

ERES

REPORT

Evaluation
of the Reform
at the Secondary
School Level



TO CHART KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

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The progress report is a communication tool that charts the evolution of the various stages expected within the context of evaluation of the ERES project. This first report proposes a brief reminder of the origins of this project and presents the general outline of the progress of data collection conducted among students, their families and school staff. Several items of information concerning the evolution of the project are also included in this first issue.

Origin of the project PROJECT

The ERES project, which is being conducted by a research team from Laval University in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport (MELS), aims to answer the following question: to what extent does the implementation of the new Education Program in high school allow students to increase their commitment to learning, acquire knowledge in the disciplines, develop the targeted skills and improve their motivation and educational success? A more detailed presentation of the study context and its goals and objectives may be found on the project Website (<http://www.eres.fse.ulaval.ca/en/description>) under the heading "Project description."

In order to answer the question above, the team has been working since August 2007 to create questionnaires for participating students, their parents and also for school staff members. At the same time, they have been organizing, planning and carrying out the first collection of data.

of high school will be randomly selected in 2008-2009). All participants received a questionnaire online or on paper, according to their choice. Since April 2008, about 2450 questionnaires have been returned to the research team. The actual response rate is 40% for students and 41.5% for parents. By October, data from these questionnaires will be processed in order to draw a preliminary portrait of each of the first two cohorts. At the end of the questionnaire, parents were also invited to give their opinions on the education program followed by their child. Members of our team are currently reading through all the qualitative comments written by parents in order to compile and process those very useful data items.

Some news about the data collection

... From families

Following the telephone contacts made during 2007-2008, approximately 6030 families from the Province of Quebec (1 student and 1 parent per family) initially agreed to participate in the project. Half of these students were in their fourth year of high school and, therefore, had not been exposed to the new Quebec Education Program. They represent our first cohort. The other half of the students were in their second year of high school and had been exposed to the new education program. They represent our second cohort. (A third cohort starting their second year

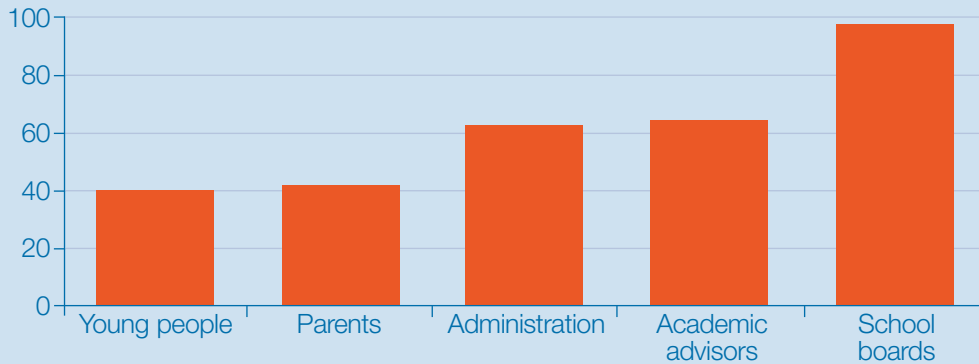
... From school staff

Also during last spring, we asked school principals, educational advisers from schools attended by the targeted students and also school board administrators to fill out an online questionnaire (<http://www.eres.fse.ulaval.ca/en/description/questionnaires>). Up to now, 63% of school principals have answered our request and, in addition, provided us with data about the academic performance of students participating in the project. The response rate of educational advisers is 64% and that of school board administrators 98%. Table 1 presents the participation rates of the various target groups.



Table 1 : Participation rate

RESULTS AT A GLANCE



Miscellaneous information...

School dropout follow-up

Dropping out of school is a reality that cannot be ignored when we discuss the education situation of high school students. According to Education Indicators-Edition 2008, released by MELS: "In 2006, 19% of 19-year-olds were without a secondary school diploma and were not attending school." In order to collect data on the context of school dropouts, one hundred participants, who began high school in 2004-2005 (cohort 1) and dropped out of school in 2007-2008, are being recruited from a list provided by the MELS. They are asked to participate in a telephone interview and complete a questionnaire adapted to their reality. This process will be repeated every year for all three cohorts. These data will provide a comparison between the profile of school dropouts who attended the former education program and those who were part of the new program.

Evaluation of skills in french and mathematics

The question of disciplinary knowledge is central to the education of young people. Within the context of the ERES project, a standardized assessment of knowledge in French and in mathematics is planned for students of our three cohorts. Thus, students beginning their fifth year of high school this year will be sought in the autumn for a mathematics exam. At the end of the school year, the students will take a single French test, which will be managed by the MELS and will inform us about the knowledge gained in that discipline. As with the dropouts, these assessments will be repeated with the second and third cohorts in a comparative perspective.

January report

In January, a preliminary description of cohorts and the various steps expected in this ongoing study will be available.

¹ Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2008). *Education Indicators - 2008 Edition*. Quebec: Government of Quebec, p. 61.

