schools on various projects and strategies.

No model is inherently better or worse – they have different requirements and are used for different reasons. What the data does suggest however, is that it is important to be intentional about choosing the best fit for meeting participating schools’ and school boards’ needs. Be mindful and explicit about what kind of approach you want to take and be ready to commit to seeing that choice through! *More on page 25.*

## **2. Collectively own the vision and process**

Seen as equally important for the success of the initiative is the collective engagement and buy-in of all key stakeholders. Ensure ALL key stakeholders: a) understand and b) support the vision of the extended model, not only at each school but ideally ACROSS schools. This includes:

- Active support from school administration and staff;
- Active support from the school board; and,
- Active support from a third-party facilitative partner (such as LEARN’s PRT).

*More on page 26.*

## **3. Harmonize policies and procedures**

Ensure there are clear, harmonized procedures for:

- Assessing the readiness of each school when considering their suitability for extension;
- Individual and multi-site application processes;
- Job levels, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for CDAs; and,
- Evaluative procedures, including measurements (KPIs, etc.) for extended model success.

*More on page 26.*

## **4. Ensure proper CDA resourcing and support**

Many interviewed cited that the increase of logistical, programming and relationship-building work that running multiple sites requires, alongside the complexity of contextual issues schools



---

face (poverty in communities, teacher turnover etc.) means that CDAs working in extended models need additional skills, resourcing and support that CDAs working in single sites might not require.

This resourcing includes:

- Full-time hours;
- Harmonized job classification / professional designation;
- Clear supervisory mechanisms; and,
- Sufficient integration at each school.

Focusing on these areas of additional resourcing would give the CDAs the resources and support needed to fully develop the initiative as a mechanism for school and community vitality (for instance, there would be support necessary to develop stronger connections between school pedagogical strategies and the CLC action plan). *More on page 27.*

## **5. Strengthen cross-school communication**

All participants recommended ongoing communication across all stakeholder groups within extended model schools, including:

- CDAs with their individual principals;
- CDAs with each school staff team (teachers);
- Principals with each other (across school sites);
- Teachers, whenever possible, with other teachers (across school sites); and,
- School board representatives, principals and CDAs (across school sites).

The major challenge in establishing and maintaining communication channels seems to be due to a combination of a lack of time, resources and having to work with procedures and processes that function well for single-site communication but less for multi-site cross communication. Ensure the necessary cross-school communication channels are in place or create and sustain them - this brings to life the potential for deep collaboration! *More on page 27.*

## **6. Offer ongoing third-party support**

Ensure that you have resourcing for third-party support (such as LEARN's PRT) which is a necessary "backbone" in keeping the strategic oversight and vision of the extended model thriving. *More on page 28.*

---

## The Project: Extended Model of the CLC Initiative

In 2006, the Provincial Resource Team (the PRT), an educational consulting body situated at LEARN, was formed by Quebec's ministry of education to support the development of the Community Learning Centre (CLC) initiative for the English community sector of Québec. For the past 12 years, it has been resourcing school-community partnerships with a focus on supporting student outcomes and community vitality.

In early 2015, the PRT held a community forum to discuss the future of the CLC initiative with key stakeholders. During discussions, educational partners identified a need to expand the CLC model to benefit a greater number of schools. By strategically scaling the initiative, to include multiple schools in the same area, it was believed that a greater number of students and their families could access community-based programming and resources. Key reasons for expansion included:

- **Promote equity & sustainability** of the CLC initiative across schools, allowing a greater number of schools this opportunity.
- **Promote a learning community** among principals, CDAs, teachers and school board representatives, enabling wider dialogue / learning across regionally based school clusters (for instance, principals across feeder schools).
- **Promote depth of partnerships** – the extended model was intended to create room for community partners of the CLC to focus and develop greater roots with their associated institutions (and vice versa).
- **Promote stronger connection** between communities and schools, by implicating a larger pool of students, and increasing the visibility of the schools in the community.

Based on this feedback, the PRT received funding from the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur" (MEES) for seven extended site projects. Sites were selected

---

using a readiness application process, and seven CLCs were chosen (that were associated with eight schools). Since extending, these CLCs are now associated with 29 schools. See Appendix for a more detailed list of extended CLCs and associated schools, including those that extended without going through a formal process and in some cases, without additional funding.

In its early stages, the extended model had a harmonized application process and dedicated consultation support from the PRT. It has since developed using various definitions and approaches, due in part to:

**1) CLCs extending in school boards without a formal vetting process**– there are currently 11 extended CLCs associated with 44 schools, of which only six went through an official application process; and,

**2) Limitations of the PRT** – Administrative constraints in 2015-2016 resulted in the loss of an external consultant dedicated to the extension project. Coupled with competing demands from the network, the PRT was unable to provide consistent support to the extended model teams. This has contributed to less cohesion within and across school boards re: the implementation of consistent extended model structures and procedures.

Now, in 2018, it is time to take an evaluative look at the initial years of this extension. This report seeks to answer several questions - exactly what is an “extended model?” Is it working? Where does it go from here?

## **Who is this report for?**

This report is for internal and external stakeholders key to the CLC initiative, at all levels. It is intended to be a living document, used as a tool for deeper discussion. It points to successes, challenges and recommendations to foster a successful approach to extension.

It is hoped that as a reader, you find within these pages actionable items to consider and integrate into your current extended model and/or specific aid with initiating the beginnings of one.

---

## Methodology of the Evaluation Process

### Scope of the Evaluation

This evaluation was primarily focused on establishing a clear picture of the initial success and challenges of the CLC extended model initiative, as expressed by the stakeholders charged with the development and ongoing leadership of the extension within their respective schools.

Success is defined here as an extended model that is realizing the majority of the reasons to scale, as outlined on page 11 of this document.

### Data collection techniques

For the purposes of this evaluation, 37 principals, CDAs and school board representatives were contacted across five extended models (in five different school boards) for one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The five CLCs included in this study:

- Richelieu Valley Community Learning Centre (Riverside School Board)
- Chateaugay Valley Community Learning Centre (New Frontiers School Board)
- Lanaudière Régional Community Learning Centre (Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board)
- Richmond, Danville & Drummondville Community Learning Centre (Eastern Townships School Board)
- Verdun Community Learning Centre (Lester B. Pearson School Board)

A total of 27 participants from these models were interviewed (a participation rate of 73%), including:

- All CDAs (seven total)
- School board representatives (eight total)

- Principals (12 total)

CLC activity reports from 2015 and 2018 were additionally consulted.

The extended models included in this study were chosen by LEARN’s PRT. They were selected on the basis of having demonstrated initial success with the extended model through:

- Multi-site school connections - evidence of cross-over activities, principals meeting together semi-regularly, etc.;
- Capacity of CDA resource(s)–CLCs involved in the study had at least one full time CDA or two CDAs with the equivalent of a full-time workload across their extended sites.

For the purposes of confidentiality, no organization or person is mentioned specifically in this report. Quotes used have been stripped of individual indicators to ensure anonymity, and data has been themed according to major trends and outlier issues. To see a full list of questions asked during interviews, see the Appendix.

## Snapshot of Participating CLCs

Extended Model CLC	Number of CDAs & classification	Number of Schools & Principals in Extended Model	Salient characteristics
Extended Model 1, School Board 1	1 CDA, <i>Professional</i> (full-time, started as part-time)	5 schools (all elementary) 5 principals	
Extended Model 2, School Board 2	2 CDAs, <i>Managers</i> (part-time, both at 60%)	3 elementary, 1 high school (feeder school) 4 principals	Multiple municipalit� regionale de comt� (MRCs) - large geographic area
Extended Model 3, School Board 3	2 CDAs, <i>Support staff</i> (part-time)	4 elementary, 1 high school, 1 adult education centre 5 principals (many part-time)	Large geographic area Some schools in close proximity to one another

Extended Model 4, School Board 4	1 CDA, <i>Professional</i> (full-time)	2 elementary, 1 high school (feeder school) 3 principals (full-time)	High poverty index, schools in close proximity to one another
Extended Model 5, School Board 5	1 CDA, <i>Support staff</i> (full-time)	2 elementary, 1 high school 3 principals	Large geographic area

## Limitations of this study

### Limitation #1 - School Leadership Focus

The focus of this evaluation was an in-depth gathering of data from institutional leaders (Principals, Board Representatives, CDAs) charged with implementing this model, to gain a clear picture of how it was experienced by key drivers of this change. Our scope did not extend to teachers, parents, students or community partners. The extended model has been running for less than four years, which is not long enough for a nuanced evaluation of its impacts on these levels of the system.

It is strongly recommended these voices be included in any future evaluations.

### Limitation #2 - Number of extended models included in study

For this initial evaluation, five extended models already showing elements of success were chosen - the scope of the data set that has emerged is limited to this number and can only suggest inferences and results based on this subgroup. In future evaluations, it could be useful to have a larger sample or to include a more diverse pool of participants. This would potentially result in more nuanced outcomes and findings.

## How to read this report

This report is divided into two sections:

**Part 1: Seven Keys to Success (and the challenges implementing them!)** identifies the major elements participants noted as fundamental to their extension’s vitality *or* as missing in-

---

redients of the model's success. It covers key difficulties in fostering an extended model within systems geared toward single-site delivery.

**Part 2: Looking to Extend?** turns to insights gleaned from the first section, with the hopes that issues raised here will enable school boards and other key stakeholders to move forward in their consideration of becoming extended with best practice tips and tools at their fingertips.

## Part 1: Seven Keys to Success

*(and the challenges implementing them!)*

### 1. Unified vision about what an extended model IS (and can do!)

The key contributing factor (identified by 22 out of 27 participants) that indicates whether an extended model will have traction is **having a unified vision** of what extension means, at all levels of leadership, alongside **having unified buy-in** at these same levels. Participants noted that this vision goes beyond the initial extension and must include an ongoing assurance that when there is turn-over in positions of leadership, new employees understand and support the extended model philosophy and framework from the start.

School boards where all stakeholders (school board, principals, CDAs) clearly understood **and agreed** to the extension prior to the governing board formalizing the initiative had a noticeably higher level of CDA integration in their schools (including a direct connection to teachers), projects that touched more than one site, and mentioned more often in their interviews that they experience the extended model as a means for the growth of their larger community. Those interviewed that had less of a clear vision spoke more often about the extended model being a top-down decision. They also spoke more frequently about the model as an opportunity to get additional services to individual school sites.

Despite identifying the importance of a unified vision, the majority of participants either: a) indicated their extended model had varying definitions across stakeholders or b) defined the model in a way that was inconsistent with other stakeholders. The model was described, from various perspectives, as either:

- 
1. A framework that allows individual sites a chance to get resources they would otherwise miss out on;
  2. A framework that allows for school boards to increase retention and hopefully, alongside retention, graduation rates; or,
  3. A framework that allows schools to partner with each other and similar community partners, to build support for students across the larger community, both internal and external to the school.

There are solid inferences that can be made as to why coming to a common definition has been so difficult to achieve. In researching documents and talking with participants, it has become clear that there was never a single definition that all school boards were introduced to at the beginning of this project. Additionally, as the next section will illustrate, it seems clear that extended CLCs went through differing application and approval processes, did not have the same initial scope, and allocated differing resources (HR and otherwise) to the extended model project.

## 2. Harmonized Framework and Structure

Another key element for success that many participants (16 out of 27) noted was lacking in their current CLC was **harmonized frameworks and structures** outlining policies and procedures from which to steer the extended model. This lack of a cohesive approach has led to role confusion (to be discussed), a lack of clear indicators of success, and a reliance on school policies and procedures created for the single-site institution, which are inherently not as supple or flexible as this type of approach needs.

A key example of these differing approaches can be seen in how each extended model occurred. Of the five, none were established in the same way: one was birthed from a project that saw principals already connecting and engaging across schools, another was driven from the school board with a focus on student recruitment, one school board has understood itself as engaging as an “extended model” since the inception of its CLC initiative, and another was due in part to a community effort to keep schools alive and thriving in a low-income area.

Differences in initial reasons for beginning an initiative do not inherently lead to divergence regarding the day-to-day management of a model. However, the lack of structures and frameworks in place to guide schools that had decided to extend widened this management gap. At the early stages of extension (for approximately 18 months over 2014-2015) LEARN hired a



---

consultant to lead the implementation process of the extended model. This included 10+ months of tailored support in the following areas:

1. Preparation: Inquiry & Research Phase
2. Review Status & Readiness of Participating CLCs
3. Provide consultation and coaching support to successfully expand outreach to include more students and community members (e.g., strategic planning sessions with stakeholders across participating sites)
4. Documentation of Learning & Recommendations

The school boards that had the consultant in at these early stages, as well as those who received similar support from the PRT, showed a tendency towards a more unified approach in their processes and procedures. The data indicates that there is a positive correlation between the amount of support given by the PRT/third party from the outset and the extended model success as it relates to three areas: 1) coherent structures/processes, 2) greater collaboration across schools and 3) increased internal communication across and within schools.

Those that received less third-party support mentioned relying on a mix of structures already in place, creatively “winging it” and using past experience to figure out what an extended model could look like. This led to the duplication of approaches that worked well for other types of CLC frameworks (multi or single-site) but that did not translate as easily to extended model needs. In no other area does this lack of harmonization, and the importance of a consistent approach, become more apparent than when considering the role of the CDA and their ability to successfully support this model.

### **3. Proper support and resources for the CDA**

Having a unified vision for the extended model ensures the initiative starts out on the right foot. Having a well-supported CDA whose role is understood by all nurtures beginnings into a sustainable reality. A full 100% of participants identified the CDA role as crucial in the execution of the extended model, although there were different understandings of what the role entails. The way in which participants understood the role of the CDA seemed to have a connection with how they defined the extended model itself.

Those that defined the extended model as a framework for individual sites to get resources spoke about the role of the CDA as one of an administrative and facilitative support for their individual school. Those that saw the model as a framework that allows schools and community

---

groups to partner with each other saw the role of the CDA as that of a cultural translator and community convener.

These differences in role definition did not have clear positive or negative correlations in the satisfaction or engagement of the CDAs regarding their work. There were other major factors related to CDA sense of well-being on the job, including: a) workload hours and job classification; b) relationship to the schools/community; and, c) role clarity and decision-making authority. We turn briefly to these now.

## **Workload & Hours**

The majority of CDAs interviewed indicated they are doing full-time work on part-time hours (over half are at 60% or less and work 80% or more). Of the seven interviewed, 100% said a full-time load for this type of role is a non-negotiable to ensure the successful delivery of the extended model. CDAs face specific challenges in effectively carrying out the complex mandate of the extended model on part-time hours. It is not atypical for a CDA to be part-time and still expected to support three schools in multiple locations, with different school cultures and needs. Generally, this lack of hours results in certain schools getting less direct support, the CDA building less partnerships than is ideal, and generally having difficulties building integrated, cross-school initiatives.

Only one CDA interviewed said she could build the types of connections and partnerships she wanted to. Of note is that she was one of the full-time CDAs, with two schools that were close in proximity to each other.

CDAs are not the only stakeholders in the school boards that see this workload issue - 12 out of the remaining 20 participants noted the lack of full-time status for CDAs as an impediment to extended model success. Despite an awareness of the problem, some cited that beyond the issues of budget and finances, a lack of basic school resources was an additional deterrent to creatively solving the issue. For example, many noted that the physical lack of sufficient office space in their schools meant that even if the CDA had full-time hours, there would be no place to put them.

## **Job Classification**

---

Another issue tied to job satisfaction, retention and the coherence of the CDA role was seen in the diversity of job classifications assigned for the same responsibilities at and across school boards. All seven CDAs interviewed were, on paper and in practice, tasked with the same role, but paid at varying levels based on different job classifications. Some are classed at the level of professional and receive tens of thousands of dollars more per year than others considered as technical staff for the same job. For the CDA in an extended model role, a level of strategic thinking and ability to make critical connections and support complex systems are all necessary. That this discrepancy is present has led to role confusion, dissatisfaction and a de-valuation of the position that may threaten the achievement of desired outcomes.

### **Relationship to the School and Community**

Those who worked part-time and/or worked within larger geographic regions (four of the five school boards have extended models that cover two or more MRCs) noted a love of their work and a deep connection to the values of the CLC initiative alongside an awareness that they cannot make the inroads with the communities and partners that they want to given the amount of resources, time, and ground they are expected to cover.

This lack of time and spreading out of CDA resources was also apparent in relationships with teachers and other members of the school community. Of those interviewed, over 70% mentioned an inability to attend important school meetings, such as governing board and staff meetings, due to having to be present at multiple schools on part-time hours. This dynamic has resulted in an ongoing link to the schools through the principal, who may or may not have the time (or, for some, interest) to connect the CDAs to their school plans and teachers. This makes it hard for CDAs to “break into” school cultures and be seen as part of a school-wide opportunity to have objectives (and cross-school projects) realized.

Principals that have had the most success integrating CDAs have embedded processes and frameworks within their schools that structurally reinforce the role of the CLC and its coordinator. For example, some schools have created CLC committees that include the presence of teachers, who are mandated as part of their workload to be part of the initiative. This has resulted in an integrated, holistic approach to CLC projects and has activated school staff as an integral component of the project. The CDA(s) in these cases is no longer seen as “outside” of the day-to-day, but as a natural part of it.

---

## Role Clarity and Decision-Making

Finally, the lack of clear role definition has had an impact on the ways in which CDAs are held accountable to the school boards. Only a few had clear procedures in place for who they are accountable to, and not one school had a standard performance evaluation procedure in place. This means that most CDAs in an extended model have multiple bosses, who all like things being done in different ways. One CDA told the story of how if they need to go on vacation, they have to ask multiple principals to get approval - even if it's just a long weekend. Another CDA explained how the administrator at the originating site they started at (prior to becoming an extended model) still supervises the CDA's workload expectations as if they were only working for one boss, and one school, instead of many. All the CDAs interviewed expressed a desire to get feedback from those that supervise them, and a sense of isolation and frustration at having few mechanisms to do so.

## 4. Communication, communication, communication

The CLC extended model has complexity at its heart, as a networked initiative bringing together numerous stakeholders from a diversity of systems. To function properly, a key to its success, as noted by the majority of respondents, is the ability for these actors to communicate in meaningful, timely ways. Those interviewed had a multitude of different experiences in internal and external communication. For many, this was an area that needed much work, with over 50% citing difficulties both within their school sites and across their extended models. Common issues included:

- Lack of time/interest from principals to meet as a larger team to discuss the CLC initiative as it relates to their extended model objectives (of the five surveyed, only one school board indicated that they do this with a degree of regularity)
- Lack of connection between the CDA and teachers - many CDAs noted that it was hard to communicate with teachers directly, citing their relationships with school staff were managed directly by principals
- Many cited that the only time CDAs, principals and school board representatives get together is at the conferences and occasional professional development sessions run by LEARN's PRT (not due to a lack of interest, but due to a lack of time/coordinating resources)
- Lack of connection and alignment between school board representatives and principals, leading to differing instructions from leadership about concrete application of framework and strategies

- 
- A difficulty in running cross-school programming that would benefit whole communities due to a general lack of communication across schools and a focus from schools on (their) single-site
  - Lack of congruency between each school re: communication pathways and approach, leaving the CDA to navigate several different cultures and expectations in terms of connecting with principals and staff

While these challenges were noted and experienced by the majority of school boards, there were also indications of communication flow. Success stories that participants mentioned show that there are creative ways schools are communicating with one another - for instance, at one board, the schools have become so interwoven that their teachers will often share PED days, meeting all together to learn and develop. Additionally, two CDAs shared how they have chosen to informally prioritize communication together, which has resulted in a stronger, more harmonized approach to their extended model strategy.

Interestingly, the communication links that many schools mentioned they use to stay connected together either originated from, or were managed by, third-party support. This data suggests a potential relationship between outside support and deeper cross-network communication, which reinforces the role of said type of resource.

## **5. Active Support of the School Board**

Those that experienced an active, engaged school board mentioned how key this has been to the ongoing sustainability of the model. One principal remarked that, “without the leadership and ongoing support of the school board, the CLC initiative would remain stagnant instead of beginning to develop into something that I can see is having a direct impact on the students’ interest in school”. Another noted that the school board had been the defining factor for their understanding and connecting to the value of the CLC and the extended model. It is clear through these testimonials that an active school board is a crucial factor in the deepening and fostering of the model and its potential for school-community growth.

## **6. Active Support of a Third-Party Facilitative Partner**

Participants at all school boards noted the complexity of the extended model’s multi-stakeholder framework and objectives, especially when compounded by the challenges of their

---

contexts. Every principal and school board rep interviewed commented on the difficulties of attempting a truly integrated extended model due to a lack of resources, support and the need to focus on other dossiers. One respondent noted, “I would love to spend more time building on what the extended model could mean for our communities, but the CLC initiative is only *one* of a handful of major portfolios I am working on.”

Respondents who had received support from LEARN through the PRT at the initial stages of extension mentioned how vital this aid had been. As another participant mentioned, “when we first began, having the PRT support to help us strategize and connect the dots was crucial to our sustainability - they focused solely on supporting us. It was a game-changer. They had an overall perspective about how this works that I just don’t have - my day-to-day is here, in the school - I’m never going to have that system-wide lens, but I need it for this model to work.” Additionally, 18 out of 27 participants mentioned the role the PRT has played in bringing together the various stakeholders to take “time out” to talk strategy, plan and ensure cohesion regarding school-wide objectives and CLC activities. Many mentioned that without these types of sessions, run by an external support system, networked connectivity and planning wouldn’t happen, citing in particular the development of relationships and communications across schools as a highlighted outcome of this support.

Over half of respondents acknowledged the key role that the PRT has played as a facilitator of systems-wide conversations, tools and perspectives. There was a clear sense from many that without this kind of ongoing third-party maintenance, the extended model would have difficulty sustaining itself, or it would simply stay as an exercise in getting a few more resources to a few more schools.

## **7. Time, time and more time**

Out of the 27 participants interviewed, 17 mentioned that this type of initiative takes time, and that the success of the extended model is a work in progress. The majority of respondents suggested a need to be patient with outcomes and not expect too much, too quickly. Five people independently noted that a « layered » approach, of building one CLC at a time, could be a good framework for school boards less familiar with the requirements and demands of this type of project.

---

There were many conditions cited that made it difficult for the potential of the initiative to fully take hold and flourish as quickly as some indicated they wished it could. These contextual challenges, while not unique to the English school boards of Québec, are certainly felt by them in significant and ongoing ways. They are not areas that can be “wished away” or problems to be “solved” but rather paradoxes to be acknowledged and worked with, and include:

- A high level of poverty in many school environments (urban and rural)
- A high turnover of principals and teaching staff
- Declining populations in English communities in rural and (some) urban areas
- School budgeting issues and lack of resources
- Lack of community resources in rural areas
- Need to service large geographic areas - of the five schools, three had challenges because of the need to connect with different partnership tables across different geographical regions

## The Extended Model: At an Important Developmental Juncture

Of the five extended CLCs, only one said they considered themselves an « extended model » in the sense of “a framework that allows schools to partner with each other and similar community partners, to build support for students across larger community, both internal and external to the school”. The majority of those interviewed (20 out of 27) indicated that they believed they were working in a way that allowed individual sites an increase to resources they would otherwise miss out on, which was still seen as important.

Given the contextual challenges that English school boards face, it is not surprising that extended models are on the right track and are not yet offering integrated cross-community programming and partnerships. In 2015, the PRT and Qu’Anglo had a dialogue where they determined that it would be “unlikely” for any CLC to meet the conditions of a fully integrated extended model, based on an evaluation of the (at the time) 37 CLCs to date.

It is clear the CLC initiative has undergone a transformation over the past 12 years. This evaluation is a continuation of the story of the development of the CLC model, from infancy to adolescence. When the initiative began, it was understood (if at all) as a « room to get resources » for individual (single-site) schools. The CLC was not initially understood as an

---

integrated component of the school, and the coordinators that oversaw its mandate were often seen as extra hands to help the administrative running of after-school programs, not as facilitators of community/school connectivity.

After a decade, these coordinators, now called Community Development Agents (CDAs), have been trained up to be community leaders and catalysts for change. The CLC initiative is now seen as a community connector and a way of engaging in school-community education. It is becoming a verb, not a noun. School boards involved with its coordination are embedding its spirit into the fabric of their processes and protocols. A central component of the evolution of this role and of the CLC itself has been the support of LEARN's PRT, who have been the backbone of support for training CDAs and expanding the network to what it is today.

From the stories expressed in the interviews, a narrative picture emerged of an initiative at a sort of a cross-roads - now, more than ever, there is a chance for the extended model to achieve what it first set out to do: to promote connections across school leaders, a depth of partnerships and a stronger bond between communities and schools for the ultimate goal of increasing the equity & sustainability of English schools and the English community of Québec. The other option is for the CLC mandate to stay on its current path, as a single-site support for the ongoing resourcing of individual English schools, which it is now doing with seasoned experience.

The six recommendations described in the final section of this report have emerged from the interviews held with leaders who have pointed to the strengths and challenges of the current extended model. It is hoped that they can be considered a guide to harnessing current potential energies to create ties across schools for an extended model that is truly holistic, systemic, and life-giving to the larger community.



---

## Part 2: Looking to Extend? Six Recommendations

### 1. Choose what type of model fits best

**Recommendation:** Each school and school board, when considering the extended model, should consider what it is ultimately looking for:

- ✚ a multi-site CLC initiative, with one CDA that can serve a variety of schools, in a somewhat separated way, or;
- ✚ an integrative model where those same schools learn to connect and build self-sustaining programming over time, with the help of a CDA as a facilitator?

This report does not argue the validity of one over the other, but does point to the need to be very clear about what you have the capabilities and interest for, and to be transparent and clear about that choice (and plan accordingly!).

## 2. Collective Ownership


**Recommendation:** An assessment for readiness (that is harmonized and used by all English language school boards) **should be mandatory** for all schools thinking to extend, and should seek to ensure:

- School Board commissioners, directors, principals, staff and partners are willing to engage in the CLC implementation process. This includes, as much as possible, all staff and teachers
- Space for key stakeholders to have an ongoing, active voice in the planning process (determining the needs of their school and community, putting in place program supports, allocating HR beyond the CDA to meet those needs)
- A

p  
a  
s  
s  
i  
n  
g  
o  
f  
a  
r  
e  
s  
o  
l  
u  
ti

### CLC Models at Glance




*Image and description provided by LEARN's Provincial Resource Team.*



**Single-site characteristics:** one school, one plan/vision, small number of leaders, CDA task boundaries can be flexible without threatening achievement of goals

**Multi-site characteristics:** Multiple schools, multiple plans/visions, multiple leaders that work independently from one another, CDA(s) supports largely distinct strategies, activities and goals, can involve multiple MRCs, higher need for task boundaries

**Extended model characteristics:** Multiple schools within a shared region/serving the same community (often feeder schools), a single unified plan and vision, shared strategies and activities, many leaders with high need for ongoing collaboration, CDA has a high need for task boundaries



---

on (through the Council of Commissioners) that clearly identifies all stakeholders are: a) on board and that b) a vision for the extended model is clear and congruent

### 3. Develop Harmonized Policies and Procedures

**Recommendation:** *School boards must create and enforce* harmonized policies, procedures and frameworks for the selection, initialization, and sustainability of the extended model. These frameworks would best be created in collaboration with LEARN as well as key internal and external stakeholders involved in the CLC initiative, to ensure consistency in approach for each school board and the English education sector. These frameworks should include clearly defined:

- Assessment protocols/evaluation of school system readiness for the extended model
- Protocols for the pre-planning phases of the extended model project
- Procedures for integration of extended model in its initial phases
- HR procedures for CDA role, accountabilities, delegation of authority and performance evaluation
- Protocols and standards for unified partnership agreements across extended models
- Procedures for the development and maintenance of internal communication pathways across schools
- Ongoing evaluation and updating of policies and procedures as the model develops

### 4. Full-time CDA resourcing and support

**Recommendation:** To ensure viability of the extended model initiative, the CDA role must be **classified as that of a professional** and remunerated appropriately. Additionally, the CDA role within extended models must be resourced as a full-time workload and **support no more than three schools**. This maximum number comes from three of the interviews with CDA participants, as well as four administrators, each of whom indicated that more than three schools waters down the quality of connection and ability to fulfill mandate to the point where the extended model approach suffers.

This would help to ensure that each CDA in the extended model has the same job title, remuneration, accountabilities and delegation of authorities as the others.

### 5. Strengthened Cross-School Communication

---

**Recommendation: *Increase support for ongoing, continuous communication*** within and across schools by formalizing frameworks and offering resources and opportunities for informal relationship-building. This would ensure a deeper connection across schools as well as a strengthening of communication at individual sites, by providing:

- Strengthened presence of CDAs at school meetings (teacher meetings, staff meetings, governing board meetings, etc.).
- Support for habitual, regular meetings of principals across the extended model
- Formalized mechanisms for integration of CDA into school communication pathways (staff meetings, outings, etc.)
- Formalized support for shared PED days for extended model leaders to get together and connect (in collaboration with a third party, like LEARN's PRT)
- Formalized mechanisms for strategy and planning sessions for extended model initiative, driven by leaders of program (school board reps, CDAs, principals)

## **6. Ongoing resourcing and advocacy for Third-Party Support (LEARN)**

**Recommendation:** The role of a third-party, like LEARN's PRT, ***is an essential resource*** for a model as complex and networked as the extended models within the CLC initiative. In many ways, the PRT could be considered the backbone from which to support and uphold the extended model mandate and mission. A third-party resource, with a systems-wide perspective, solely focused on supporting the sustainability of the framework is necessary for any extended model to realize its full potential. **It is strongly recommended that** Commissioners, Directors, Principals, school boards, and staff sensitize themselves to the value of third-party support, and advocate for its continued resourcing to ensure that the extended model can thrive.

---

## Documents Consulted

- CLC expansion scope of work
- CLC Extended model progress report June 2016
- DG Letter CQSB Approval
- Extension Model SWOT Analysis
- Ideal Conditions for CLCs to be Chosen for Extension Model
- Readiness Assessment June 2016
- School Community Connections Mapping Purpose
- Steps to CLC Extension - Quick Guide

## Appendix

### Semi-Structured Interview Questions (for all participants, at all levels)

1. How long have you been working in your current position?
2. What was your impression of the CLC network before you became directly involved with it?
3. When do you remember hearing the idea to become an Extended Model? From who?
4. What was the reasoning to extend the CLC model?
5. How was the structure decided?
  - How many schools are a part of the extended model? How were these schools selected (i.e., did they get to 'choose')?

- How many working hours does the CDA have available (full time, part-time and if so, 20hrs or 10hrs)

School Board	CLC (originating site)	Number of schools associated
--------------	------------------------	------------------------------

- Is the CDA expected to spend a fixed amount of time at all schools? If so, how much at each?
- If not, where do they spend most of their time?
- What is the impact of this 'presence' (or lack thereof)?
- Who do the CDAs report to? One principal? All principals? The school board?

6. Is the extended model "working"? Why or why not?

7. If you could go back in time and change any aspect of how it came about, what would you tweak/alter?

8. What pieces of advice would you give to other school boards about how to structure this type of scaling project?

## Extended Models and Associated Schools in CLC Network (June 2018)

		<b>Pre-extension</b>	<b>Post-Extension</b>
ETSB	Richmond, Danville & Drummondville Region CLC	1	4
NFSB	Chateaugay Valley CLC	2	6
CQSB	Quebec CLC	1	3
SWLSB	Joliette High School	1	3
SWLSB	Laurentian Regional CLC	1	3
RSB	Richelieu Valley CLC	1	5
RSB	Seaway CLC	1	5
LBPSB	Verdun CLC	1	3
LBPSB	Lakeside CLC	1	2
LBPSB	Riverdale CLC	1	4
NFSB	Chateaugay	1	6
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>44</b>