

# THE EDUCATION TO EMPLOYABILITY STUDY



The Black Community Resource Centre &  
The Provincial Employment Roundtable of Quebec

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d'expression anglaise

Québec



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# Collaboration

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The Black Community Resource Center (BCRC) is a growing, resource-based organization that strengthens community capacity by providing professional support to organizations and individuals in need. The BCRC engages directly with community members, researchers, experts, policy makers, and other stakeholders in the areas of employment, education, research, health, justice, and culture with the goal of promoting and advancing opportunities for the Black community. This project aligns with these goals insofar as it generates further research on the status of the English-speaking Black community in order to address socio-cultural and socio-economic needs related to underemployment and unemployment in the English-speaking Black community.

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The Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) is a non-profit multi-stakeholder initiative focused on addressing the employment and employability challenges facing Québec's English-speaking community. PERT accomplishes this through its research activities, community network development, and partnerships with organizations working to address employment challenges in the English-speaking community. PERT further recognizes that there are communities within the English-speaking community that experience unique challenges and endeavors to partner with organizations such as the BCRC to better understand these issues and develop actionable solutions.

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# Acknowledgements

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The views expressed herein are those of the Black Community Resource Center and Provincial Employment Roundtable. They do not purport to reflect the views of the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise.

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# Executive Summary

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In Québec, both the Black community and the English-speaking community occupy relatively precarious economic and employment positions: both experience higher-than-average unemployment rates and earn lower median after-tax incomes compared to the province's total population. The English-speaking Black Community (ESBC) sits at the intersection of these two communities, and experiences the double marginalization of being both a racial and linguistic minority in Québec.

It is often difficult to describe the exact experiences or state of the English-speaking Black community in Québec because the Government of Québec does not collect data according to language or race. This complicates efforts to examine educational outcomes through variables such as grades, graduation rates, or disciplinary rates, as well as employment outcomes through variables such as employment rates and representation across different industries.

This project, through the collection of qualitative and quantitative data on the educational experiences of the English-speaking Black community in Québec, contributes to filling these research gaps, particularly the lack of information on the impact of education variables on the employability, employment and socio-economic well-being of various communities of English-speaking Black Quebecers. The study's results suggest that Black Quebecers face different treatment and expectations in Québec's educational system compared to non-Black Quebecers, as well as disproportionately negative experiences in the educational system. The study also suggests that the experiences of Black English-speaking Quebecers as both racialized and linguistic minorities could negatively impact their sense of belonging in schools and in Québec society. The report seeks to map the education and employment trajectory of members of the English-speaking Black community and illuminate areas where changes can be made to improve the educational experiences, success rates and employment outcomes of Black English-speaking Quebecers.

# Executive Summary

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Our Key findings were:

- 01** Black survey respondents recalled receiving more negative actions from their school and school staff compared to survey respondents who did not belong to a visible minority.
- 02** Black survey respondents had the highest rates of specific incidents of discipline/punishment and public shaming/humiliation compared to non-Black survey respondents. The differences in experiences of discipline, punishment and shaming between visible minorities and non-visible minorities were tested and were found to be significant using ANOVA.
- 03** English-speaking survey respondents recalled more parental involvement in their school experiences than French-speaking respondents.
- 04** In the focus groups, participants (all of whom were members of the English-speaking Black community in Québec) described various positive and negative experiences during their education. Negative experiences often centered on lack of sense of belonging, as well as racism perpetrated by school staff and community.
- 05** Focus group participants often characterized themselves according to their position in the English-speaking Black community, or as Montréalers or Black Canadians. Some participants described a detachment from Québécois identity owing to perceived lack of fit (in terms of both language and race).

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1. ANOVA refers to "analysis of variance".

# Introduction

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In June of 2021, the Black Community Resource Centre (BCRC) and the Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) established a research partnership in order to examine the educational pathways of the English-speaking Black community (ESBC) in Québec. Education is linked to both individual and national socioeconomic outcomes<sup>2</sup>, while poor education experiences, and particularly practices of discipline and shaming, have been linked to poorer socioeconomic and employment outcomes<sup>3</sup>. The study therefore examined the effect that academic institutions and curriculum content, as well as staff and community members, had on Black students' academic performance and educational trajectories, with the aim of understanding contributing factors to the socioeconomic status of the ESBC in Québec.

This is an underexplored topic in Québec. This is compounded by the lack of linguistic- and race-based data collected by the Government of Québec, particularly in the areas of education and employment, access to justice issues, health and social services. This project has aimed in part to address this data gap through the collection of new data on the experiences of English-speaking Black Quebecers. It has additionally aimed to better understand the relationship between educational experiences and life outcomes for members of the ESBC.

## Background

Recent data has demonstrated that the English-speaking community in Québec experiences poorer economic and employment outcomes compared to French-speaking Quebecers. In particular, 2016 Census data indicated that English-speaking Quebecers experienced an unemployment rate 2% higher than French speakers in Québec (8.9% compared to 6.9%), and earned \$2,795 less when looking at median after-tax income<sup>4</sup>. In the area of education, however, English speakers and French speakers had similar rates of postsecondary attainment: 59.3% of English speakers and 58.8% of French speakers had a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

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2. Riddell, C. (2006). The Impact of Education on Economic and Social Outcomes: An Overview of Recent Advances in Economics. Canadian Policy Research Networks.

3. See, for example, Boudreau, E. (2019). School Discipline Linked to Later Consequences. Harvard Graduate School of Education. Retrieved from: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/19/09/school-discipline-linked-later-consequences>; Marchbanks, M. P. et al. (2014). More than a Drop in the Bucket: The Social and Economic Costs of Dropouts and Grade Retentions Associated with Exclusionary Discipline. *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk*, 5 (2), p 1-36. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/childrenatrisk/vol5/iss2/17/>

4. PERT. Employment Profile of English Speakers in Québec. 2022. [https://pertquebec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/PROVINCIAL\\_PROFILE\\_QUEBEC.pdf](https://pertquebec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/PROVINCIAL_PROFILE_QUEBEC.pdf)

Meanwhile, the Black community in Québec experienced an unemployment rate of 13%, compared to the non-visible minority community's unemployment rate of 6.6%.<sup>5</sup> The Black community earned a median income of \$23,387 compared to the non-visible minority population's median income of \$32,620.<sup>6</sup> In the realm of education, 60.3% of Black Quebecers have a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree, compared to 58.3% of the non-visible minority population in Québec.<sup>7</sup>

When the data was broken down further to examine the intersection of language and race, these disparities became more complex. The English-speaking Black population in Québec experienced the highest unemployment rate, at 13.5%, followed by the French-speaking Black population (12.9%), the English-speaking non-visible minority population (7.9%), and the French-speaking non-visible minority population (6.4%).<sup>8</sup> Out of these groups, the English-speaking Black population had the lowest rate of individuals who had attained a university degree at the Bachelors level at 16.6%.<sup>9</sup>

This data plays an essential role in illuminating the extent of the disparities that exist between the different linguistic and racial communities in Québec. There are significant limitations however, as Census data is collected periodically, once every 5 years, and therefore does not capture year-over-year variations. Furthermore, as a general survey of the Canadian population, it does not collect specific data on the different variables pertinent to this study such as graduation rates of students by race and linguistic identity.

## Literature Review

There are a number of research projects that have aimed at filling or otherwise addressing the data gap described above. In particular, there is significant research in the field of educational experiences of Black Canadians and English-speaking Black Quebecers.

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5. Statistics Canada. Dataset. 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no.98-400-X2016276, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/98-400-X2016276> . Accessed 20 March 2022. Dataset.

6. Statistics Canada. Dataset. 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no.98-400-X2016277, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/98-400-X2016277> . Accessed 20 March 2022. Dataset.

7. Statistics Canada. Dataset. 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no.98-400-X2016192, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/98-400-X2016192> . Accessed 20 March 2022. Dataset.

8. Bayne, C. S. (2019). Community Education and Development: Perspectives on Employment, Employability and Development of English-Speaking Black Minority of Quebec. *International Journal of Community Development & Management Studies*, 3 (sup 1), 1-51, Retrieved from: <http://ijcdms.org/Volume03/v3sup1p01-051Bayne6069.pdf>

9. *ibid.*



For example, the Government of Ontario’s decision to end the practice of academic streaming in the ninth grade because it was “shown to disproportionately affect Black and low-income students when it comes to graduation rates and the chance of going to a post-secondary institution,”<sup>10</sup> followed the publication of a 2017 report by Dr. Carl James and Tana Turner.<sup>11</sup> Their research found that Black students in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) were being disproportionately streamed into applied courses, which are considered to be at a lower academic level. Their research also found that Black students were being suspended at disproportionate rates.

In the Québec context, Dr. Marie McAndrew and her research team have been conducting research on the educational experiences and outcomes of Black students for more than a decade. Her 2008 research and articles (in collaboration with Jacques le Dent and Rachid Ait-Said) indicate that Black students in the French school system occupy a more vulnerable position (in terms of academic success) compared to the total student population.<sup>12</sup> In particular, Creole and Anglophone Caribbean students in the French school system have some of the least favourable educational outcomes, which the researchers attribute to the difficulty of receiving education in a language other than one’s mother tongue. An interesting caveat to this research is that it approaches/understands the Black community through immigration status, as this is the information available to researchers through school data. That is, Québec schools collect data related to immigration status, through which some information about race and ethnicity can be gleaned, but do not collect information solely related to race or ethnicity. For this reason, Black students who have an immigration status of third generation or higher are not included in this research. This limitation is located not within the research, but the provincial systems of data collection.

More recently, 2018 research by Tya Collins and Marie-Odile Magnan documented the educational pathways of Haitian youth in Montréal.<sup>13</sup> They found that many pathways were characterized by issues of constraint, and included significant experiences of racism and negative interactions with guidance counselors.

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10. “Ontario to End ‘Discriminatory’ Practice of Academic Streaming in Grade 9.” CBC News, 6 July 2020, [www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-streaming-high-school-racism-lecce-1.5638700](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-streaming-high-school-racism-lecce-1.5638700). Accessed 11 Nov. 2021.

11. James, C.E. & Turner, T. (2017). *Towards Race Equity In Education: The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: York University.

12. McAndrew, Marie, et al. *La Réussite Scolaire Des Jeunes Des Communautés Noires Au Secondaire*. Immigration et métropoles, le Centre interuniversitaire de recherche sur l’immigration, l’intégration et la dynamique urbaine, la Chaire en relations ethniques de l’Université de Montréal, le ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport du Québec ainsi que le Conseil des éducateurs noirs du Québec., Sept. 2008.

13. Collins, Tya, and Marie-Odile Magnan. “Post-Secondary Pathways among Second-Generation Immigrant Youth of Haitian Origin in Quebec.” *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne de L’éducation*, vol. 41, no. 2, 29 June 2018, pp. 413–440.

Another 2018 article by Tya Collins and Pierre Canisius Kamanzi found that young Quebecers from an immigrant background were more likely to follow a linear (i.e. direct) pathway into postsecondary than their peers whose parents were born in Canada.<sup>14</sup> However, immigrants of Latin American and Caribbean origin (both first and second generation) were “the least likely to access postsecondary education through linear pathways to university”.<sup>15</sup> They were more likely to undertake non-linear pathways involving vocational and technical training and general education.

In 2011, the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse found that racial profiling and systemic discrimination against racialized youth “were sufficiently important for society as a whole to feel concerned by them.”<sup>16</sup> In a 2017 report, the Commission expressed its disappointment on “the lack of action”<sup>17</sup> taken to address systemic discrimination, and particularly the failure to implement the recommendations it previously advanced to address systemic discrimination. The 2017 report also reiterates the Commission's 2011 findings, including the higher dropout rates experienced by first-generation immigrant students and bias against racialized students during the categorization process used to orient students. The report also reaffirmed that “immigrant and racialized students are regularly subject to double discrimination because of their over-representation in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with fewer resources. This increases the risk of these students being left behind from their school board’s achievement targets”.<sup>18</sup>

This preliminary survey of literature on the educational experiences of Black youth, and English-speaking Black youth in particular, has offered significant insight into the educational policies and practices in Québec. At the same time, however, this body of literature has evidenced a fractured data landscape; i.e. a landscape in which data has been collected in an ad-hoc manner owing to a lack of centralized coordination or the existence of a singular comprehensive data set on which to draw conclusions and make comparisons. In lieu of such resources, organizations and researchers have had to collect their own data and establish their own networks and coordination processes. In this way, organizations and researchers have been able to generate findings attesting to racialized disparities in Québec education system, although these are subject to the constraints of the fractured landscape, as in the case of McAndrews’ research, which attempts to understand the Black community accounting for the factor of immigration.

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14. Kamanzi, Pierre Canisius, and Tya Collins. "The Postsecondary Education Pathways of Canadian Immigrants: Who Goes and How Do They Get There." *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, February 2018, p. 58-68.

15. *Ibid.*, page 65.

16. Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse. June 2017, [www.cdpcj.qc.ca/storage/app/media/publications/commentaires\\_CERD\\_2017\\_En.pdf](http://www.cdpcj.qc.ca/storage/app/media/publications/commentaires_CERD_2017_En.pdf), page 2

17. *Ibid.*, page 1.

18. *Ibid.*, page 12.

# Methodology

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In this study, quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to gather data. In the initial steps of the study, feedback from members of the ESBC was solicited to ensure that the study aligned with the concerns of the community being studied.

## Data Collection



### Surveys

The project team collected data from online surveying from October 2021 to February 2022. The surveys were meant to collect quantitative information relating to the educational experiences and employment outcomes of different linguistic and racialized (or non-racialized) communities in Québec in order to generate comparative statistics. Thus, a French translation of the survey was published alongside an English version in order to make comparisons between different racial and linguistic groups.



### Focus Groups

The focus groups took place from October 2021 to February 2022 and were conducted in two parts, individual sessions (Phase I) and group sessions (Phase II). The purpose of the focus groups was to collect qualitative and detailed information directly from members of the ESBC regarding their educational experiences in Québec and how they related these to their employability and/or employment situation. Eligibility criteria included self-identification as a member of Québec's ESBC and a minimum of two years spent in primary and/or secondary education in the province. All participants were over the age of 18.

# Findings

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The surveys and focus groups utilized in this project facilitated the collection of a diverse array of data, from which several key statistics and findings emerged.

Firstly, Black survey respondents, irrespective of linguistic identity, recalled receiving more negative actions from their school and school staff compared to survey respondents who did not belong to a visible minority. In particular, Black survey respondents had the highest ratings of specific incidents of discipline/punishment and public shaming/humiliation. These differences between the Black respondents and white respondents were found to be statistically significant.

Second, English-speaking survey respondents, irrespective of race, recalled higher parental involvement in their education and school experiences. Parental involvement in education was observed at a higher rate for English-speaking respondents than for French-speaking respondents.

Focus groups were conducted to provide context and depth to the survey findings. In particular, participants described experiencing a lack of sense of belonging, as well as racism perpetrated by school staff and community.

Focus group participants also described an evolving perception of their identity as members of Québec's ESBC. Focus group participants described negotiating their identities as Black English speakers and as Quebecers, with some describing their Quebecer identity as secondary to their race and language.



# Survey Results<sup>19</sup>

The online surveying focused on three major educational experiences: perceived support at school, negative experiences at school, and parental involvement. Across the following scores from the scale questions of the survey, the midpoint was 3.

## 01

### Demographics

The survey collected responses from 335 respondents who had done their primary or secondary school in Québec and their mean age was 44.8. 61% of the participants were female and 39% were male. 99 of the participants identified themselves as Black, 176 identified as white, and 60 identified as Asian.

## 02

### Perceived Support at School

Perceived support at school was defined to participants as the extent to which they remember feeling supported academically by teachers and other school staff, their sense of belonging, their comfort communicating with teachers and school staff, and whether their interactions with school staff were perceived as "helpful" to them. In measuring respondents' perceived support at school, the overall mean for respondents' perceived support at school was 2.80, which was below the midpoint of 3. There was no significant difference among the three different groups of respondents on perceived level of support at school. The means for respondents who identified as Black, Asian, and White were 2.82, 2.81, and 2.79 respectively. When comparing English speakers and French speakers, irrespective of their self-identified race, there were no significant differences in their perceived support at school.

## 03

### Negative Experiences at School

Negative experiences at school were defined to participants as experiences relating to discipline and punishment, public shaming and humiliation, othering and alienation, and discouragement. Respondents were asked to rate their levels of agreement with having experienced different negative events at school. The overall mean for respondents' negative experiences at school was 2.45. When broken down according to race, there was a significant difference among the three different groups of respondents.

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19. This survey was conducted in collaboration with the McGill Human Motivation Lab.

Respondents who identified as Black had the most negative experiences at school (mean = 2.67), followed by respondents who identified as Asian (mean = 2.40) and respondents who identified as white (mean = 2.34).

When negative experiences at school were broken down question by question, it showed that Black respondents experienced significantly more disciplinary actions/punishment and public humiliation/shaming (Table 2) compared to the other groups.

For disciplinary action/punishment, Black respondents had the highest experiences of disciplinary action (mean = 2.79), followed by Asian respondents at 2.36, and white respondents at 2.18. For public humiliation/shaming, Black respondents also had the highest experiences (mean = 2.51), followed by white respondents at 2.12, and Asian respondents at 2.08.

When comparing English speakers and French speakers, irrespective of their self-identified race, there were no significant differences in their recollection of negative experiences in school.

## **O4** Parental Involvement

Parental involvement was defined to participants as experiences relating to discussions with parents about school, discussions between parents and teachers, and parental involvement in school-based activities. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements regarding parental involvement. The overall mean for respondents' parental involvement was 2.92. There was no significant statistical difference in the level of parental involvement when comparing respondents who identified as Black (mean = 2.93), Asian (mean = 2.80) or White (mean = 2.96).

Although there were no significant differences between English respondents and French respondents on educational support and negative experiences at school, English respondents (mean = 3.09) rated a significantly higher level of parental involvement in their educational experience compared to French respondents (mean = 2.73, Table 2).

**Table 1**

Sample Size, Means, and Standard Deviations of negative experiences at school

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I experienced disciplinary actions/punishment.			
Black	99	2.79	1.41
Asian	60	2.36	1.46
White	176	2.18	1.41
I experienced public humiliation/shaming.			
Black	99	2.51	1.49
Asian	60	2.08	1.33
White	176	2.12	1.35

**Table 2**

Sample Size, Means, and Standard Deviations for English respondents and French respondents

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Educational support at school			
English respondents	177	2.79	0.94
French respondents	158	2.83	1.07
Negative experiences at school			
English respondents	177	2.50	0.99
French respondents	158	2.40	1.17
Parental involvement.			
English respondents	177	3.09	1.01
French respondents	158	2.73	1.02

# Focus Groups

18 individuals participated in the focus groups. Of the 18 focus group participants, all participants identified as members of the ESBC and had graduated high school between the mid 1970s and the mid-2010's. The focus group consisted of a semi-structured interview format where participants were asked to respond to questions prepared by the project team. Questions asked focused on the themes of: positive and negative aspects of the participants' educational experiences; the impact of different groups of people on their educational experiences; the impact of their education on their employment outcomes, and changes they would like to see in the educational system. Focus group participants were also prompted to discuss aspects of their identity in relation to the ESBC and the changes they would like to see with regard to education and employment in the ESBC.

Responses by participants were recorded and later coded to identify the key themes and sentiments that participants expressed. The key findings were:

## Racism

Participants recalled experiences of racism and isolation in Québec society, and also in their educational experiences. Participants noted a lack of education and awareness in schools on Black history and culture in Québec. Several participants also reported facing disproportionate disciplinary measures in school compared to non-Black students, as well as experiencing a lack of support from teachers and school staff.

## Reducing Barriers in the Educational System

Participants discussed the changes they would like to see in Québec's educational system. Career and professional development was a primary theme, with participants indicating that more focus was needed to provide career guidance to students. Diversity was also a key theme; participants indicated that more diverse representation was needed among teaching and school staff to better reflect the communities they were teaching. Lastly, participants described the need for more efforts to help non-French speaking students by reducing the barriers they face due to not speaking enough French.



### Lack of Engagement with Academic Counsellors

Participants reported having minimal interaction with academic counsellors during their time in school. Those who did interact with academic counsellors did not feel that the guidance they received was helpful in preparing them for post-secondary schooling. Many only began those interactions once they began their post-secondary school and discussed how it was largely of benefit to them.

### Identity within the ESBC

Focus group participants described negotiating their identities as Black English speakers and as Quebecers, with some describing their Quebecer identity as secondary to their race and language. When it came to being a member of the ESBC, the majority of participants indicated that they did not identify as “Quebecers” with many instead identifying as “Black Montrealers”, “Black Canadians”, or other identities such as “Haitian-Canadian”. There were several reasons given, such as a belief that they were not perceived as Quebecers (due to race, language or both), a perception of Québec values as being different or contrary to their own sense of identity, and a general lack of acknowledgement of Black people’s history and contributions to Québec society.



# Discussion

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## Collecting Data on Racialized Differences in Education in Québec

While the E2E study contributed to addressing some information gaps, much more research is needed to further understand the relationship between educational experience and employment outcomes for Black English speakers in Québec.

The survey established significant differences between Black and White respondents in regard to the frequency of negative experiences, and particularly disciplinary actions/punishment and public humiliation/shaming in school. Furthermore, the focus group participants discussed a sense of invisibility of ESBC members in their educational setting, including a lack of Black educators, a lack of Black studies and history as part of the academic curriculum, a general lack of interest in important events for the Black community (such as Black History Month), and the difficulty of integrating or identifying as a Black Quebecer. The focus group findings also suggest that many participants did not feel that the support offered in the educational setting, such as access to academic counselling, was sufficient.

Taken together, the insights provided by participants in the focus groups helped to explain and provide context for the higher frequency of negative experiences recalled by Black survey respondents. Although this project does not directly link these two datasets, the focus groups provide clear and often consistent commentary on the current state of Québec's educational system, which is corroborated by the survey findings. The data in this report suggests that the Québec education system is disproportionately punishing and disciplining Black students who also reported higher rates of public humiliation and shaming. Focus group participants linked personal experiences of this to a sense of solidarity with the ESBC, and at times a sense of alienation from identification with Québec society. Ultimately, the findings point to a need for more to be done to ensure that Black students are respected and in an environment where they can academically thrive.

## Career Outcomes

Educational experiences and outcomes do not always correspond to employment outcomes. This was noted by several focus group participants; they described their career success as being "in spite of" their negative educational experiences. Many other life circumstances – from extracurriculars to support systems – impacted the career and life pathways that individuals chose for themselves.

Focus group participants provided feedback both on the elements of their life trajectories that facilitated their career outcomes, as well as noted the factors that were lacking in their career development. . Examples of factors that had positive impacts on career development were strong family and community support systems, as well as mentorship opportunities and diverse academic and extracurricular programming that enabled them to explore their interests. Factors that had a negative impact included lack of information and guidance on career options, as well as discouragement in pursuing certain academic pathways from academic staff.

Several participants also discussed the complexities of defining academic and career success as Black English speakers. They noted that there is often the assumption that certain pathways, specifically “traditional” academic pathways leading to CEGEP and university, are for high-achieving students and offer the best route to a good career. Some participants indicated that they had chosen non-traditional pathways in their careers, such as vocational training or entrepreneurship, which have specific challenges and advantages. Challenges included racism and exclusion from funding opportunities given the lack of representation of Black entrepreneurs in Québec, while advantages included control over the workplace environment for entrepreneurs.

## Language

Previous research has established a link between academic success, race, immigrant status, and language: McAndrews et al described how Black English-speaking immigrant youth placed in French schools are often streamed into lower-level academic courses or SM<sup>SHLD</sup> courses, because their difficulty in understanding French as the language of instruction is perceived by educators as a learning difficulty.<sup>21</sup>

The role of language is difficult to extrapolate from the data collected in this study. In the focus groups, participants described mixed experiences, both positive and negative, when learning French in school. A few participants described the complex nature of language and language learning as immigrants in Québec.

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20. This refers to students with Handicaps, Social Maladjustments and Learning Difficulties as defined by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. This includes all students who, for a given school year, have been assigned a code or those who have not been coded but who have an individualized education plan. ([http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site\\_web/documents/PSG/recherche\\_evaluation/ALaMemeEcoleEHDAa\\_a.pdf](http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/PSG/recherche_evaluation/ALaMemeEcoleEHDAa_a.pdf)).

21. McAndrews et al. La Réussite Scolaire Des Jeunes Des Communautés Noires Au Secondaire.

For those who migrated to Canada as English speakers, not only did they have to adjust to becoming members of the ESBC and learning Canadian English but they also had to learn Québécois French and norms in school. This complicated their understanding of and identification with the ESBC, the Black community, and Québec as a whole.

Participants also described French-language learning as a tool for both survival and success in school and in employment. One participant indicated that while they could not change the colour of their skin, they could learn French as a tool to better communicate and express themselves, as well as access more opportunities in Québec.



# Limitations and Challenges

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## False Responses

The researchers received false responses during the surveying period. Many surveys had been completed with an IP address corresponding to unusual locations (with a particular concentration in California). It was also found that these surveys were completed in an unreasonable amount of time. To filter for this, the research team reviewed responses to check for irregular responses that were given within an unreasonable response time, as well as removed the irregular responses from US-based respondents.

## Respondent Bias

This was not a random sample of the population, since individuals were solicited for participation and responses were not weighted to represent the population. Participants in the focus group all held a Bachelor's degree or were in the process of obtaining one. Additionally, the majority of survey and focus group respondents were women and Montreal-based.

## Small Consultation Size

In the initial phase of this project, researchers consulted subject matter experts in order to advance their understanding of the landscape of education in Québec and existing literature on English-speaking Black students in Québec. While these consultations were highly informative, researchers connected with a relatively small number of experts (6 in total). An expanded round of consultations may have benefitted the development of the research project and tools.

## Retrospective Testimony

Another limitation that surfaced in the context of the focus groups was that of retrospective testimony. Participants were asked to provide information and reflect on their educational pathway. For some participants, this was more recent for others. All participants, however, had received at least their elementary education more than a decade prior to this project. It is reasonable that during this time span, participants may have forgotten significant elements of their experience, or formed impressions or memories foregrounding certain elements of their experience over others, causing some distortion.

# Conclusion

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The findings of this study follow decades of concerns voiced by ESBC members about their treatment in Québec’s educational system. While there is much anecdotal evidence of differential treatment in the provincial education system, there is also a growing amount of research and data being collected on this subject. This study aimed to contribute to this area of research by collecting quantitative and qualitative data from participants in Québec, including comparing their experiences to non-racialized communities. The survey findings show that Black participants had a significantly higher level of negative educational experiences when compared to White and Asian participants, specifically when it came to experiencing public humiliation/shaming and disciplinary actions in school. The focus group research also confirmed that Black English-speaking participants felt that they had experienced differential treatment in a negative way within the educational system.

As both a linguistic and racialized minority, the ESBC has and continues to experience the growing risk of social, economic, and cultural exclusion in Québec. We hope to continue engaging with local communities and conducting holistic research aimed at improving ESBC outcomes, and bridging diverse areas including education and employability. Furthermore, we hope this study encourages the broader network of researchers, policymakers, educators and other community stakeholders to develop a better understanding and take action to address the challenges faced by Black English-speaking Quebecers in education.



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# Appendix

## Survey: English Version

1. Do you self-identify as being: (check all that apply)
  - a. Black
  - b. White
  - c. Hispanic or Latinx
  - d. Asian (including South Asian)
  - e. Middle Eastern or North African
  - f. Indigenous from outside of Canada
  - g. First Nations, Métis, or Inuit
  - h. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
2. What level of schooling did you attend in Quebec? (check all that apply)
  - a. Primary school
  - b. Secondary school
  - c. I did not attend primary school nor secondary school in Quebec → skip to end of survey if c was selected
3. In what year did you finish your primary school? → display if Q2 a. was selected  
Graduated in: \_\_\_\_\_
4. In what year did you finish your secondary school? If you did not finish, please indicate that in the field box. → display if Q2 b. was selected  
Graduated in: \_\_\_\_\_
5. In your secondary school, were there different levels of classes/programs organized according to students' academic ability?
  - Yes
  - No
6. If yes, did you experience any of the following?
  - Sorted into a lower level class for one or more subjects (No - Yes)
  - Sorted into a high class level for one or more subjects (No - Yes)

## Survey: French Version

1. Vous identifiez-vous comme étant : (cochez toutes les cases qui s'appliquent)
  - a. Premières Nations, Métis ou Inuit
  - b. Origines autochtones de l'extérieur du Canada
  - c. Noir
  - d. Hispanique ou Latino
  - e. Asiatique (y compris les Asiatiques du Sud)
  - f. Moyen-Orient ou Afrique du Nord
  - e. Blanc
  - f. Autre, veuillez préciser :
2. Quel niveau de scolarité avez-vous fréquenté au Québec ? (cochez toutes les cases qui s'appliquent)
  - a. École primaire
  - b. École secondaire
  - c. Je n'ai pas fait d'études primaires ou secondaires au Québec. → skip to end of survey if c was selected
3. En quelle année avez-vous terminé vos études primaires ? → display if Q2 a was selected  
Diplômé en: \_\_\_\_\_
4. En quelle année avez-vous terminé vos études secondaires ? Si vous n'avez pas terminé, veuillez l'indiquer dans le champ prévu à cet effet. → display if Q2 b was selected  
Diplômé en: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Dans votre école secondaire, y avait-il différents niveaux de classes/programmes organisés en fonction des capacités académiques des élèves ?
  - Oui
  - Non



# Appendix

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7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the level of education you received as a result of this process was a good match for you? Strongly disagree - Somewhat disagree - Neither agree nor disagree - Somewhat agree - Strongly agree)

8. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about your school experience. (Strongly disagree - Somewhat disagree - Neither agree nor disagree - Somewhat agree - Strongly agree)

- a. I experienced social and academic support from teachers and school staff.
- b. My teachers believed in my academic ability.
- c. I felt a sense of belonging in the school.
- d. The curriculum reflected the diversity of the society (Quebec)
- e. I felt comfortable communicating with teachers and school staff.
- f. My experience with career and/or academic counsellors was helpful.
- g. I experienced disciplinary actions/ punishment.
- h. I experienced public humiliation/ shaming.
- i. I sometimes felt "othered"/ alienated.
- j. I felt discouraged.

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your parent(s) or guardian(s). (Strongly disagree - Somewhat disagree - Neither agree nor disagree - Somewhat agree - Strongly agree)

- a. My parent(s) talked to my school principal and/or teachers about how I was doing
- b. My parent(s) always went to parent/teacher interviews
- c. My parent(s) and I regularly talked about things happening in school.
- d. I brought home notes, flyers, and reports from school for my parent(s) frequently
- e. My parents were too busy to participate in school activities.
- f. My parents participated in important committees with the principal and/or my teachers and/or other parents.

6. Si oui, avez-vous vécu l'une des expériences suivantes ? → display if Q7 a was selected

- o Trié dans une classe de niveau inférieur pour une ou plusieurs matières (Non - Oui)
- o Triés dans un niveau de classe avancé pour une ou plusieurs matières (Non - Oui)

7. Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous d'accord ou non avec le fait que le niveau d'éducation que vous avez reçu à la suite de ce processus correspondait bien à vos besoins ?

- a. Pas du tout d'accord
- b. Un peu en désaccord
- c. Ni d'accord ni en désaccord
- d. Plutôt d'accord
- e. Tout à fait d'accord

8. Veuillez indiquer si vous êtes d'accord avec les affirmations suivantes concernant votre expérience scolaire. (Pas du tout d'accord - Un peu en désaccord - Ni d'accord ni en désaccord - Plutôt d'accord - Tout à fait d'accord)

- a. J'ai bénéficié du soutien social et scolaire des enseignants et du personnel de l'école.
- b. Mes professeurs croyaient en mes capacités académiques.
- c. J'ai ressenti un sentiment d'appartenance à l'école.
- d. Mon identité était représentée dans le programme.
- e. J'ai pu communiquer avec les enseignants et le personnel de l'école.
- f. J'ai eu une expérience positive avec l'école et les services d'orientation professionnelle.
- g. J'ai subi des actions disciplinaires/des punitions.
- h. J'ai subi une humiliation publique.
- i. Je me suis parfois sentie "différente"/aliénée.
- j. Je me suis sentie découragée.

# Appendix

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10. Please indicate which of the following options best describes your current status:

- a. Employed full-time (30 hours or more per week)
- b. Employed part-time
- c. Unemployed
- d. Full-time student
- e. Part-time student
- f. Retired
- g. Full-time homemaker or career

11. I identify my gender as...

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Genderqueer
- d. Transgender
- e. Non-Binary
- f. If self-definition is preferred, fill in the blank:  
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12. Can you estimate in which of the following groups your household income (before tax) falls in 2021?

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000 to \$40,000
- \$40,000 to \$60,000
- \$60,000 to \$80,000
- \$80,000 and over

13. What is the highest certificate, diploma or degree you have completed?

- a. No certificate, diploma or degree
- b. Secondary (high) school diploma or equivalency certificate
- c. Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma
- d. College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma
- e. Bachelor's degree
- f. Master's degree
- g. Earned doctorate

9. Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous d'accord ou non avec les affirmations suivantes concernant votre/vos parent(s) ou tuteur.trice(s). (Pas du tout d'accord - Un peu en désaccord - Ni d'accord ni en désaccord - Plutôt d'accord - Tout à fait d'accord)

- a. Mes parents ont parlé au directeur de mon école et/ou à mes professeurs de mes résultats.
- b. Mes parents sont toujours allés aux entretiens parents/professeurs.
- c. Mes parents et moi parlions régulièrement de ce qui se passait à l'école.
- d. Je rapportais très fréquemment à mes parents des notes, des prospectus et des rapports de l'école.
- e. Mes parents étaient trop occupés pour participer aux activités scolaires
- f. Mes parents ont participé à des comités importants avec le directeur et/ou mes professeurs et/ou d'autres parents

10. Veuillez indiquer laquelle des options suivantes décrit le mieux votre état actuel :

- a. Employé(e) à temps plein (30 heures ou plus par semaine)
- b. Employé(e) à temps partiel
- c. Sans-emploi
- d. Étudiant(e) à temps plein
- e. Étudiant(e) à temps partiel
- f. Retraité(e)
- g. Personne au foyer ou aide-soignant(e) à temps plein

11. Comment définissez-vous votre genre? Veuillez sélectionner toutes les réponses applicables.

- a. Homme
- b. Femme
- c. Genderqueer
- d. Transgenre
- e. Non-binaire
- f. Si vous préférez l'autodéfinition, veuillez préciser

# Appendix

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14. What's your legal status in Quebec?

- a. Canadian citizen
- b. Permanent resident
- c. Temporary resident (visitor, student, worker or other)
- d. Asylum-seeker or refugee
- e. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Where were you born?

- a. Born in Quebec
- b. Born in Canada, but outside of Quebec, please specify province: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Born outside of Canada, please specify country: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Where were your parents born?

- a. All parents born in Canada
- b. All parents born outside of Canada. Please type out the countries: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. One parent born outside of Canada, please type out the country: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Pouvez-vous estimer dans quels groupes suivants se situe le revenu de votre ménage (avant impôts) en 2021 ?

- a. Moins de 20 000 \$
- b. \$20,000 à \$40,000
- c. \$40,000 à \$60,000
- d. \$60,000 à \$80,000
- e. \$80,000+

13. Quel est le plus haut certificat, ou diplôme que vous avez obtenu ?

- a. Aucun certificat ou diplôme
- b. Diplôme d'études secondaires ou certificat d'équivalence
- c. Certificat ou diplôme d'apprentissage ou de métier
- d. Certificat ou diplôme d'un collège, d'un cégep ou d'un autre établissement non universitaire
- e. Baccalauréat
- f. Diplôme de maîtrise
- g. Doctorat

14. Quel est votre statut légal au Québec?

- a. Citoyen(ne) canadien(ne)
- b. Résident permanent
- c. Résident temporaire (visiteur, étudiant, travailleur ou autre)
- d. Demandeur d'asile ou réfugié
- e. Autre, veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Où êtes-vous né ?

- a. Né(e) au Québec
- b. Né(e) au Canada, mais à l'extérieur du Québec, veuillez préciser la province : \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Né à l'extérieur du Canada, veuillez préciser le pays :