

EDUCATIONAL PROJECT 2023-2027

Merton School

English Montreal School Board



The educational project is a strategic tool for an educational institution that defines its policy orientations, priority actions and expected results. It is a tool to inform its community with a view to ensuring educational success for all students regardless of age. The educational project reflects the characteristics and needs of the students who attend the educational institution, as well as the community's expectations regarding the education they receive. The educational project is prepared and implemented through the collaborative efforts of the various school stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, and other school staff members as well as community and school board representatives.

The educational project is part of a process designed to promote coordinated action and synergy among the various levels of the education system (MEQ, school boards and educational institutions), with due regard for their specific areas of autonomy and characteristics. This educational project must align with the English Montreal School Board's Commitment to Success Plan.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

According to the Education Act, Sections 37 and 97.1, an educational institution's educational project must include:

- a description of the context in which the institution acts and the main challenges it faces, particularly with respect to educational success and, in the case of a vocational training centre, the relevance of the training to regional or provincial labour market needs,
- the specific policy orientations of the educational institution and the objectives selected for improving educational success,
- the targets to be achieved by the end of the period covered by the educational project,
- the indicators to be used to measure achievement of these objectives and targets,
- the intervals at which the educational project is to be evaluated, determined in collaboration with the school service centre or school board.

The educational project must:

- respect the students', parents' and school staff's freedom of conscience and of religion (EA, Section 37),
- cover a period that is harmonized with the period covered by the school service centre or school board's Commitment to Success Plan and the period covered by the MEQ strategic plan (EA, Section 37.1, 97.2 and 209.1),

- comply with the terms established by the Minister to coordinate the entire strategic planning process between the educational institutions, the school service centre or school board and the MEQ (EA, Section 459.3),
- be consistent with the school service centre's or school board's Commitment to Success Plan (EA, sections 37 and 97.1).

COMPOSITION OF THE SCHOOL TEAM

This educational project was created by a school team that included:

- Two teachers
- A representative of Governing Board
- A parent
- A representative of the Home and School Association
- A representative of the Support Staff
- A Grade 6 student
- The school principal

GROUPS CONSULTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

- The Parent Body
- The Grade 6 students
- The Teachers and Professionals
- The Support Staff
- The Daycare Staff (our Daycare is private)

SCHOOL PROFILE

History

Merton School was built in 1952 as part of the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal. Subsequently, it was leased to the private United Talmud Torah school system for nearly 20 years in the 1970's and 80's. The school re-opened in 1990 as Merton School, a public French Immersion school once again under the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, which eventually became the English Montreal School Board.

Location and Student Body

Merton is a neighborhood French Immersion school located in the predominantly English municipality of Côte Saint-Luc. It is surrounded by residential houses, apartment buildings, municipal parks and commercial areas. A nearby senior residence is our emergency shelter. 279 students (out of 302) speak mainly English at home and 274 were born in Quebec. 36 students have Special Needs codes and 55 (including the coded students) have Individualized Education Plans to address a variety of health, learning and behavior difficulties. The school's IMSE (Indice de milieu socio-économique) rating is 3 and 6 students receive lunches

sponsored by the school. Because the school serves a relatively compact territory, many children often play with each other outside of school and many families know each other. This, together with our deliberate efforts to include parents in all aspects of school life, makes Merton a tight-knit community with a homey feeling.

In 2023 Merton School has a population of 302 students who come mainly from Côte Saint-Luc, Hampstead, Montreal West and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG). The number of students has remained above 300 students since 2017. **There are two classes at each Grade level except for Grade 5, in which there are three.**

Parent Involvement

Parents are very active in the school and are regularly engaged in the academic and social-emotional progress of their children through written communications and meetings. Governing Board and the Home and School Association are the main vehicles for parent volunteers. Parents can be found in the school building serving lunches, volunteering in classrooms, helping decorate the building for special events (notably, the yearly Haunted House and the End of Year BBQ), and carrying out spirit-building activities and fundraisers. Opportunities abound for parents to volunteer during school hours or in the evenings according to their availability, and their presence has a direct impact on the feeling of community in school.

Programs Offered

The school offers a French Immersion program from Kindergarten to Cycle 3. Students in Kindergarten and Cycle 1 complete most of their course work in French, save for 150 weekly minutes of ELA instruction. In Cycles 2 and 3, students study 50% of the time in French and 50% in English. Over their elementary school years, students receive 68% of their instruction in French.

Cycles 2 and 3 benefit from 3 weekly hours of Science, Technology and Robotics instruction. This program has long been a source of pride for our school. Technology and assistive technologies are also integrated in the classrooms. Updating and maintaining technological tools to best serve our students is an ongoing challenge and the goal of many of our fundraising activities.

There are no Arts specialists, but the teachers in each class invest great effort in Arts and Drama instruction. Teachers regularly work together to develop projects that are carried out between “buddy” classes, in cycles or school wide.

Two Physical Education and Health specialists provide a varied and exciting program that focuses on developing life-long enjoyment of physical activity. It includes plenty of outdoor time, familiarity with many sports and games and competitive and non-competitive encounters with other schools. The school has an updated library managed by a

documentation technician one and a half days a week, and we enjoy a close relationship with the Côte Saint-Luc Eleanor London Library and its librarians.

Approximately 80% of our students make use of the many After-School options offered by our Home and School Association, which include a private daycare, a wide variety of extra-curricular activities (fencing, chess, cooking, beading, among others), and a Jewish Studies program subsidized by the Programme d'enseignement des langues d'origine (PELO).

Staff Description

The Staff at Merton is mostly stable, with little turnover from year to year (2 new teachers per year on average). Teachers engage in a variety of professional development activities and regularly welcome student-teachers from all major Universities in the area. We have 15 full time classroom teachers, 1 Resource teacher and 4 specialists (one English Language Arts C1, two Physical Education and Health, one of them part-time, and two Science and Technology (the ELA C1 specialist is also a very part time Science teacher). Our team includes also a behavior technician, 5 handicapped student attendants, two secretaries (one of them part time), two caretakers (one of them part-time). Lunch monitors supervise students during lunchtime and, together with the attendants, provide additional supervision during recesses.

Students with Special Needs and Support Measures

Approximately 18% of our student population currently has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP, 55 students), with 36 coded students and several waiting to be assessed. The EMSB provides the services of a school psychologist (1 day a week), a Speech and Language Pathologist (1 day a week), an Occupational Therapist (as needed) and a Special Needs Consultant (1 day every week or every other week). The CLSC in our area provides a School Nurse who works in the building one day every other week. Students and families are referred to the CLSC to obtain the services of a social worker or psycho-educator. Tutors are engaged by the school every year to provide additional academic support and FSL instruction to students. A homework program is provided after school for groups of 8 students at a time, organized by grade level from grades 2 to 6.

One challenge Merton faces is providing sufficient pedagogical differentiation to students with special needs and learning disabilities, students who are advanced, and a growing number of students who arrive from out of Province or from out of Canada with little English or French. In addition, we have observed an increase in the number of students who present with social-emotional challenges like high anxiety, oppositional behavior, and conduct disorders. At the same time, students who come to us from unsuccessful school experiences elsewhere tend to do well at Merton. They, and their families, often credit the kindness of the human environment for their smooth integration.

Facilities and Technology

The school's L-shaped building is on one floor. Merton has a large enclosed grassy playground and asphalt basketball court that provide plenty of space for students to relax or play during recesses. A municipal park with swings and sports courts is adjacent to the

school and available for use. The school is situated in a peaceful and secure suburban environment. It is well served by the public transportation system and offers bussing to eligible students.

The Science and Technology Room was renovated three years ago thanks to a multi-year fundraising effort by our Home and School Association and a significant one time private donation. The school currently has **106 laptop computers**, of which 43 are stored in the Science and Technology Room and the rest are permanently used by the senior classrooms (Grades 3 to 6), with a few loaned to Staff members. **68 iPads** are mostly used by the Junior students (Kindergarten to Grade 2). A couple of them are assigned to the Homework program and 18 are kept in tech tubs that can be borrowed by any class. Several iPads are loaned to students who have little English or French and need them to communicate and for academic use.

Current challenges include:

- a. The increasing need to provide laptops for individual use to students with special needs who require assistive technology.
- b. The recent requirement to retire iPads after 5 years of use when they no longer can handle security updates. 25 iPads are due to be retired very soon, which will represent a net loss of at least 14 after this year's purchases are made.
- c. The overall cost of replacing outdated technological equipment (including robotics equipment), which far exceeds available budgets.
- d. Speed and reliability of the network.

MISSION AND VALUES

Our mission at Merton School is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment which celebrates diversity and promotes cooperation and mutual respect. Our goal is to help children grow to become responsible, capable and engaged citizens of their school, their community and the world.

Guiding Values

Community: We **create** cooperative and collaborative partnerships that become a web of support for all of us. We see ourselves as important parts of a larger whole.

Learning: We **pursue** knowledge and understanding in all its forms. We approach the world and people with a curious, open mind.

Personal Growth: We **promote** the physical, mental and social health and well-being of every person. We make efforts to improve ourselves in every way and to realize our full potential.

Respect: We **make an effort** to understand different perspectives and treat each other in inclusive, compassionate ways that protect every person's dignity.

Responsibility: We **are each held accountable** for our learning, our actions and our words. We share responsibility for the quality of our school environment.

All our rules of conduct are focused on creating a peaceful, happy and safe environment for children to share as they engage in learning and playing together. All staff members at Merton see themselves as responsible for all the students entrusted to our care. In guiding our children, we aim to:

- Make them aware of the effects of their behaviour.
- Model for them and teach them safe, fair and helpful ways of behaving.
- Help them correct what they did wrong when possible, and/or replace negative behaviour with positive action.

THE CONSULTATION

Our Consultation process was quite straight forward. The Committee met twice. At the first meeting we mainly decided on the consultation format (online survey through Google Forms) and the content of the questions. The second meeting was devoted to reviewing the School Profile (which was written by a subcommittee), analyzing the results of the consultation and the data provided by the School Board, and deciding on goals to be pursued over the three years covered by the Educational Project. Subsequently, drafts were circulated back and forth but no additional meetings were considered necessary.

We had nearly 100% participation in the surveys from the Teachers, Professionals, Support Staff, and Grade 6 students. The private daycare Staff, however, did not participate (we only received 1 response). This may be due to the short window of time provided to complete the questionnaire, during the period of final exams at university. General parent body participation was a little above 10%. The Consultation results from all groups were very positive and encouraging. It was affirming for the committee to see that the positives mentioned in the various surveys matched the express priorities of the school and the areas we as a community believe to be our strengths. The challenges identified were predictable, indicating that as a community we seem to have a good measure of self-knowledge.

Consultation Summary by Group:

The Parent Body: *Strengths:* The people who work in the school, attention to academic needs and social-emotional needs, supportive climate, communication. *Challenges:* Need for more attention to advanced students, need to streamline communications to only one digital platform, need to maintain vigilance regarding social-emotional and behaviour support.

The Grade 6 students: *Strengths:* The people (teachers, students, community), supportive environment, physical education program, activities offered. *Challenges:* No particular trend emerges, students seem happy with their school and offer individual recommendations (more recess, a bigger gymnasium, creation of a Merton High School, and many, many more).

The Teachers and Professionals: *Strengths:* Attention to individual needs, caring approach in all areas, academic support (tutors), taking Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) seriously, collaboration and mutual support among staff members. *Challenges:* Need to have two adults in the classroom at all times, additional support for students with special needs (academic and social), reduced class sizes.

The Support Staff: *Strengths:* Caring, availability, and attention to students, attention to the needs of Staff members. *Challenges:* Need for more professional Staff to be available in school, additional programs to address social and emotional well-being of students, additional training.

The Daycare Staff (our Daycare is private): As mentioned, only one daycare person filled out the survey.

In light of the results mentioned above, we will continue to make every effort to maintain the positive community feeling evident in the responses of every group, continue to offer all available resources to students and Staff and continue to advocate for those tools and supports that are not available to us yet.

ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES

The academic section of the educational project is aligned to the school board's Commitment to Success Plan. While the EMSB acknowledges the significance and contributions of all subjects and grades in shaping student development, the primary focus for reporting is on the core subjects at the end of Cycle 3. The end of cycle 3 serves as an indicator of progress for students as they prepare to enter secondary school.

END OF CYCLE 3 MATHEMATICS

EMSB's Objective:

To increase the proportion of end of cycle 3 students demonstrating proficiency (70% to 100%) on the uniform exam (C1) from 61.5% in 2023 to 69% by 2027.

**Table 1: Percentage of End of Cycle 3 Students
Demonstrating Proficiency (a mark of 70% or more) on the Uniform Exam (C1)**

	2019	2022	2023
Merton	66%	51%	75%
EMSB	68%	55%	68%

Source: Lumix, GPI, 2023

Table 1.a: Comparison of Proficiency rate between Merton and Model (French Immersion Schools) for 2023

	2023
Merton	75%
Other EMSB French Immersion Schools	80.8%

Interpretation: The numbers shown in Table 1 demonstrate that Merton’s results were slightly below those of the EMSB in 2019 and 2022 for this competency and are now comfortably above in 2023. It is worth noting that past Educational Projects did not focus on C1 (Situational Problem Solving) but on C2 (Uses Mathematical Reasoning). C1 is by far the more difficult one of the two to teach and practice sufficiently in class, since each situational problem is complex and takes a long time to work through. In 2022 when teachers were still working on closing the gaps caused by learning conditions during the pandemic, this complex competency would logically have suffered the most. An additional factor to keep in mind is that the proficiency rate for students in EMSB French Immersion Schools ONLY is slightly above that of Merton (80.8%), as shown in table 1.a. It will be our goal to close that gap. For full information purposes, Merton’s proficiency rate in C2 for 2023 was 93.2%, more than 10 percentage points above the proficiency rate of other French Immersion Schools and over 20 percentage points above that of the EMSB as a whole.

Objective: To increase the proportion of end of Cycle 3 students demonstrating proficiency on the uniform exam (C1) from 75 % in 2023 to 80 % by 2027.

END OF CYCLE 3 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

EMSB’s Objectives:

To maintain the success rate of elementary students on the end of cycle 3 English Reading component of the June examination above the 90% range through 2027.

To maintain the success rate of elementary students on the end of cycle 3 English Writing component of the June examination above the 90% range through 2027.

Table 2: MERTON AND EMSB Success Rates (a mark of 60% or more) on the End of Cycle 3 English Language Arts June Examination by Component (%)

	2019	2022	2023
Merton Reading Component	93%	98%	100%
Merton Writing Component	95%	100%	100%

EMSB Reading Component	93%	87%	92%
EMSB Writing Component	96%	95%	93%

Source: Lumix, GPI, 2023

Table 2.a: MERTON AND EMSB Proficiency Rates (a mark of 70% or more) on the End of Cycle 3 English Language Arts June Examination by Component, 2023

	2023
Merton Reading Component	63.6%
EMSB French Immersion Schools Reading Component	63.8%
Merton Writing Component	77.3%
EMSB French Immersion Schools Writing Component	64.1%

Interpretation: Since the success rate in 2023 has reached 100%, we will focus for our objective on the **proficiency rate instead**. Like our success rate, in 2023 our proficiency rates are equal to or higher than those of other French Immersion schools as well as higher than those of the EMSB as a whole. However, we feel we can expect to raise our proficiency rate for Reading and Writing in the years ahead.

Objective: To increase the proficiency rate of elementary students on the end of Cycle 3 English Reading component of the June examination from 63.6 % in 2023 to 67 % in 2027.

Objective: To increase the proficiency rate of elementary students on the end of Cycle 3 English Writing component of the June examination from 77.3 % in 2023 to 80 % in 2027.

END OF CYCLE 3 FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE:

EMSB's Objectives:

To maintain the success rate of elementary students on the end of cycle 3 French Second Language, reading component of the June examination at 90.0% through 2027.

To maintain the success rate of elementary students on the end of Cycle 3 French Second Language, writing component of the June examination at or above 90.0% through 2027.

Table 3: MERTON AND EMSB Success Rates on the End of Cycle 3 French Second Language June Examination by Component (%)

	2019	2022	2023
Merton Reading Component	84%	NA	95%
Merton Writing Component	86%	NA	91%
EMSB Reading Component	87%	NA	83%
EMSB Writing Component	91%	NA	87%

Source: Lumix GPI, 2023

*Please note: there is no data available for 2022.

Table 3.a: MERTON AND EMSB French Immersion Schools Success Rates on the End of Cycle 3 French Second Language Writing (%)

Success Rate	2023
Merton Reading	95%
EMSB French Immersion Schools Writing	95%
Merton Writing	91%
EMSB French Immersion Schools Writing	95.6%

Interpretation: The 2023 Data shows that although pre-pandemic we were lagging slightly below the EMSB (keeping in mind that every individual student in 2019 counted for a 2.3% difference, and in 2022 for a 2.2%), we have been able to more than close that gap. We will aim to maintain the current gains during the period of this Educational Project. However, our rate of success in writing continues to lag below the average of all *French Immersion* Schools for writing only; therefore, we will continue to work to match them. (see Table 3.a). In reading, we will aim to maintain the success rate at the current level through 2027

Objective: To increase the success rate of Merton students in the Cycle 3 French writing component of the June examination from 91 % in 2023 to 95 % in 2027.

Objective: To maintain the current success rate of 95% for French reading through to 2027.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

EMSB's Objectives:

To decrease the rate of elementary students' victimization, as reported by the students, resulting from bullying on the OURSCHOOL Survey from 31% in 2023 to 25% in 2027.

To increase the rate of elementary students' feeling safe at school, as reported by the students, on the OURSCHOOL Survey from 59% in 2023 to 65% in 2027.

To decrease the rate of elementary students' moderate to high perceptions of anxiety, as reported by the students, on the OURSCHOOL Survey from 31% in 2023 to 22% in 2027.

Table 4: MERTON Student Perceptions of Selected School Climate Factors (%)

Factor	MERTON		EMSB		Canadian Norm (2023)
	2019	2023	2019	2023	
Bullying and Victimization	31	29	28	31	29
School Safety	63	72	60	59	61
Anxiety	18	28	22	31	30

Source: OURSCHOOL Survey (The Learning Bar), 2022-2023

Interpretation: The OURSCHOOL Survey is a tool that allows students to convey their perceptions of school life. Students take the survey annually; it is anonymous and covers a variety of topics including bullying, school safety, the students' sense of belonging, student anxiety and student-teacher relationships. The survey is one of many tools that schools use to implement the Ministry's policy on bullying and intimidation (Safe School Action Plan). It should be noted that students are asked what they perceived in the last 30 days preceding the survey.

It is worth noting that the Board's Commitment to Success Plan will continue to report on the overall student perceptions of school safety, whereas schools will report on perceptions of school safety during the day. The percentages in the table concerning this factor include student feelings of safety on the way to school and home. This allows schools to give more context to their contribution to this factor.

Presenting the results of the survey in 2019 and 2023 side by side may be misleading, in that the Canadian norms were different in 2019. For example, the Canadian Norm for anxiety in 2019 was 22%; the difference between the Merton rates and the Canadian Norm can therefore be said to have remained fairly consistent. That said, Merton has always taken the approach of prevention in all that is related to safety, bullying and the social-emotional well-being of our students. We continuously look for strategies and tools within our means to support a healthy school climate. Our 2023 Anti-Bullying, Anti-Violence Plan documents those efforts.

ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVE:

To increase social skills training and support for students.

This objective may be addressed by having the behaviour technician offer periodic sessions to groups of students to address different social situations and the appropriate skills to navigate them. However, since problems with personnel sometimes make special workshops difficult to maintain consistently, The Moozoom platform will be used as a teaching tool throughout the school and with specific groups. We will report on the number of students that benefitted from any group workshops and provide the data which is available on the frequency of use of Moozoom in the school.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Connecting with parents of preschoolers is crucial for preschools to establish positive ties with the community. By building relationships, sharing information, and addressing common concerns, preschools contribute to creating a supportive and engaging community for both children and families. Reaching out to parents not only builds trust but also strengthens the sense of partnership and collaboration with families. This partnership goes beyond the child's early education, creating a lasting and meaningful connection.

The MEQ has created a document titled *the Guide to Support the Parent Component: Preschool Education for 4-Year-Olds* (August 2021). This guide offers suggestions for schools to facilitate a minimum of 10 meetings over the academic year for parents of 4-year-old preschoolers. The guide recognizes that families care about their children's well-being and success and that part of doing their best to support their children's development is to be collaborative partners with the school and the school team.

Merton does not have a 4-year-old Kindergarten.

DIGITAL COMPETENCY

In 2018, the MEQ launched its Digital Action Plan which was its blueprint for the integration of digital technology and associated innovative pedagogical practices into the education sector. In 2019, the MEQ published its Digital Competency Framework with 12 dimensions, which was derived from the Digital Action Plan.

The ICT-RÉCIT team has been working with schools to train TIF teachers and integrate technology with students that develops their competency through the 12 dimensions. Schools will report anecdotally on how the competency is being developed and the number of PD events that staff attend.

Merton has been selected by the EMSB as a pilot school for the new Digital Competency Framework. As such, we have analysed the results of a School Board-wide survey to identify those dimensions of Digital Competency in which we would like to see improvement over the time frame of the current Educational Project. The selected dimensions were chosen not only based on the results of the survey, but also because of their potential impact both on Staff efficacy and on student success.

In particular, we intend to focus on **Competency 8: Using digital tools to foster inclusion and address diverse needs**. Our intent is to increase the number of teachers who feel competent using digital tools for this purpose (including, but not limited to, a better understanding of assistive technologies) and to increase the use of assistive technology and other digital tools to foster inclusivity and differentiate instruction in our classrooms. We will track our progress in attaining these goals by monitoring the number of PD sessions devoted to these topics, and the number of activities or projects in each cycle that feature the use of assistive technology and other inclusive digital practices.

APPENDIX: OBJECTIVES AT A GLANCE

OBJECTIVE	Specific Initiatives Towards Improvement
<p>Mathematics: To increase the proportion of end of Cycle 3 students demonstrating proficiency on the uniform exam (Competency 1) from 75 % in 2023 to 80 % by 2027.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource support (resource teacher and tutors) - Additional and earlier practice
<p>English Language Arts: To increase the proficiency rate of elementary students on the end of Cycle 3 English Reading component of the June examination from 63.6 % in 2023 to 67 % in 2027.</p> <p>English Language Arts: To increase the proficiency rate of elementary students on the end of Cycle 3 English Writing component of the June examination from 77.3 % in 2023 to 80 % in 2027.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource support (resource teacher and tutors) - Increase PLC time for English teachers to coordinate efforts
<p>FSL: To increase the success rate of elementary students on the end of Cycle 3 French writing component of the June examination from 90.7 % in 2023 to 95 % in 2027.</p> <p>FSL: To maintain the current success rate of 95% for French reading through to 2027.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focused resource support - Increase PLC time for French teachers to coordinate efforts
<p>SCHOOL CLIMATE: To increase social skills training and support for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops for individual groups if/when possible - Moozoom program implemented.
<p>Digital Competency: To use digital tools to foster inclusion and address diverse needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase professional development opportunities offered to teachers and attendants on the use of assistive technology - Support teachers in implementing activities that integrate assistive technology.