

# **Extended-Model Community Learning Centres and Educational Success:**

## **A Mixed Methods Case Study**

**Report prepared for the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec**

### **Executive Summary and Recommendations**

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# Executive Summary

## Background

We begin by explaining some of the issues and challenges that the English-speaking communities of Quebec have historically faced and continue to face today. English-speaking communities live both as an Official Language Minority Community (OLMC) within Quebec and as a part of the official language majority in the rest of Canada, thus being referred to as a collective *min-jority* in this report.

The majority of English-speaking Quebecers do not have access to programs and services in English that are equivalent to those available in French to the French-speaking majority with regard to social, health, educational, or employment opportunities. This situation is even more fragile for Black and racialized English speakers in Quebec (Pocock, [2024](#)).

The implementation of Community Learning Centres, also known as CLCs, was perceived as a concrete way to support the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking communities, as well as to counter some of the historical issues and challenges faced by communities, such as poverty, unemployment, and underemployment.

## Aim

In this study, we examined how, and to what extent, the Extended-Model Community Learning Centre (EM-CLC) model, one of three CLC models serving English-speaking students in Quebec, supports student *Educational Success*, an overarching concept that also encompasses *Vitality* and *Institutional Completeness*.

## Method

We conducted a mixed methods case study where participants were first asked to fill out a survey containing both quantitative and qualitative questions in relation to their EM-CLC about Educational Success, Vitality, and Institutional Completeness. Participants were also invited to participate in an individual, semi-structured interview. Seventy-one participants completed the survey, and 12 participants did an interview. All interviews were conducted by the principal researcher. As for the study's limitations, no EM-CLC families or Kindergarten to Secondary 5 students were invited to participate. Also, quite possibly due to a prolonged teachers' strike, few teachers participated in the study.

## Key Findings

Overall, the findings regarding EM-CLCs supporting Educational Success were favourable in two particular areas:

- Institutional Completeness; and
- Vitality
- **EM-CLCs support Institutional Completeness through formal and informal partnership building with not-for-profit and some for-profit organizations; they provide access to some English and bilingual spaces within school and community infrastructures.** However, very few Community Development Agents (CDAs) had access to dedicated CLC spaces during a specific day and time, especially during school hours. This limitation may prevent the integration of certain school-community activities, events, and partnerships that counter poverty (such as food programs), or that create closer ties between EM-CLCs and the Quebec Education Program's (QEP) (*Ministère de l'Éducation* [MEQ], [2001](#)) cross-curricular competencies during the day.
- **EM-CLCs also support Vitality in both official languages.** Activities, events, and partnerships mostly occur in English, or English-French bilingual settings; they (re)produce a deeper sense of belonging to the local community or the region rather than to Quebec's English-speaking *min-jority* communities or to Canada's English-speaking majority. In particular, the presence and the participation of seniors in EM-CLC initiatives demonstrate to students and families alike that they can spend their lives in Quebec as English speakers. EMCLCs also break seniors' isolation by promoting social involvement.
- As with any initiative, there exists a need within EM-CLCs for continuous improvement to align with the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and its 2024-2025 Action Plan. **According to the study's results, the elements requiring more practitioner and researcher foci are two-fold:**
  - The identification and selection of EM-CLC activities, events, and partnerships in direct relation to the QEP and, more specifically, cross-curricular competency development; and
  - An explicit connection between the common elements of some EM-CLC schools' Educational Projects and their school board's Commitment to Success Plan objectives. This connection is important to create greater access to special education services since certain health and social supports are less available in English outside of an English school setting in Quebec, especially in the regions.
- **To increase the sharing of school facilities with community organizations and municipalities, school boards are encouraged to simplify the expectations with respect to certain administrative processes.** Specifically, a revision is required to [deed of establishment](#) expectations around the use of premises and immovables by community members that occur after the deed is signed and approved. A more flexible administrative process could help incorporate more CLC activities, events, and partnerships, for example, to promote French literacy, numeracy, and women's and girls' leadership,

as well as sports and outdoor activities, which were both more limited areas noted amongst the examples shared by participants.

- **There remains a great need to regularly promote the heritage and history of Quebec's diverse English-speaking communities in EM-CLCs; this aligns with the Government of Canada's *Framework for the Vitality of Official-Language Minority Communities (OLMC)* where language and culture go hand in hand.** CDAs and teachers alike should also receive additional training on how to incorporate more of the heritage and history of English-speaking communities into EM-CLC activities, events, and partnerships alongside QEP cross-curricular competencies. All English-speaking students, including 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, Black, and racialized children, youth, and adults, as well as families and seniors, would then have the opportunity to explicitly learn about diverse past and present leaders in their local, municipal, and regional communities, as well as at provincial and national levels. The goal would be to inspire new leaders and tap into past and current leaders' wealth of knowledge.
- **There is a high risk of CDA demotivation in the way some school boards assign EM-CLC workload.** Some participants feel new CDAs are not being trained adequately before starting their position. Other CDAs are assigned to six schools in an EM-CLC, in which case the number of work hours assigned may not reflect the expected workload, pay scale, or position title. Also, there are EM-CLCs that group schools located within two Regional County Municipalities (RCM), which then involves the duplication of meetings, partnerships development, et cetera; as such, this duplication should be avoided to increase efficiency and motivation. Finally, certain CDAs are being reassigned to other tasks, such as substitute teaching. These recurrent factors may be contributing to some CDA positions continuing to go unfilled. The MEQ is encouraged to create a financial measure to stabilize funding for CDA positions. They should also work in partnership with school boards to identify other complementary financial measures, such as those associated with countering poverty, that can be favourably combined with CLC funding. In addition, it is recommended that school boards include no more than four to five schools in an EM-CLC; these schools should ideally be located within the same RCM.

## Conclusion

While our results do indicate that the current EM-CLC approach and structure supports Educational Success for English-speaking students, including Institutional Completeness and Vitality of English *minority* communities in Quebec, the study cannot conclude whether or not the current EM-CLC approach and structure is more effective than the single-site or the multi-site CLC models, as the latter two were not included in the sample. As such, a similar study involving the other two models should be considered in the future. Finally, it would also be important to include more parent, student, and teacher voices in future studies on CLCs, since they are also current and future CLC leaders and partners of EM-CLCs.

# Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on findings from the quantitative and qualitative data collected in this empirical study. They are aimed at improving the connections between EM-CLCs in English schools located within Quebec's English-speaking *minority* communities. It should, however, be noted that some recommendations may require additional funding from various government bodies to effectively promote a more concerted effort to directly link EM-CLCs and Educational Success. Finally, as researchers, we offer expert advice to help inform future empirical studies on EM-CLCs.

**To better understand the recommendations below, please read the integral version of the report.**

Stakeholder	Educational Success	Vitality	Institutional Completeness
<b>Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (MEQ)</b>	<p>Develop a bilingual, multimodal digital marketing campaign about its 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and MEQ yearly Action Plans intended for different stakeholders (e.g., parents, educators, and community partners) to create a common understanding of Educational Success.</p> <p>Conduct a comparative research study involving all CLC models regarding Educational Success, Vitality, and Institutional Completeness within English <i>minority</i> communities to determine the most promising model, according to context.</p>	<p>Work with English-speaking or bilingual experts, in Quebec and across Canada, who can fulfill a specific CLC need. For example, collaborate with a consultant to develop a concerted digital communications and marketing plan for all three CLC models in line with the MEQ's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and its yearly Action Plans.</p> <p>Continue to allot specific funding for special projects to support youth entrepreneurial training or social enterprises (as an example, see <a href="http://rqeee.org">rqeee.org</a>) within EM-CLCs.</p>	<p>Encourage school boards to simplify the administrative processes in relation to negotiating formal partnerships (e.g., <a href="#">deed of establishment</a>). Such changes would facilitate EM-CLCs in negotiating additional formal partnership agreements, as previously suggested by Qu'Anglo (<a href="#">2015</a>).</p>

	<p>Create a budget allocation measure, specifically designed for CDA positions, for all schools that wish to become (or remain) a CLC. This may allow all schools with a disadvantaged SEI decile rank to consider becoming CLCs.</p> <p>Work in partnership with school boards to identify any financial measure(s) that can be used to complement the <a href="#">Canada-Quebec Agreement</a> to fund EM-CLC activities, events, and partnerships.</p>	Collaborate with CLC school board representatives to develop a survey template for school boards to gather feedback from students and families about their current and future EM-CLC activities, events, and partnerships.	
<b>Provincial Resource Team (PRT)</b>	<p>Create with CLC school board representatives a formal two-year paid mentorship program for new CDAs, to complement the existing CDA training and mentorship available through the PRT. This program should also include training on the mentor-mentee relationship and educational success. Western Quebec School Board's research-based Teacher Induction Program (see Hollweck, <a href="#">2019</a>) could serve as inspiration in creating and revising this program.</p> <p>Develop resources to help implement school-community learning (Lacireno-Paquet et al.,</p>	<p>Increase the number of CLC activities, events, or partnerships led by Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities to better represent Quebec's English-speaking <i>min-jority</i> communities.</p> <p>Design a teacher-specific resource area within the CLC section of the PRT website.</p> <p>Plan teacher-specific professional development opportunities to increase engagement (Lacireno-Paquet et al., <a href="#">2010</a>; Qu'Anglo, <a href="#">2015</a>), including for adult education teachers.</p>	<p>Share ideas for removing barriers to partnership facilitation and offer training on the topic to CDAs, school principals and other school staff.</p> <p>Continue to offer an individual initial pre-service training session to each new CDA, in addition to existing group sessions (Lacireno-Paquet et al., <a href="#">2009</a>). This training should be completed before the CDA starts their work on-site.</p> <p>Consult with school boards on which provincial partnerships to establish, facilitate, maintain, and</p>

	<p><a href="#">2009</a>), with the help of different network partners that specialize in pedagogy or community learning.</p> <p>Hire a professional grant writer to regularly assist CDAs so that the latter's work hours can be dedicated to working directly with students, families, seniors, school staff, and community partners.</p> <p>Identify and create more provincial partnerships that promote English or bilingual activities and events related to numeracy and French literacy; Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities' heritage, history, and excellence; 2SLGBTQIA+ students; women's and girls' leadership; and sports and outdoor activities. Provincial partnerships are especially important for EM-CLC schools located in Quebec's regions where English or bilingual partnership opportunities may be more limited.</p>		<p>reinforce, in order to ensure collective access to English and bilingual services needed to achieve the school boards' Commitment to Success Plan objectives.</p>
<b>School Boards</b>	<p>Work with their human resources department to explore the possibility of hiring a part-time early childhood educator to perform</p>	<p>Develop a concerted digital marketing and communications strategy specific to the promotion of all three models of CLCs. The strategy should include an updated logo, mission, vision, values, et</p>	<p>Simplify the administrative processes in relation to negotiating formal partnerships (e.g., <a href="#">deed of establishment</a>). Such changes would facilitate EM-CLCs in negotiating additional formal</p>

	<p>some CDA duties, in the event that a CLC does not have a CDA.</p> <p>Work with their human resources department and unions to explore the possibility of hiring a teacher to also take on some CDA duties if a CLC does not have a CDA, and to compensate them accordingly.</p>	<p>cetera. For example, see <a href="http://ecc-canada.ca">ecc-canada.ca</a>.</p> <p>Continue to work with Indigenous communities (Qu'Anglo, <a href="#">2015</a>) to address the Calls to Action related to education, as per the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (<a href="#">2015</a>).</p> <p>Ensure that their website includes a regularly updated CLC-specific section.</p> <p>Prioritize CLC support for schools and centres with the most disadvantaged SEI decile ranks in order to create equal opportunities for all students, families, and communities.</p>	<p>partnership agreements, as previously suggested by Qu'Anglo (<a href="#">2015</a>).</p> <p>Prioritize the hiring of CDAs that are English-French bilingual to be able to effectively participate in all local community committees, such as the <i>tables de concertation</i>, and complete provincial grant applications available to EM-CLCs.</p> <p>Invite school board representatives to present an annual detailed report to the council of commissioners on the EM-CLC partnerships in place, and how they specifically contribute to achieving the school board's Commitment to Success Plan objectives.</p> <p>Promote non-profit community partners, as well as their logos, on the school board website.</p> <p>Require all EM-CLC schools to directly involve CDAs in their Educational Project planning and revision process.</p>
	<p>Create yearly CLC awards to recognize a student leader, a CDA, a community partner, and a CLC, in relation to their contributions to Educational Success, Vitality, and/or Institutional Completeness.</p>		



<p><b>CLC School Board Representatives</b></p>	<p>Confirm that a steering committee with decision-making power (rather than a partnership table for informational purposes) is implemented for each EM-CLC. The committee could be made up of the CDA, the school principals, teachers, parents, and students from each site (Lacireno-Paquet et al., <a href="#">2009</a>, <a href="#">2010</a>; Qu'Anglo, <a href="#">2015</a>). Seniors and community partners could also be added to this committee.</p> <p>Implement and annually assess the CDA formal mentorship program recommended above.</p> <p>Ensure that each new CDA participates in initial paid training with the PRT before beginning to work in a CLC.</p> <p>Organize initial training from PRT for new CLC school principals, prior to the beginning of the school year, to retain and maintain existing partnerships.</p> <p>Explore, with the MEQ, the budget allocation measures which can be</p>	<p>Ensure that each 1.0 EM-CLC CDA is assigned to no more than four to five schools, all within one RCM, to avoid duplicating partnerships. Include, when possible, at least one high school in each EM-CLC, in order to prioritize student retention.</p> <p>Identify, with CDAs and school principals, harmonized expectations for the promotion of EM-CLC activities, events, and partnerships through school websites, social media pages, monthly newsletters, podcasts, et cetera.</p> <p>Attend CLC professional development and the CLC Conference organized by the PRT.</p>
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	used to complement the <a href="#">Canada Quebec Agreement</a> , in order to fund CDAs and/or EM-CLC activities, events, or partnerships.		
<b>Community Development Agents (CDAs)</b>	<p>Ensure that the activities, events, and partnerships have direct, identifiable links to the QEP and other curriculum documents.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>Consult with teachers to identify the cross-curricular competencies being worked on in class. Then select EM-CLC activities, events, and partnerships that align with the competencies and also connect to the schools' Educational Project.</p> <p>Identify and create local and regional partnerships that promote French literacy; English or bilingual numeracy; Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities' heritage, history, and excellence; 2SLGBTQIA+ identities; women's and girls' leadership; and sports and outdoor activities.</p> <p>Implement a steering committee with decision-making power (rather</p>	<p>Encourage student-led and staff-supported EM-CLC activities, events, and partnerships that promote leadership and active citizenship through strengthening ties between youth and their communities. This can help retain youth and equip them with the skills needed to successfully enter the job market.</p> <p>Reserve space for senior-led activities, thus fostering a long-term sense of belonging to the local community for students and families.</p>	<p>Share local, provincial, and federal resources with families that address issues and challenges related to violence against women and girls, as well as to poverty, unemployment, and underemployment.</p> <p>Execute the promotion of EM-CLC activities, events, and partnerships through school websites, social media pages, monthly newsletters, podcasts, et cetera.</p> <p>Create and maintain a database of community partners and initiatives in case of absence, illness, or employment status changes. Share this online database with the school principal and/or CLC school board representative. This ensures that EM-CLC partnerships not only remain intact, but also facilitate a</p>

<sup>1</sup> For example, please refer to pages 3 and 4 of the following document: <https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/education/pfeq/primaire/programmes/PFEQ-culture-citoyennete-quebecoise-feuillet-AN.pdf>

	<p>than a partnership table for informational purposes) for each EM-CLC. The committee could be made up of the CDA, the school principals, teachers, parents, and students from each site (Lacireno-Paquet et al., <a href="#">2009</a>, <a href="#">2010</a>; Qu'Anglo, <a href="#">2015</a>). Seniors and community partners could also be added to this committee.</p>		<p>more seamless transfer of information.</p> <p>Collaborate closely and regularly with both elementary and secondary student councils, where available, to include their voices in the activity and event selection process; this also helps develop their leadership and active citizenship skills.</p> <p>Attend CLC professional development and the CLC Conference organized by the PRT (Lacireno-Paquet et al., <a href="#">2010</a>).</p>
<b>School Principals</b>	<p>Be co-leaders of their EM-CLCs by treating their schools and the EM-CLC as one entity (Lacireno-Paquet et al., <a href="#">2009</a>).</p> <p>Allocate budget and time to designated teacher, school professional, and student representatives from each cycle to meet with the CDA when working on their action plan, and identify their needs and interests together, in line with school-community learning.</p>	<p>Monitor to ensure that specific cross-curricular competencies are selected and closely linked to the educational project's expected outcomes, across all EM-CLC cultural, linguistic, and sporting activities, events, and partnerships. This applies to activities both inside and outside the classroom, as well as before, during, and after school hours.</p> <p>Ensure that the CDA explains their role and responsibilities to the</p>	<p>Directly involve CDAs in their school's Educational Project planning and revision process.</p> <p>Plan, together with their CDA, the promotion of CLC activities, events, and partnerships through the school's website, social media pages, newsletters, podcasts, et cetera.</p> <p>Inform their CDA about the types of special education needs that exist in the school, the current</p>

	<p>Encourage the CDA's presence at teachers' cycle meetings.</p> <p>Ensure that the common <a href="#">CLC Action Plan</a> strikes a balance between literacy, numeracy, history, heritage, sports and the outdoors, and STEM activities, events, and partnerships in both official languages.</p> <p>Annually consult parents and students to obtain a more holistic picture of the strengths, interests, and needs in relation to EM-CLCs.</p> <p>Work with their school board's human resources department to explore the possibility of hiring an early childhood educator to perform some CDA duties if a CDA position is vacant.</p> <p>Work with their human resources department to explore the possibility of hiring a teacher to also take on some CDA duties if a CLC does not have a CDA, and to compensate them accordingly.</p>	<p>school staff at the beginning of the school year.</p> <p>Grant CDAs access to space in each school dedicated to CLCs, that is easily visible and accessible to teachers, parents, and students (e.g., bulletin board, designated workspace, and/or shelving space in the library or foyer for equipment storage).</p>	<p>organizational services in place, and program gaps.</p> <p>Ensure that at least one space and time slot is reserved during school hours (e.g., library or gym) for weekly school-community activities and events. Consider prioritizing parent and tot programs for Kindergarten 4/Kindergarten 5 recruitment purposes as well as senior and special needs services (e.g., respite services for caregivers).</p> <p>Ensure that the CDA has been granted full access to the school during and after school hours, as well as on weekends (e.g., keys, key cards, alarm code, addition of their name to the alarm company's contact list).</p> <p>Attend CLC professional development and the CLC Conference organized by the PRT (Lacireno-Paquet et al., <a href="#">2010</a>).</p>
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	Ensure that the CDA is not diverted to other tasks, such as substitute teaching.		
<b>Other School Staff</b> <b>(e.g., teachers, professionals, daycare staff)</b>	<p>School teams should be actively involved in EM-CLC planning (Lacireno-Paquet et al., <a href="#">2009</a>). They should also be involved in activity, event, and partnership execution.</p> <p>Share their yearly plans with the CDA.</p> <p>Invite the CDA to cycle meetings.</p> <p>Receive training from the PRT and/or school board educational consultants on how to implement school-community learning in line with the curriculum (Lacireno-Paquet et al., <a href="#">2009</a>), especially cross-curricular competencies.</p>	Reach out to CDAs to share activity, event, and partnership ideas in relation to cross-curricular competency development and/or social-emotional development.	<p>Share their ideas on removing barriers to partnership facilitation.</p> <p>Attend CLC professional development and the CLC Conference organized by the PRT (Lacireno-Paquet et al., <a href="#">2010</a>).</p>

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