

BACK TO SCHOOL TOGETHER!

Taking the time to rebuild meaningful relationships with students from disadvantaged areas is essential after a period of interruption. These young people will have had a wide range of experiences, which may be quite different from school. However, these experiences can be used to enrich their educational path.

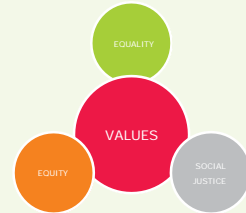
The outpourings of solidarity that have come from both the community and families are invaluable assets for facilitating transitions. It is important to recognize that all day-to-day experiences, such as cooking, doing household chores, reading signs, drawing, playing, communicating on the Internet, involve the application of subject-specific knowledge.

By bringing these connections to light, learning is given meaning, thereby fostering the development of the students' competencies. These actions help to reduce the gaps in academic success and support the perseverance of students from disadvantaged backgrounds by building on fundamental values such as equality, equity and social justice. It is important to invest in these educational relationships, as they are the foundation on which a rewarding and inclusive education is established.

Values

The values that guide the actions of *A Montréal School for All* are equality, equity and social justice. Their implementation helps to reduce the gaps in academic success and perseverance.

(Diagram based on MEES, 2020, p. 4)



→ WHAT SUPPORTS LEARNING IN DISADVANTAGED AREAS?

The education community must pay particular attention to the context of transition (after the break), which requires some readjustment by focusing on the effects of certain practices in different areas:

THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER EFFECT

Students' commitment to school is reinforced when they feel that their teachers and other people working with them are interested in them and in their experiences, support them as needed, and allow them to express themselves and make their own decisions.

THE CLASSROOM/GROUP EFFECT

Some classroom practices are more conducive to learning, including those that encourage students to work together and allow them to play a supporting, motivational and protective role with their peers. Dynamics between peers play an important role in the classroom.

THE SCHOOL EFFECT

The importance given to periods of transition or adaptation and the school staff's high expectations of students are other vital factors that have positive impacts on everyone's learning, especially in disadvantaged areas.

THE SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY COLLABORATION EFFECT

Students should be able to count on the partnership between their families and the school in helping them to develop and grow. This partnership must be based on mutual trust and respect for each other's competencies and role. Community partners working in support of the educational project are essential assets, as they can become involved in the lives of students and their families, helping to provide positive, healthy, safe and welcoming environments.

(MEES, *Reference Manual for Intervention in Disadvantaged Areas* (2020) 24-26)



"The school must integrate into an education community made up of parents, teachers and professionals from the school and the community in order to foster academic success, perseverance and the development of young people's full potential."

(MEQ, *Rôle des parents et de la communauté dans la réussite éducative et dans la valorisation de l'éducation* (2021), 64) [Translation]

→ ACKNOWLEDGE, LEGITIMIZE AND UNDERSTAND THE STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE

"Although there is a difference in the success levels of students from advantaged and disadvantaged areas, the learning capacity of the latter group is not at issue and should not be doubted. Every student comes to school with their own baggage shaped by personal experience, and it is vital that this be taken into account."

(MEES, *Reference Manual for Intervention in Disadvantaged Areas* (2020), 21)

Establish connections with the students' experiences

→ CREATE A CLIMATE OF WELL-BEING AND KINDNESS

Research consistently refers to a fundamental premise: well-being and kindness, established within a safe classroom climate, are key to academic success. After a break, students may not have had the opportunity to put the **behaviours** expected by the school into practice. It is therefore imperative that the necessary time be set aside to teach and implement these behaviours. It is through the creation of a positive and safe learning environment that we can best support the educational process.

"A high-performing school is a safe place for the children and the adults who spend time in it. In addition, it is a welcoming environment for the students, the personnel, the parents and the community. It is an environment that aims at responding to the needs and the welfare of everyone. Not only is the principal welcoming but so is the support staff (particularly the secretarial staff) as well as the teachers and other professionals. The respect for diversity is best expressed in a welcoming atmosphere. In such an environment, students, staff and parents feel secure, and feel that they are being taken care of."

(J. Srchambault, R. Garon, and L. Harnois, *Leading a School in a Disadvantaged Area: Characteristics of High performing Schools, from scientific research* (2011), 1)

Be caring, be indulgent, provide spaces for discussion