

CHAPTER 4

Educational Success of Indigenous Students

Performance Audit

Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec
Centre de services scolaire de l'Énergie
Centre de services scolaire de l'Or-et-des-Bois
Centre de services scolaire du Fer
Central Québec School Board
New Frontiers School Board

IN BRIEF

Nearly 20 years after identifying a gap in success rates of Indigenous students, the Ministère de l'Éducation is still doing little to help them succeed. Moreover, there is no strategy or action plan to guide the actions of school bodies, which has repercussions on the services provided to students. For example, Indigenous students do not receive sufficient support, nor is it adapted to their needs, when they transition from a school in their communities to one in the Québec school system. Nor do they receive enough help in French.

Then, despite the recommendations it received and the commitments it took, the Ministère is doing little to provide Indigenous students with a safe and culturally relevant learning environment. It follows that, for instance, for the school bodies audited, school staff do not receive sufficient training to understand the causes of certain behaviours and acquire the tools they need to better support Indigenous students in their educational path. In addition, few of the schools visited had hired a liaison officer to facilitate the bond of trust and encourage Indigenous students' engagement.

Lastly, one of the Ministère's main actions since 2005 has been to provide additional funding. However, the funds intended for the success of Indigenous students are not allocated on the basis of regional needs and realities, and the funding methods do not allow for the implementation of sustainable actions.

FINDINGS

1

Nearly 20 years after identifying a gap in success rates of Indigenous students, the Ministère de l'Éducation is still doing little to help them succeed.

2

The support provided to Indigenous students, for example when transferring from a school in their communities to the Québec school system, is neither sufficient nor adapted to their needs.

3

Few actions have been taken to ensure a safe and culturally relevant learning environment for Indigenous students, despite commitments and recommendations to this effect.

4

Funds intended for Indigenous student success are not allocated on the basis of regional needs and realities, and funding methods do not allow for the implementation of sustainable actions.

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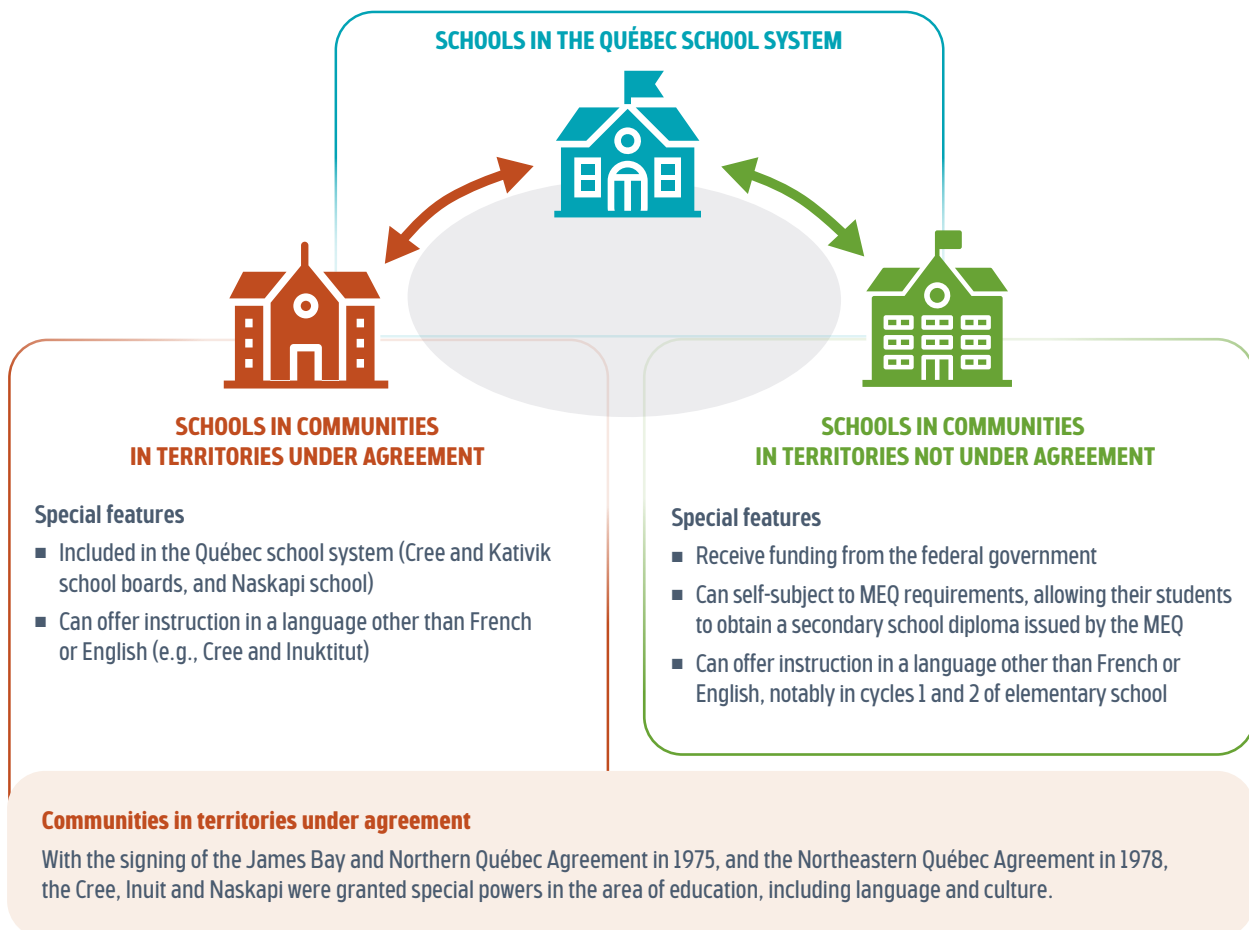
See also the Sustainable Development Commissioner's observations on the subject.

BACKGROUND

1 In Québec, the Indigenous population is made up of 41 First Nations, from 10 recognized nations, and the Inuit. It was estimated at 140,000 individuals in 2021. Each nation, including the Inuit, has its own history, culture, language and realities. Approximately 65% of this population lives in municipalities, and 35% in Indigenous communities. More information on Indigenous peoples in Québec is presented in the Additional Information section.

2 Indigenous students can complete their elementary and secondary education in three different school systems. They can attend schools in Indigenous communities in territories under agreement or those in territories not under agreement, or schools in the Québec school system (Figure 1). The legal framework for each school system is different. In addition, the education program may vary from one school system to another, or even from one school to another. For example, education may be given in an Indigenous language, in English or in French, depending on the school and level.

FIGURE 1 Elementary and secondary school systems attended by Indigenous students



Illustrations: Freepik image bank.

3 Indigenous students are likely to change schools along the way, which involves complex transitions, especially when they move from one school system to another. There are a number of reasons for switching schools, including a lack of teaching at their level in their community, or a desire to access more services. For example, in the 31 First Nations communities (other than Cree and Naskapi), 23 have a school, and in 8 of these, secondary level is not offered or is only partially offered. For some students, these transitions may involve cultural or family changes, or changes in pedagogical approach.

4 Québec's public school system comprises 72 school bodies, including 60 French-language school service centres, 9 English-language school boards and 3 special-status school bodies. A summary of how the system works and typical student educational paths is presented in the Additional Information section.

5 The student information available to the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (MEQ) allows us to estimate that approximately 3,100 Indigenous students attended a school in the Québec public school system each year from 2017-2018 to 2022-2023.¹ Close to a quarter of school bodies welcomed more than 50 Indigenous students each year.

Data on Indigenous students in the Québec school system

For analysis purposes and to select the school bodies to be audited and the files to be examined, we estimated the number of Indigenous students who had attended the Québec school system during a given period based on information recorded in the MEQ's school population information system. We considered Indigenous students to be those who had already declared one or more of the following:

- an Indigenous mother tongue;
- a place of residence in an Indigenous community;
- attendance at a school in First Nations or Inuit communities.

This estimate represents only a portion of the potential number of Indigenous students, due to the lack of available data. While it is incomplete, notably because it does not include Indigenous students who do not meet the above criteria, it is the most representative estimate at present.

6 The responsibility for supporting Indigenous students to help them succeed is shared between the MEQ and school bodies. In particular, the MEQ must develop policies and guidelines to direct the school system's actions, establish budgetary rules and ensure the quality of educational services. School bodies must, for their part, support and guide schools by making goods and services accessible, and by implementing optimal conditions to offer students quality educational services and ensure their educational success. More details on the roles and responsibilities of the Ministère and school bodies are presented in the Additional Information section.

1. Students who attended schools in Cree and Kativik school boards as well as the Naskapi school were not taken into account because the legal framework of these schools is different.

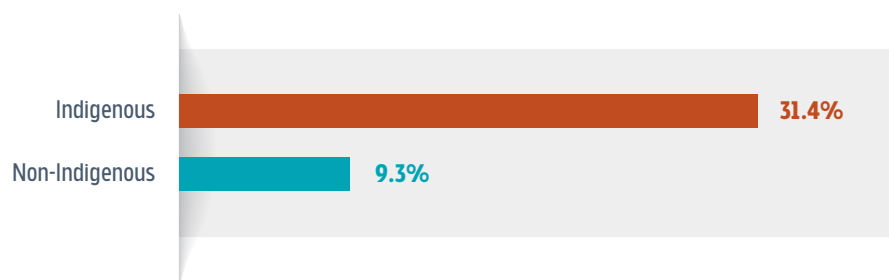
Why we did this audit

7 On the one hand, education is a critical lever in the fight against poverty, and an essential prerequisite for creating sustainable social, cultural and economic value for society. Citizens with limited education have poorer job prospects and fewer opportunities to participate in society. It is therefore essential to create an education system that meets the needs of all young people.

8 A number of studies, including one published by the Canadian Council on Learning, show that Indigenous children have different needs due to their culture and history. The MEQ recognized in its 2017 Policy on Educational Success that educational services must be adapted to their needs and that they must be able to develop in a safe and culturally relevant learning environment. In her observations, the Sustainable Development Commissioner presents her thoughts on the benefits of an education that values Indigenous cultural heritage to support the educational success of Indigenous students. These observations are available on the Auditor General's website.

9 Statistics Canada's most recent census in 2021 shows that among people aged 25 to 34, fewer Indigenous people have a certificate or diploma than non-Indigenous people (Figure 2).

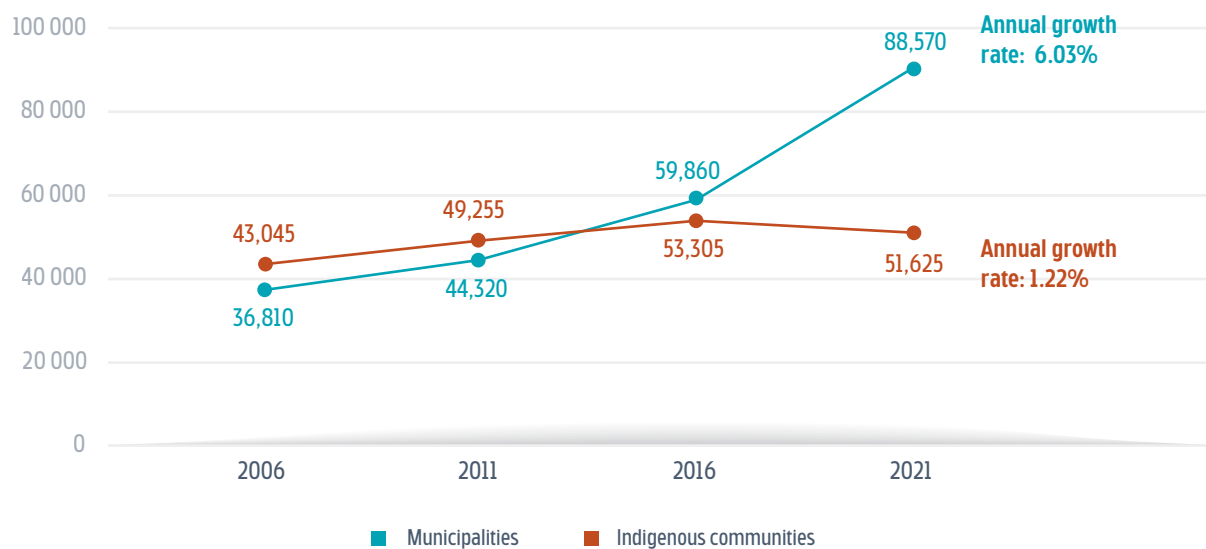
FIGURE 2 Proportion of the Québec population aged 25 to 34 without a certificate or diploma in 2021



Source: Auditor General of Québec based on data from Statistics Canada.

10 Furthermore, the Indigenous population is growing at a faster rate than the Québec population. In 2021, Indigenous youth under age 25 represented a larger proportion of the Indigenous population (36%) than youth of this age in the rest of the Québec population (27%). Moreover, from 2006 to 2021, the annual growth rate of the Indigenous population was much higher in Québec municipalities (6.03%) than in Indigenous communities (1.22%), as shown in Figure 3. As a result, Indigenous students are increasingly likely to attend schools in the Québec school system rather than in their communities.

FIGURE 3 Growth in the number of Indigenous peoples in Québec from 2006 to 2021, by place of residence



Source: Auditor General of Québec based on data from the Réseau de recherche et de connaissances relatives aux peuples autochtones DIALOG, 2023

Audit objective and scope of work

11 The purpose of the audit was to determine whether the MEQ and the school bodies audited have taken effective measures to improve school-related factors in the educational success of Indigenous students attending the Québec public elementary and secondary school system (general education in the youth sector). Thus, schools in First Nations communities in territories not under agreement, which are funded by the federal government and do not come under the jurisdiction of the MEQ, were not examined.

12 In addition to conducting work in the MEQ and gathering data on the 72 school bodies, we carried out more detailed work in the following 5 school bodies and some of the schools they oversee:

- Centre de services scolaire de l'Énergie;
- Centre de services scolaire de l'Or-et-des-Bois;
- Centre de services scolaire du Fer;
- Central Québec School Board;
- New Frontiers School Board.

13 The Cree School Board, the Kativik School Board and the Naskapi School were not selected, as they are subject to the *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons*, which differs from the *Education Act* in certain respects. This law gives special powers to these bodies, particularly in relation to language and culture.

14 The period covered by our audit work extends over six years, from the 2017-2018 to the 2022-2023 school year inclusively. However, some analysis may relate to situations before or after this period.

15 The audit objective and scope of work are presented in detail in the Additional Information section.

Support for Indigenous students in the Québec school system, in brief

16 Over the past 30 years, a number of reports have addressed educational issues affecting Indigenous students, including public inquiry commission reports (Figure 4). More details on these reports and their recommendations are presented in the Additional Information section.

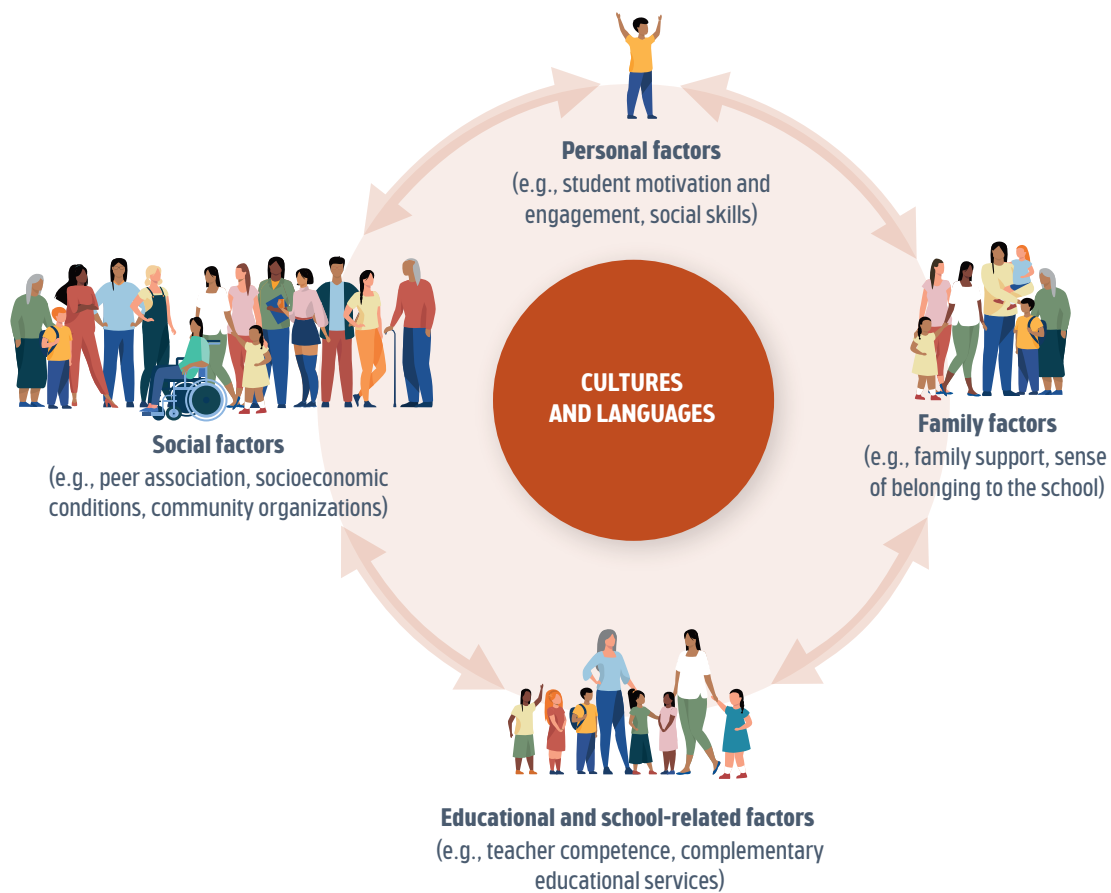
FIGURE 4 Objective of the main reports dealing with educational issues affecting Indigenous peoples

	Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples	Investigate and propose solutions to problems that affect the relationship between Indigenous peoples, the federal government and Canadian society as a whole.
	Report of the National Assembly's Committee on Education	Gather information on the educational needs of Indigenous peoples as felt and defined by them, on the main problems they encounter and on the types of educational projects that have proven successful.
	Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission	Facilitate reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples, and acknowledge the traumas created by residential schools.
	Report of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress, known as the Viens Commission	Investigate with a view to making recommendations as to the concrete, effective and sustainable measures to be implemented by the Gouvernement du Québec and by the Indigenous authorities to prevent or eliminate, regardless of their origin or cause, any form of violence or discriminatory practices or differential treatments in the provision of public services to the Indigenous peoples in Québec.
	Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls	Examine the systemic causes behind the violence that Indigenous women and girls experience.
	The Québec Ombudsman's first follow-up report on the Viens Commission	Follow up on calls for action issued by the Viens Commission.

Factors fostering educational success

17 Educational success goes beyond academic success (graduation and certification); it takes into account a person's overall intellectual, cognitive, social and physical potential. The Policy on Educational Success published by the MEQ in 2017 presents four main categories of factors that influence educational success (Figure 5). It also states that promoting Indigenous cultures and languages is part of the ministerial vision of educational success. Note that the MEQ provides funding to support the educational success of Indigenous students in the public school system (a total of approximately \$64.5 million from 2017-2018 to 2022-2023).

FIGURE 5 Determining factors of educational success, according to the MEQ



Illustrations: Freepik image bank.

FINDING 1

Nearly 20 years after identifying a gap in success rates of Indigenous students, the Ministère de l'Éducation is still doing little to help them succeed.

What we found

18 Since at least 2005, the MEQ has recognized that there is a gap in success rates between Indigenous students and all students in the Québec school system combined. However, the Ministère has yet to set objectives and targets for the success of Indigenous students, as it has done for other groups of students in which it identified a gap in success rates. This lack of objectives and targets is reflected in the actions of school bodies. Their actions to promote the educational success of Indigenous students are poorly structured, relying on local initiatives and often on dedicated individuals.

19 As a result, a substantial gap in success rates remains and little improvement can be seen compared to all students combined and to other groups of students with gaps in success rates.

Why this finding matters

20 In the Policy on Educational Success published in 2017, the MEQ recognizes that the principles of equity and equality of opportunity require us to consider the gaps in success rates observed between various groups of students, and to take the necessary steps to reduce them as much as possible. Moreover, it states in its 2017-2022 and 2023-2027 strategic plans that Indigenous students are one of the five student groups with the most significant gaps in success rates.²

21 Furthermore, the Ministère is responsible for developing policies that guide the actions of the school system, and for establishing national indicators. To this end, it must indicate to school bodies which of its strategic plan objectives they should consider in their commitment-to-success plan, so as to align the actions for which they will be held accountable.

2. The other four groups are boys, students with handicaps or social maladjustment or learning difficulties, students from disadvantaged backgrounds and first-generation immigrants.

22 In 2007, the National Assembly's Committee on Education presented a report on the success of Indigenous students, in which it recommended that the MEQ develop a series of indicators to measure the perseverance of Indigenous students.

What supports our finding

No strategic direction or measurable indicators to improve Indigenous students success

23 In 2005, in response to the gap in success rates between Indigenous students and that of all students in the school system combined, the MEQ created a budgetary measure to support school bodies in their efforts to promote the success of Indigenous students. However, it was only in 2017 that it agreed to adopt an approach that considers the many factors and challenges underlying this gap in success rates. In fall 2017, it set up a consultation mechanism, the Provincial Round Table on the Educational Success of Indigenous Students, which was tasked with finding solutions to meet the special needs of Indigenous students. Together with Indigenous representatives and partners, the Provincial Round Table can make recommendations to the Minister on the work submitted to it by the MEQ. A complete list of its members is presented in the Additional Information section.

24 In 2018-2019, the Provincial Round Table identified priorities for action. However, at the time of this report, the MEQ had still not adopted a strategy or action plan that would take these priorities into account to guide the actions of school bodies. In fact, the Provincial Round Table has proposed several initiatives in recent years. Nonetheless, its recommendations to MEQ authorities regarding these priorities for action went unheeded. To date, the MEQ's achievements have consisted mainly of providing additional funding (Figure 6). During this six-year period, a full cohort of students has had time to start and finish elementary school.

Provincial Round Table on the Educational Success of Indigenous Students

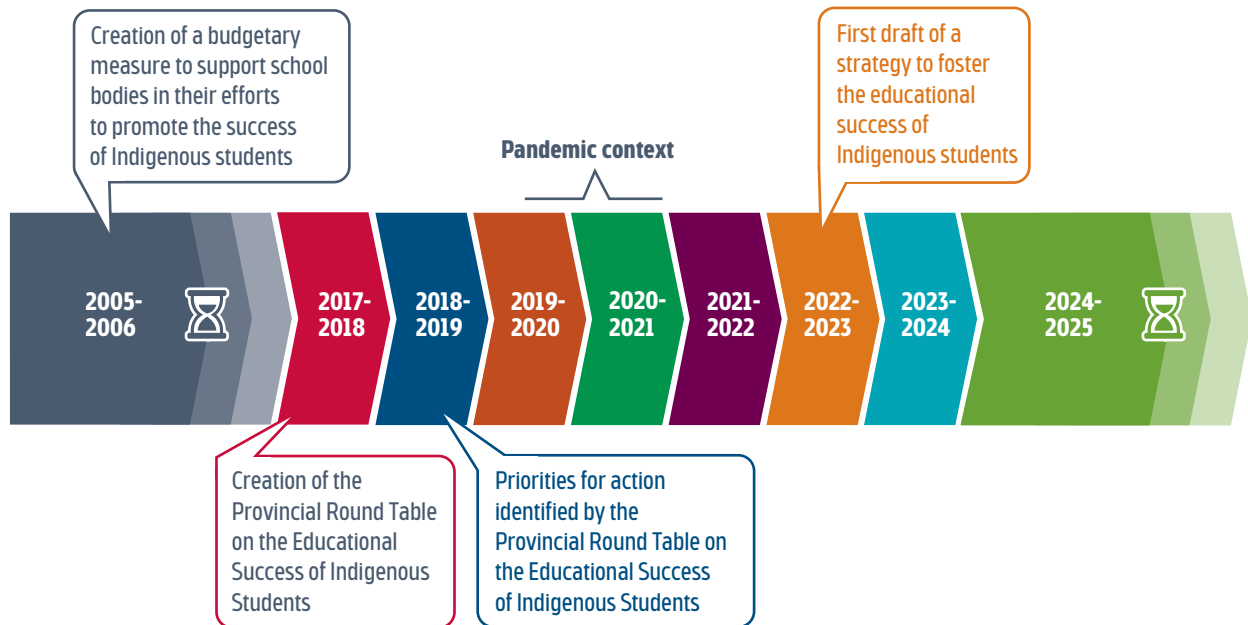
This is a working group reporting to the Minister of Education, currently co-chaired by an assistant deputy minister and an Indigenous representative. The Provincial Round Table's mandate is to take on a leadership role regarding the recognition of Indigenous students' needs and realities, with the aim of enabling these students to reach their full potential and improve their educational perseverance and success. It currently brings together 20 organizations linked to the school system and Indigenous partners and governmental sectors.

Priorities for action of the Provincial Round Table on the Educational Success of Indigenous Students

Three topics are prioritized:

- Promoting Indigenous languages and cultures;
- Adapting curriculums and educational materials;
- Raising awareness of Indigenous realities among school staff.

FIGURE 6 The MEQ's main achievements since identifying a gap in success rates of Indigenous students



25 This lack of strategy is reflected in the actions of school bodies. In the commitment-to-success plans of the school bodies audited, as in the MEQ's strategic plans, there are no objectives or targets for the success of Indigenous students, whereas there are some for other groups of students with gaps in success rates. As a result, the schools' educational projects contain few tangible actions to improve the educational success of Indigenous students.³ Moreover, the lack of clear guidelines and the lack of support for the implementation of tangible actions in schools were raised as difficulties experienced by those working in the field.

26 It should be noted, however, that some of the school bodies we audited have taken a number of promising initiatives in recent years to improve their approach (e.g., the creation of a committee with the region's Indigenous partners). Yet, these local initiatives remain isolated and rely on dedicated individuals.

3. During the period audited, some schools had included objectives concerning Indigenous students in their educational projects, but this was not the case for the 2023-2027 period.

Practices in other provinces

In 2007, Ontario Ministry of Education published the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education policy framework, intended for itself and Ontario school boards. It sets out the approach for supporting Indigenous students and defines 10 performance measures, for example:

- Significant increase in the percentage of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students meeting provincial standards on province-wide assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics;
- Increased participation of Indigenous students' parents;
- Increased satisfaction among educators with respect to targeted professional development and resources designed to help them serve Indigenous students more effectively;
- Integration of educational opportunities to significantly improve the knowledge of all students and educators about the rich and diverse cultures and histories of Indigenous peoples.

In 2004, Manitoba Ministry of Education and Early Childhood Learning published its first action plan for the education of Indigenous peoples, a plan that has been adjusted over the years. The most recent, titled An Indigenous Education Policy Framework, was released in 2022 and outlines the Ministry's vision, guiding principles, strategies, and actions for achieving the intended learning outcomes for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in Manitoba. Here are some examples of planned strategies:

- Promote parent, grandparent, and extended family (aunties and uncles) involvement;
- Create an inclusive and culturally safe learning environment.

27 The lack of indicators also makes it impossible to track progress in terms of perseverance and results for Indigenous students, whereas there are indicators for other groups of students with gaps in success rates.

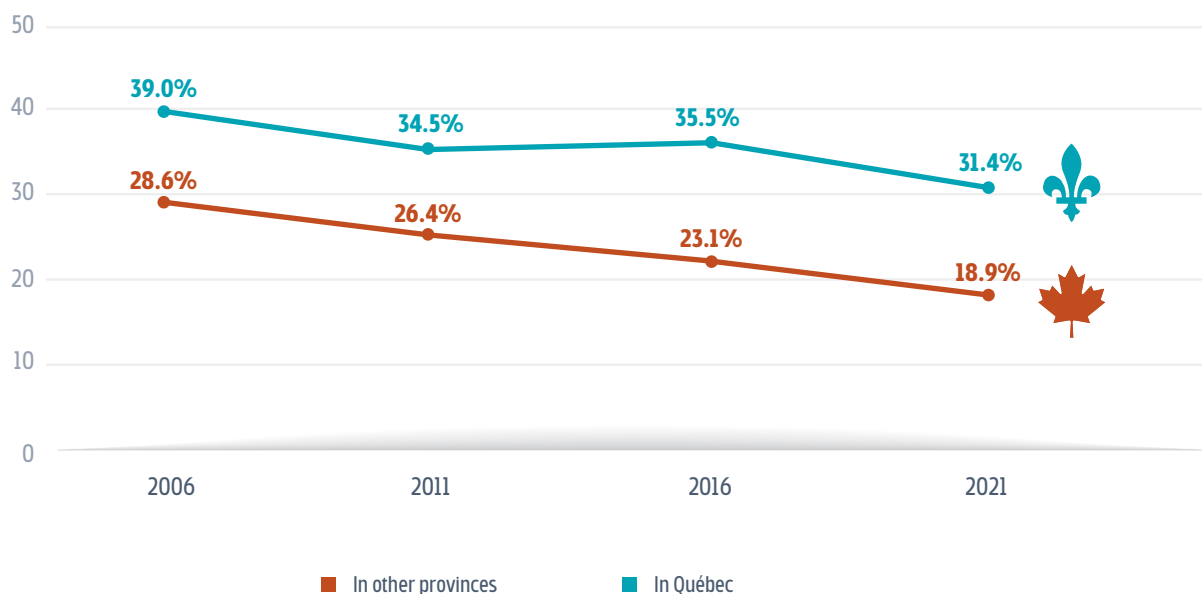
28 In addition, the Ministère does not use the data it has on Indigenous students in the school system for analysis and evaluation purposes. Nor does it share it with school bodies. In addition, the data available is incomplete. For example, it is difficult to obtain information on Indigenous students who attend the school system, but who do not live in an Indigenous community or declare English or French as their mother tongue. All this means that the MEQ is unable to measure the outcomes of its actions to promote the success of these students, or to justify their importance in relation to the number of Indigenous students in the school system. Yet, the amounts it pays out are increasing, from \$3.9 million in 2017-2018 to \$16.1 million in 2022-2023. This issue of data availability has been raised many times, both by the school bodies and in various reports.

29 Furthermore, in 2021, the MEQ made a commitment to the Provincial Round Table to provide training on Indigenous realities to the Ministère's branches in order to raise their awareness and make their actions beneficial to the First Nations and Inuit. However, training is only offered to branches that request it, with the result that only 7% of the Ministère's staff and only three managers took such training in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. And yet, this training could benefit them in their role of developing policies and guidelines to guide the school system's actions.

Persistent gap in success rates without significant improvement in student performance

30 As stated earlier, the MEQ has recognized a gap in success rates of Indigenous students since at least 2005. However, little improvement can be observed among Indigenous students compared to that of all students combined and other groups of students with a gap in success rates. In addition, as Figure 7 shows, since 2006, Québec has had a higher rate of Indigenous people without a certificate or diploma than all Canadian provinces combined. In 2021, this rate was still over 30%. Québec is also the province that has seen the least improvement, with an average improvement of 19% compared to 34% in the other provinces. Results by province for 2021 are presented in the Additional Information section.

FIGURE 7 Proportion of the Indigenous population aged 25 to 34 without a certificate or diploma in Canadian provinces, from 2006 to 2021¹



1. In Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan, Métis groups and associations have constitutional status. Data for this population have been included for these provinces.

Source: Auditor General of Québec based on data from Statistics Canada.

FINDING 2

The support provided to Indigenous students, for example when transferring from a school in their communities to one in the Québec school system, is neither sufficient nor adapted to their needs.

What we found

31 Analysis of Indigenous students' needs transitioning from a school in their communities to a school in the Québec school system is deficient, in particular because it does not take into account the differences between the school systems' education programs. In addition, the educational paths of many Indigenous students are modified as soon as they enter the system, even if their school record does not always indicate such a need. At the secondary level, the modification of paths may lead some students to take Work-Oriented Training Paths which do not lead to a secondary school diploma.

32 Difficulties with French-language skills complicate the educational paths of Indigenous students, but few of them have access to linguistic support in the French school bodies audited. The support provided to these students to help them improve proficiency in French are also less intensive than that for students from immigrant backgrounds. Moreover, the amounts allocated by the MEQ to provide these services are minuscule for non-Francophone students from non-immigrant backgrounds.

33 Lastly, at the secondary school level, Indigenous students who are at risk or have learning difficulties benefit little from the complementary educational services (e.g., special education professionals and remedial teachers) available in the schools.

Why this finding matters

34 According to the Ministère, transitions require adjustments by the educational institutions, which must take various factors into account to ensure a harmonious transition that fosters student engagement and motivation, and, by extension, student perseverance and success. To do this, it considers that institutions must get to know the student, and analyze their needs and situation in order to adapt the actions accordingly. Similarly, the transmission and sharing of relevant information—for example on the student's educational path and learning progress—between the various stakeholders, including parents and organizations outside the school, are effective transition practices. Continuity in pedagogical and evaluation practices also contributes to a smooth transition.

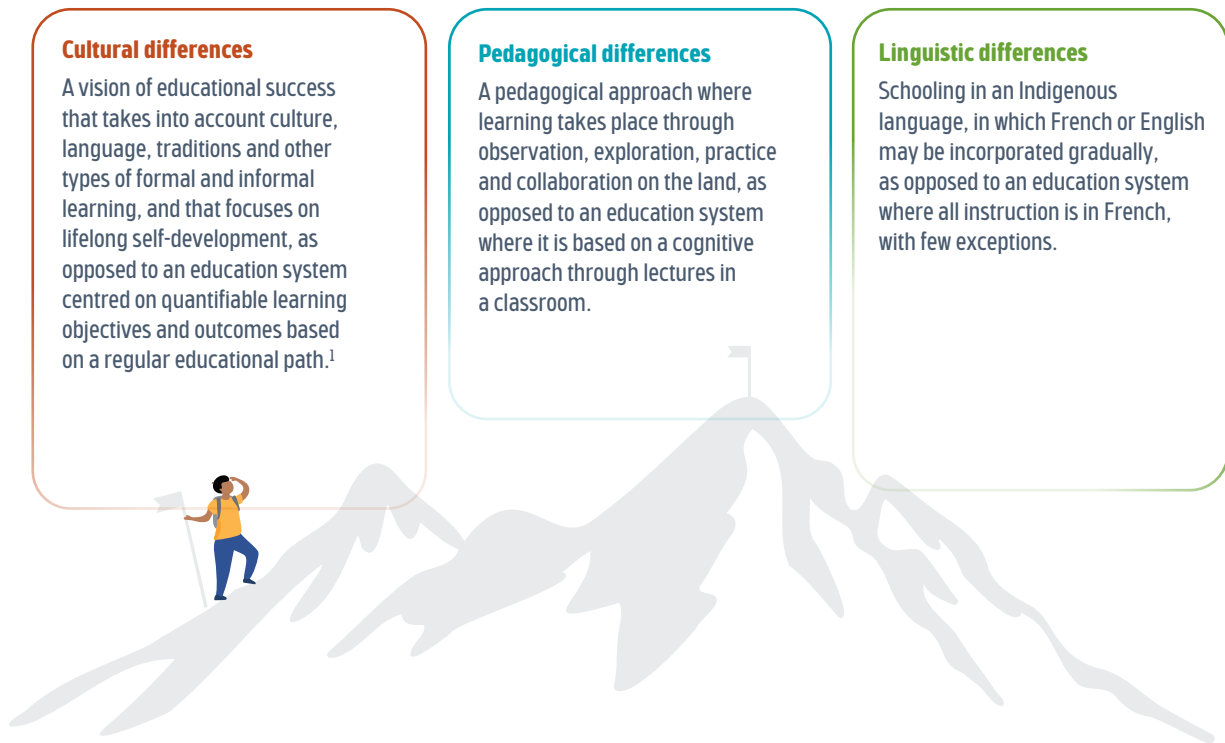
35 The MEQ lays out school transitions, which correspond to the passage from one education level to another, for example from elementary to secondary school. However, many Indigenous students experience frequent and complex transitions, with issues that go beyond education level changes. These students face cultural, pedagogical and linguistic differences. Figure 8 shows the challenges they face when moving from a school in their communities to one in the Québec school system. From 2017-2018 to 2022-2023, we estimate that 40% of the 6,213 Indigenous students who attended the Québec public school system⁴ experienced at least one complex transition during their educational path.

Complex transitions

For Indigenous students, this means moving from the school system in their own community to that of the Québec school system. These transitions are sometimes necessary, for example when their community's educational services do not cover all the elementary and secondary grades.

4. Students who attended schools in Cree and Kativik school boards as well as the Naskapi school were not taken into account because the legal framework of these schools is different.

FIGURE 8 Challenges associated with transitions between schools in First Nations or Inuit communities to one in the Québec school system



1. According to the MEQ, a student's regular educational path in the Québec school system begins at age 6, in Cycle 1 of elementary school, and ends at age 16, in Secondary 5.

Illustrations: Freepik image bank.

36 Many Indigenous students must study in a language other than their own, and French (or English) is often their second or even third language. In fact, 65% of the 6,213 estimated Indigenous students who attended the Québec public school system from 2017-2018 to 2022-2023 declared an Indigenous language as their mother tongue. This is an issue to consider, since in Québec,⁵ no secondary school diploma can be issued to a student who does not have the knowledge of spoken and written French required by MEQ programs. To obtain a secondary school diploma, students must successfully complete the Secondary 5 course in French as the language of instruction or as a second language.

37 Complementary educational services and welcoming services and support in learning French play an especially important role in the educational success of Indigenous students. Under the *Education Act*, school bodies are responsible for establishing a program for each student service and special educational service, and schools are responsible for their implementation, including the provision of services tailored to the students' needs.

5. Special rules apply to students attending schools in communities in territories under agreement (Cree School Board, Kativik School Board and Naskapi school).

What supports our finding

Inadequate analysis of student needs during complex transitions

38 The public schools we visited do not have enough information about students who are going through a complex transition to be able to determine their needs as soon as they arrive and provide adapted services. According to our analysis of the files, in 17% of cases (19 students out of 110), the school had no information on the student, not even a report card from the school in the community, and in 51% of cases (56 students out of 110), the report card was the only document the school had. While the report card provides a minimum of information about the student, including grades and academic progress, it is not sufficient to enable the proper identification of the student's needs, nor to understand the differences between the school systems' education programs. Moreover, these differences are rarely taken into account by the Québec school system, which is slow to provide support to foster the success of students whose educational achievements do not correspond to the requirements of MEQ programs of study.

39 Here are two concrete examples that illustrate the importance of analyzing a student's needs beyond the information in their report card, in order to properly integrate the student into their new school in the Québec school system:

- In the first case, report cards from the school in the community showed that the student had taken French as a second language in grades 1 and 2, and French as the language of instruction in Grade 3. However, there was nothing in the report cards to indicate the French skills he had acquired over the three years, or his level of knowledge of the French language in relation to the requirements of MEQ programs for the French school system. Since his Grade 3 report card indicated that he had done well in French, no support was offered to him when he entered the Québec school system for Grade 4. The student suffered major setbacks from the start of the school year, and it wasn't until December that he was offered the services of a remedial teacher for approximately 30 minutes a week until June. During the school year of his integration, this student benefited from a total of just 12 hours of remedial educational services. Unfortunately, he failed Grade 4.
- In the second case, the only report card available from the school in the community, that of Grade 4, showed that the student had taken a French as a second language course, but no English course when he entered the English school system in Grade 5. The school had no other information on the student's prior educational experience. According to our research, the school attended by this student in the community incorporates French as a second language from Grade 4 and English from Grade 5. This student received no support during the school year of his integration into the Québec school system, even though difficulties in French and English were noted from the moment of his arrival.

40 In most of the cases analyzed, the schools did not take any steps to offset the lack of information, even though such measures do exist to profile the student and determine their needs as soon as they arrive at the new school, such as the implementation of a welcoming protocol.

Welcoming protocol

According to the MEQ, the implementation of a welcoming protocol is one of the support services that can be offered to students newly enrolled in Québec public schools. This protocol includes an initial interview with the student and their family to gather the information needed to draw up a profile of the student. An evaluation of the student's language skills can also be done when the new student has to develop in an educational environment where the language of instruction is not their own.

One school body audited has developed a welcoming protocol for Indigenous students, which was implemented as of the 2023-2024 school year. One of the aims of this protocol is to determine students' linguistic support needs.

41 Moreover, in 75% of cases (40 students out of 53⁶) where the school in the community had put in place an individualized education plan for a student, the adjustments or specialized services the student was receiving were not maintained by the school in the Québec school system. In 19 cases, the student's individualized education plans were simply not obtained by the new school. In the remaining 21 cases, the support measures were abandoned without justification.

42 Lastly, the schools we visited rarely evaluate the language skills of Indigenous students who declare a mother tongue other than French upon arrival. However, this evaluation is necessary when a student first enrolls in a Québec school where instruction is given in French to determine the student's linguistic support needs.

6. We analyzed a total of 110 files of Indigenous students who had transferred from a school in their community to one in the Québec school system. Of these 110 students, 53 had benefited from an individualized education plan put in place by the school in their community.

Special education or grade repetition due to lack of adapted tools and solutions

43 Inadequate evaluation of Indigenous students' needs, which in particular fails to take into account differences between the school systems' education programs, sometimes leads schools in the Québec school system to consider that Indigenous students are behind academically. Accordingly, 40% of the students whose files we analyzed (44 out of 110) had their educational path modified when they entered the Québec school system. For example, students were integrated into a specialized class or made to repeat a year as soon as they entered the system. In the schools we visited, integration into a specialized class or repeating a year was not justified or consistent with the recommendations of the school in the community in 50% of cases (22 students). Here are two examples to illustrate the situation:

- In the first case, the student was in Grade 3 in a school in the community when he arrived in the Québec school system during the year. He underwent a remedial evaluation at the request of the school administration to support a decision to place him in special education and confirm an accumulated academic delay of more than two years. However, this evaluation does not mention that the student had attended French as a second language course at his former school. As the expectations evaluated were those of the MEQ French as the language of instruction program, it was considered that too many notions had not been acquired, and it was recommended that the student continue on an individualized path.
- In the second case, the student was immediately integrated into a specialized class as soon as he entered the system, in Secondary 1, even though the report card from his school in the community showed no failures and recommended that he continue learning in the regular program.

44 We must underline that decisions that have the effect of modifying a student's educational path, including placement in a specialized class, are rarely reversible. Only 3 out of 22 students returned to a regular stream after a modification in their educational path. Generally speaking, the initial decision is endorsed over the years by the schools, which consider previous decisions to be appropriate. Note that Work-Oriented Training Paths do not lead to a secondary school diploma.

45 These unfounded decisions are no stranger to the fact that tools and solutions adapted to the specific needs of Indigenous students are limited. The MEQ does provide tools and solutions, but these are geared towards supporting students from immigrant backgrounds and Indigenous students have little access. This is the case of the *Intégration linguistique, scolaire et sociale* program, which is a preparatory program developed to facilitate linguistic, social and educational integration, designed for students who are unable to follow instruction in French. This program allows modified expectations in all other school subjects, most often temporarily, during the period of integration and adjustment to the Québec school system. This is a promising means that can be used before considering the student's return to the regular stream at the appropriate time, following a situational analysis carried out by a multidisciplinary team.

Special education

Special education aims to adapt educational services to students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties in a way that promotes their success, taking into account their abilities and needs. In some situations, decisions may have an impact on the student's educational path, such as modifying learning objectives and expectations associated with the Québec Education Program requirements, or placing the student in a specialized class. Starting in Cycle 2 of secondary school, Work-Oriented Training Paths are offered to meet the needs of certain students.

***Intégration linguistique, scolaire et sociale* program**

The evaluation framework of the *Intégration linguistique, scolaire et sociale* program differs from that of regular Québec programs of study. Evaluation is based on levels rather than annually. This means that students can learn at their own pace, depending on their age and previous schooling.

46 While Indigenous students may experience similar issues to those of immigrant students, their realities and needs differ. For example, in one of the school bodies audited, the majority of Indigenous students declare French as their mother tongue, and therefore do not meet the established criteria for receiving linguistic support. However, we were told by some of the school body’s practitioners that these students would still need support, as their French shows major structural differences from the language of instruction. Students may also declare an Indigenous language as their mother tongue, but since they were educated in French at the school in their community, they are considered capable of continuing their education in French without the option of benefiting from more flexible arrangements.

Insufficient support in French to promote graduation

47 According to our analysis of Ministère data, success in MEQ French programs is more difficult to achieve for Indigenous students than for non-Indigenous students whose mother tongue is neither French nor English (Table 1).

TABLE 1 Secondary 5 French courses success rate, language of instruction and second language¹

	Language of instruction				Second language			
	Indigenous students ²		Non-Indigenous students whose mother tongue is neither French nor English		Indigenous students ²		Non-Indigenous students whose mother tongue is neither French nor English	
	Total number	Success rate (%)	Total number	Success rate (%)	Total number	Success rate (%)	Total number	Success rate (%)
2017-2018	80	56	6,599	80	51	45	791	89
2018-2019	75	71	6,812	80	64	59	798	93
2021-2022	62	58	8,596	76	86	22	792	88
2022-2023	52	83	9,202	77	108	32	781	88

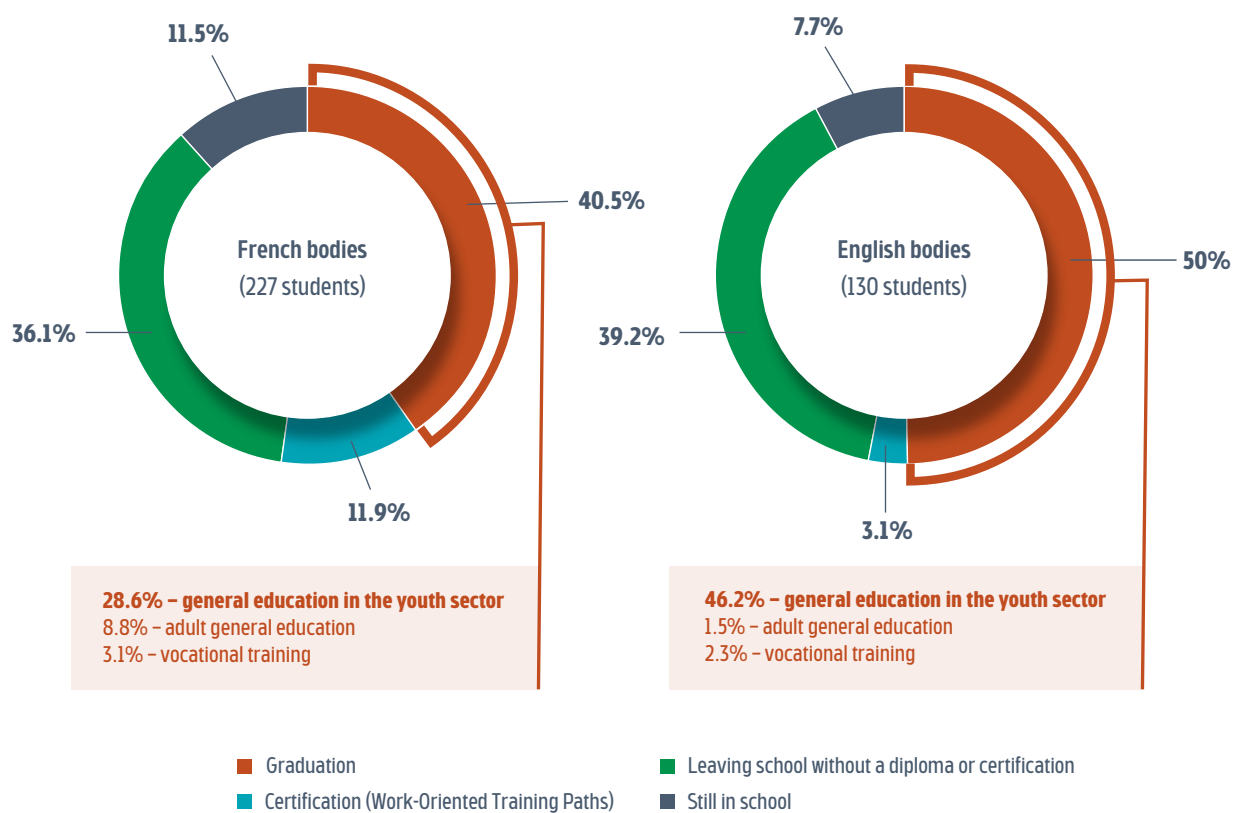
1. This is the success rate for students who took the French uniform examination in June. The school years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 were not considered because the ministerial examinations were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. All the Indigenous students we identified were considered, including those who declared French or English as their mother tongue.

Source: Auditor General of Québec based on MEQ data.

48 Even though the gap in success rates is larger for French as a second language course, the proportion of Indigenous students graduating with a diploma in general education in the youth sector is higher in the schools of the English school bodies audited. In the French school bodies audited, difficulties in French have a greater impact on students' academic progress. As shown in Figure 9, of the 227 Indigenous students we identified from the 2014-2015 to 2016-2017 cohorts, 54 (24%) had taken Work-Oriented Training Paths or graduated from adult general education or vocational training, and 108 (48%) had still not obtained a diploma or certification 7 to 10 years after starting secondary school.

FIGURE 9 Indigenous students paths from the 2014-2015 to 2016-2017 cohorts for the school bodies audited



Source: Auditor General of Québec based on MEQ data.

49 Despite the substantial gap in success rates of Indigenous students, linguistic support was not widely available for them and, where it was, the support provided was less intensive⁷ than that provided to students from immigrant backgrounds. In addition, while a significant proportion of immigrant students benefited from such services, few Indigenous students had access to them (Table 2). Detailed information on the two types of linguistic support provided in the school system is presented in the Additional Information section. Linguistic support in French is offered only in schools belonging to French school bodies.

7. According to the MEQ, intensive support is provided for at least one period per day or the equivalent.

TABLE 2 Percentage of students with access to linguistic support in French school bodies audited¹

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Indigenous students	12 ²	14 ²	9	8	6	10
Immigrant students	28	27	35	33	32	46
Gap	16	13	26	25	26	36

1. These are Indigenous students and first-generation immigrant students who declared a mother tongue other than French.
2. In one of the three school bodies audited, no linguistic support was provided to Indigenous students in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

Source: Auditor General of Québec based on MEQ data.

50 And yet, many Indigenous students encounter difficulties related to linguistic integration. In 65% of the 40 files of students who declared an Indigenous mother tongue that we consulted in the French school bodies audited, we noted a difficulty related to proficiency in French. In the majority of cases, these students were not receiving linguistic or complementary support services. Difficulties in French, particularly when French is the language of instruction, can have repercussions on learning other school subjects that require reading and writing skills.

Difficulties related to linguistic integration

For example, this means needing help to understand the meaning of French subject-specific instructions and vocabulary like *Encercler*, *Entourer* and *Souligner*.

51 The MEQ provides allowances to French school bodies to set up linguistic support.⁸ It is then up to each school body to determine how the money is used and distributed to the schools. However, the amounts allocated per non-Francophone and non-immigrant student, such as Indigenous students, are minuscule. From 2018-2019 to 2021-2022, the allowance amounted to approximately \$80 per student, per school year. In 2022-2023, this could reach \$450 per student, per school year. In comparison, an additional \$6,813 is allocated for students from immigrant backgrounds when they first enrol in the system. The funding gap for linguistic support between school bodies serving mainly Indigenous students and those serving immigrant students is therefore significant.

52 In addition, the French as a second language support allowances allocated to school bodies in the English system do not cover the French linguistic support needs of Indigenous students either, since they are intended solely for students from outside Québec. As a result, English school boards receive no financial support to help Indigenous students succeed in French.

8. In 2022-2023, the total amount granted came from the addition of three amounts: the amount for new immigrant students, the amount for non-Francophone students and, where applicable, an amount to enhance the allowance so that all school bodies receive a minimum allowance. The total amounts for new immigrant and non-Francophone students are based on the average number of students, calculated over two previous years. The number of new immigrant students is also weighted to take into account certain factors, such as the education level on arrival.

Little access to complementary services in secondary school

53 Services can be offered to Indigenous students who are at risk, or have a handicap, social maladjustments or learning difficulties. These complementary educational services, which include services from special education professionals or remedial teachers, are intended to help students progress in their learning.

54 In secondary school, Indigenous students who are at risk or have learning difficulties benefit little from these complementary services. In the files we analyzed,⁹ access to these services declined in secondary school. While it was possible to confirm that a student was receiving services at elementary level, thanks to an individualized education plan or a service summary sheet, it was not possible to confirm this at secondary level in 76% of the files for at-risk students or those with learning difficulties (42 out of 55 students).

55 The absence of information in the files increases the risk of repeating ineffective actions to support students' educational success. In a context where interventions can be carried out at different times in a student's educational path, by different stakeholders, the school must make every effort to ensure that interventions are consistent, followed up on, and in line with actions already undertaken. Furthermore, the special education policies of the school bodies audited specify that practitioners are responsible for noting and sharing information about students, including the interventions they carried out.

Initiative at a secondary school

Students considered at risk of failure after the first communication are withdrawn from certain courses, at the rate of three 60-minute periods per nine-day cycle, to receive additional support in a subject that must be passed to obtain a secondary school diploma.

9. We selected 94 files of Indigenous students at risk or with learning difficulties (39 in elementary school and 55 in secondary school), excluding students placed in a specialized class or who had taken Work-Oriented Training Paths.

FINDING 3

Few actions have been taken to ensure a safe and culturally relevant learning environment for Indigenous students, despite commitments and recommendations to this effect.

What we found

56 Various initiatives can help schools provide Indigenous students with a safe and culturally relevant environment.

One of these is the hiring of liaison officers in schools to facilitate the bond of trust and encourage Indigenous students' engagement. However, in the school bodies audited, there were few liaison officers in the schools visited, despite the Ministère's commitments in this regard.

57 The training provided to school staff on Indigenous realities is not sufficient.

Moreover, most of the staff we met who worked with Indigenous students had not received any training on the realities of Indigenous students.

58 Although it has been shown that understanding Indigenous realities is an important factor for establishing a safe and trustworthy environment for Indigenous students, the inclusion of Indigenous cultures and contributions into curriculums has still not been completed. Yet this need has been mentioned in various reports since 2007.

Safe and culturally relevant environment

In particular, this means ensuring egalitarian relationships that respect identity, languages, cultures and values. This may involve a liaison officer playing a direct role with the student and their family, or offering Indigenous and non-Indigenous students early awareness-raising activities on arts and culture, the evolution of human thought, and the diversity of cultures and civilizations. The Sustainable Development Commissioner's observations on this audit go into more detail on the cultural safety process.

Why this finding matters

59 As the MEQ states in its 2017 Policy on Educational Success, educational settings must offer a welcoming, safe and caring environment, and they must take families' needs and realities into account, particularly regarding their cultural and linguistic differences. As for Indigenous students, the MEQ recognizes in this policy the need to strengthen their identity and underscores that these students must be able to develop in a learning environment that is safe and culturally relevant.

60 A number of researchers, including those at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique, have stated that the relationship of trust between students and school staff, as well as cultural recognition, have a decisive influence on the academic success of Indigenous students. The MEQ shares this vision, specifying in the Policy on Educational Success that the quality of the staff-student relationship has a leveraging effect, notably on student engagement, perseverance and ultimately educational success. The Ministère considers it important to create a bond of trust with students and to offer a caring presence, especially for Indigenous students. The presence of a liaison officer is one of the actions recognized for achieving this. It's also important for school staff to be aware of the realities faced by Indigenous students, and to intervene appropriately.

61 According to our audit work, historical factors can create additional challenges for Indigenous students, which schools need to consider. For example, the mistrust of some families towards the Québec school system, in particular due to the historical presence of Indigenous residential schools, the last of which closed in Québec in 1979, must be considered. Further details are provided in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's summary in the Additional Information section.

62 Lastly, several reports, including that of the National Assembly's Committee on Education on Indigenous school success published in 2007 and that of the Viens Commission published in 2019, have called for action on the need to adjust curriculum content to integrate more Indigenous history and culture. Notably, they demonstrated that understanding Indigenous realities is important for establishing a safe and trustworthy environment for Indigenous students.



What supports our finding

Few liaison officers to facilitate the bond of trust and student engagement

63 The Ministère's budgetary measures make it possible to hire a liaison officer to assist Indigenous students and their families in the students' educational path and support them when they encounter difficulties. In fact, the MEQ had planned specific funding for the hiring of such resources in 10 school bodies, including 4 of the school bodies audited, in response to a measure in the 2017-2022 Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit.

64 However, in 2022-2023, five years after the release of this action plan, fewer than half of the schools we visited employed a liaison officer to support Indigenous students and their families (Figure 10).

FIGURE 10 Schools with a liaison officer in 2022-2023 among those visited

School bodies audited 	School body 1		School body 2		School body 3		School body 4			School body 5			
	School A	School B	School A	School B	School A	School B	School A	School B	School C	School A	School B	School C	School D
Presence of a liaison officer in the schools visited 	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗ ¹	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓

1. This school employed a liaison officer in 2023-2024.

65 In schools where a liaison officer was present, several staff members mentioned the positive impact of this resource in creating a bond of trust with the student and their family.

66 On the other hand, it would be necessary to better define the tasks of this type of liaison officer, as well as the skills required to carry out this role. In several of the job descriptions used to recruit them in the school bodies audited, the focus is on intervention with a clientele presenting behavioural problems, rather than on the cultural safety approaches targeted by the action plan. In addition, some job postings do not require relevant Indigenous experience or knowledge, or only mention this as an asset.

67 The MEQ has not yet defined the role of liaison officers, although it consulted its network of First Nations and Inuit respondents¹⁰ in winter 2023 to define the competencies as well as the roles and responsibilities of these officers. The “draft” version of the document produced in February 2024 as a result of these consultations features content that would be highly relevant to school bodies looking to hire their first liaison officer. It contains objectives and examples of tangible actions. This document could also help school bodies produce relevant job descriptions.

Insufficient staff training

68 The 2017-2022 Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit underscored the importance of culturally relevant and reassuring interventions for Indigenous students, and targeted staff training as a means of achieving this goal. Moreover, school bodies have an obligation to support their staff to enable them to deliver quality services, notably by providing capacity-building training.

10. This is a committee set up by the MEQ in 2021 to ensure the sharing of information on Indigenous students between the Ministère and the school system. One representative per school body usually attends meetings.

69 The school bodies audited offered training and cultural activities to certain staff members. However, our interviews with school staff revealed that such training is not sufficient and is not necessarily structured to enable staff to recognize cultural behaviours in order to act and react appropriately. Furthermore, most of the staff we met who worked with Indigenous students had not received any training on the realities of Indigenous students.

70 Such training can help understand the causes of certain behaviours and provide tools for better intervention. For example, some of the staff we met noted that Indigenous students are sometimes labeled as shy, that place less importance on school attendance, or whose parents are rarely involved with the school.

71 Furthermore, in 2019-2020, the MEQ set up a specific budgetary measure for the awareness of Indigenous realities among school staff. However, few schools are taking advantage of this measure. In the 13 schools we visited, 8 did not use it in either 2021-2022 or 2022-2023.

Inspiring initiatives in school bodies audited

- Some schools in one school body include a support service featuring a cultural component in the Indigenous students' schedule.
- In three school bodies, a staff member is responsible for supporting school staff working with Indigenous students.
- All the schools we visited mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. This day, also commemorated as "Orange Shirt Day," is an opportunity to address the history and effects of residential schools.
- In 5 of the 13 schools visited, a room is available for Indigenous students to meet in an Indigenous cultural space where a resource person is available for them.

Partial inclusion of Indigenous realities into curriculums and difficult access to teaching tools

72 In its report on the school success of Indigenous students, published in 2007, the National Assembly's Committee on Education recommended that the Ministère adjust the content of its programs of study to include elements of skills to be developed in connection with Indigenous cultures. The Viens Commission, whose report was published in 2019, also called on the MEQ to take action to enrich the curriculum and introduce concepts related to Indigenous history and cultures earlier in students' educational path. Yet in 2024, the inclusion of elements related to Indigenous realities into curriculums has not been completed.

73 The new *Culture and Citizenship in Québec* program, which replaces the *Ethics and Religious Culture* program and which was integrated into the education program on an optional basis in 2023-2024, and made mandatory from 2024-2025, was designed in response to these recommendations. This program introduces students to Indigenous cultures from the first year of elementary school to Secondary 5, with the exception of Secondary 3. However, we found that the first “compulsory” elements relating to Indigenous peoples are only taught in Secondary 2. In other years, elements on Indigenous cultures are presented in the program’s appendix and are outlined as optional elements, and it is up to teachers to decide whether or not to include them. In our interviews, we found that some teaching staff felt uncomfortable with certain topics related to Indigenous cultures, and preferred not to discuss Indigenous themes if they did not have to.

74 Furthermore, the History of Québec and Canada program for Secondary 3 and 4 students now covers the residential school period and the signing of agreements in Québec. It was revised in 2017, in consultation with representatives of Indigenous peoples. On the other hand, it is not yet planned that the curriculum used in elementary Social Sciences programs (Geography, History and Citizenship Education), which have been in force since 2001, will be revised as recommended by the Viens Commission in particular.

75 In recent years, tools and guidelines have been developed to support teachers in the use of culturally relevant school materials and content. However, they are not easily accessible, and their use depends on the teacher’s goodwill. Our interviews with teaching staff showed that the vast majority of teachers were unaware of their existence, and when they were, it was often because they had done their own research or had been told about it by another staff member, in particular the liaison officer.

Initiative in one of the schools visited

One school offers an Indigenous history course to Secondary 5 students.

Practices in other provinces

British Columbia:

- The Ministry of Education and Child Care has been developing courses in collaboration with Indigenous representatives since at least 2008.
- Students must complete four credits in Indigenous-focused coursework to graduate from high school.
- The Ministry offers tools for incorporating Indigenous perspectives throughout the elementary and secondary curriculum.

In Manitoba, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning has made available a collection of resources to facilitate the teaching of the residential schools’ history.

FINDING 4

Funds intended for Indigenous student success are not allocated on the basis of regional needs and realities, and funding methods do not allow for the implementation of sustainable actions.

What we found

76 Some budgetary measures are specifically designed to promote the perseverance and success of Indigenous students attending schools in the Québec school system. However, the MEQ does not prioritize funding requests based on regional needs and realities, while the needs estimated by school bodies are greater than the amounts available. As a result, there is no guarantee that the amounts are being allocated to schools where they are most needed. In addition, except for one of the school bodies audited, existing processes made it impossible to establish that the amounts had been used for the intended purposes.

77 Funding methods do not allow for the implementation of sustainable actions. Funding is not recurring and the amounts are confirmed late, which is detrimental to the implementation of long-term projects.

Why this finding matters

78 The amount paid by the MEQ to support school bodies in their interventions to promote the perseverance and success of Indigenous students has quadrupled since 2017-2018, rising from \$3.9 million to \$16.1 million in 2022-2023.¹¹ The budgetary measures governing the payment of amounts are presented in the Additional Information section.

79 Although the total amount granted has increased, it only covers two thirds of the needs estimated by school bodies for 2022-2023. In this context, it is important that the amounts allocated cover the main needs as effectively as possible, and that the right clientele benefits.

11. This amount excludes amounts paid for schools in Cree and Kativik school boards as well as the Naskapi school because these schools do not necessarily benefit from the same budgetary measures.

80 Furthermore, a degree of funding predictability is needed to enable school bodies and schools to plan their staffing levels, hire the resources they need before the start of the school year, or set up capacity-building projects for more than one year.

What supports our finding

Lack of prioritization of requests and monitoring of outcomes

81 To obtain funding under the budgetary measures aimed at fostering Indigenous success, school bodies submit an annual request to the Ministère. They must present an estimate of their needs based on the various issues and realities faced by the students who attend their schools. Here are some examples of issues raised by the school bodies we audited:

- an Indigenous mother tongue;
- isolation of the Indigenous community;
- socioeconomic factors.

82 In practice, these justifications are not taken into account when allocating amounts between school bodies. In general, amounts are allocated on the basis of amounts paid in previous years. In addition, Ministère representatives told us they wanted the amount allocated per student to be the same from one school body to another. However, this can be difficult to apply, since the MEQ does not have reliable data on the number of Indigenous students attending schools in the system.

83 The MEQ has no tools, such as an evaluation grid, to ensure that accepted funding requests propose the most relevant capacity-building projects. And yet evaluation grids are commonly used to assess projects, including those submitted to obtain the allowance for minority-language education and second-language instruction.

84 In addition, with the exception of one of the school bodies audited, existing processes made it impossible to establish that the amounts had been used for the intended purposes. Moreover, the MEQ provides no guidance to school bodies for monitoring and evaluating the impact of projects funded by budgetary measures. As a result, neither the Ministère nor the school bodies can ensure that projects achieve the desired goals.

Funding methods that prevent actions from being sustainable

85 Budgetary measures to support Indigenous students are aimed at implementing actions and strategies to improve their perseverance and success. However, school bodies have to renew their funding requests every year, and no recurrent funding is granted. Accordingly, the actions planned (e.g., setting up a welcoming class or hiring a liaison officer) cannot be integrated into the school bodies' annual planning with certainty, nor can they be planned for more than one year, which undermines the sustainability of the actions.

86 For the 2023-2024 school year, the MEQ indicated in a complementary document appended to its budgetary measures that requests could be the subject of a multi-year commitment if the school body had a strategic plan coordinated with the Indigenous community. However, this new possibility was not specified in the funding request form sent to school bodies, nor in the description of the Ministère's budgetary measures, which limited understanding, according to several of the school bodies audited. As a result, only three of the school bodies audited were able to benefit from a financial commitment for more than one year, even though all of them had needs in this regard and could have been entitled to it.

87 It is all the more difficult for school bodies to ensure the sustainability of planned actions, as confirmation of the amounts granted often arrives late, after staff assignments have been made (Table 3). If their budget isn't confirmed by the time staffing sessions are held, usually in June, it is harder for schools to hire staff in time for the start of the school year. Considering the current recruitment challenges, it therefore happens that there are no longer qualified staff available because they are usually already assigned. For example, in one school we visited, late funding resulted in a position linked to pedagogical and cultural support of Indigenous students seeing a lot of staff turnover in recent years. As the position was posted late, potential staff had already accepted other positions to ensure job security. Moreover, in 2023-2024, this school only managed to fill the position in January, several months after the start of the school year, which limited interventions with students.

TABLE 3 Funding request and confirmation dates, 2017-2018 to 2023-2024

	Requests submitted by school bodies	Confirmation of amounts allocated by the MEQ
2017-2018	May 26, 2017	May 4, 2018
2018-2019	June 8, 2018	December 10, 2018
2019-2020	July 3, 2019	December 19, 2019
2020-2021	July 17, 2020	December 17, 2020
2021-2022	June 18, 2021	August 25, 2021
2022-2023	May 18, 2022	June 23, 2022
2023-2024	May 23, 2023	August 15, 2023

88 School bodies also apply to the federal government for funding under Jordan’s Principle. Some of the school bodies we audited claim that they turn to the federal government because of the long processing times at the MEQ, the red tape and insufficient funding. The federal amounts are paid out quickly, usually within 48 hours. In addition, 11 school bodies have signed contribution agreements with the federal government, further facilitating their access to funding.

89 Table 4 shows the amounts requested from the MEQ by the school bodies audited and the amounts they received from the MEQ and the federal government to provide services to Indigenous students.

Jordan’s Principle

This is an order from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to ensure that First Nations children can access the services they need, when they need them, no matter where they live in Canada. The funding provided under this order can help a wide range of health, social and educational needs. Funding requests under Jordan’s Principle are administered by Indigenous Services Canada.

TABLE 4 Amounts requested and granted to school bodies audited to provide services to Indigenous students, 2022-2023 (in dollars)

	Requested from the MEQ	Granted by the MEQ	Granted under Jordan’s principle
School body 1	3,804,070	1,823,895	615,143
School body 2	2,394,811	1,651,249	45,407
School body 3	1,076,520	1,076,520	285,448
School body 4	3,668,430	1,412,000	884,669
School body 5	797,331	806,331	614,563

90 Although the use of two separate funding envelopes increases the amounts available to provide services to Indigenous students, amounts granted under Jordan’s Principle are often used to fund activities similar to those normally covered by MEQ budgetary measures, such as the hiring of school support staff or a liaison officer. Despite being aware of this practice, the MEQ does not have an overall picture of the services funded under Jordan’s Principle that would normally be covered by its budgetary measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

91 The Auditor General has made recommendations to the Ministère de l'Éducation and the following school bodies: Centre de services scolaire de l'Énergie, Centre de services scolaire de l'Or-et-des-Bois, Centre de services scolaire du Fer, Central Québec School Board and New Frontiers School Board. These are presented below. We invite all school bodies to take inspiration from the recommendations addressed to the school bodies audited, as they may apply to several of them.

Recommendations to the Ministère de l'Éducation

- 1 Develop and implement a strategy or intervention framework to improve the educational success of Indigenous students, particularly in terms of student perseverance and closing the gap in success rates.
- 2 Define and implement specific, measurable indicators, in particular to guide school system actions aimed at improving the educational success of Indigenous students.
- 3 Provide the school system with tools and solutions adapted to the needs of Indigenous students from the moment they arrive and throughout their educational path, to enable transitions that foster student engagement and motivation.
- 4 Accelerate the integration of Indigenous realities into curriculums and facilitate access to educational materials to ensure that all students are made aware of Indigenous perspectives throughout their educational path.
- 5 Develop strategies to provide Indigenous students with a safe and culturally relevant learning environment, including ensuring that school staff receive capacity-building training on Indigenous realities.
- 6 Evaluate existing funding methods to ensure that amounts are allocated at the right time and in line with priority needs and regional realities, and that they enable the implementation of sustainable actions.

Recommendations to school bodies audited

- 7 Implement measures to ensure that Indigenous students attending their schools receive the support they need from the moment they arrive and throughout their educational path.
- 8 Ensure that an Indigenous-sensitive school staff member is available in each school attended by Indigenous students to assist these students and their families throughout the students' educational path and offer them a caring presence.
- 9 Provide school staff with the necessary training on Indigenous realities so that they can recognize cultural behaviours, avoid prejudice and adapt their interventions where necessary.

COMMENTS FROM AUDITEES

The auditees were given the opportunity to submit their comments, which are translated below. The French version shall prevail. We would like to underscore that they have agreed to all our recommendations.

Comments from the Ministère de l'Éducation

The Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (MEQ) acknowledges with great interest the performance audit conducted by the Auditor General of Québec (AGQ). It agrees with the audit recommendations. The MEQ agrees with the AGQ on the importance of supporting the educational success of Indigenous students.

The MEQ would like to underscore that all the measures already in place within school service centres and school boards are accessible to the entire clientele, including the First Nations and Inuit students who attend them.

Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a strategy or intervention framework to improve the educational success of Indigenous students, particularly in terms of student perseverance and closing the gap in success rates.

The challenges faced by Indigenous students are many, and closing the gap in success rates requires sustained action. The MEQ considers that it has implemented actions in favour of Indigenous students. Although adjustments are necessary, these measures aim to have a positive impact in the school system. The ministerial consultations on the educational success of Indigenous students, which took place in spring 2023, enabled the MEQ and its partners to develop a common long-term vision.

Recommendation 2: Define and implement specific, measurable indicators, in particular to guide school system actions aimed at improving the educational success of Indigenous students.

The MEQ is working on improving the estimate of the number of Indigenous students and the availability of data, but the information collected by the MEQ does not include any questions relating to the ethnic origin of students that would allow Indigenous students to be identified. The *Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information* (CQLR, c. A-2.1) (Access Act) stipulates that public bodies may only collect personal information if it is necessary for the exercise of their right and powers or the implementation of a program under their management. Furthermore, many Indigenous communities consider that statistics relating to Indigenous students should be based on the self-identification of these students by nation. That is why work to improve statistics on Indigenous students will have to continue in collaboration with Indigenous partners.

Recommendation 3: Provide the school system with tools and solutions adapted to the needs of Indigenous students from the moment they arrive and throughout their educational path, to enable transitions that foster student engagement and motivation.

The MEQ has set up a network of respondents in each school service centre and school board. Liaison officers also work in some schools, and can support Indigenous students and their families. The MEQ is also sensitive to the linguistic support needs identified by the AGQ. That said, the MEQ also favours measures in schools that benefit all students, such as the provision of complementary services, a dynamic school life including extracurricular activities, teaching support provided by classroom assistants, and the maintenance of an inclusive and caring school climate.

Recommendation 4: Accelerate the integration of Indigenous realities into curriculums and facilitate access to educational materials to ensure that all students are made aware of Indigenous perspectives throughout their educational path.

In November 2021, to follow up on the recommendations of the Viens Commission, the MEQ earmarked \$19.4 million to implement measures to support the production of complementary teaching materials taking Indigenous realities into account, to support Indigenous students and school bodies in school perseverance and school success, and to develop an implementation plan to integrate Indigenous content into ministerial curriculums, in consultation with First Nations and Inuit. The MEQ remains committed to this approach, for the benefit of all students who will have access to an enriched curriculum, and of Indigenous students whose school engagement will be stimulated by access to relevant cultural references.

Recommendation 5: Develop strategies to provide Indigenous students with a safe and culturally relevant learning environment, including ensuring that school staff receive capacity-building training on Indigenous realities.

Training in awareness of Indigenous cultures and realities has been deployed. The Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue's continuing education team has implemented a personalized coaching service, with financial support from the MEQ. A network of First Nations and Inuit respondents and liaison officers has been set up. The MEQ teams organized information and exchange meetings, and shared practices and a variety of resources, including some teaching tools. The MEQ is working to better integrate these measures into the system. Many projects were funded, based on requests from school staff and needs observed locally in each school body.

Recommendation 6: Evaluate existing funding methods to ensure that amounts are allocated at the right time and in line with priority needs and regional realities, and that they enable the implementation of sustainable actions.

Various funding commitments have been taken in recent years, notably in the 2021-2022 Budget Plan: Québec is Resilient and Confident, in which \$37 million over five years was granted to the MEQ to support the success of Indigenous students and ensure equal educational opportunities. The MEQ is also responsible for a measure in the 2022-2027 Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Wellness of the First Nations and Inuit, with funding of \$9.9 million over five years. Among other things, these actions have resulted in increased funding for certain measures in the budgetary operating rules of school service centres. The MEQ accordingly intends to continue optimizing the budgetary rules under its responsibility.

Other MEQ actions to promote the educational success of Indigenous students

The scope of the audit is limited to school bodies established under the *Education Act*, which de facto excludes a considerable portion of the MEQ's annual work with other Indigenous educational bodies. By excluding the Cree School Board, the Kativik School Board, the Naskapi school and schools in First Nations or Inuit communities in territories not under agreement, the AGQ is excluding part of the services provided to Indigenous students in Québec. Every year, nearly 10,000 students attend primary and secondary schools in these communities. These territories present their own unique challenges, as well as separate funding mechanisms. The MEQ is nevertheless also deploying actions to support the success of these students.

In addition, the MEQ is supporting the provision of general adult education services in six First Nations communities not under agreement, which represents a ministerial commitment. The MEQ is also working to adapt its vocational training services. Furthermore, the MEQ provides financial assistance to non-profit organizations for Indigenous students through a support program for partners in education. This program has a special focus on Indigenous students.

Comments from the Centre de services scolaire de l'Énergie

The Centre de services scolaire de l'Énergie agrees with the recommendations made, which are consistent with the actions already in place within our organization to improve our practices and foster the success and perseverance of our Indigenous students, and that of all our students.

In a context of staff shortages, the availability of human resources could become an issue.

Comments from the Centre de services scolaire de l'Or-et-des-Bois

The Centre de services scolaire de l'Or-et-des-Bois (CSSOB) welcomes the report of the Auditor General of Québec and agrees with the recommendations made. We are confident in our ability to carry out those that fall within our competence, based in particular on our commitment-to-success plan. The CSSOB reaffirms its commitment to the success of all students, including First Nations students. We have already implemented local initiatives and taken concrete steps, such as hiring a centralized development officer and liaison officers in certain areas to support our students and their families. The CSSOB will pursue its partnerships with the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, native friendship centres and other community players to support them. Thanks to rigorous planning and adequate resources, we will continue to implement the actions required for their success.

Comments from the Centre de services scolaire du Fer

We agree with the report's recommendations and are already implementing actions in line with them.

However, staff shortages are a major issue in implementing strategies specific to the needs of our Indigenous students. We are open to working with all our partners to improve our approaches.

Comments from the Central Québec School Board

The Central Québec School Board (CQSB) positively welcomes the findings of the Auditor General of Québec's (AGQ) report on the educational success of Indigenous students in its schools and adult education and vocational training centre.

The CQSB takes note of the recommendations to the audited school bodies and will pursue its commitment to the success of Indigenous students. To this end, in consideration of the AGQ report and our actual data, our Indigenous students will continue to benefit from increased support in French as a second language, thereby promoting their success in the ministerial exams and, consequently, maximizing their chances of graduating from secondary school.

At the same time, formal training given by the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue and sanctioned by the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec will be offered to all our school teams by the end of the 2024-2025 school year with a view to providing staff members with professional development on Indigenous cultures and perspectives. Accordingly, our staff will be better equipped to welcome and provide socioemotional and instructional support to our Indigenous students in their educational path.

Furthermore, our school board has had an Indigenous resource person on staff since 2019-2020, who, as a professional, assists school teams in supporting Indigenous families new to our schools. The goal is to build a relationship of trust with school staff and ensure the best possible deployment of services specific to our Indigenous students.

That said, we take the AGQ's findings and recommendations to heart. To support the success of all our Indigenous students even more effectively, we will ensure that our current and future actions always reflect them.

In conclusion, the size of our small school board would not have allowed us to present such a picture of the situation. We therefore see this as an opportunity to improve our methods and benefit from the statistical data processed as part of the audit.

Comments from the New Frontiers School Board

The New Frontiers School Board (NFSB) welcomes the report of the Auditor General of Québec (AGQ) and takes note of the background and findings in the report. The NFSB agrees with the recommendations to the audited school bodies—they reflect the steps already underway and its commitment to the educational success of Indigenous students. The NFSB recognizes the efforts and dedication of its staff in supporting its Indigenous students. With the support of the Ministère de l'Éducation, the NFSB commits to continuing its efforts to respond to the AGQ's recommendations.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Audit objective and scope of work

Entities roles and responsibilities

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Audit objective and scope of work

Audit objective

This independent audit engagement report is part of the November 2024 volume of the *Rapport du Vérificateur général du Québec à l'Assemblée nationale pour l'année 2024-2025* (in French only).

The Auditor General's responsibility is to provide a conclusion as to the specific objective of this audit engagement. To this end, it has gathered sufficient and appropriate evidence on which to base its conclusions and obtain a reasonable level of assurance.

Its evaluation is based on criteria that it considered valid in the circumstances and that are set out below.

Audit objective	Evaluation criteria
Ensure that the MEQ and the school bodies audited have taken effective measures to improve school-related factors in the educational success of Indigenous students.	<p>The funding methods enable the implementation of capacity-building measures for the educational success of Indigenous students.</p> <p>The MEQ and the school bodies audited have taken steps to ensure that Indigenous students attending a school in the provincial system are entitled to the support they need throughout their journey and have access to a welcoming educational environment where they feel valued.</p> <p>The MEQ has established priorities and measurable objectives to evaluate the actions put in place for the educational success of Indigenous students.</p>

The performance audit work in this report was carried out pursuant to the *Auditor General Act* and in accordance with current work methods. These methods comply with the Canadian Standard on Assurance Engagements (CSAE) set out in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance*, in particular the standard on direct engagements (CSAE 3001).

In addition, the Auditor General applies the Canadian Standard on Quality Management 1. As such, it maintains a quality management system that includes documented policies and procedures for compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements. During its work, the Auditor General complied with rules concerning independence and other rules of professional conduct set out in its code of ethics.

Scope of work

This report was completed on 8 November 2024.

The audit focuses on the measures taken by the MEQ and five school bodies to improve school-related factors in the educational success of Indigenous students at the elementary and secondary levels (general education in the youth sector).

During our audit, we conducted interviews with MEQ and school body staff. We also met with principals, teachers and support staff at 13 schools. In all, 145 people were interviewed in the school bodies audited. Indigenous partners and other public administrations were also consulted.

In addition, we analyzed various documents concerning support for Indigenous students and processed data based on information collected between October 2023 and May 2024 in the Ministère's school enrolment information system. We estimated the number of Indigenous students using this system. We considered Indigenous students to be those who had already declared one or more of the following:

- an Indigenous mother tongue;
- a place of residence in an Indigenous community;
- attendance at a school in First Nations or Inuit communities.

Although incomplete, this estimate is currently the most representative.

The school bodies audited and the schools visited (2 to 4 per school body) were selected on the basis of the presence of Indigenous students in the schools, their geographical location and the presence of certain risks.

In accordance with the *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons*, the Cree School Board, the Kativik School Board and the Naskapi Education Committee have special powers, particularly in relation to language and culture. For this reason, schools in territories under agreement were not selected.

Among the Indigenous students we identified in the school bodies audited, we selected 94 students in difficulty (39 in elementary and 55 in secondary school), 110 students who had experienced complex transitions and 28 students who had failed their Secondary 5 course in French as the language of instruction or as a second language. This selection was based on reasoned choice, according to non-statistical criteria, such as integration into the Québec school system during their educational path, or the presence of difficulties. We determined whether support services were available to students by analyzing the files of selected students.

Our work mainly took place between June 2023 and June 2024. It covers the 2017-2018 to 2022-2023 school years. However, some analysis may relate to situations before or after this period.

The results of our audit cannot be extrapolated to all school bodies, but they do give some indications of what the players in the education sector need to take into account, as well as some good practices.

Entities roles and responsibilities

The MEQ's main responsibilities are set out in the *Act respecting the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport*, the *Education Act* and the *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education*. Here are those most relevant to our mandate:

- devise and propose elementary and secondary education policies to the Government;
- certify the secondary education of Québec students, who must meet the requirements of the *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education*;
- establish national indicators for school service centres and school boards;
- establish budgetary rules to provide, among other things, an equitable apportionment with regards to the allocation of subsidies applicable to the operating expenses of school service centres and school boards, and it can prescribe budgetary measures to take account of specific situations or to carry out certain projects;
- encourage consultation and cooperation between departments and agencies and interested persons;
- ensure quality in the educational services provided by school service centres and school boards.

The main responsibilities of school service centres and school boards are set out in the *Education Act*. Here are those most relevant to our mandate:

- establish educational institutions in their territory, to support those institutions and to accompany them by procuring access to the goods and services and offering the optimal conditions enabling them to provide students with quality educational services and ensure their educational success, so that the population may attain a higher level of knowledge, social development and qualification;
- organize the educational services¹² offered in their institutions and ensure their quality as well as the effective, efficient, fair and environmentally responsible management of their human, physical and financial resources;
- contribute, to the extent provided for by the law, to children attending school as required;
- ensure that the persons who come under its jurisdiction are provided the educational services¹³ to which they are legally entitled;
- ensure that the basic school regulation established by the Government is implemented in accordance with the gradual implementation procedure established by the Minister.

12. Educational services offered to students include elementary and secondary instructional services, complementary services (e.g., services from psychoeducators, special education professionals, remedial teachers) and special services (e.g., assistance in learning French).

Indigenous peoples in Québec

The term “Indigenous” refers to the first peoples of North America and their descendants. In Québec, the recognized Indigenous peoples include 41 First Nations (from 10 recognized nations) and the Inuit.

The term “First Nations” has replaced “Indian band” and “Indian reserve.” The term “Indian” is used mainly in certain legal contexts because of its use in the *Indian Act*. First Nations refers to the “Status, Non-Status and Treaty Indians” in Canada.

The 41 First Nations are:

- Anishinabe (Algonquin): 9
- Atikamekw: 3
- Eeyou (Cree): 9
- Innu: 9
- Kanien’kehá:ka (Mohawk): 3
- Mi’gmaq: 3
- Naskapi: 1
- Wendat: 1
- Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet): 1
- W8banaki (Abenaki): 2

The Inuit, who are not “Indians” within the meaning of the *Indian Act*, occupy Québec’s far north, beyond the 55th parallel. There are 14 Inuit villages in Québec. There is also an Inuit population in the community of Chisasibi, which is the permanent site of the Chisasibi Cree.

Figure 11 shows a map of the various Indigenous communities in Québec.

FIGURE 11 Map of First Nations and Inuit villages in Québec



Source: Auditor General of Québec based on information from the web platform "Voices from the Land."

Organization of the Québec school system and educational paths

The regular educational path begins at age 6, in Cycle 1 of elementary school, and ends at age 16, in Secondary 5. Students follow the Québec Education Program (QEP), which at the elementary level is divided into three two-year cycles. Secondary education is divided into two cycles, offering a five-year general educational path leading to a secondary school diploma.

The *Charter of the French language* stipulates that children must attend French schools until they finish secondary school. However, students may attend an English-language school in certain special situations, for example when one of their parents has received elementary or secondary education in English in Canada. The MEQ is responsible for processing applications for eligibility to education in English.

Students who have difficulty meeting the requirements of the QEP (handicapped students or students with social maladjustments or learning difficulties) can follow a modified educational path. They may, for example, be subject to modified learning expectations based on their needs and abilities, or be placed in specialized classes. The modified expectations that will serve as a benchmark for teaching and evaluating students are defined with the goal of helping them to achieve success and progress in their educational path.

If modified learning expectations continue until the end of Cycle 1 of secondary school, when the student is at least 15 years of age, they can then choose to continue their secondary school education in one of the work-oriented programs leading to a training certificate in a semiskilled trade or a prework training certificate.

When a student reaches 16 years of age on the last day of a school year (June 30), but has not completed the five-year secondary school path, they can attend an adult education centre, which will allow them to get their secondary school diploma.

Main commissions of inquiry that addressed educational issues affecting First Nations and Inuit in Québec

This section presents only some of the commissions of inquiry that have addressed First Nations and Inuit education issues.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was created by the Canadian government in the wake of the Oka crisis, which pitted protesters from the Mohawk community of Kanesatake against the Sûreté du Québec and the Canadian army in 1990. The Commission's mandate was to investigate and propose solutions to problems affecting relations between Indigenous peoples, the federal government and Canadian society as a whole. In fall 1996, it released a report setting out 440 recommendations for fundamental change in relations between Indigenous people, governments in Canada and Canadian society as a whole, including the following:

- Aboriginal, provincial and territorial governments act promptly to reach agreements for mutual recognition of programs provided by their respective educational institutions so as to facilitate the transfer of students between educational systems while protecting the integrity of cultural dimensions of Aboriginal education;
- Provincial and territorial ministries require school boards serving Aboriginal students to implement a comprehensive Aboriginal education strategy, developed with Aboriginal parents, elders and educators including, in particular:
 - hiring of Aboriginal support workers, such as community liaison workers;
 - curriculum, in all subject areas, that includes the perspectives, traditions, beliefs and world view of Aboriginal peoples;
 - accountability indicators tied to board or district funding.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, created in 2008, “provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences.” According to the Commission’s final report, published in June 2015, the federal government began establishing residential schools for Indigenous children in the 1880s. In 2008, the Canadian government acknowledged that the two primary objectives of the residential school system were to: “remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture.” The residential school system was introduced later in Québec, in the 1930s. In all, at least 150,000 Indigenous children in Canada were removed from their families and communities to attend residential schools. In Québec, there were 12 federal residential schools and residences, attended by an estimated 13,000 Indigenous children. Most residential schools ceased to exist in the 1970s.¹³

The Commission issued 94 calls for action to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples. In December 2015, the Prime Minister of Canada accepted this report. Calls for action include child welfare, education, health, justice, and language and culture. Call to action 62 is aimed at federal and provincial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, and educators, and includes the following proposals:

- Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students;
- Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

Viens Commission

In December 2016, the Québec government adopted by decree the establishment of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress, known as the Viens Commission. Although education services were not a special focus of the Commission’s final report published in 2019, a few calls for action related to youth education did emerge, including the following:

- Make implementation of student retention and academic success measures for Indigenous students and young people a priority and allocate the amounts required, guided by the needs identified by the Indigenous peoples themselves and complying with their ancestral traditions.

Viens Commission

The Commission’s mandate was to investigate with a view to making recommendations as to the concrete, effective and sustainable measures to be implemented by the Gouvernement du Québec and by the Indigenous authorities to prevent or eliminate, regardless of their origin or cause, any form of violence or discriminatory practices or differential treatments in the provision of public services to the Indigenous peoples in Québec.

13. The dates mentioned may differ from what researchers consider to be the official opening and closing dates of residential schools, and the estimated number of children is not unanimous.

- Further enrich the Québec curriculum by introducing a fair and representative portrait of Québec First Nations and Inuit history, working with Indigenous authorities.
- Introduce concepts related to Indigenous history and culture as early as possible in the school curriculum.

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was launched by the federal government in 2016 as a key initiative to end the disproportionately high levels of violence faced by Indigenous women and girls. The report, tabled in June 2019, includes 231 calls for justice, including one aimed directly at the MEQ, namely:

- That the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur and all educational institutions in Québec to incorporate in the mandatory curriculum training developed together with Indigenous organizations on the socio-cultural, historical and contemporary realities of Indigenous Peoples.

Members of the Provincial Round Table on the Educational Success of Indigenous Students

Organizations linked to the education system

- Association des directions générales scolaires du Québec
- Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Québec
- Centrale des syndicats du Québec
- Central Québec School Board
- Centre de services scolaire de la Baie-James
- Centre de services scolaire du Littoral
- Cree School Board
- Kativik School Board
- Ministère de l'Éducation
- Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur
- Naskapi Education Committee

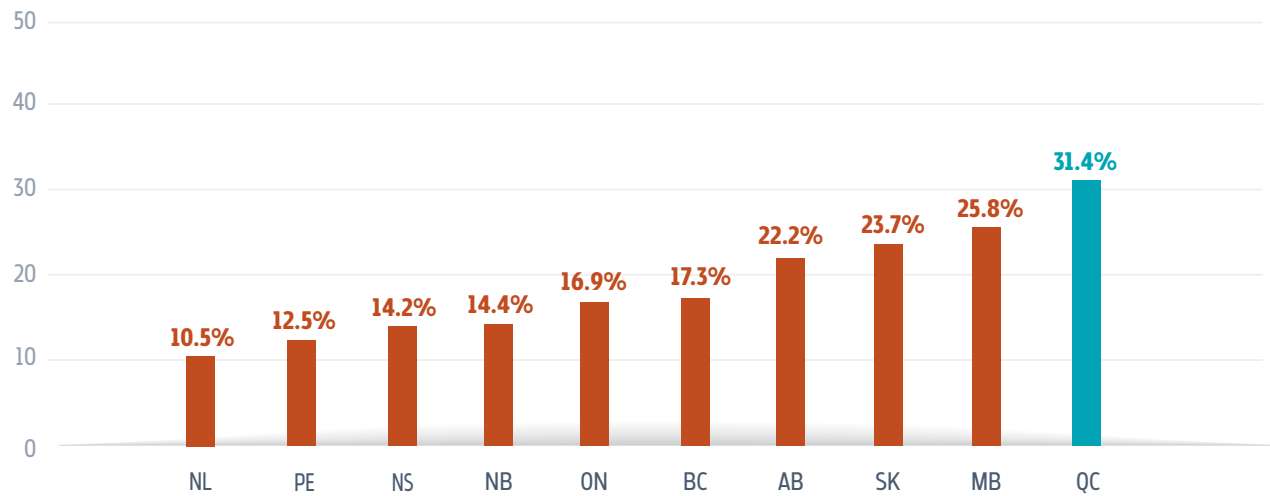
Indigenous organizations

- Centre de développement de la formation et de la main-d'œuvre huron-wendat
- Conseil de la Nation Atikamekw
- First Nations Adult Education School Council
- First Nations Education Council
- Innu TakuaiKAN Uashat mak Mani-utenam
- Institut Tshakapesh
- Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec

Other government organizations

- Indigenous Services Canada
 - Secrétariat aux relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit
-

Proportion of the Indigenous population aged 25 to 34 without a certificate or diploma, in Canadian provinces, in 2021¹



1. In Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan, Métis groups and associations have constitutional status. Data for this population have been included for these provinces.

Source: Auditor General of Québec based on data from Statistics Canada.

Linguistic support in French provided in French schools of the Québec school system

Special services in French include welcoming services and support in learning French and supplementary linguistic support for francisation. They are offered only in schools belonging to French school bodies. Access to these services is a right guaranteed to students under article 1 of the *Education Act*.

Welcoming services and support in learning French

The main goal of these services is to improve the French language skills of students who are unable to follow instruction in French.

These are intensive services offered from the moment students enter the school system until they can follow instruction in French. Evaluation of this ability is based on an instructional decision, endorsed by the school principal and supported by a teacher's assessment.

Welcoming services and support in learning French can be offered within a welcoming class or a regular class.

Supplementary linguistic support for francisation

These services are less intensive than welcoming services and support in learning French, as they are not offered on a daily basis. They are designed for students who are able to follow instruction in French.

Their aim is to improve students' French-language skills. Their aim is also to make students more autonomous in their learning, both orally and in reading and writing, in understanding subject-specific instructions and vocabulary, but also in using effective strategies and work methods that enable them to progress in their French language learning.

This support takes the form of individual or small-group intervention, in or out of class, and can vary from one student to another, as well as over time and from one subject to another.

Budgetary measures for the educational success of Indigenous students

Each year, the MEQ establishes the budgetary rules that determine the operating allowances to be paid to school bodies. It also offers school bodies the possibility of using additional funds to support the educational success of Indigenous students. During the period under review, these amounts were divided between three separate measures. For the 2023-2024 school year, these three measures were merged, and the amount granted was \$18.1 million, roughly the same as in 2022-2023.

Measures	Finding	Description ¹	Examples
Measure 15061 Raising awareness of Indigenous realities	-	Component 1 – Students Projects that foster harmonious relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, particularly those living in close proximity to one another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Visit to an Indigenous community for students ■ Creation of a collective work with an Indigenous artist
	Finding 3	Component 2 – Staff members Projects focused on acquiring or consolidating knowledge about the contemporary realities, lifestyles and traditions of Québec's Indigenous communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enrolment of staff members in training on Indigenous realities
Measure 15062 Educational success of Indigenous students	Finding 4	Projects to increase the educational perseverance and success of Indigenous students, enabling them to reach their full potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indigenous liaison officer ■ Welcoming class project ■ Teaching through applied arts
Measure 15063 Support for Indigenous education in the system	Finding 4	Projects to provide culturally safe and relevant services to Indigenous students to foster their educational success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Resource teacher ■ Special education technician ■ Psychoeducator ■ Remedial teacher

1. These are descriptions of the measures for the 2022-2023 school year.