



**Contributions of Community Learning Centres (CLCs)  
to Student Engagement and Success:**

**Findings from Evaluations conducted by CLCs  
June 2010**

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Working Document

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**Working Document**

# 1. Introduction to the Report

## 1.1 Objectives

The objective of this report is to assemble together and present findings from evaluations of programs in Community Learning Centre (CLC), which were conducted during 2009 and 2010 in order to assess the impact of CLC programs on students. The report is the product of a year-long team effort that involved 10 CLCs from across Quebec, including small and large schools, primary and secondary schools, and rural, urban and semi-urban schools. The 11 CLCs were part of a committee that was formed in the fall semester to work collectively on exploring the benefits of CLCs for students, and gathering evidence that can support future policy and sustainability. In addition to the 10 CLC evaluations, the present report highlights the findings of two additional CLC evaluations that were perceived as valuable because of their methodology and findings. A description of the 12 different CLCs is provided in the Appendix.

Due to the length and scope of many of the CLC evaluation reports, it was not possible to present them in full. As a result, the present report provides only a brief description of the findings from each. The emphasis is on describing and synthesizing the key results from the evaluations. Readers interested in a fuller account of the evaluations are encouraged to visit the CLC website to have access to the individual reports of CLCs.

## 1.2 Research Questions

The essential question that inspired this report and the evaluations is whether CLCs are having positive and demonstrable effects on the well-being and success of students. Although CLCs are not designed to serve only students, but also families and the local English-speaking community; results to date have shown that students remain the primary beneficiaries and “targets” of CLC programs and services (Lacireno-Paquet, Hefley, Guckenburg, Morgan, Kagle, and Lamarre, 2009). The question of how CLCs impact on the school success of students may also be one of the most decisive, given that CLCs remain educational institutions at their heart. In the establishment of CLCs, stakeholders have often asked if the CLC will either add to, or detract from, the educational role of the school. The evaluations in this report attempt to answer this question and they explore how CLC programs and services have been contributing to the learning experiences and development of students.

Exploring the impact of CLCs on students is no simple task, given that CLCs are complex and multi-faceted organizations that often operate several different programs at the same time. Evaluating and separating the effects of any single intervention is challenging at best. Students' lives are also not limited to CLCs, and are affected by processes both inside and outside of schools. As a result, it is reasonable to expect that few programs will be able to change the lives of whole populations of students in significant ways, especially not during a three or four-year period, which is the current lifespan of the CLCs in Quebec. Yet, we know from research that a combination of mutually-supportive interventions – including those implemented by CLCs - does have the potential to make significant, positive differences in the lives of students and their families (Schorr, 1997). To date, research has demonstrated that certain “typical” CLC programs – such as after-school programs, early childhood education, family support, academic support, and literacy

initiatives – are associated with a number of positive outcomes in children and youth (Little, 2009). To set the CLC evaluations in the broader context of research and practice, each chapter begins with a brief summary of the relevant literature.

### 1.3 Organization of the Report

The evaluations in the report explore the impact of CLCs in either one of two ways:

- a) They assess the implementation and effects of specific CLCs programs (e.g., after-school recreation, literacy) on participating students;
- b) They explore the impact of the CLC as a whole, for example, by examining changes in the majority of students since the inception of the CLC. This was done through the use of online surveys and school records, among other methods.

As a whole, the evaluations examine how changes in the CLC have influenced factors like student engagement in school, feelings about school, participation in programs, social and emotional health, literacy development, and academic skills and performance. There is also one evaluation of a program involving parents, which sought to explore how families benefit from their involvement in CLC programs. Together, the evaluations are based on a variety of different **quantitative and qualitative methods**, including surveys, individual interviews, focus group discussions, school and program records (e.g., attendance, behavioural incidents), observations, and program records.

The range and types of programs evaluated in this report include: early childhood education programs, extra-curricular activities at lunch and after-school, activities and support to promote literacy, homework assistance and tutoring, and sports and artistic and cultural activities for students and adults.

As with any evaluation, there are limitations that could not be overcome. Due to various constraints, such as time and resources, the majority of evaluations could only employ a certain number of methods. For example, in some cases, the evaluation of a program is based largely on one focus group discussion. Other CLCs were only able to engage a limited number of teachers and parents in interviews and surveys, in part because of the small size of the population. Several evaluations did involve a larger sample, yet even in these situations the challenge was to obtain full and detailed responses from participants. In spite of these limitations, the evaluations kept high standards of rigor and transparency; in turn, they have yielded findings that are revealing and compelling.

## 1.4 Highlights of Findings from CLC Evaluations

The present report provides an illustration of the many and diverse ways in which CLCs in Quebec are responding to the needs of children and adolescents and promoting their engagement, well-being and success in school. Evaluations in this report reveal that CLC programs have had beneficial effects on outcomes like student literacy, participation and motivation in school, self-confidence, social skills, artistic and sports related talents, and academic competencies. It is also important to note that CLCs have still only been in existence for 3 to 4 years, and their impact on children may not be fully felt or realized. Therefore, the findings highlighted in the evaluations of CLCs point both to the successes achieved to date, and the possibilities for the future. Below is a description of what the 13 evaluations have shown about the benefits and impact of CLCs on students.

### Increasing access to beneficial opportunities and services

CLC extra-curricular and after-school programs have met a demonstrable need for students to have access to quality activities outside of the classroom. In many, if not all settings, these activities would have remained unavailable or inaccessible due to barriers like cost, distance, and/or a lack of services and resources in English. In some CLCs, students have expressed that they would like an even greater variety and quantity of activities in order to meet the diverse interests and talents of students. In a focus group discussion with students participating in guitar lessons at the Casse CLC, it was stated that youth in the region have too few opportunities to enjoy and participate in arts and music classes, and yet the desire to have these kinds of activities is high. At St. Willibrord CLC, parents indicated that one of the main benefits of the after-school activities was their affordability. Here is how parent expressed it, “my daughter was able to continue with a learning environment throughout the summer thanks to the Literacy Day Camp and is now able to pursue some of her creative interests at an affordable cost to me.”

### Promoting student participation in positive and life-enriching activities

Rates of student participation in CLC programs have been increasing over time and been fairly high and consistent in recent years. In a number of CLCs, rates of registration and participation have either been equal to or higher than what was anticipated. Students at the Mecatina CLC said they enjoyed lunch and after-school extra-curricular programs as an opportunity to “have fun and engage in activities with their peers.” In the same CLC, parents described the after-school arts programs (e.g., music, drama, and photography) as “building self-esteem” and “promoting commitment and responsibility.” In the evaluation of the Netagmicu CLC, students reported that programs had encouraged their participation in activities. When asked how the CLC had helped them, various students responded that it had encouraged them to “get involved,” to be “more involved,” to “be more independent” and “more active.” High school students at Gaspé CLC and St. Paul's CLC report that lunch and after-school programs are important because they provide an opportunity for them to fill their leisure time with constructive activities and to avoid engaging in negative behaviours like delinquency and drug use.

### Improving access to early childhood education programs

A number of the CLCs have instituted early childhood education programs as a way to serve parents with young children and enhance early literacy and school readiness. In

each setting, the feedback from participants indicates that these programs are beneficial in several ways: they provide parents with a vital opportunity to meet and socialize with other parents; they strengthen parents' knowledge and capacities to support the early literacy development of their children, and; they expose children to the joy of reading at an early age. An evaluation of a "Mother Goose" program at St. Lambert presents several instructive findings on the implementation and impact of this early childhood program. According to a survey, all 14 participants in the program said they wanted to continue participating, and 13 rated the program as being of "high quality." Only one said it was "acceptable." Results of the survey also showed that parents believed the program was beneficial to them and their children. According to their responses, it "decreased isolation" (8/14), "allowed them to make new acquaintances and friends" (9/14), "helped them to feel more confident as a parent and caregiver" (4/14), and that they "enjoyed spending time with their children more" (10/14). The extent of one parent's satisfaction with the program is revealed in the following quote, "I love the Mother Goose program! It is so well organized! Early literacy is so important and I am so happy that I had Mother Goose for my little boy."

#### Promoting student participation in healthy activities and lifestyles

In the majority of CLCs, some form of physical activity is being organized, such as yoga, sports, dance classes. These kinds of physical activities fill a gap that has been left by the declining focus on physical education during school hours, caused by the busy schedules of schools. In the evaluation of extra-curricular physical activities at St. Lambert CLC, parents and teachers reported that the activities are healthy outlets for children. One teacher expressed, "My kids come back calmer. After Zumba Dance and Yoga, I see a difference with the kids." A parent said, "From Karate, my child has gained confidence. He learned the days of the week in order to look forward to the class." The evaluation of the Riverview CLC community garden and cooking class have shown that both programs were successful in helping students and parents to gain increasing knowledge about nutrition and to develop lifelong skills in gardening and cooking healthy meals. As a result of the program, students developed an appreciation of fruits and vegetables that they had never tried before, and began asking for their parents to cook them at home. In total, about 200 youngsters from Riverview and the neighbourhood participated in a collective garden that produced great quantities of healthy fruits and vegetables that students were able to eat and take home. The St. Paul's CLC maintains a variety of sports activities (i.e., volleyball, hockey, badminton, track and field, and cross country skiing), and has found that up to 80% of students have been participating. One of the conditions for participating is that students stay on top of their homework and grades. According to the evaluation, teachers report that students participating in sports or school teams are making an extra effort to keep school assignments up to date.

#### Meeting the needs and expectations of students and parents

Student and parent satisfaction with programs has been high across the CLCs. In most cases, students and parents want the programs to continue. In the St. Paul's, a new youth centre had become so popular that students were spending less and less time at home, according to their parents. In a couple of other CLCs, Riverdale and St. John's, the majority of students participating in a literacy program with adult mentors has expressed a desire to continue participating in the next year. In the same programs, most, if not all, of the students consulted for the evaluation indicated that the program is improving their

reading skills and vocabulary, and that they wished to continue developing these abilities. Finally, at Riverview CLC, the community gardening program with children from the school and the neighbourhood was so successful and popular with the children, parents, and community organizations that it will be repeated again.

#### Reinforcing students' capacities to learn and perform academically

Teachers in several CLCs have expressed that CLC programs deserve to be maintained because of the positive changes they have observed in their students. Teachers cite changes in the self-confidence, motivation, and competence of students participating in programs in literacy, homework help, and extra-curricular arts and sports. At Mountainview CLC, the change that was most frequently observed as a result of the homework assistance was an increase in self-esteem, for example, a teacher expressed the following about the impact of a homework help program on one of her/his students, "I saw that one of my students in grade one who was receiving services had a much more positive attitude and more confidence in herself." At St. John's CLC, a teacher said the following about the benefits of the "Reading Buddy" program, "[This program] is a very positive help for struggling readers...they are eager to go with their [buddy]. I've noticed an improvement in their reading and writing." Students corroborated what teachers and parents had to say about the positive impact of programs focusing on literacy and academic skills. According to one student at Riverdale CLC, "I would have failed French if I had not attended [the homework assistance program]." Students at the same CLC also give clear reasons as to why the homework assistance was beneficial. In several cases, they said they did not have anyone at home to turn to for assistance, or that it was simply much easier to complete their work at school than at home.

To date, none of the three evaluations of homework help programs has found significant changes in grades, which may be reasonable to expect given the relatively short time frame of the programs and the uneven patterns of student participation, particularly at the high school level. The positive changes in self-confidence may be encouragement enough to continue the programs in order to see if this change leads eventually to better grades.

#### Enhancing the school climate and student motivation

Several CLCs report that extra-curricular activities, recreational after-school programs, and homework help programs are enhancing students' motivation in school. This finding is based on reports from students, parents, and teachers. Students indicate that these activities make the school day more motivating, interesting and fun. The following is a quote from one student at the Riverview CLC: "The CLC makes the school more cheerful, we recycle more, and more people are getting involved. [There are] more things to get involved in." The following is an even more telling quote from a child at the same CLC: "It [the CLC] makes me and my friends happier, and the school very happy and I love going to school now. I love the school because it is peaceful and there is some people that are not peaceful and I don't like that!" Students participating in the Youth Fusions after-school programs at James Lyng CLC reported that the activities "uplifted the school spirit" and increased their motivation to attend school. One student expressed, "It made me look forward to school." Similar comments were made by students in the evaluation of the Netagamiou CLC. According to a couple of students participating in a focus group discussion, the CLC has made school and learning "fun" and "helps me have fun at school."

### Improving the well-being of students

Several CLCs have used online surveys, such as Tell Them From Me (TTFM) and “Voices and Choices” to assess the impact of the CLC on students. Surveys have been implemented yearly, though not always at the same time each year. Overall, survey results have generally shown that the rate of negative behaviours in school has decreased, and that positive behaviours have increased. A total of three CLCs report that the rate of bullying has decreased, and that sense of belonging to school has increased over the last 3-4 years. At St. Paul's CLC, it has been observed that key health indicators have improved markedly since the inception of the CLC. Results of the online surveys revealed the following (identify timeframe): a decrease in drinking and intoxication from 81.6% to 30%; a decline in marijuana use from 40.8% to 8% and; a fall in smoking (18.6% to 10%) and sexual activity (63.3% to 34.6 %). At Netagamou CLC, improvements have also been observed in TTFM results on bullying, self esteem, and depression. At Metis Beach, an analysis of school records has shown that student behaviours have improved significantly over the past 3 years. This includes a 95% reduction in incident reports and 96% reduction in suspension rates (over a 6 month period). In the past year, there were 11 incident reports and only 1 suspension. The Metis Beach evaluation also cites survey results from TTFM which have shown gains on measures like student aspirations and sense of belonging.

### Enhancing the relationships between children, parents and schools

Parents appreciate the opportunities that CLCs provide for them to spend “quality” time with their children. As one parent at the Riverview CLC expressed, “I think a lot of parents are looking for a way to do things with their kids. They’re all working, and not everybody’s creative. Usually at home it’s kids in one room, parents in another. I think [what is needed are] more ways to have one-on-one [with your kids], mother/daughter or father/son.” The evaluation of the international cooking class at Riverview was one such opportunity that parents and children enjoyed participating in together. The feedback on the cooking class shows that parents and children were able to learn, have fun and grow together in a period of 8 short weeks! One obvious strength of the program was its capacity to engage participants of varying different ages. According to the evaluation of the Mecatina CLC, one of the most frequent comments that parents made with regard to CLC programs was that they appreciated the opportunities to participate in activities with their children that combine fun and learning, as one parent said, “I like spending time with my children while doing fun activities that also involve learning.” Elementary students also commented that it is “a fun activity that can be done with family.”



## 2. CLC Program Snapshots and Highlights

### 2.1 Literacy Programs:

#### Early Childhood Education and Family Engagement

Literacy Initiatives at Mecatina CLC
Literacy Initiatives at Netagamou CLC
Oasis Literacy Program at Riverdale CLC
Mother Goose Program at St-Lambert CLC
Reading Buddies Program at St. John's CLC

Schools have often implemented **literacy programs** that offer extra support to students in their early years in order to help them master the basic building blocks of reading. Many literacy programs emphasize the importance of addressing learning problems early, as remediation in later grades becomes more difficult (Wasik and Slavin, 1993; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 1999). Some of the most effective early literacy programs use the format of one-on-one tutoring with a trained adult. In a review of 16 studies on literacy programs involving adult tutors, Wasik and Slavin (1993) concluded that all the programs were effective in enhancing the reading abilities of students. An evaluation of a “Reading Buddy” program involving first graders found that a 6-month program of one-on-one tutoring lead students to have more positive attitudes towards reading, greater self-confidence, and improved reading skills. These types of programs have been shown to work with students who have low literacy skills and are at-risk of failure in reading (Caserta-Henry, 1996; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 1999; Wasik and Slavin, 1993). For this report, it was not possible to identify any evaluations or studies of similar literacy programs conducted in high schools. Although the belief is that prevention has to begin in the early grades, programs to build on the literacy skills of adolescents may also be effective, as illustrated by the findings from the Oasis program at Riverdale CLC.

The important role of positive parent-school relations and **parent involvement in education** in shaping the academic success of students has been fairly well established in research. Indeed, a whole field of research and practice has developed around the concept of parental engagement in school (Epstein, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997). In a comprehensive review of research on the role of school, family, community connections in student learning, researchers Henderson and Mapp (2002) conclude that programs and actions that involve parents in the schooling of their children improve attendance levels, academic performance, and positive attitudes towards school. In the same report, the authors review research on effective strategies to engage families. One of their main findings is that successful programs that connect families and schools

“invite involvement, are welcoming, and focus on parent and community needs” (Henderson and Mapp, 2002, p. 43). These programs are also built on a foundation of trusting, caring, and respectful relationships between parents and school staff.

## Literacy Initiatives at Mecatina CLC

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 56 \**

### Literacy Program

The literacy activities evaluated at Mecatina CLC consisted of Family Literacy Celebrations, Youth Reading Circles, Born to Read, and Books on Wheels for Seniors. Included in the Family Literacy Celebrations were National Family Day, Canadian Children's Book Week, and Family Literacy Day.

The Youth Reading Circles consist of Snuggle Buddies (0-4 years with an intergenerational aspect), Book Bug Club (K-3), Book Chat Club (Gr. 4-6), and Teen Zone (Secondary). The youth reading circles had an average of 25% participation rate for all activities. The attendance data reflects that participation was higher in the elementary levels than it was in secondary. Elementary students indicated that “reading good stories and doing crafts and fun activities” were what motivated them to attend while secondary students enjoyed “going with friends and the music theme”

Born to Read is an annual event that promotes the gift of reading to the very youngest of children and has been taking place for the past three years. Results from the follow-up telephone interviews indicate that 85% of the participants replied that they are spending more time singing and reading to their child since attending the program, and realizing the importance of literacy in early childhood development.

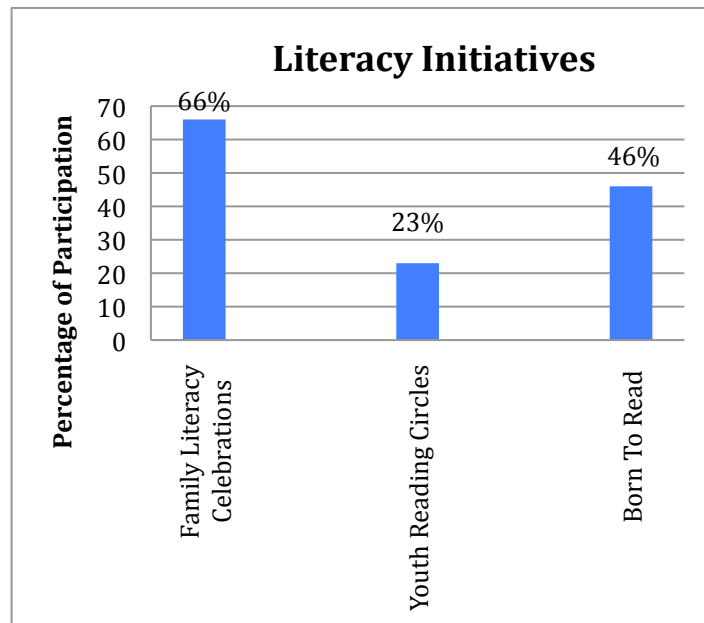
Seniors from the community participate in the Snuggle Buddies Reading Circle and the Books on Wheels Program

### Results

The data indicate that there was an average of 66% participation of all potential students in the activities. It was noted that there was an extraordinary number of parents participating at these events with 53% of student families represented. The feedback from parents and students show that, overall, they are pleased with the activities as offered. One of the most frequent comments from parents was they appreciated the opportunity to participate in activities with their children that are fun and actively promote learning, as one parent said, “I like spending time with my children while doing fun activities that also involve learning.” Elementary students commented that it is “a fun activity that can be done with family” while the secondary students say it appealed to them for the simple fact that “the game was about music with cool songs”.

During the interviews with the # seniors participating in Books on Wheels, 100% said that they “enjoyed the program and having the books delivered, accompanied by a nice visit”. They also indicated that the amount of time they spent reading has increased since joining the program and that they hoped the service would continue.

Based on the responses collected from the questionnaires, the impact of the literacy activities can be seen in the number of times people are reading. For example, parents and children are reading 4-12 times a week on average, either alone or with their child(ren), for a period of 20 minutes each time. In addition, 83% responded that the literacy activities offered provide an opportunity for them to be more involved into their children’s learning. Furthermore, the data showed that 66% of the respondents (parents and students) are currently borrowing books from the library.



Literacy initiatives percentages are based on total number of eligible participants

## Literacy Initiatives at Netagamiou CLC

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 59 \**

### Literacy Program

The Literacy Program has received a significant amount of support from partners and has been extensively developed over the past three years, in keeping with one of the priority areas identified by Netagamiou School in its proposal to become a CLC school as well as the school board strategic plan. Literacy, or more specifically the level of leisure reading among students, was identified as an area of concern in the first TTFM student survey (2007-2008). Students from Grade 5 to Secondary 5 reported reading only an average of 10 minutes per day, compared to the average of 36 minutes in replica schools. Following anecdotal reports of teachers who expressed concern that many secondary students were experiencing difficulty comprehending course texts and in recognition of the academic importance of literacy, an intensive literacy program was developed and implemented. Further exploration with students revealed that, especially among secondary students their reason for not reading was a lack of interesting reading materials.

### Description and results

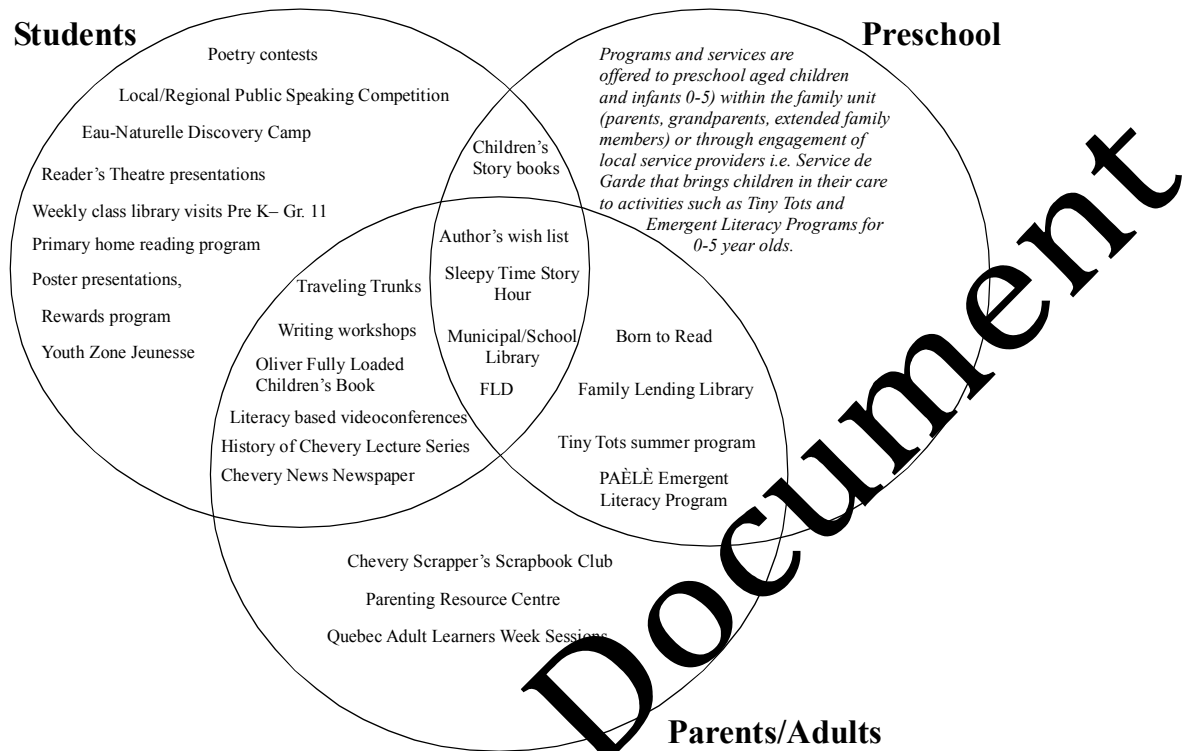
A team of parent and student volunteers also contributed significantly to service delivery through the Born to Read and Sleepy Time Story Hour programs, the latter of which received a MELS award in 2009 as one of the top five literacy programs in Anglophone schools across Quebec. The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations and The Centre For Literacy were instrumental partners in expanding the permanent library collection through donations of new and gently used books. The Commission Scolaire du Littoral Adult Education Centre offered valuable expertise, training and support to adults and parents through their "Show Me The Way" emergent literacy program for 0-5 year olds rounding out the coordination and management of existing resources for the benefit of youth and the community.

Concerted efforts were made with partners, especially through Quebec Federation for Home and School Association book donations and The Centre for Literacy's Traveling Trunks program to increase the selection of books for young adults in the Netagamiou Library.

At the same time, programming was developed for children aged 0-5 and their parents to support early literacy development in both languages (Sleepy Time Story Hour, Born to Read and the CSL Emergent Literacy program).

Students in both the English and French Language programs at the primary level were engaged in the research, writing, illustration, translation, publishing and presentation of their own book about a local community artifact that played an important role in the early development of Chevery. In 2009, this book and the Sleepy Time Story Hour was recognized as one of the top five programs across Quebec promoting literacy and received the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport 2008-2009 award for the "*Plan d'action sur la lecture à l'école*".

Venn diagram demonstrating the delivery of literacy activities to different target groups



The students involved expressed both pride and satisfaction for their accomplishments. Their comments demonstrate the success of this program in achieving cross-curricular competency goals:

*“We learned how to read to little kids and they liked it. Some words were hard to read so we had to ask for help*

*I liked everything about the story hour. I liked the reading to little kids... when they grow up they can tell other little kids about it*

*The story hour will keep going, which is good because the little kids are learning more and can get out with other little kids. They have more activities. We have after school activities, but the little kids had nothing.”*

*I like the fact that we also wrote our own book, that we're actually going to print it and make it a real book and then sell it*

*I learned that you can make many kind of books. Writing the story of Oliver is writing down the history of our community... and we can sell the book to raise money for our school. I like this because we're the authors, we did it ourselves... we're the one's that wrote the story.. We're preserving history and people will know about our history.”*

## Oasis Literacy Program at Riverdale CLC

\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 61 \*

### **Born to Read Program**

Riverdale CLC runs programs and provides services benefiting not only Riverdale students, but the English speaking community at large in the area of family and community engagement. Community partners run early childhood literacy programs for moms and toddlers 0 to 4 years of age and a children's lending library for community kids 0 to 8 years old. Born to Read offers access to educational opportunities/life-long learning through Mother Goose Rhyme Time, a weekly gathering of parent and children coming together to learn and share the joys of nursery rhymes, songs and stories and circle games. This program promotes early literacy and social skill development in young children.

The Born to Read program provides an opportunity for parents to learn about the importance of reading, singing and story-telling to their babies and introduce families to the public library. Parents and caregivers are trained to nurture their baby's love of reading and learning. Additionally, children taking part in the Mother Goose program are invited to join the Teddy Bear Book Club. The Mother Goose program has done a great job in getting kids ready for school and equipping them with functional literacy skills to arrive in the school at grade level.

### **Results**

Mothers in the Mother Goose sessions were asked to complete a survey, the findings of which indicate that most of the mothers participating found that this activity educational and promoted early literacy development. They also indicated that the increased development of social skills was a great benefit to them. Some mothers said that the program is an excellent way to stimulate their children and the songs and the rhymes really cause them to interact and start to learn. The majority of mothers surveyed also indicated that this program was a great way to spend quality time with their child and meet other mothers and now read more often to their children.

As a result of the Born to Read Mother Goose weekly programs, an increased number of community children now have access to early childhood literacy programs. The children are learning how to cope and get along in a structured environment and that is stimulating their cognitive development. The program has also resulted in increase literacy interaction between parents and their children, with parents now reading more often to their child at home because they took part in the program.

Ninety-one percent of the responses from the mothers who participated in the Born to Read Mother Goose Rhyme Time program knew nothing or very little about the Riverdale CLC, so there is plenty of room for improvement when it comes to bringing awareness to programs as a Riverdale CLC activity

[My child is] *"growing up and having an appreciation for books and love for reading"*

## Literacy initiative at St. Lambert

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 63 \**

### **Reaching out to Preschool Families: Mother Goose Rhyme Time**

St. Lambert Elementary began hosting the Mother Goose program in the fall of 2008 in partnership with the South Shore Reading Council (SSRC) and the Montreal Children's Library. The program had been offered by the SSRC the year before at a local church with about a dozen families attending. Parents or caregivers bring their child(ren) age six months to two years to participate in a structured program of singing, storytelling, snack and play time designed to encourage parents to develop the skills to encourage the child's early literacy.

Since the first session at St. Lambert, the program has been full every session and has had a waiting list for the twenty places available. The program runs three, ten-week sessions per year. The SSRC pays for the salaries of the two animators, who are trained by the Montreal Children's Library.

Currently, the St. Lambert library does not run any of its early childhood programs in English despite being a fully bilingual library in a city with a population that is about 20% Anglophone. Even for French programs, they do not offer any programs for children under the age of three. For this program, our desire is to ensure that English families who would like to participate in an early literacy program have access to the program in English, but we do not exclude Francophones or Allophones.

In a survey in the spring of 2010, we asked participants questions to learn about the program's impact on them. Fourteen participants completed the survey. Eleven were mothers of the child, three were grandparents. Some of the findings included: Word of mouth is the primary way that people have heard about the program with eight parents reporting having heard about it from another parent who participated. Two participants also heard about it from an apprentice who was recently hired from the community.

### **Results**

Eleven of the fourteen respondents were specifically looking for a program in English. The mother tongue of the majority of participants is English (10). Three participants were mother tongue French and one Chinese. The majority of participants recalled being sung to as children (12 of 14). Interestingly, although 10 people said their mother tongue was English, their parents sang to them in: Chinese (1), French (4), Creole (1), Yiddish (1) and English (6) indicating that their family backgrounds include other languages than the mother tongues of participants.

Reading tended to be done in the mother tongue language. Ten of fourteen participants recalled being read to by their parents, seven in English and two in French. One did not report the language. Fewer participants reporting have stories told to them out loud: 6 in English, 1 in French.

Participants usually attend more than one session. Only one respondent was attending the program for the first time in the spring of 2010. The rest had attended previously with their child or with an older child.

Attendance in the program is generally high. All of the participants indicated that they intended to continue attending (there were four weeks remaining when the survey was conducted) and ten had attended all of the weeks to date. Absences were the result of conflicts in schedule and illness.

100% would recommend the program to others. The program was rated high quality by 13 and average/acceptable by one.

Impact of the program on Parents' Skills and Behaviour: When asked about the frequency that they read to, sang with, and told stories with their children, participants reported reading and singing with their children often even before the program. Only one participant seldom read or sang to the child. The program seems to have the greatest impact on the participants' likelihood to sing with their child with six reporting that they now sing with their child more often than before. Two participants indicated that they would read with their child more often after attending the program. The skill being least impacted is the story telling practice encouraged by Mother Goose. All of the participants said that they would tell stories to their child about the same amount as before attending the program, with four participants reporting that they seldom (less than one time per week) tell stories and nine telling stories often (several times/week).

In addition to impacting parenting skills, the program has other positive impacts on parents. Participants reported that participating in Mother Goose helped them in the following ways:

- Feeling more confident as a parent or caregiver (4)
- Decreased isolation (8)
- Making new acquaintances or friends (9)
- Enjoying spending time with their child more (10)

When asked what they would change, suggestions included making the story telling portion more interactive and dynamic, including French songs as well as English ones and reading a book instead of telling a story. A quote from the comments section of one parent's survey speaks volumes about how participants feel about the program:

*"I love the Mother Goose program! It is so well organized! Early literacy is so important and I am so happy that I had Mother Goose for my little boy."* (Mother in Mother Goose Program).

## Reading Buddies Program at St. John's CLC

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 62 \**

### Reading Buddies Program

The Reading Buddy program was created to assist students who may be struggling with reading in class.

The Reading Buddies program was first launched at St. John's CLC in March 2007 as part of a literacy initiative spearheaded by teaching staff in collaboration with the Coordinator. The CLC was responsible for community outreach, securing and coordinating the volunteers, and maintaining contact with community partners.

The program was designed to help struggling readers gain personal confidence, improve their reading scores, and learn to appreciate literature. Students were selected according to need and paired up with a volunteer from the community.

To help with volunteer engagement and recruitment, the local "Continuing Education Centre" offered credits to students who volunteered in and completed the program. A partnership was developed with the Western Quebec Literacy Council (WQLC) who provided training to the community volunteers to ensure they were equipped with the necessary skills. Volunteers came from the school staff, Literacy Council as well as the community at large. Near the end of the school year, students wrote a report on a book that they chose and presented it at "Reading Buddy Participation Day."

### Results

The results indicate that the hour a week of one-on-one attention was something that was greatly valued and sought after by students. In many cases, time spent with the volunteers was a very positive experience and students were able to view reading as something enjoyable and important.

The community volunteers became positive role models for the students, demonstrating that reading is fun. They helped students view reading in a more positive light without academic or performance pressure. In many cases, the students selected for the program did not receive a lot of one-on-one reading time at home. Many students do not have access to a home library and do not make use of their community library. Reading may not always be as popular or common in every household. For this reason, the volunteers become very important role models. By setting aside time in their week to read with the students the volunteers demonstrated to their 'buddies' that reading is important.

According to student evaluations collected in 2009, 100% of the participating students enjoyed their experience. All students stated that they would like to have a Reading Buddy again in the next school year. Students not selected to participate in the program often expressed that they would like to have a Reading Buddy as well. Though other students view the program as a special privilege, the students selected to participate were not negatively viewed or labeled as struggling students. Many of them felt that their reading had improved.

In the Spring 2010 evaluation, the majority of students surveyed indicated that they wanted to improve their reading and vocabulary skills and all of the 17 students who said they wanted to stay in the program reported that they would like to spend more time with their Buddy.

The feedback from teachers obtained both in 2009 and 2010 has been consistently positive. In a 2009 evaluation, teachers reported that students were benefiting in important ways from the program. When asked if the program helped students develop a more positive attitude towards reading, all teachers indicated that it did. When asked to rate the effectiveness of the program, the three teachers indicated it was “very effective.

“[The students] enjoyed the one-on-one time and this led to better alone reading.

“[This program] is a very positive help for struggling readers...they are eager to go with their [buddy]. I’ve noticed an improvement in their reading and writing.”

“[The students] are more interested in reading. They enjoy reading more now.”

“Student enjoyed the program and most of those who participated improved their DRA scores.”

“My students read all their books sent home...and have developed a love for books.”.



## 2.2 Extra Curricular Activities

### After School Programs/ Summer Programs

After-School and Lunch Programs at Mecatina CLC

Community Garden at Riverview CLC

Extra-Curricular Activities at St. Lambert CLC

Guitar Lessons at Gaspe CLC

Youth Fusion Program at James Lyng CLC

Youth Programs at St Paul's River CLC

International Cooking Class at Riverview CLC

Effective and high-quality **after-school and summer programs** have been found to have a number of positive effects on children and adolescents, including: improved behavior in school, increased sense of self-confidence and competence, fewer absences from school, better social skills, and higher academic skills and performance (Miller, 2003). Given the promise of after-school programs in enhancing the motivation and success of students, the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) coined the term “complementary learning” to describe the essential after-school experiences that all youth should have to grow and thrive in school (See [www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org)). Unfortunately, the research literature has also shown that many youth, particularly those living in low-income circumstances, have less access to beneficial after-school programs than their more privileged peers. Research has also shown that when these students do participate in programs, they benefit in significant ways (Jones and Offord, 1989).

### After School Programs at Mecatina CLC

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 56 \**

#### Lunch-Time Program

The lunch-time programs offered consisted of Guitar Lessons (K and up including adults), Games Club (Gr. 1-4), and Write-On (Gr. 5 and up). All three activities took place throughout the year. Survey results showed that 47% of all the students participated in one or more of the lunchtime activities.

The Write On program saw a regular participation of approximately 5 students each time it was offered. Elementary students stated that they were motivated to participate in the Write-On activity because they “liked writing” while secondary students grabbed the opportunity “to get school work done”. Parents were pleased that their child or children was provided “an opportunity to work on class writing assignments or to develop their own writing creativity”.

Participation records showed that 13 out of 17 students who were eligible to participate in the Game Club took part consistently every 2<sup>nd</sup> week that it was offered. The student indicated that they were motivated to attend simply because they “enjoy playing games with their friends.” Parents found it was a good “opportunity (for students) to socialize while working on their sportsmanship.”

On average, 11 out of 60 students, plus 2 adults, took part in the Guitar Lessons. The lessons were provided by a secondary student and took place 2 times a week. Parent feedback was very positive as indicated by this remark; “my child learned a lot throughout the lessons and had lots of respect for the instructor.” The impact of learning to play a musical instrument can be summed up by the following students’ statement: “I feel good to be able to play guitar.” The majority of participants signed up for the 2 sessions, 3 months each, which indicated a satisfaction with the program offered.

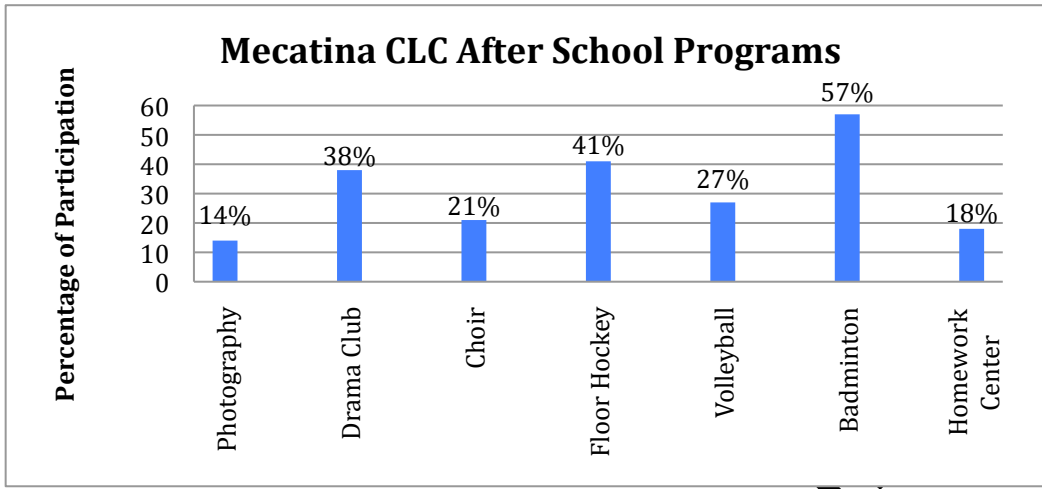
### **After-School Program**

The after-school programs evaluated for this report are comprised of a variety of activities in 3 different areas: arts, sports, and extended learning. The programs were offered to various groups ranging from kindergarten to secondary. The arts activities were offered to students from all levels kindergarten through secondary. The photography (Gr. 3 and up) and drama programs (K and up) were given for a period of 6-8 weeks while choir (Gr.1 and up) ran throughout the year for its 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Overall, after-school arts programs had a participation rate of 33 out of 60 students or 55%. The actual number of participants appear relatively small for some programs, however, the programs can still be judged to be successful because of the rate of participation. For example, the photography program had only 7 participants but a regular attendance rate of 94.4%. Overall, parents found that the arts programs played a role in their child(ren)’s success by “building self-esteem and confidence” and “promoting commitment and responsibility.”

### **Sports Program**

The sport programs evaluated included volleyball (for secondary students), badminton (grades 2-4), and floor hockey (grades 1 and up). The floor hockey took place during the fall and spring, while volleyball and badminton continued throughout the year. These programs are quite popular and take place each school year. Overall, the participation rate for 2009/2010 was 50% for all students. Students indicated that they were motivated to participate in order to have “fun” and “do activities with friends”. Records show that the majority attended the activities more than 13 times during the whole year or one school

term? Parents indicated that they were satisfied with the activities because they promoted “a healthy lifestyle and well-being” in their children.



After-school program participation percentages based on the number of eligible participants

Working Document

## Community Garden at Riverview CLC

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 61 \**

### Community Garden Program

Riverview school's "Roots Collective Garden" was implemented in April 2009. The aim was to promote the health and well-being of children and their families by enhancing their knowledge of and relationship to healthy foods. The collective garden connects people to the foods they eat in a tangible and positive way through the process of learning about gardening and nutrition, growing a garden, and harvesting fruits and vegetables that they then eat. By exposing people to fresh, diverse, and organic fruits and vegetables that they may otherwise have no access to, this project seeks to turn community members onto healthy foods and promote a shift in eating habits from unhealthy to nutritional eating.

Another important element of the collective garden is the building of partnerships between the school, the students and several community organizations. By pooling resources and working together several community partners were able to deliver a quality service to children and community members and ultimately reach a larger segment of the population than is generally the case. Furthermore, the project could not possibly have succeeded without these partnerships as the school was closed during the summer months. Without the collaboration of all partners the garden would have gone unattended during the summer and would never have come to fruition.

### Results

Overall, an estimated total of 200 children participated in the garden. This included: 90 children from two kindergarten, two grade one and one grade two class from Riverview school, approximately 100 youth from summer camps, and two to four families from the community. The families who participated visited the garden weekly during the three-hour period on Wednesdays when the garden was open to the community. The estimate of 200 includes an additional 150 students (from where?) who helped create 4 large garden beds and dig up grass and plant a garden.

Throughout the summer a large quantity of vegetables were harvested and enjoyed by project participants. The project culminated at the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year with a corn roast that drew approximately 150-200 people. The corn roast welcomed families back to school and celebrated the success of the Collective Garden. Several school and community partners attended and helped out, reflecting the strength of partnerships that the project was able to forge.

In classroom workshops delivered by an animator from Culture Élémentaire, students planted seeds and learned all about plant growth from germination, to photosynthesis, and harvesting. These lessons were tied to the classroom curriculum. Teachers were asked to evaluate the workshops. Their responses indicate that all four of the teachers who participated found the workshop age-appropriate, educational, and effective in enhancing their own and their students' knowledge and skills.

While most of the garden had been planted by the time the summer camps started, the youth in the summer camp were also kept busy planting to replace vegetables and fruits that had been harvested. They too learned about urban gardening. Educational activities and games were organized for the camp participants, which supported the learning that they gained by working in the garden.

All of the youth involved learned about nutrition and were able to eat the foods they grew. All of the children sampled whatever came out of the garden, including many vegetables and fruits that they had never tried. This opened their minds about the foods they ate and many children were surprised by how much they enjoyed the raw fruits and vegetables. Parents reported that their children requested more vegetables at home, wanted a greater variety of vegetables, and began eating raw vegetables whereas previously they ate only cooked vegetables.

### **Conclusions**

The collective garden began somewhat as a pilot project and emerged to become a rich community activity and learning experience for everyone involved. A large number of youth from the community –aged 5 to 11 years old – gained new knowledge about nutrition and developed the ability to plant vegetables and fruits on their own. For Riverview students, the project provided an opportunity for hands-on knowledge of core curriculum subjects.

For the camp youth who are generally restricted to urban setting and have limited contact with natural environment, the garden introduced them to the whole process of food production, which they knew little about before. The work on the garden also involved a lot of teamwork and cooperation. The youth saw the fruits of this labour and teamwork in the production of the foods, which everyone was able to enjoy.

The garden was also a success in terms of its ability to build partnerships because without the participation of Culture Élémentaire, Dawson Community Centre and the YWCA, the garden would not have been possible. All community groups worked together harmoniously and each one reported satisfaction with the project. As for the garden itself, it 'greened' Riverview's concrete landscape and added warmer, more welcoming feel to the school. Perhaps the ultimate sign of the project's success is that it will be repeated again with all original partners on board, including Riverview students and teachers.

## Extra-Curricular Activities at St. Lambert CLC

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 63 \**

### Extra-Curricular Program

Development of services for families is a major focus for the CLC and the extra-curricular activities offered by the school are believed to have a positive impact on students and their families. An extra-curricular activities program exposes students to a variety of opportunities, helps them develop skills and interests in things that they may not otherwise be exposed to. Additional outcomes that may be addressed by participation on extra-curricular activities include:

- Decreased problems in school in unstructured time
- Decreased family stress
- Better academic performance in the time following activities
- Reduced experiences of bullying/increased perception of safety
- Making friends across age groups with students who have common interests
- Make school more fun

When the CLC began organizing activities, there were five or six activities offered during the lunch period and one or two after school. In the fall of 2008, a list of activities was publicized in one program and the number of programs offered was doubled. All activities offered were, and continue to be, selected based on feedback from parents, students, and staff. The program was designed to minimize the cancellation of courses (for not enough students registered) thus reducing disappointment for the students as well as the administrative burden on the CLC. It was important that a variety of opportunities were made available for students of all age groups.

As with similar programs, previously only students who paid for activities could participate. Through arrangements with the service providers/activity animators, free spaces were made available in every program and parents were made aware that they could request a free placement if their child could not otherwise participate. In the 2010 such places for students were subsidized through the MELS homework assistance grant and teachers were encouraged to help identify students who could benefit from participating in a program to address a variety of needs – building confidence, increasing social skills, and exposing them to activities they might not otherwise have an opportunity to try.

### Results

Families report that the activities are starting to have the desired outcomes. They particularly appreciate the positive effect of the programs on students' self-esteem, the security and ease of having the programs offered at the school and the variety of

programs offered. Experience shows us that students in cycles one and two are most interested in registering for extra-curricular activities.

Enrolment trends were monitored, observation of activities to assess the level of student engagement, and observations by teachers whose students have participated all factored into the overall analysis of the impact the activities are having. Parental surveys and focus groups were conducted to capture qualitative data. Enrolment in extracurricular activities doubled in the fall of 2008 and has remained at a very high participation rate in every session since then. Attendance in activities is high with only 2-3% of students absent from activities for reasons other than illness or scheduling conflict on a week to week basis.

Both parents and teachers have reported that the activities are healthy outlets for children. The karate program has been specifically cited as having a positive impact on students' self-esteem. The combination of discipline, physicality and loud but controlled vocal expression appears to meet the needs of boys for self-expression, discipline and esteem particularly well. Boys who have difficulty focusing in a classroom setting seem to respond especially well in this activity.

The school administration has recognized that the number of disciplinary incidents during lunch hour decreases when activities are running.

“My kids come back calmer after Zumba dance and yoga, I see a difference with the kids.”

“From Karate, my child has gained confidence. He learned the days of the week in order to look forward to the class.”

“Having different ages can benefit when the older girls tend to help the younger girls.”

Working Document

## Guitar Lessons at Gaspé CLC

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 54 \**

### Guitar Lessons

Guitar lessons were introduced at the Gaspé Polyvalent with the objectives to answer a demand amongst the students for music instruction and to have the students give something back to their immediate community.

In evaluating the guitar lessons, the goal was to assess three key questions:

- The impact on students.
- Whether the lessons are responding to a need.
- How the lessons could be improved.

The overall purpose of the evaluation was to examine how the guitar lessons contribute to the mission and role of the CLC in supporting positive youth development.

Beginning in 2007-2008 school year, the Gaspé CLC began offering group guitar lessons during the lunch hour. The lessons attracted students interested in learning the instrument and participated in exchange for a commitment to volunteer with the CLC and community. Part of the fit of guitar lessons came from the fact that the CLC coordinator is himself a talented, professional musician within the Gaspé community.

### Results

Attendance figures show an increase in attendance over the duration of the period.

2007-2008- 5 students from the "Polyvalente" and 1 student from Gaspé Elementary attended lessons on a regular basis.

2008-2009- 9 students from the "Polyvalente" and 2 adult students from the community attended lessons on a regular basis.

2009-2010- 29 students signed-up for the lessons and about 15 attended on a regular basis. The other 14 students (and one teacher) attended at least 2 lessons and stopped participating for a variety of different reasons.

The level of student interest and participation in the guitar lessons indicate that the classes answer a real need. During a focus group, students strongly underlined the importance of having artistic activities at school. Students said that they particularly enjoyed the guitar lessons and would like them to continue. However, they also said

that they would enjoy different kinds of artistic activities (e.g., various musical instruments, drama, improvisation).

From student comments, it is clear that students would like more artistic activities in their lives, reflecting that these opportunities are generally in short supply in the region. Below are quotations from students on their views about art and music lessons at school.

- “We used to have drama which was amazing...”
- “It would be so nice to have music classes...”
- “We should have guitar or music classes during class hours...”
- “It’s great to have guitar/singing sessions; many schools don’t even have that...”

During the focus group discussions, students expressed that guitar lessons and other artistic classes may help prevent students from engaging in negative behaviours and enhance their learning and development. In the quotations below, students describe how artistic classes allow youth to fill their leisure time with positive and constructive activities.

- “I like the guitar classes; we have nothing else to do, it gives us a hobby...”
- “As a hobby, the lessons keep you occupied...”
- “Guitar lessons are good because they keep people out of trouble, like drugs...”
- “It gives people something to do...”
- “It gets people off the computers...”

#### **Lessons Learned**

- Need to address the relatively short amount of time for lessons at lunch (30 minutes)
- Need to address transportation issues to facilitate afterschool activities
- There is a continued need/want for diverse extra-curricular activities
- Students are willing to commit to volunteer duties in exchange for lessons

## Youth Fusion Program at James Lyng CLC

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 55 \**

### Youth Fusion Program

After the CLC initiative launch in December 2006, intensive preparation for creating a framework and action plan began at James Lyng High School. A Town Hall meeting united representatives from all corners of the community including a moderator from Concordia University. This group conceived a set of common objectives, which have informed all subsequent CLC programs including the Youth Fusion Program. They are

- To provide appropriate supervised activities for youth outside school hours
- To advance healthy lifestyle choices
- To improve employability prospects for the community.

Youth Fusions is a James Lyng CLC partner that connects university students with youth from high schools that can be categorized as at-risk of dropping out of school. Youth Fusions have facilitated activities throughout the year including an environmental club, video game programming, choir, newspaper and a skateboarding/BMX club.

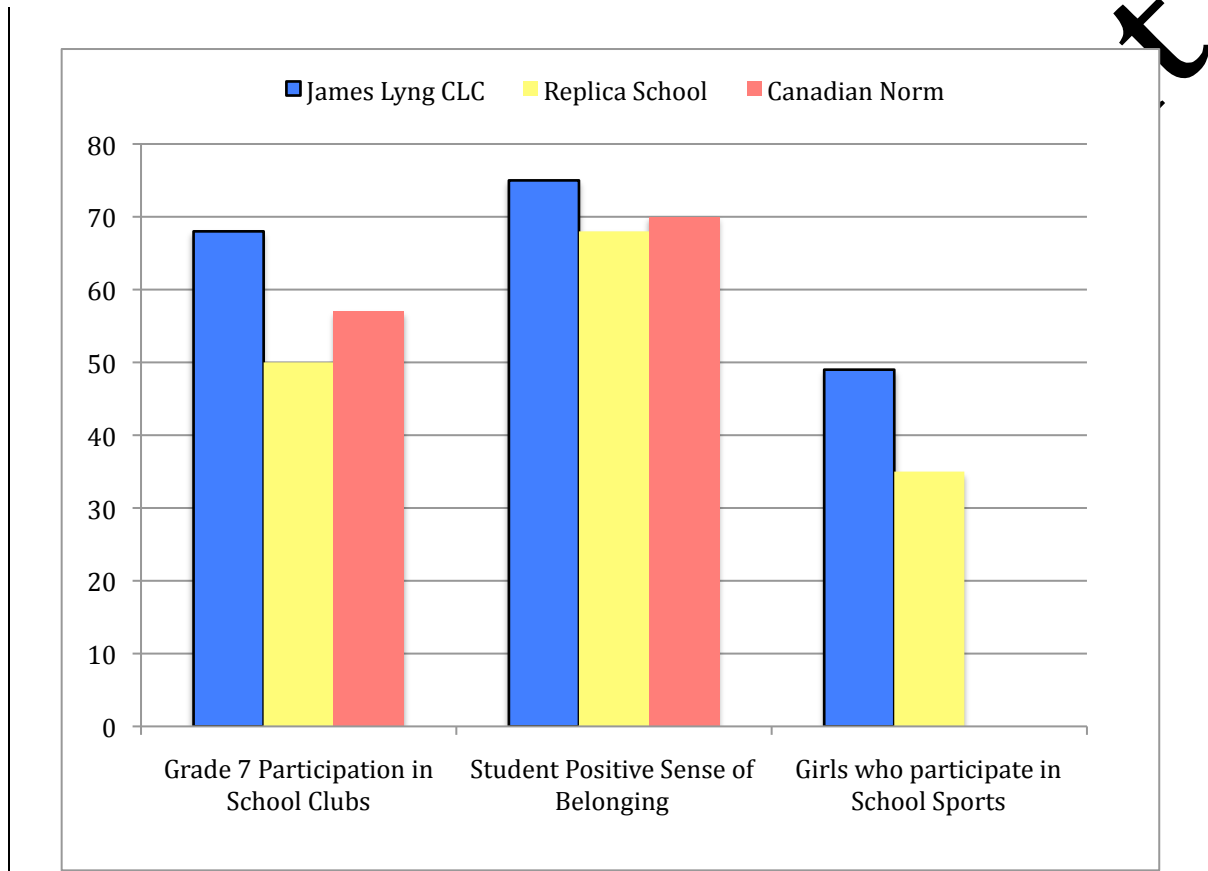
### Results

Completion of the Tell Them From Me (TTFM) on-line student survey has provided valuable data to the CLC in its examination of the impact of after school activities. It is noted with satisfaction that 68% of grade 7 youth participate in clubs (twice the expected proportion based on a replica school). Overall, girls participate more in clubs (58%) compared to boys (42%) but both outperform the Canadian norm as well as the replica school. Participation in school sports too is high with 70% of boys and close to half the girls engaging in these healthy supervised activities, well above what might be expected from this at-risk population. It is then not surprising that in the targeted characteristic of "positive sense of belonging" youth at James Lyng show strength. Three quarters of James Lyng students fall into this positive category compared to 68% in the replica school. More important is the high rate of positive sense of belonging found among males because they generally have more difficulties in school according to the last survey it was 82%. Of interest is the high sense of attachment to the school expressed even among youth repeating grades once (71%) or twice (70%).

The results from further questionnaires show that students in the Youth Fusion programs had high praise for the variety of the activities. They found the activities "interesting" (the average score was 3.6 on a scale of 4); most believed that these activities contributed to a better school life (3.7/4) and students felt "proud of their participation" (3.5/4).

The CLC after school program provided by Youth Fusions affords students in James Lyng with meaningful opportunities to engage in positive extra-curricular activities, stay in a safe environment and develop meaningful relationships with university student mentors.

*“They (Youth Fusions mentors) have helped me on a personal level and they inspired me to never give up. They inspired me to work hard and succeed.”*



A total of 40 questionnaires were completed by students participating in Youth Fusions programs. The results show that students had high praise for the variety of the activities. They found the activities “interesting” (the average score was 3.6 on a scale of 4); most believed that these activities contributed to a better school life (3.7/4) and students felt “proud of their participation” (3.5/4).

The table below summarizes responses that students gave to two open-ended questions in the survey. Their feedback shows that students have generally been very satisfied with the activities and would like them to be maintained. As shown below, several students remark that participation in these activities has enhanced their motivation to attend to school, increased their participation in school, promoted their self-confidence and their talents and skills in the arts and sports. One student even said that participating in the Green Team “helped my marks a little.” Another said that “they (the Youth Fusions Coordinators) inspired me to work hard and to succeed.” It is also important to note that

one student gave a negative report of his/her participation in the newspaper, and described it as involving “too much stress.” This particular finding would be important to examine further and to determine how the activity can be improved.

### Qualitative responses from student questionnaires on Youth Fusions

Program evaluated	What are the greatest and most positive impacts of Youth Fusions activities ...?	
	On yourself	On school life
Green Team	Not sure	Helped my marks a little
Green Team	How to nurture youth and preserve the environment	To care more for the school and its surroundings
Green Team	Made me love the earth and nature	Worked with others
Green Team	Made me love the earth	Funnier
Leadership, Green Team and sports	Leadership, people get to stop bullying, and also the activities	Everything was good and bad sometimes.
Choir, basketball, hairdressing and law club	Well, basketball it made me better	It makes me have stuff to do
Newspaper	None, except tons of stress	None, except tons of stress and depression
Newspaper	It helped me to improve how to write properly	I can get more students.
Newspaper	It is “stuff” to do	Fun
Newspaper	Being able to publish my artwork and writing	I cannot think of anything at the moment.
Newspaper	Letting people see my comics and see what they are like	Not really anything.
Hairdressing, choir	Changed my outlook on things	Really gave a school spirit.
Choir, newspaper	They (Youth Fusions mentors) helped me on a personal level and they inspired me to never give up.	They inspired me to work hard and succeed.
Choir	Something to do after school, got to get out of class	Explore my talents.
Choir	Perseverance and practice makes perfect!	Uplifted the school spirit.
Sports	Making me have fun	Helping me pass
Sports	I like doing activities	It's kind of fun
Sports	They helped me build my self-confidence	Made me look forward to school.
Sports	No answer	They helped everyone in different ways.
Sports and Green Team	It got me more involved in stuff	It got me ready for going to school, knowing that I had something fun.
Video game club	It was fun to do	Make me want to stay after school.
Video game club	Made me more active at school	People hang out together.

## Youth Programs at St Paul's River CLC

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 64 \**

### Youth Programs

The youth programs evaluated at the St. Paul's CLC include the Youth Centre, which hosts various activities the Mad Scientist Club, Youth Local Action Group, Cooking Classes, library, Daycare 4 -12 years old, and more. In addition, the evaluation examined the implementation of the sports and artistic activities offered.

Overall, data collected show that the youth programs combined are having a considerable impact on students. Participation in the activities has been high and consistent, and students, parents and teachers report positive gains in student well-being. To assess and monitor the health of youth, the school implemented the Voices and Choices and Tell Them From Me online surveys. The results for some health and well-being indicators are fairly striking. For example, the data show that since the CLC programs were put in place drinking and intoxication decreased from 81.6% down to 30%, marijuana use decreased from 40.8% to 8%, smoking went from 18.6% to 10% and sexual activity decreased from 63.3% to 34.6 %. There was also a significant increase of 20% in the level of student participation in sport related activities.

### Results: Youth Centre

Records show that in the past year, the Youth Centre has had one hundred and five (105) youth participating out of a possible one hundred twenty (120) students. The fifteen (15) students that are not attending are students from the Municipality of Blanc Sablon and the community of Old Fort Bay who lack the transportation to and from the centre. There are sixty to seventy (60-70) youth consistently participating on a regular weekly basis according to attendance sheets.

Through telephone interviews with parents it was established that they were extremely satisfied with the Youth Centre activities and programs. They love the staff at the Youth Centre and feel that they are excellent role models for the youth. They were unhappy that the CLC was closing for the summer months and strongly recommended that the Youth Centre programs be maintained year-round. There were no complaints raised about the fees being charged for CLC activities and the parents felt they were reasonable. A very small amount of parents (5%) did request that the Youth Centre close earlier in the evening or open fewer days a week because they were having problems getting their children to spend time at home instead of the centre.

Through surveys with youth it was established that they would like an increase in variety of programs offered but were very satisfied overall with the services currently being offered. They appreciated the CLC staff and felt they were one of the assets of the CLC. Community organizations and members also stated that they saw a difference when the CLC was closed for the summer months. They cited an increase in vandalism and underage drinking with youth when the CLC closed. They also recommended that the CLC not close during the summer months.

Teachers felt there was a huge improvement in student behavior and success since the Youth Centre programming was in place and cited the fact that it was good that the CLC had tied the school code of conduct with the youth centre (i.e., if students don't complete homework at school or have multiple detentions they are not allowed to attend activities at Youth Centre until their behavior improves). They did recommend that the Youth Centre hold more family nights so parents could spend more time with their children.

### **Results: Sports and Recreation**

There are currently five (5) sporting teams formed at St. Paul's High School (i.e., Volleyball, hockey, badminton, track and field and cross-country). The students have been attending approximately ten to twelve (10-12) sporting and recreation events a year. Approximately 80% of students are participating in organized sports.

Youth were very satisfied with the sports program being offered but would like an increase in the variety. They expressed great sense of school pride at sporting events and stated that students from other schools told them they were very lucky to have all the facilities and equipment available to them. However, they also expressed the need for more equipment, as some were damaged or old and essential for training.

Teachers remarked that the students who participate in sports or school teams make extra effort to keep school assignments up to date. Students were also motivated to be successful in class so that they could stay in the extra curricular sports program. Teacher did recommend that a calendar be produced with all sporting events so that they would know when the students would be missing because of travel to events.

Parents were extremely satisfied with the improvements to the sports programming and felt that their children were more motivated to do well in school and enjoyed coming to St. Paul's School. They recommended that a calendar be prepared so that they could have more warning of when the big sporting events were being held and also wanted to be able to purchase the school sport clothing for themselves.

### **Results: Music and Theatre**

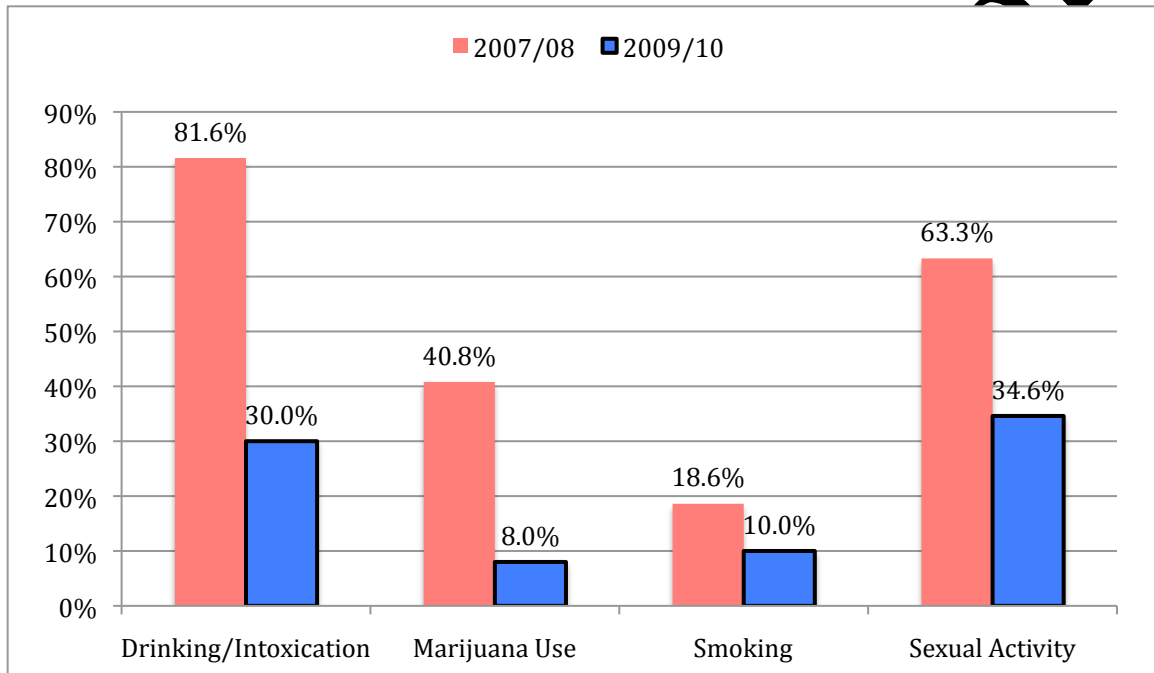
There are currently twenty (20) students participating in the music and theatre program. Six to ten (6-10) of these youth participate on a regular weekly basis. The evaluation showed that youth were satisfied with the music program being offered but would like an instructor available to teach them. They expressed great sense of school pride at music and theatre events and stated that students from other schools told them they were very lucky to have all the equipment available to them. However, they also expressed the need for more musical instruments such as a piano, violin, etc.

Teachers remarked in interviews that the students who participate in music programs make extra effort to keep school assignments up to date as they lose privileges to the music centre. Students were also motivated to be successful in class so that they could stay in the theater program. Teachers did recommend that efforts be made to encourage new students to use the facilities as it tended to be the same students using the facilities all the time. Parents were satisfied with the music programming and felt that their

children were more motivated to do well in school and enjoyed coming to St. Paul's School.

Teachers and parents are satisfied with the after school programs and have commented that students participating have continually experienced success in school and fulfilled their responsibilities. The after school programs are fulfilling a community need and will continue to make adjustments to become a major pillar of youth development in the community.

Together, the quantitative and qualitative data clearly show that students are leading healthier lifestyles as result of the creation of the CLC and its many programs.



Health indication results taken from student responses to 'Voices and Choices' and 'Tell Them From Me' surveys.

WORK

## International Cooking Class at Riverview CLC

\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 61 \*

### International Cooking Class

The project evaluated is entitled *Around the World in Eight Weeks*. It is a cooking class that teaches participants how to cook cuisine from around the world. The format of this class is similar to a collective kitchen project. The classes are open to the public and cater to a multi-generational clientele. The idea is to introduce people to different kinds of foods and eating habits that are conducive to a healthy diet, and supply them with the knowledge and skills to continue cooking and eating healthy in the future. The long-term goal is to influence a healthier culture of eating habits to a small population in Verdun.

The idea for the project was conceived by the CLC Steering Committee, while the coordination of the project was carried out by the CLC coordinator. In order to deliver the program, a partnership was built with the Réseau d'Entraide de Verdun (REVE), who provided a collective kitchens chef/coordinator to teach the classes. An existing partnership with the CSSS Sud-Ouest allowed for a registered nutritionist from the clinic to deliver a nutrition workshop during the first class.

### Results

Originally intended to serve up to 15 people, the project was modified to allow for the participation of up to 35 participants. This adjustment was improvised in the week or two leading up to the project start-up and entailed a budget readjustment that would allow for the purchase of much needed equipment to meet the needs of a larger class. The end result was a successful functioning partnership between the CLC, the CSSS and REVE. In fact the partnership was so successful that it has since been further developed. The project will continue next year and Riverview will physically house offshoot collective kitchen projects of REVE.

The overall attendance of the 30 registered participations was high. The post-project survey asked participants how many classes they attended. Of those surveyed people attended an average of 87% of the courses, or 7 out of 8, not including the potluck celebration on the ninth week. Further evidence of participation included the quantity and types of meals that were produced during the classes and enjoyed by families. Each week different dishes were created and the quality of food produced was good. Participants also produced a large quantity of food – enough so that each participant or family could take meals with them at the end of the class.

The evaluation shows that the majority of participants, or 60%, felt that the program met their expectations. Another 20% said it “somewhat” met their expectations, and 20% said the course did not meet their expectations. The following list reflects the things that participants indicated they liked most about the class (in order of the popularity of the responses):

- Cooking
- Good food and a diversity of dishes
- Socializing and meeting new people
- Introduced people to new foods
- Friendly and cooperative atmosphere
- Good information from the nutritionist

Participants acquired a general knowledge of cooking, from learning how to read food labels and measure ingredients, to how to substitute hard-to-find or expensive ingredients and mix a variety of spices to acquire a particular taste. They also learned how to save money by making things from scratch instead of buying them made, such as curry paste. Moreover, participants were able to demonstrate the knowledge they had acquired by cooking meals onsite and at home. In terms of numbers, the following statistics were taken from the post-project survey.

- 47% of participants reported they learned a “great deal”
- 47% learned “some” new skills

Of those surveyed, 80% said that the classes offered a great opportunity for families to spend quality time together. The following participant testimonies mirror this finding:

*“We got to cook together which made us talk more to one another. I will really remember these moments.”*

*“It was great for my children and I to spend quality time together.”*

*“It was a great intergenerational project.”*

### **Conclusions**

Based on the evaluation criteria outlined, the international cooking class was a success. The three main goals of the project – promoting healthy eating on a budget, increasing the amount of quality time spent together by families, and building community partnerships – were met. The evidence further demonstrates that families acquired knowledge about nutrition and cooking skills that are transferable to the home. Furthermore, families were able to eat healthy meals on a tight budget and take food home with them. Not only did the project strengthen families in this sense; it made the school a site for family engagement and community-building. Community building occurred on several levels – between Verdun citizens, between Verdun citizens and organizations in their community, and between local community organizations through networking, resource sharing and partnerships.

Participants were satisfied with the program and able to articulate the positive impacts that the course had on them and their families. Of the impacts identified, spending quality time together as a family was one of the most noteworthy, with 85% of participants reporting more quality time spent together. The project funds were expended and REVE,

the partner organization, reported satisfaction with the project and intends to continue similar activities in the next school year. Overall, the project delivered a valuable service to the community and its continued implementation is recommended.



# Working Document

## 2.3 Academic Support Programs

Homework Program at Mecatina CLC

Homework Program at Mountainview CLC

Homework Program at Riverdale CLC

In comparison to other types of programs, evaluations of **homework assistance programs and tutoring** have not been as numerous. Indeed, it has been said that these programs are often less popular with students because they are perceived as an extension of the school day. As a result, it has often been recommended that academic support and remedial programs use non-academic activities, like arts and music, to develop youths' skills and learning. In spite of the challenges, homework assistance programs may still serve as a necessary and beneficial option for students who are struggling with their academic studies, as the CLC evaluations in this report show. Evaluations of homework help programs have shown that some of their strongest effects have been in improving students' self-confidence, feelings of competence, study skills, and bonding to school (Cosden, Morrison, Gutierrez, and Brown, 2004). Researchers have had more difficulty identifying significant impacts of homework assistance on academic performance, for reasons that remain unknown. However, some evaluations have shown that these programs can “prevent” youth who are at risk of failure from falling further behind. In one study, it was found that students who attended a homework help program maintained the same level of academic performance, in comparison to a “control group” which demonstrated a decline in grades over the same period (Cosden et al., 2004). The particular value of homework assistance programs is that they provide students with a structure and adult supervision to complete their homework after-school, which may be especially valuable for students whose families cannot help them and who need that extra support (Cosden et al., 2004).

### Mecatina Homework Program

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 56 \**

#### Homework Program

The extended learning program consisted of a homework centre service held each afternoon from Monday to Friday from 3:00-4:00 pm for secondary, and 2-3 times a week for elementary. On average, 11 out of 58 students were participating on any given day.

## Results

It was noted by the homework supervisors that 53% of students were able to complete their homework assignments for the following day, while others were working on long-term projects. The supervisors also noted that students were primarily working on Math and French.

*[the homework centre] “helps me get my work done, especially Math”.*

*”it helped my child a few times with homework where I couldn’t help her. It was really helpful.”*

*“overall, it helps maintain the average of the average students; however, it is a significant help for students who might not have assistance available at home to get their homework completed. In these cases, the homework center plays a significant role in improving grades and helping students succeed. However, a remedial math class for students at risk would be beneficial as well.”*

Working Document

## Mountainview Homework Program

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 58 \**

### Homework Program

In 2008-9, the homework support program was initiated by the CLC to meet an expressed need for after-school homework support for students, especially those experiencing academic difficulties. In 2009-10, the program was reorganized to better serve the needs of students and to set up a more sustainable administrative structure. A remedial homework support program was created with groups formed from students who teachers had identified as needing intervention in language arts or mathematics.

Initially, a Mountainview teacher offered to supervise groups of students after school as they completed their homework. The program was incorporated into the after-school activities program offered to all students. Funding for the program was provided by the MELS homework assistance grant.

The teacher who had originally overseen the entire program took over working with two groups of cycle 2 students who needed remedial math support and additional teachers were hired to provide support to students in English and French. A lunch monitor was hired to supervise the program. The group included students from grades 1 to 6 and was designed to provide them with a quiet environment to complete their homework during the first hour after school with someone to maintain order and answer questions as needed. The program took place in the library and students without homework were directed to read if not completing homework.

### Results

The result that was most frequently observed by teachers of students participating in the homework support, particularly the remedial program, was increased self-esteem. A number of teachers reported that their students were more confident after participating in the program and that the change affected their overall behaviour and attitude towards learning.

All families in the school were sent a homework program survey. Thirty-nine responses were returned, of which 25 students had not participated in the program, and 14 students were enrolled. More than two-thirds of families who did not enroll their children did not have a perceived need for services. Lack of after-school transportation was also seen as a barrier and one that presents a significant challenge for any after-school programming.

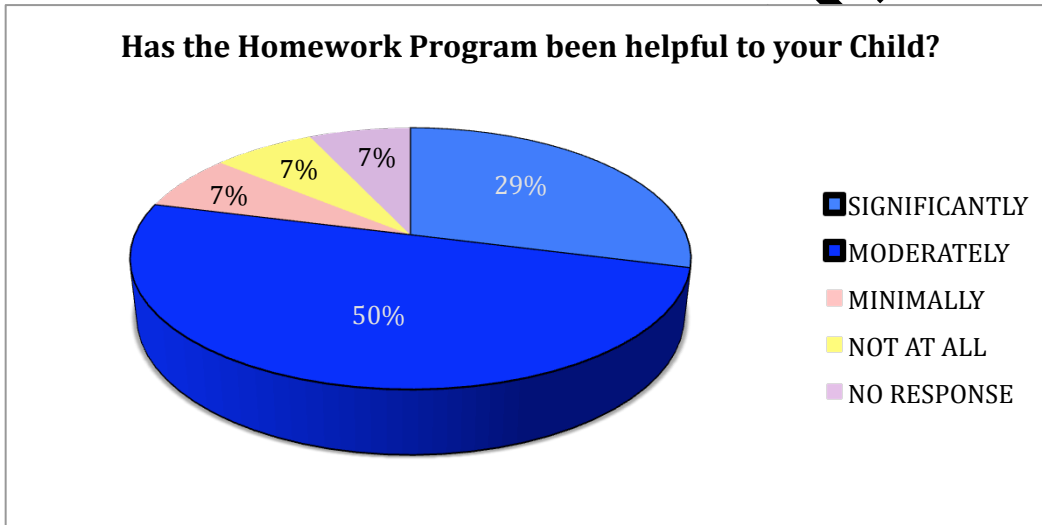
For those that did participate in the program, there was a high level of student attendance and parental support for re-enrollment, which indicates that the program is meeting the

expressed need of parents for homework support. Parents felt the timing, duration, and number of sessions was satisfactory, that the program set-up was perceived as good to excellent and that it had been moderately to significantly helpful for their child.

Of the teachers surveyed, all felt that the homework completion and remedial programs were needed and should continue to be offered in future. They felt the program has had some measurable impact on the skills and confidence of the students, many demonstrating improvements in key areas, including study skills.

In the long-term, it is hoped that reducing stress on families and enabling them to enjoy more free time together in the evenings would have an impact on the student's and family's overall well-being.

*"I saw that one of my students in grade one who received services had a much more positive attitude and more confidence in herself."*



Work

ment

## Riverdale Homework Program

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 60 \**

### Homework Program

With the aim of providing academic programs aimed at student engagement and success, and in partnership with the West Island Black Community Association, Riverdale CLC developed an after-school homework program designed to help students increase their academic performance, classroom participation and assignment completion. An after-school homework program meets a demonstrable need in the community and the CLC facilitated the implementation of the program.

Students participate in an after-school homework program and get the help needed with their homework assignments. Throughout the year there is evidence that students realize the importance of getting their homework done on time and that eventually this would all result in an increase in their academic success.

The program only started in January as the Community partner had some difficulty finding a coordinator to run it after school. This was one of the reasons given for low student participation. Afterschool transportation was also a problem.

### Results

The program was evaluated using focus groups, attendance and grades. The attendance data show that most students who visit the homework program attend irregularly; many students show up once and never return. The reasons for this unclear, but it may be safe to assume that students generally do not see an incentive to participate unless they are having real difficulties in class, or a teacher and/or parent is urging them to attend. Students in the focus group said they all attended the homework program in order to obtain specific help on a subject or classroom assignment.

The data on grades was difficult to analyze and did not reveal a clear pattern of improvement or decline. Some students showed increases in their grades, while others experienced a decrease in performance.

It is apparent that the students who participated in the homework program realized the value of getting help with their homework and having it completed on time. Attending the homework program has motivated students to do their homework and they start to see improvement and positive results in their classes which all points towards the direction of their overall academic success.

There is a clear indication from the responses that the homework program is a valuable and integral part of the Riverdale CLC; however, there is work that needs to be done in order to promote, advertise and change the perception of the program to have it operating at its full potential.

*"I took it as a benefit to finish my homework. There are people who can help. At home I have my dad and my brother, but they cannot really help."*

*"Stay after school, have fun, do your homework, and have free time at home."*

*"I would have failed French if I had not attended."*

*"Lots of students think that the homework program is only for students experiencing difficulties, perception still exist that because the program runs out of the WIBCA [West-Island Black Community Association] room it is only for black students."*

*"Program needs more volunteers that can help with a wider variety of subjects from the higher grades ... needs to be advertised more, bulletins are not being read in TAG."*

**Working Document**

## 2.4 Community Schools

Community School at Métis Beach CLC

Community School at Netagamiou CLC

Community School at St Willibrord CLC

The evaluation literature on **community schools** has grown in recent years, as the approach gains increasing popularity in North America and Europe. Evaluations conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom have shown that successful community schools have led to significant improvements in student attendance, classroom participation, and academic performance (Cummins, Dyson, and Ruijs et al., 2009; Whalen, 2007; Krenichyn, Clark and Benitez, 2007). A longitudinal evaluation of Children's Aid Society community schools in New York city revealed that students developed more positive attitudes towards school and improved their scores on reading and math (Clark and Grimaldi, 2005). Research on community schools has also shown that the process of creating partnerships between schools and external agencies takes time and can be challenging (Crowson and Boyd, 1993). Due to this, it may take longer for significant changes to emerge in the student population.

Evaluations of community schools are most instructive when they examine both the processes of implementation and their short and long-term effects. As evaluations in this report show, CLCs involve fundamental changes to the school and are much busier and more involved in students' lives than the typical primary and secondary school. Success must also be measured by factors such as the number of new opportunities created for students to learn and grow during and after-school, the removal of barriers to essential services, and more extensive cooperation between the school, parents and community agencies.

### Métis Beach Community Learning Centre

*\*For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 57 \**

The implementation of a CLC created a space to develop projects and procedures that seek to support the whole child and the community the children live in. The effect of these changes has seen positive effects in key areas related to school success and health.

As part of the implementation of a Community Learning Centre within Metis Beach School, the coordinator and staff developed a multitude of activities and programs designed to increase student and staff motivation. The CLC focus on the development of school-community partnerships, student engagement and success and access to

educational opportunities and lifelong learning has had welcome effects on Metis Beach School.

## **Results**

Below are some highlights of results that are believed to flow from the implementation of the CLC initiative at MBS.

### **Attendance**

Attendance data shows a decrease in school absences at the same time the CLC initiative began. Quotations from school staff illustrate the dramatic nature of the changes:

*“Holy Cow! It is great to see that the students are motivated to come to school.”  
(Attendant for students, Metis Beach)*

*“I was surprised and impressed with the attendance record trend.” (principal).*

### **Motivation**

Below are selected results from the “Tell Them From Me” which has been conducted at least once a year since 2006. Though some data are lost when the results are broken by sex, the responses from females and the mean result for both groups show that students have gained an increasing sense of belonging to school over the last 2-3 years.

Clear improvements have also occurred in students' aspirations for the future, in their sense of teacher expectations (possibly a direct response to changes in the culture of the school), and their perceptions of the quality of classroom lessons.

### **Academic Competencies**

**At the elementary level**, improvements have been shown in most academic areas including mathematics and Developmental Reading Assessment results (DRA).

*\*DRA is the tested method for assessing, analyzing and documenting primary students' development as readers from kindergarten through elementary cycle 3 year 2.*

**The High school** offers all MELS required courses, and does this by offering advanced mathematics and science through the LEARN Distance Education Portal, which has produced a 100% success rate. In combination with the support provided by the CLC in the last 3 years we saw an improvement in secondary 1, 2 and 3 which is reflected by successful completion of courses

In 2007-2008, Fifty percent of our secondary 3 students passed all courses. Twenty percent of cycle one students have failed at least one subject.

In 2009-2010, in secondary 4, the one student in that grade is succeeding in all courses. In secondary 3, 75% of the students are passing all courses. Furthermore, in secondary 1 and 2, 87% of the students are passing all their courses.

### **Health**

Through extensive partnerships with the CSSS, Maison des Familles, Sûreté du Québec, Québec en Forme, Centre de Jeunesse, and other organizations, the CLC has made some progress in improving students' access to health services and their health behaviour and well-being. In spite of this, significant progress still needs to be made. Programs such as “Wellness in School,” New Approaches New Solutions (NANS), and a community sports program appear to be having a positive impact on student outcomes.

### **Lessons Learned**

Collection of hard data is important in seeing effects of new programs and projects.

### **Analysis of Results**

Since the CLC initiative was implemented at Metis Beach School, remarkable and steady improvements have been shown in various indicators of student's well-being and success in school, as the figures on the previous pages have shown. While it may be difficult to put all this success down to the CLC, its impact on the approach the school administration, staff, parents and community has taken, is obvious in all decisions and policies. Future monitoring of these results should continue. This will help provide a better sense of the role that the CLC has played in changing the lives of students.

Working Document

## Netagamiou CLC: Development of School-Community Partnerships

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 59 \**

The Netagamiou CLC has developed a dynamic Partnership Network from the beginning that focused on bringing a wide range of partners together for the support and mutual benefit of our school, community, and each other. Partners are organizations (government, local, regional, provincial, etc.) as well as individuals (students volunteers, parents, etc.)

The Netagamiou CLC Partnership Network has a revolving door that's always open. The level of engagement of each partner varies according to many things, including the partner's capacity, the fit of an initiative with the partner's mandate, the benefits for the partner, as well as the needs of the school/community.

Improved planning, coordination, and management of available resources has been achieved by partners working together to improve coordination of service delivery and to maximize the management of available resources in order to better respond to needs of school/community.

### **Results**

A significant increase (352%) of community involvement in school (and community) has been found through the data analysis. More partnerships are being developed on an ongoing basis including one between Concordia University School of Extended Learning, the Lower North Shore, the Quebec CLC Network, and the Commission scolaire du Littoral Community Learning Centre network and schools.

### **Examples**

**Eau-Naturelle Discovery Camp** is a 25-year old summer camp, which the Netagamiou CLC helped reorganize in 2007 with partners such as the Chevery Municipal Local Committee, Chevery Sports Committee, the Municipalité de la Côte Nord du Golfe Saint Laurent, the Quebec Natural Foundation and the Coasters Association with an emphasis on science, nature, culture and wellbeing, following feedback from students and parents and in consultation with Netagamiou School teachers.

**Netagamiou Municipal/School Library** is another excellent example of the benefits of improved management of available resources through increased coordination and by partners working together. After more than two years of research, development and planning, the Netagamiou Municipal/School Library was inaugurated and a full time Library and Cultural Activities Animator started working in January 2010. All grades from Pre Kindergarten to Secondary 5 (ages 4-17) can visit the library weekly with their teachers to review and borrow books. An Author "wish list has been started by the librarian in an effort to ensure that, when funds are available, books that interest the youth are bought for the library. The library visits have had a positive impact on student library visits outside of class. More students are visiting the library during public evening hours, reading in the library and borrowing more books, magazines, etc. as evidenced by the following data:

**Summary of library loans from 2009 and 2010**

<b>Year 2009</b>	<b>5 ½ months of 2010</b>	<b>Results</b>
Adult books = 96	Adult books = 284	295% increase
Youth books = 323	Youth books = 382	18% increase
Magazines = 26	Magazines = 87	232% increase
VCR movies =18	VCR movies = 100	450% increase

Anecdotal reports from parents and teachers and data from library borrowing records indicate an increased interest and engagement in reading among students and adults. This has been confirmed by results of the TTFM student online self-reported survey. Leisure reading time among students has doubled since the first TTFM student surveys, from 10 minutes per day to 20 minutes per day, and although this remains below the level of replica schools, it is a significant improvement.

**The Chevery News newspaper** was established through the Netagamiou CLC in an effort to improve this situation, by providing a forum for Netagamiou CLC partners to share information of interest to the Netagamiou CLC community. This quickly expanded to include information about and from other communities on the Lower North Shore and developed an email list serving more than 400 members from the Lower North Shore, expatriates as far away as Mexico, Mississippi and Alberta as well as others interested in the Lower North Shore

**Conclusion**

The Netagamiou CLC has established a strong, supportive, and diverse CLC Partnership Network, from which members serve on the partnership table as well as a number of program and project based CLC committees. The Netagamiou CLC partnership network has worked collaboratively to develop a dynamic and flexible CLC operational framework. This has been accomplished through partnership table and committee meetings, as well as by informal exchanges and networking between partner organizations.

Partners have been asked repeatedly over the three years, during case study interviews, through surveys, and one on one conversations about their level of satisfaction with the degree of communication. To date stakeholders have responded affirmatively, and have reported that their requests for more information have always been addressed when needed. Sixty three percent (63%) of parents who responded to a CLC survey reported that they feel the CLC has resulted in increased English services to the community.

*“When I think CLC, I think **link**... between all those people maybe, gathering them all in one place... having one place that’s common to all. I think that’s one thing people don’t really understand... this could be the place... where people feel comfortable to go, where everyone feels equal”. (Member of the Chevery Community)*

## St. Willibrord Community Learning Centre

*\* For a Snapshot of this CLC's context, refer to page 65 \**

Over the last four years the St. Willibrord School Community Learning Centre has become an excellent tool in helping maintain and enhance the survival and growth of the Anglophone community in the Chateauguay region. As of June 2010, we have reached a point where the families we serve are aware we exist, understand what our mandate is and are using our programs and facilities to improve their quality of life

While the St. Willibrord CLC has grown every year to service more and more families, it has also partnered with established and new community organizations, businesses, governmental departments and individuals in an effort to inform citizens of the services which are at their disposal. By having made these crucial partnerships, different logistical models have been created in terms of the manner in which services are provided. Whether it be the CLC directly running an entire project (taking registration, paying employees) to having a partner run the entire project and simply utilizing our facilities or creating a shared-run model, whereas the partners involved find a manner to share all the logistical issues in providing a service.

Our CLC has a focus to open a variety of programs to the community at large and not just solely to the St. Will population. We target primarily the four other schools in our board in the greater Chateauguay region: three elementary schools (Harmony, Centennial Park, Mary Gardner) and also our regional high school Howard S. Billings.

One of our major successes has been to sensitize the “in building staff” (whether it be teachers, custodians, support staff and the “board wide staff” (directors of departments, other school staff, union delegates) as to what we are doing but more importantly why we are doing it. By understanding “why”, employees and parents are more inclined to support projects and ideas that work (and even those that fail). And of course the “why” is to help the survival of the minority Anglophone community within the province of Quebec.

### Results

A common theme that emerged from the interviews with partners was that the CLC was providing the English community with programs that brought people together and where people were connecting in ways not seen before.

While offering a wide variety of programs to the community, 90.9% of respondents indicated that their needs were being met with programs offered at the CLC. Further compliments related to the affordable cost, a safe place for social interaction, and learning continuity through literacy camps in the summer.

More than half of students surveyed indicate that they have increased their creative and technical skills ranging from art and music to computer technology. Just under half recognize opportunities to develop leadership and improve other such skills. 60% of students surveyed also feel challenged by what they are learning. One area for improvement is a sense of disruptive behavior recognized by 47% of participants surveyed.

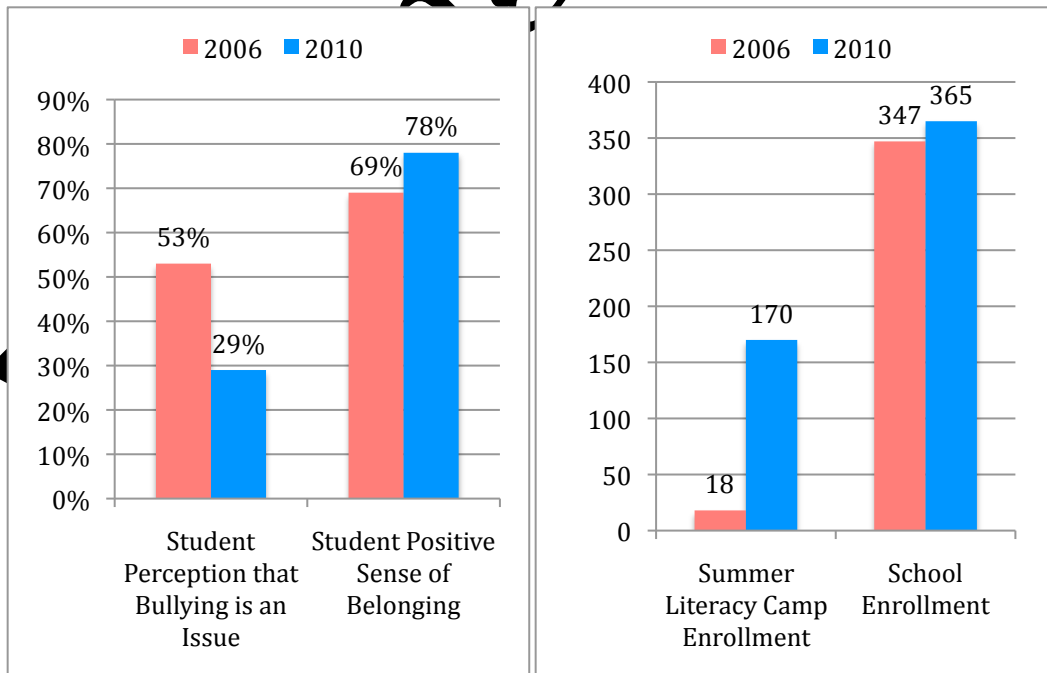
77% of teachers surveyed recorded a positive impact from CLC programs that carried over into their other classrooms subjects. Teachers especially noticed improvement in the areas of fitness, creativity, making friends, and leadership.

To conclude, enrollment at St Willibrord has increased since adopting the CLC philosophy. The student sense of belonging has improved by 9%, the perception that bullying is an issue has dropped by 24%, and the Summer Literacy Camp enrollment has jumped from 18 to 150 with a waiting list needed to accommodate 20 more students wanting to participate. The greatest finding has been the improvement in student reading. While tracking the same group of cycle one readers over two years, the rate of students reading at grade level soared from 20% to 90%.

*“My daughter was able to continue with a learning environment throughout the summer thanks to the Literacy Day Camp and is now able to pursue some of her creative interests at an affordable cost to me”*

*“Adults are learning how to learn from one another and network”.*

*“[Giving people a chance for] learning from experts that would otherwise be unaffordable”.*



### 3. Conclusions

There are many insights and conclusions that may be drawn from the evaluations as a whole. They highlight which programs seem to be working, and which ones could be improved. Most of the programs seem to have reached their objectives, and the challenge for some remains of staying attentive to the needs of participants, and creating more opportunities and incentives for students to participate. The hallmark of many of the programs implemented by CLCs is that they were chosen in response to the identified or documented needs of students (e.g., low literacy levels, limited access to accessible after-school activities, poor school performance). Moreover, CLCs often chose programs that have been proven effective in other settings and are supported by research, such as the Reading Buddy program and Mother Goose. Based on the response to programs, it can safely be said that CLC programs are responding to the needs of students and providing more opportunities for them to learn, grow and succeed.

The evaluations also provide evidence of the commitment to quality and responsiveness that CLC staff has demonstrated in determining which programs to implement and how. As indicated, programs have been met with a high level of satisfaction on the part of students, parents, and teachers. In some cases, what remains to be determined is how to ensure that these programs continue to be effective, responsive and sustainable. Many programs are run on the volunteer base of CLCs and receive limited funding. In an age of declining funds for voluntary programs, it remains unclear how well CLC programs will survive over the years. One hopes that the ingenuity demonstrated by CLCs and their partners, and the growing popularity of the programs they have implemented, will serve them well in the future.

Finally, the evaluations in this report, which were largely lead and implemented by CLC Coordinators and their colleagues on a limited budget, provide concrete examples of how schools and CLCs can conduct their own evaluations. With a little training, persistence and creativity, it is possible for individuals with little or no experience in evaluation to engage in some form of systemic evaluation. Everyday, professionals ask themselves questions that involve judgements about the quality and effectiveness of programs, for example: “are students attending”, “if not, why not?” “Are students satisfied with the services we’re providing?” “How can we support them even more effectively in succeeding in school?” These are all questions that can form part of a more systematic attempt to gather and assess data about the processes of implementation and their results. Many tools and guides are now available online for those interested in developing the knowledge and expertise in program evaluation. As indicated earlier, each evaluation report of the CLC is available online and provides an instructive example of how one school has gone about evaluating the effects of programs on students.

This report is the fruit of a collective effort involving CLC Coordinators and members of the CLC “Provincial Resource Team.”

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## 5. Annex: Snapshot of Community Learning Centre

### Gaspé-Percé Community Learning Centre

This CLC incorporates three schools under one roof - Gaspé Elementary, Gaspé Polyvalente, and Belle Anse Elementary schools. Part of the Eastern Shores School Board, the CLC is located in the Gaspé region and has a unique heritage which traces its origins back to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Today, the English community is still sizeable minority in Gaspé yet fragmented in smaller pockets, which are scattered along considerable distances. One of the consequences of this fragmentation is the absence of a meeting ground for Anglophones to build community vitality and community consciousness. This is especially true for the Anglophone youth for whom the school is more or less the only place where they can meet up with their friends. The CLC has been working to create bridges between the scattered communities and between other community organizations working in the region.

The youth population is shrinking and seniors account for almost 35% of the total English speaking population. The decline in the English speaking community in the area is a major factor in the maintenance of an acceptable standard of education: it reduces the manoeuvrability of the school to deliver a wide variety of services. While all rural communities suffer from a lack of support services, and the Gaspé Coast is no exception, the situation is further complicated by the scarcity of support services for an isolated, rural and impoverished minority community.

**The vision** of the CLC is to create “a partnership of 3 schools that opens its doors during the day, beyond school hours and often on weekends and works with community organizations to offer activities in the school that are geared to students, parents and community members. The purpose is to promote student success, lifelong learning, and community vitality.”

**The CLC mission** is to promote “the well being of the English speaking community of Gaspé-Percé through a focus on life-long learning and inclusive collaboration of all linguistic and cultural partners.”

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## James Lyng High School Community Learning Centre

James Lyng serves the communities of Little Burgundy, St. Henri, Pointe Saint-Charles, Ville Émard Côte Saint-Paul, and lower NDG, in the southwest sector of Montreal. The area is characterized by widespread unemployment; poverty and social dysfunction. Underachievement and high school dropout are serious threats to the education of youth. Learning and behavioural difficulties are present in a large percentage of our students.

Poverty of suitable life experiences plays a role in the development of a culture of negativism. The school is the most consistent and supportive element in the lives of many of our students and parents, and accordingly a great responsibility to meet their needs follows.

Part of the English Montreal School Board, the James Lyng CLC was established in 2006. It is located in the economically depressed southwest part of Montreal and grew out of earlier MELS initiatives under *Agir Autrement Phase 1*. Under this program the school engaged in a number of practices which were tailored to meet the special educational needs of its community. The CLC project was seen as a way to advance and James Lyng's existing orientations into the Southwest Anglophone community.

A set of common objectives were developed and are part of all subsequent CLC programs. They are

- To provide appropriate supervised activities for youth outside school hours
- To advance healthy lifestyle choices
- To improve employability prospects for the community.

**The Mission** is that James Lyng Community Learning Center is a hub for developing life-long learning through empowerment. Its aim is to level the playing field to develop the community of southwest Montreal, generating experience locally and far afield. It is participatory in nature and its destiny is to collaboratively organize, mobilize, and develop opportunities for success among its students, their families, and the wider community

## Mecatina Community Learning Centre

The Mecatina Community Learning Center was established in January, 2007. It is situated in the community of La Tabatiere on the Lower North Shore, one of the larger communities in the region. The school dispenses pre-kindergarten through secondary 5 education, and also houses the Adult Education Centre. In this close-knit community the school becomes an extension of the family.

The school acts as the sole provider of educational services, as well both provider and partner of most sports, recreational and cultural activities within the community. In this capacity, the school offers all available services to this remote community, from adult education training programs to library services. It offers a variety of activities as well, from sports tournaments to cultural events.

The Mecatina CLC's **vision** is to encourage life-long learning by providing sustainable, safe and motivating opportunities in collaboration with contributing partners, thereby maintaining and improving quality of life within the community.

The Mecatina CLC's **mission** is to be a collaborative organization comprised of united partners working toward the development of sustainable opportunities that promote life-long learning.

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## **Métis Beach Community Learning**

### **Centre Description of the school, student population and local community**

Built in 1929, Metis Beach School is a small rural/coastal school and is situated on the southern banks of the St-Lawrence. It is 700 km East of Montreal and is the only English public school in the Lower St-Lawrence. Although it is in the town of Métis-sur-Mer, which has a small concentration of Anglophones, the region is predominantly French speaking. Very little, if any at all, services are offered in English. In 1995, an addition was built to accommodate the growing number of students. Our numbers have continued to slowly increase. 35 year ago, we taught up to grade 9. At 14 or 15 years old, our students had to go to Montreal, Quebec City or New Brunswick to complete their high school. Since 1976 we began teaching from elementary to secondary 5.

### **Mission**

Using the school as a hub, in collaboration with diverse partners sharing a common vision, our mission is to promote student success and foster life-long learning by actively participating in the development of educational services as well as enhancing community vitality through cultural, sports and recreational activities for students, their families and the communities they belong to.

### **Vision**

Metis Beach Community Learning Centre is highly respected and well known throughout the wider community, providing a wide variety of services to the Metis Beach School students and parents, as well as the English speaking community of the region.

Metis Beach Community Learning Centre staff members takes responsibility and are involved in the development of the Metis Beach School students and the vitality of the English community of the region, while at the same time are provided the training, support, resources and empowerment to do so. They work together in or as a team and share in the leadership of the Community Learning Centre, with an open relationship between the school staff, students, parents and the community, making all feel welcome as well as being involved in school and community events.

Metis Beach Community Learning Centre promotes parents and community members to take an active role in the Metis Beach School student's education by providing the support structure as needed. It is a place where everyone continually seek out improvement, innovation and growth.

## Mountainview Elementary School Community Learning Centre

The CLC development at Mountainview began in the fall of 2007, but has since seen a new principal as well three new coordinators since their start-up. Mountainview Elementary School, with the Riverside School Board, is located in Otterburn Park, on the east side of the Richelieu River, between the river and Mont St. Hilaire. Amongst the families at the school, 10% specify that English is their mother tongue. The majority of families are bilingual or French speaking at home, which results in French being spoken more than English in unstructured times amongst the students at home and at school. As is the case in most English schools, maintaining enrolment has required increasing the boundaries of the school over time, such that it now serves 27 different communities in the area. Attachment to the school and the community is therefore a significant challenge as the distance between school and home makes participation in after-school activities difficult for students who are transported by bus.

**The mission** of the Mountainview Community Learning Center, as determined by the partnership committee is to: *“promote lifelong learning, cultivate good citizenship values, foster student success, and enhance the well-being of all community members.”*

Together, the partners established the following common vision for the CLC:

*“We believe that Mountainview School Community Learning Center is:*

- 1. A place to welcome community members to share, pass on their knowledge and support each other in their diversity,*
- 2. An innovative center offering diverse and quality services, through outreach to the community and fostering partnerships with different organizations and individuals.”*

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## Netagamiou Community Learning Centre

Netagamiou School is located in the remote community of Chevery on the Lower North Shore of Quebec. The Netagamiou School/Community Learning Centre (CLC) is Chevery based, with links to other organizations through its partners. It serves a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-generational community of diverse individual and group stakeholders from local and extended communities.

The Netagamiou School/CLC serves students from the communities of Chevery, Kegons and Harrington Harbour, offering education in English and French at the preschool and primary levels, education in English at the secondary level, as well as Adult Education services through the Commission scolaire du Littoral offices located in the Netagamiou School. Students from the other communities live in residence during the school year and travel back and forth to their own communities during school breaks. The Netagamiou School enrollment in 2009-2010 was 50 students from Pre kindergarten to Secondary 5.

The Netagamiou School/CLC, part of the Commission scolaire du Littoral (CSL), has the ultimate goal to enable their school and community to develop the capacity to secure a successful future in the region. During the 2007 school/community consultations led by the CLC, it was proposed and agreed that “we must work together to support our youth and to ensure a strong, vibrant future for our community.”

**The CLC’s vision** statement is “supporting and promoting lifelong learning, growth, activity, services and exchanges that meet the diverse needs of students, the whole community and all partners involved.”

**The Netagamiou School/CLC mission is to:**

1. Equip students and adults with the support, knowledge and competencies required to be actively engaged citizens and to make healthy and balanced life choices for academic and personal success.
2. Support the expansion and development of infrastructures and services to meet social, cultural, and economic needs as well as the sustainable development of our community.

## Riverdale High School Community Learning Centre

Riverdale High School, with the Lester B. Pearson School Board, had approximately 1012 students in 2007 when they became a CLC, however have experienced a decline in their student population to fewer than 800 students. The Riverdale CLC provides services to the five suburban municipalities: Pierrefonds, Roxboro, Dollard des Ormeaux, Ste. Geneviève, and Ile Bizard. While English is the primary language of operation for most of the families, nearly twenty percent of students speak a language other than English in their homes. The parent community represents eighty-two different countries of origin and speaks twenty-eight different languages.

While this diversity is certainly something celebrated at Riverdale, they also recognize the particular challenges it poses. Beyond language, there are cultural bridges that often have to be traversed to promote understanding between staff, students and parents. Language barriers alone can impact significantly upon academic achievement and those same language barriers can prove to be a considerable obstacle for success when home support for students is necessary.

A large number of students come from the Cloverdale district of Pierrefonds, recognized by the Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal (CGTSM) as a significant "pocket of poverty". Additionally, there are a large number of Riverdale families which are headed by single parents and families which are headed by new arrivals to Canada working at the lower end of the wage scale. The community has challenges and concerns ranging from cultural and financial to literacy and health which are some of the areas that have been address through the Riverdale CLC. The CLC continues to work towards improving these areas and address new challenges as they arise, making it easier for families from the community that can benefit from CLC services.

**The vision** of the Riverdale CLC is to be a place where this ethnically rich community can come together and learn from and about each other and address areas of concern that will be beneficial to our students, the school and the community at large.

The steering committee of the Riverdale CLC, defined their mission as: "an organization fostering life-long learning by actively participating in sustainable socio-economic / cultural / linguistic development. In collaboration with community partners, we strive to provide quality educational services, sports and recreational activities, as well as arts and cultural activities responding to the diverse needs of the community."

## Riverview Elementary School Community Learning Centre

Riverview is a kindergarten to grade 6, early immersion inner city elementary school in Verdun, situated at the eastern edges of the Lester B. Pearson School Board. Serving an Anglophone population, it currently houses 240 students from Verdun and surrounding areas in the south west of Montreal.

Riverview receives additional funding from MELS (i.e. pockets of poverty) to 'level the playing field' and to be able to offer its students as many opportunities for success as possible. This additional support is fundamental; particularly in light of the percentage of 'at risk' students and the income level of our families. Riverview Elementary School has a total of 40 students or 16.5% of the school population who are coded at risk for learning or behavioural difficulties. Forty percent of Riverview students live in single parent families. Seventy percent live below the poverty line, forty eight percent of whom live on an annual income of under \$20,000 per year.

Verdun is a poor neighbourhood with a long cycle of poverty. Many of our students' parents and grandparents attended Riverview, making it a true community school. The population of Verdun is largely Francophone but has an established Anglophone community with a strong Irish heritage. While there is some cultural diversity the community is fairly homogenous in its composition of Irish or Anglo Saxon citizens.

**The CLC vision** is "a healthy community that values educational achievement and personal success through positive youth, family and community development. We promote a holistic approach to education whereby the emphasis is not only on acquiring knowledge, but also skills and the ability to apply them. We envision a community with strong shared values whose citizens are responsible contributing members of society. The CLC aims to cultivate pride in our citizens and our community and offer services, programs and resources that will improve and strengthen the Verdun community."

**Our mission** is to provide social, cultural and pedagogical programs/services to the Anglophone minority in Verdun in order that they become lifelong learners and contribute to the Verdun community as healthy, successful citizens. We seek to empower our community by cultivating life skills and supporting the personal and collective development of its members. We do this by forming partnerships with the businesses and community organizations of our neighbourhood, in order to provide programs/services and learning opportunities for the families of Verdun, now and in the future."

## St John's Community Learning Centre

In 2007, a community learning centre (CLC) was implemented at St. John's elementary school. St. John's is an elementary school operated by the Western Quebec School Board and is located in Campbell's Bay Quebec, a rural community in the Pontiac, north of Gatineau. The population of the school is approximately 100 students in Kindergarten to cycle 3 and they occupy a shared facility with the local French elementary school.

Each school in Quebec receives a numerical rating from the Ministry of Education using two criteria: the economic status of the parent(s) and the educational level reached by the mother of the student. The ratings range from one = least disadvantaged, to ten = most disadvantaged. In 2008 St-John's Elementary school was rated an 8. In recent years, closures of the lumber mills and the decline of the forestry industry have added additional stress to the economic reality of the region.

**The mission** of the CLC is to form community partnerships to enhance student learning and support overall student success. With a vision of transforming this small rural school into a hub for community activity and lifelong learning, the CLC reaches out to partners in the community to offer programming and activities to students and community residents alike. By integrating the community into the school and bringing the school out into the community, the CLC is able to offer a level of learning not usually accessible within the boundaries of school walls. Strong partnerships allow the CLC to offer unique and dynamic opportunities to the students and community at large.

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## St Lambert Elementary School Community Learning Centre

The CLC is located in St. Lambert Elementary School which serves an average of 350 families and 460 students annually. The school serves the community of St. Lambert, an historically Anglophone community and from Lemoyne and sections of Brossard. St. Lambert Elementary is administered by the Riverside School Board. The school's urban location provides easy access to services and facilities within walking distance, including an arena, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a curling rink and many parks. It is also located right beside St. Lambert's downtown core which is known as 'the Village'.

The Steering Committee chose to keep the **mission** of the CLC as simple as possible and to reflect both its inward and outward focuses in the statement: "The St. Lambert Community Learning Center's mission is to increase student success and strengthen the English speaking community."

The CLC **vision** includes having connections amongst all of the organizations in the community, creating a network of support for students and their families, and facilitating interaction amongst different age groups and generations.

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## St Paul's River Community Learning Centre

The St. Paul's River CLC, with the Littoral School Board, was established in 2007 and serves the communities of Bonne Esperance and Blanc Sablon on the Lower North Shore, near the Labrador border. St. Paul's school accommodates students from pre-school to secondary 5. Students on the whole are motivated to learn. The school accommodates between one hundred and thirty to one hundred and forty students each year. Many students go on to continue their college and university education. The school is really like another family, if you consider the number of years students have spent together.

Different organizations were approached and the concept of a CLC was explained and these organizations were invited to a meeting. From that first meeting, the CLC Partnership Table was established. Over the course of the program, sustainable initiatives will be undertaken to ensure that the communities the Municipalities of Bonne Esperance and Blanc Sablon have improved services with better accessibility and enhanced quality of service, and will be offered services locally as much as possible. There will be a support network for those services that must be acquired elsewhere. Through the creation of durable links between different stakeholders that have already been formed and those that are foreseen these initiatives will become a reality.

**Vision:** The CLC will strengthen and support its communities by facilitating the engagement of all partners to enhance the success of the school and community.

**Mission:** The CLC will strive with its community and partners to cultivate a culture of lifelong learning and collaboration within its population, by creating and nurturing a network of relationships between community and public sector leaders and resources for the communities of the Municipalities of Bonne Esperance and Blanc Sablon.

The CLC believes that...

1. Learning is a lifelong practice
2. A community needs tools and resources to reach its full potential
3. Children are the future of the community
4. It takes a village to raise a child
5. The strength and vitality of the community depends on informed and engaged citizens

## St Willibrord Elementary School Community Learning Centre

St. Willibrord School, with the New Frontiers School Board, is situated in the heart of Châteauguay, a predominantly French “urban” community of approximately 42,000 residents southwest of the Island of Montreal. Due to its close proximity to the Kahnawake first nation’s reserve, St. Willibrord’s also provides services to approximately 100 Aboriginal students from Châteauguay and Kahnawake. The parents of students are predominantly employed on the Island of Montreal; creating long hours of travel and use of day care services. There is a significant amount of children going back home to “babysitter” situations with little adult supervision before the supper hour.

St. Willibrord CLC was one of the original pilot project CLC’s, having been established in 2004. The school has become the centre for the provision of services to children and families in the English community with comprehensive, responsive, and integrated services through a single point of access: the school.

St. Willibrord School and Community Learning Centre revised their **vision** this year: the school and CLC is a safe and nurturing place that values the needs of students, staff, parents and community and inspires us to become autonomous, resilient, lifelong learners.

Out of the 35% Anglophone community, St. Willibrord holds a diversity of culture that is threefold between Anglo 70%, Franco 5%, and Mohawk 25%. The CLC has a variety of programs open to the community at large and not just solely to the St. Willibrord population. They also target the four neighbouring elementary schools (Harmony, Centennial Park, Mary Gardner) and also Howard S. Billings Regional high school.

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