

# ACCOMPANIMENT - PRACTICE & RESEARCH

Guidelines for Navigating the Research Report

*This document serves as a guideline for navigating the research report: Accompaniment – Practice & Research. Noted here is merely an extraction of key findings. All questions arising from referring to this document should be directed to the [full report on the LCEEQ website](#).*

## CONTEXT

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The initiation of the LCEEQ research project, Accompaniment Research & Practice, was born out of the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec's (MEQ) indication that there might be a creation of an Institute of Excellence in Education in Québec. Discussion was held with the full membership of LCEEQ, followed by a mandate for further investigation of the role LCEEQ could play should there be an official call for proposals. To reflect upon this notion, LCEEQ held a Design Sprint in the spring of 2019. Inviting members of the Committee as well as some of the community at large, this group explored the question: If there was an Institute of Excellence in Education in Québec, how would LCEEQ position itself for the English community?

The Design Sprint yielded a positive outcome suggesting that LCEEQ could become the Institute of Excellence in Education in Québec—conducting research and recommendations for excellence in practice for the English Education Network in Québec. Recognizing that adjustments and structural changes may need to be made to the committee itself, LCEEQ first set out to establish proof of this concept with a research project that would reveal direction in practice in our English Educational Institutions.

With the understanding that the ministry would be providing more support for the retention of new teachers and to build on the existing LCEEQ initiative for school leaders: Leadership for School Improvement, LCEEQ proposed a project to first, understand what the community really needed, and second to provide practical solutions that the school boards access. A grant proposal (Proposal) was submitted to the MEQ and approved.

There were four objectives identified in the grant proposal:

1. Identify teacher mentoring and educational leadership needs in the English Educational Community.
2. Provide access to relevant research on teacher mentoring and educational leadership for stakeholders at all levels;
3. Provide professional development resources and/or opportunities for teachers, administrators and professionals;
4. Influence and inspire decision making regarding teacher mentoring and educational leadership

## RESEARCH OVERVIEW

(Primary source document: [LCEEQ Accompaniment Overview and Phase 1 Needs Assessment Final Report 2021-2022](#))

Upon receiving the funding and the hiring of a project manager, Dr. Trista Hollweck, the research project was launched in early 2020. Guided by the objectives of the grant proposal and the LCEEQ Steering Committee, Dr. Hollweck along with a team of researchers designed three phases of this research.

Using a Developmental Evaluation<sup>1</sup> approach, two teams of educational researchers and practitioners were established. These networks, in an iterative manner, contributed to the formal research and informal exploration of the state of mentoring of new teachers and administrators in Québec. A Development Evaluation Leadership Team (DELT), made up of English university researchers, and a Design Team, comprised of various people from English educational institutions who were implicated in their local mentoring initiatives met on a regular basis to provide feedback on the development of this project.

### Development Evaluation Leadership Team (DELT)

This team was comprised of researchers from McGill, Concordia, and Bishops Universities, and was responsible for the creation of the needs assessment survey and the analysis of its results as well as the design of the study in phases 2 and 3.

### Design Team

This team consisted of various stakeholders from across the English Educational Community, including all School Boards, QPAT, AAESQ, ACES, PROCÉDE, LEARN and the DSREA, among others ([p2](#)). This team met on a regular basis over an 18-month period. Using an appreciative inquiry process the membership engaged in their own professional learning, shared local practices and experiences, debated terminology, gave feedback on the Phase I survey as well as other aspects of the research as it was implemented.

Through an iterative process these two committees designed and outlined the research and provided information on current induction and mentoring initiatives within the system of English Education in Québec ([p10](#)). These key players in the English education community developed a guiding possibility statement:

***Accompaniment for and by educators to foster collaborative professionalism***

For a list of members of both the DELT and Design Teams, see [page 1](#).

For a list of team activities see [page 11](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Developmental evaluation is an approach that aims to help innovators create social change in complex and uncertain environments (<https://whatworks.org.nz/developmental-evaluation/> - accessed November 3, 2022).

This research project was conducted in [3 phases \(p10\)](#).

PHASE I	PHASE II	PHASE III
Needs Assessment	Social Network Analysis	Accompaniment Moments - Interviews

## OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS from ALL THREE PHASES

- Accompaniment Advocate (Facilitator or Project Manager)
- Mentor-Coach Professional Learning Development (Virtual modules)
- New Leaders Professional Learning Development (Virtual modules)
- Accompaniment Professional Learning Network (PLN)
- Accompaniment embedded into the PDIG process (ways to collaborate, mentoring / coaching protocols & processes, etc.)
- Joint research projects (including internships) overseen by LCEEQ
- Knowledge mobilization channels increased within the LCEEQ community

# PHASE I

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## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

### OBJECTIVE / QUESTION

To capture the sense of the current needs of educators across the English education community.

### MEANS

- Online Questionnaire – 44 items
- Total responses: 504
- Teachers: 387
- Administrators: 46
- Consultants: 61
- Directors: 10

### METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire was designed for the researchers to better understand the conditions that support educators flourishing ([p18 – paragraph 1](#)). The researchers used a SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats/Tensions framework for quantitative, qualitative and a mixed method analysis of the data ([p23](#)). A multiple regression analysis was used.

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Four key themes emerged from the analysis of responses

- Theme 1: Québec Context
- Theme 2: Collaborative Professionalism
- Theme 3: Culture of Accompaniment
- Theme 4: Pandemic

# RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

## THEME 1

Québec Context – expertise can be found within the system, but conditions and support must be strengthened ([p28](#)).

### TEACHERS:

- Relationships with colleagues were valued
- Lack of job security and lack of support structures<sup>2</sup> impede practice
- The value of skilled mentors and coaches was highlighted
- There needs to be structured and sustained collaboration
- Opportunities for observation and feedback are needed
- Relevant ongoing Professional Learning & Development (PLD) is needed

### CONSULTANTS, ADMINISTRATORS AND DIRECTORS:

- Consultants reported feeling undervalued
- Administrators reported challenges increased:
  - when there was little collaboration and common resources;
  - and when support structures for teachers were inadequate.
- Directors reported challenges:
  - when their leadership was not viewed as adequate;
  - and when support structures for teachers were inadequate.

## THEME 2

Collaborative Professionalism – areas that would contribute to collaborative professionalism: culture of accompaniment, effective professional learning and development and job security ([p30](#)).

The three most significant variables found to influence Collaborative Professionalism were (in this order)

1. School Culture
2. Professional Learning & Development
3. Permanent Position

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<sup>2</sup> Support Structures are identified as Professional Learning & Development (PLD), collaborative structures, feedback and / or mentoring)

## Other questions explored

- How are teachers collaborating?
  - Informal is most common
- How can communication between stakeholders be facilitated?
  - Leadership quality; guidelines for procedures; politics of voice; coherence and consistency
- How is collaboration supported?
  - Release time was the top mechanism identified for support
- How does collaboration thrive?
  - When it is relevant and pertinent to classroom practice
  - If there is voluntary engagement
  - When there is quality of network relationships

Several questions were focused on the aspect of Professional Learning & Development, the second strongest predictor of Collaborative Professionalism. The participants offered the following elements as being important for PLD:

- Persistent action
- Reflective feedback
- Continuous improvement
- Growth oriented professional feedback
- Contextual and meaningful
- Personalized goal setting
- Sustained, resourced and coherent

The top 3 suggested PLD topics that LCEEQ could support are listed below, but a more detailed list can be found in the main report (p40). Important note: teachers of all stages in their career reported Differentiated Learning as their number one choice.

<b>Teachers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Differentiated Learning</li><li>• Indigenous Education</li><li>• Social Emotional Learning</li></ul>	<b>Administrators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social Emotional Learning</li><li>• Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</li><li>• Classroom Observation</li></ul>
<b>Consultants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Universal Design for Learning</li><li>• Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</li><li>• Competency Assessment</li></ul>	<b>Directors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social Emotional Learning</li><li>• Problem-based Learning</li><li>• Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</li></ul>

For further details on Accompaniment Culture and Job security please review the following sections

- Accompaniment Culture ([p34](#))
- Permanent Position ([p41](#))

### THEME 3

#### A School and System Culture of Accompaniment

Three elements found through aggregated leadership responses significantly predicted a culture of accompaniment:

- The need for teacher support throughout their career
- Integration of teachers in a new school
- Formal feedback for experienced teachers

Although more than half of all respondents reported that the support they received met their needs, three key components were needed to help them flourish in their jobs:

<b>Teachers</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Skilled Mentors/Coaches/Facilitators</li><li>2. Collaborative Structures + Tailored PLD + Observations and Feedback</li><li>3. Tenure</li></ol>	<b>Administrators</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Transparent Funds Allocation</li><li>2. PLD (Leadership, collaboration, Tech)</li><li>3. Resources and Services available</li></ol>
<b>Consultants</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Consensus on approach across the system</li><li>2. Lead PLD of Choice &amp; Professional Feedbacki</li><li>3. Great sense of Autonomy<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Paired Collaboration</li><li>◦ Role sharing</li></ul></li></ol>	<b>Directors</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Resources, Trust &amp; Connection</li><li>2. Collaboration, LPD &amp; Targeted Feedback</li><li>3. Balanced Workload</li></ol>

## THEME 4

Pandemic – COVID strained the system, but new possibilities for teaching and leading arose ([p58](#))

An important note is that overall, when asked whether they enjoyed their job or not, there was a positive response from the participants. Nevertheless, being that the survey was launched in June of 2021, at the height of a world-wide pandemic, responses were reflective of this reality. Both pandemic pitfalls and possibilities are reported.

Considering that international data indicates that the world is facing a shortage of qualified and trained teachers (UNESCO, 2020) the findings from this theme are important to consider. Roughly 1 in 5 teachers who responded to the questionnaire agreed with the statement: I regularly consider leaving the teaching profession.

Using the 3 variables of enjoyment, competence, and confidence as predictors ([p60](#)) of leaving the profession, it was noted that administrators (20%) and teachers (17%) indicated the highest decrease in enjoyment, consultants (14%) had the biggest decrease in confidence and Directors (20) in competence.

On the other hand, the pandemic generated possibilities, mainly the opportunity to collaborate more frequently through virtual means. Working remotely or being able to attend PLD virtually was described as a benefit from the pandemic. A number of respondents commented the removal of uniform exams and subsequent changes in evaluation and reporting practices as a result of the pandemic was a benefit.

## PHASE I RECOMMENDATIONS ([p64](#))

- Leverage expertise in the system
- Foster collaborative professionalism in the system

## LIMITATIONS ([p24](#))

- The questionnaires were customized for the 4 distinct groups of people, and thus comparing groups was deemed too complex.
- Concepts could be better broken down for understanding. For example, the concept of accompaniment is made up of different constructs such as collaboration, welcoming, etc. Capturing separate responses on these constructs could identify their real significance.
- Questionnaire design



## PHASE II

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### SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

(Primary source document: [Phase II - SNA Final Report](#))

#### OBJECTIVE / QUESTION

To what extent do social network structures foster (or constrain) access to support for educators?

#### MEANS

Questionnaires

Total Collected: 175 from 7 school boards

Analyzed: 54; 4 schools from 3 different school boards

Mixed method analysis focused on the structure and nature of networks

#### METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire was framed with network themes: advice, joint-work, efficacy, and close-relationship. An analysis of the results was reduced to only schools with an 80% or more response rate ([p4](#)).

#### RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

- The role of leadership observed in the majority of schools
  - Teachers: centrally positioned to lead joint work
  - Administrators: centrally positioned to support teachers to believe they were capable
- Betweenness – measurement of brokering opportunities
  - Resource/Remedial teachers have very high betweenness and could be seen as agents for innovative or non-redundant information ([p15](#))
  - Administrators: opportunities to promote belief of capability; high betweenness between schools / colleagues to bring non-redundant information back to their school
- Those with few connections
  - Teachers who are not connected, both experienced and new – implies expertise in the school is not being utilized
- The vast majority of respondents feel they have a voice, are entrusted to make decisions, their accomplishments are acknowledged, and they shared beliefs with school about teaching, learning and evaluation.

- Participants suggested strategies to encourage joint work in order to create collective efficacy
  - Develop common priorities based on student needs
  - Make evidence visible of the link between collective efficacy and student learning
  - Create and distribute stories of collective efficacy
  - Provide teachers with time and space to build relationships

## PHASE II RECOMMENDATIONS ([p17](#))

- Further develop leaders' knowledge regarding the impact of network relations: strategies for collaboration and network intentionality
- Ensure succession plans are in place: collaborative work transcends turnover
- Value existing expertise: acknowledgment and sharing of expertise
- Provide opportunities to work together: need time and space for quality work
- Conduct further research ([p17](#))
  - Impact of both positive and negative relationships
  - Reciprocal relationships

## LIMITATIONS ([p17](#))

- Conducted in context of a pandemic
- Could not conduct a comparison across schools
- Self-reporting questionnaire

## PHASE III INTERVIEWS

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(Primary source document: [Phase III - Accompaniment Moments - Final Report](#))

### OBJECTIVE / QUESTION

To understand how educators in the English education community interpret their experience with accompaniment & collaborative professional development

### MEANS

Semi-structured interviews with participants of Phase II

Total Collected: 8 participants

Analyzed: 5 teachers & 3 administrators

Discourse analysis. Each participant submitted one audio-recorded semi-structured interview (Zoom). In total, 450 minutes of interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS (p3)

- Able to learn about sources and context for Professional Learning and Development
  - Sources: 1) Self-initiated, 2) Structured or organized by authority
  - Contexts: 1) Solo; 2) In relationship; 3) Collaborative
- Participants spoke positively of the following effects, largely from self-initiated events:
  - Individual satisfaction and mastery
  - Linking student success to adapting practice
  - Innovation and learning
  - Collaborative planning
- Accompaniment

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Possibilities	Tensions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-initiated mentoring relationships</li><li>• Structured mentoring programs: despite the potential for nurturing accompaniment in structured events, it was not evident in the narratives</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mostly in structured and organized events like PDIG projects, school plans, PLCs, Cycle teams, school and board wide workshops, Educational Projects</li></ul>

## CONSIDERATIONS

Explicit examples of the study were juxtaposed against the significance of school processes and the essential role of the principal in fostering effective collaboration with enabling conditions:

- Goal consensus
  - Mostly discussed with principals – being on the same page, having a shared vision, everyone moving in same direction
- Empowered teachers
  - From administration empowering individual teachers. NOTE: some administrators openly practiced ‘forced collaboration’ which may have an effect of compliance from the teachers.

- Cohesive teacher knowledge
  - Teachers valued building knowledge through collaborative experiences
- Embedded reflective practice
  - Process of collecting evidence to inform practice was absent, nothing systematic
  - Principals expressed apprehension of collecting evidence – as could be perceived as ‘checking in’ on the teachers.
- Supportive leadership
  - Teachers reported mostly emotional support from principal (effect of COVID-19)
  - Teachers felt funding and decisions to implement something was not transparent, i.e., participating in board-wide initiatives, research projects, etc.
  - Administrators felt they were key actors or gatekeepers of knowledge and resources
  - There was an absence of acknowledgment

The use of accompaniment as a strategy for collective efficacy can be driven by asking two questions depending on the kind of initiative:

### PHASE III RECOMMENDATIONS (p14)

- Recognize and expand contexts and experiences of meaningful collaborative learning
- Acknowledge and leverage educator expertise within the school
- Consider the conditions that create intersections between formal PLD initiatives and teacher-led initiatives
- Develop collaborative professionalism for school improvement
- Elicit collective engagement in changing practices and foster collective efficacy
- Design PLD for leaders focused on ways to support co-construction of shared goals, reciprocal learning, discussions of professional lives, self-awareness, and attention to teachers’ needs as learners.
- Foster embedded collective reflective practice across the system