

A photograph of two young students in a classroom. The student on the left is a girl with glasses and a blue shirt, and the student on the right is a boy in a blue and white checkered shirt. They are high-fiving each other. The background is a blurred classroom with other students and a bright light fixture. A decorative blue circular graphic with white dotted lines is in the top left corner.

**ACTING TO FOSTER  
THE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS  
OF GIFTED STUDENTS**

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# INTRODUCTION

The Québec education system takes student diversity and the needs of all students into account. It provides each student with the best possible opportunities for learning along with the support each one needs to develop fully in school and contribute to society as a full-fledged citizen. To further facilitate each student's success, it also has them develop the competencies required for the 21st century.

Gifted students are an integral part of the diversity in Québec schools. Their needs, which are both similar to and different from those of other students, change over time and influence how they learn. In its Policy on Special Education, the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur stressed the importance of facilitating the success of all students including, implicitly, that of gifted students. Meeting their needs has been a concern of the Ministère and the Québec school system for many years.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, a document on the subject of giftedness was published in 1985.

The *Policy on Educational Success*, published in 2017, stated clearly the importance of meeting the needs of gifted students. The vision it presents implies that many factors have to be taken into consideration and assigns priority to the needs of all children and students without distinction, *whether they have handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, live in disadvantaged areas, are gifted or have no particular difficulties.*<sup>2</sup>

1 In 1985, the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec published *Les Élèves doués et talentueux à l'école : État et développement*.

2 Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2017), *Policy on Educational Success: A Love of Learning, A Chance to Succeed*, 21.

In recent years, giftedness has generated substantial interest among the general public and the media. An increasing number of Québec research projects and studies devoted to giftedness have been produced for the public as a whole and, more specifically, for the school system. Education system stakeholders are concerned with the learning support that can be offered to gifted students and have launched a variety of initiatives to meet their needs. On a regular basis, these stakeholders share with the Ministère their plans, challenges and actions to develop these students' full potential.

Schools wish to make wise choices and, accordingly, question their approaches, particularly with regard to the educational progress of gifted students. Much thought has also gone into balancing the different spheres (intellectual, physical and social) of students' lives within the framework of the learning provided for in the Québec Education Program (QEP).

Student retention and the educational success of all students are core concerns of Québec society. If we tend to think that only specific programs that allow for learning outside of regular classes can meet the needs of gifted students, we should know that gifted students present many profiles and that there are many ways of supporting them in their development. By working together, the various stakeholders in the education system, the family and the community can propose the best possible avenues for supporting them on the path to success.

This document is intended to support teachers, complementary educational services staff, school administrators and parents in understanding gifted students' needs and the approaches designed to meet them in the schools.<sup>3</sup> Many of the points presented in this document pertain to all students. It reaffirms, therefore, the orientations most likely to meet the broad range of students' needs and it highlights a variety of means for arriving at this goal. The document also looks at concepts relating to giftedness and the needs of gifted students in addition to presenting projects supported by the Ministère.

This document was developed in accordance with the values of justice, equality and equity, which constitute the core of the education system, and in terms of the non-categorical approach advocated by the Ministère. Informational in nature, this document is a tool for reflection and for orienting actions within the context of the school. It is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the question of giftedness, which is related to contexts other than that of the schools. Readers can therefore consult complementary sources on their interests.

A range of terms coexist in the literature on giftedness: *gifted*, *highly gifted*, *high-potential*, *talented*, *precocious*, *twice exceptional*. For the sake of brevity, this document uses primarily "gifted," "giftedness" and "gifted students."

<sup>3</sup> This document is intended for use in the education system. It refers to the *Education Act* and the Québec Education Program. It can be useful for parents who home-school their children.

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The principles of universality, accessibility and equity that govern our education system must be applied first of all to children because the path to success begins early and continues throughout life. To foster the success of students at all levels of instruction, the education system must support and guide all students ranging from the more gifted to those experiencing difficulties.

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (2018), *Plan stratégique 2017-2022*, 22. [Translation]

”

# 1

# LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND MINISTERIAL PUBLICATIONS

**Various legal and regulatory frameworks and ministerial publications provide the basis for initiatives carried out in the schools to foster the success of gifted students. This section covers the main aspects of these frameworks and publications.**

## 1.1 Legal and Regulatory Framework<sup>4</sup>

The *Education Act*<sup>5</sup> (EA) assigns different roles to the school system and to parents in order to promote student success. The *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education* (BSR) covers the application of the EA in detail.

The BSR<sup>6</sup> specifies the educational services that must be offered to students:

- preschool education services
- elementary and secondary instructional services
- student services
- special services

These legal frameworks support the range of interventions introduced to meet the needs of gifted students. This document makes connections with these frameworks.

## 1.2 The School's Mission

Québec schools have a mandate<sup>7</sup> to prepare students to contribute to the development of a more democratic and just society. The schools also contribute to the harmonious integration of young people into society by enabling them to assimilate, and understand in depth, the knowledge and values on which this society is based, and by training them so that they are equipped to participate in a constructive manner to its evolution. With this in mind, the schools offer educational services to all young people while taking the various aspects of their lives into consideration, and give them the tools they need to develop their intellectual and social potential in both their personal and professional lives. Consequently, the schools' work with young people must be multi-dimensional. Its threefold mission<sup>8</sup> is to provide instruction, to foster social development and to provide qualifications.

## 1.3 Ministerial Publications

### 1.3.1 *The Policy on Educational Success*

According to the Policy on Educational Success, the Ministère's vision of educational success "includes success in school, but goes beyond obtaining a diploma or qualification by taking the person's overall cognitive, affective, social and physical potential into account starting in early childhood." It reminds educational institutions of their responsibility to offer all students a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment that reflects a spirit of openness and that enables them to develop a feeling of belonging to the community and to learn how to live together. Fostering success for all students and taking account of their diversity are long-standing concerns. The *Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education* (1998) stressed the need to take into account ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity in order to foster the educational success of all students. The *Policy on Special Education* (1999) showed a concern for the success of all students along with the prevention of difficulties and early intervention.

4 While this document is based on the legal framework of the *Education Act*, it may also be useful to the schools that come under the *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons*, or the federal government, whether or not they use the QEP.

5 *Education Act*, s. 207.1.

6 *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education*, s. 1.

7 Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2006a), *Québec Education Program for Elementary School*, 3.

8 *Education Act*, s. 36.

### 1.3.2 The Québec Education Program

The QEP applies to all students<sup>9</sup> and the instructional practices it sets out should make it possible to meet a variety of needs, while taking individual differences into account.<sup>10</sup> The common reference document for all Québec education system stakeholders, it fosters the development of students' competencies while leaving ample latitude for implementation. The competencies in question include both cross-curricular and subject-specific competencies in all subject areas: languages, mathematics, science and technology, arts education, social sciences and personal development. The QEP's broad areas of learning foster consistency and complementarity in the educational interventions of each school service.

#### 1.3.3 The Reference Framework: Complementary Educational Services – Essential to Success

Complementary educational services are for all students, whether or not they are experiencing difficulties or are gifted, and are intended to foster their learning progress. These services are called complementary because they make it possible to accomplish the school's mission in

conjunction with preschool, elementary and secondary educational services. The professional and support staff who implement complementary educational services programs include psychologists, guidance counsellors, special education technicians, resource teachers, psychoeducators and speech therapists. The Reference Framework, which was published in 2002, explains what these services are and how they can meet students' needs in school.

Complementary educational services staff collaborate with teachers and school administrators in order to foster student success. Collaborative communities, like professional learning communities, are ideal for furthering such collaboration and for planning activities that these stakeholders can carry out in the school, particularly to meet the needs of gifted students. For example, complementary educational services staff can facilitate a better understanding of gifted students' needs or suggest relevant interventions for the classroom in collaboration with the teacher. Complementary educational services staff can help students to develop self-awareness and understand how they learn and interact with others. It is in this context of indispensable collaboration

that complementary educational services staff can be called upon to offer training or guidance to teaching staff, with a view to prevention or intervention, depending on the situations that gifted students may experience. The Reference Framework also specifies the manner in which teachers must participate in the rollout of complementary educational services programs in order to act in a pertinent and concerted way to meet the students' needs.

#### 1.3.4 Reference Framework for the Establishment of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)<sup>11</sup>

Not all gifted students are given an IEP, but those who have adjustment or learning difficulties, or who require specific interventions to foster their learning progress, might benefit from an IEP. In such contexts, the IEP approach makes complete sense.<sup>12</sup> It must be based on an analysis of the student's situation and provide for concerted action to help the student progress. The approach will be covered in greater detail later in this document.

“ The fact that educational success is a broader term than success in school means that complementary educational services are especially important. [...] These services are intended for the whole person, build on [their] strengths and aspirations, and offer activities to foster personal development in its broadest sense. They contribute to the person's success and can counter risk factors that could otherwise hinder personal development.

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2017), *Policy on Educational Success*, 48.

9 Apart from the Work-Oriented Training Path and the Competency-Based Approach to Social Participation program (CASP), which meet the needs of other students, the QEP is intended for most students. Indigenous students, on the other hand, who come under *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons*, are exempt from the compulsory application of the QEP.

10 Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2007c), *Organization of Educational Services for At-Risk Students and Students With Handicaps, Social Maladjustments or Learning Difficulties*, 6.

11 Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2004), *Individualized Education Plans: Helping Students Achieve Success, Reference Framework for the Establishment of Individualized Education Plans*.

12 The situations that call for the establishment of an IEP are outlined within the *Reference Framework for the Establishment of Individualized Education Plans*, 22.

**While there are many concepts and theoretical models relating to giftedness, there is no universally recognized definition of giftedness. Many terms coexist—*gifted, highly gifted, high-potential, talented, precocious, twice exceptional*—and often mean both similar and different things. Their use varies depending mainly on the context and territory.**

The first concepts of giftedness, which established the intellectual quotient (IQ) as the main criterion of giftedness, have evolved. The scientific literature has shifted away from the idea of intelligence as a problem-solving capacity measurable through IQ tests, toward a concept of intelligence as a developmental and evolving trait that includes creative qualities. There is no single, unique profile of the gifted student, nor is there a criterion that could be used to identify one as such. Since the scientific literature has documented a great variety of profiles of students deemed gifted, there is a need for a broader, up-to-date and more inclusive definition that can encompass this diversity of forms and profiles, if necessary. Appendix I shows the main theoretical models of intelligence and giftedness.

Giftedness should not be considered a diagnosis. In response to the needs of all its students, the school is not called upon to make a diagnosis or to label students. Current research is oriented toward a broader definition of giftedness.

Accordingly, most experts recommend using observation to identify behaviours or other signs of giftedness instead of identifying children as gifted.

Some authors identify signs of giftedness that do not all reflect the same goal. As stated above, there is no single, unique profile of giftedness; and no list of observable signs can be said to be truly exhaustive. Observation of the indicators shown by students is intended rather to further understanding of how they function, to determine their needs and to help educators see what the school can offer them. It is important to point out that giftedness is expressed in many ways and that its signs can be in the domains of the intellect, the arts, science, sports, social life, creativity, leadership, etc.



# 2

## CONCEPTS ASSOCIATED WITH GIFTEDNESS

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Trying to define giftedness is like trying to define other complex human characteristics such as intelligence, creativity, love, beauty or justice.

Alberta Learning , Learning and Teaching Resources Branch (2004), *The Journey: A Handbook for Parents of Children Who Are Gifted and Talented*, 3.

”

Various elements apart from the foregoing signs of giftedness should be considered as essential to a better understanding of the phenomenon and how it manifests in school. It is important to remember that giftedness does not correspond to a specific IQ and is not synonymous with success in school. We often mistakenly assume that gifted students excel in everything they undertake, but this is not always the case. Giftedness is part of a developmental process and can go unnoticed in certain situations, as when behaviours like agitation and lack of motivation mask its manifestations. It could also coexist with social maladjustments, learning difficulties or other problems. Depending on how it interacts with specific problems, giftedness can manifest in very different ways in school and, in some cases, it can go undetected. Students can accordingly have problems in school that make it difficult for them to remain in school or to succeed there.

The concept of giftedness is also influenced by culture and by geographic and economic situation; and giftedness itself may go unnoticed in students who do not have a full command of the language commonly used in a school, or who are recent immigrants. Gender is also a factor. Giftedness presents a great range of profiles and needs. Gifted students have highly varied profiles and a range of factors, both internal and external, can determine whether they progress easily in school or have trouble doing so.

Appendix II presents additional information on the characteristics often attributed to giftedness and describes frequent expressions of giftedness that make it possible to better understand gifted students and their needs.



**Before orienting actions in support of all students, it is essential to fully understand their needs. While gifted students have many of the same needs as other students, the intensity of gifted students' needs and the ways in which they are expressed can prove to be different. Every gifted student has their own unique set of abilities, needs and interests. Apart**

**from personal factors, their needs are influenced by family, social and educational factors. The connections between all of these factors need to be taken into consideration when determining gifted students' needs.**

The needs of gifted students can appear in a range of areas. Hence the importance of having an overall vision for the development of an intervention strategy that takes

into account all the dimensions of the person. In this context, collaboration between the various stakeholders involved in students' lives makes perfect sense, especially with parents, because observable signs attributed to giftedness (sometimes in response to things experienced in school) can be observed in the home.

# 3

## NEEDS OF GIFTED STUDENTS



The needs described generally below do not apply systematically to all gifted students, and listing these needs does not replace the global analysis that must be carried out with regard to each student in the school.

### 3.1 Accelerated Learning Pace

Most gifted students are capable of mastering learning content and developing competencies very quickly. The ability to process information more rapidly leads to a brisker learning pace, and the learning situations offered to gifted students must be flexible enough to take account of it.

### 3.2 In-Depth Understanding

Gifted students are often quite interested in fully understanding subjects that spark their interest, in thinking about them and in approaching them from a perspective that fosters the expression of their creativity. Teachers and non-teaching professionals must take these interests into consideration by providing them with sufficient time and the other conditions they need to fully understand topics that are of personal interest to them.

### 3.3 Challenges

The zone of proximal development is a concept that indicates how important it is to propose challenges adjusted to the situation of gifted students. These challenges must stimulate the student's desire to learn and be commensurate with their competency levels. A lack of challenges can cause students to feel unmotivated, while overly ambitious challenges can cause stress that could make it harder for them to become fully involved in school projects. Even when they are realistic, challenges must be paired with the support required for competency development. It would be a mistake to think that gifted students can develop their competencies and realize their full potential independently, without the support of educators.

[...] they must be able to find answers to the questions they raise in class, acquire knowledge of the things that interest them, receive any needed help and be motivated to engage in learning they need but do not always see as important or interesting. They should be happy to go to school so that they can progress in their chosen paths and strike out in new directions.

Delaubier, J-P. (2002), *La scolarisation des élèves intellectuellement précoces*, Rapport à Monsieur le Ministre de l'éducation nationale, 16. [Translation]





Early and rapid intervention is not a question of age. It is just as necessary when children or students face critical events or transitions or when they need help adapting, which can happen at any point on their educational path. It is also essential to provide guidance throughout the process until they obtain a diploma or a qualification, whether in terms of overall development or academic learning.

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2017), *Policy on Educational Success*, 40.



### 3.4 Complex and Meaningful Learning Situations

All students need to be exposed to meaningful learning situations that take into account their interests and competencies, among other things. This is even more important for students whose involvement in an activity depends on the importance attributed to it. Repetitive, out-of-context tasks have little meaning for gifted students and can negatively affect their motivation and degree of engagement. In addition, situations that are distinctive for their complexity and that call for innovative solutions are particularly meaningful. Gifted students need to explore a variety of subjects in order to assuage their curiosity and expand the scope of their interests. Accordingly, they must be exposed to a broad range of ideas and problems that elicit their creativity and sense of innovation.

### 3.5 Recognition and Valorization

Like other students, gifted students need a welcoming and inclusive environment that recognizes their strengths and accepts their differences; they also need to be recognized in their uniqueness and feel validated within their peer group. Recognition and valorization come through in the latitude they are given for sharing their knowledge, making decisions or using their specific skills and talents. While seeing their strengths, efforts and achievements recognized, gifted students must be aware that the number of things all students have in common are far more numerous than their differences. Gifted students must also learn to make room for the achievements of other students and understand that the spotlight cannot be on them all of the time.

### 3.6 Balance

Like everybody else, gifted students need to develop cognitively, emotionally, morally and socially and physically. Special attention must also be paid to their overall development because many gifted students tend to stress the cognitive domain, sometimes to the detriment of the others. Educators need to be sensitive to this aspect and can help gifted students offset their tendency to over-stress their intellectual side by guiding them toward other areas and helping them to develop their interpersonal relationships, be open to others and work as members of a team.

Being attentive to the signs of giftedness helps to ensure that the needs of gifted students are considered in a timely manner and makes it possible to select the means most likely to foster their success while contributing to the development of their full potential and reducing the risk of problems.

### 3.7 Guidance

Gifted students need guidance in school (cognitive and metacognitive strategies, study methods), in their personal lives (self-knowledge and the management of mental states such as anxiety or anger) and in their social and emotional lives (attitudes and strategies in relationships, teamwork and collaboration, leadership). The following sections show how certain types of guidance can help students to meet their needs.

Following a global analysis of the situation of gifted students and their needs, various guidance strategies can be devised to support them in school and foster their success. Such guidance can assume many forms: for example, time with a resource teacher could be set aside to give a student an opportunity to share their concerns and look for solutions; or a resource person from complementary educational services could meet with a student to help them develop cognitive or metacognitive strategies. In fact, a whole range of student guidance measures with substantial latitude could be considered.

### 3.7.1 *Developing Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies*

Learning comes easily for many gifted students without them having to draw explicitly on any specific strategies. Hence it is important, as soon as they start attending school, to devote special attention to their work methods, metacognitive strategies and self-regulation so that they can become aware of the strategies employed in doing school work. These strategies will be useful throughout their time in school and can help them deal with any difficulties that may arise. Some high-performing gifted students never develop effective work methods, which negatively affects their perseverance in school and their feeling of agency with regard to their problems. By developing effective work methods, students improve their sense of control and competency while actively engaging in the activities proposed for them. Students must therefore be accompanied in the development of tools that will contribute to their success, not only throughout their time in school, but also when they enter adult life and gain work experience.

### 3.7.2. *Developing Self-Knowledge*

Gifted students need to discover their strengths, abilities, challenges and interests. They may need to determine, recognize and understand their personal qualities along with their emotions (anxiety, feeling of being different and misunderstood, etc.). Some students are frustrated and stressed due to performance anxiety. For them, the development of strategies conducive to self-control is very important. Students who know themselves well manage more easily to identify the internal and external factors that contribute to their success and difficulties. They are more realistic about what they can achieve and better able to set attainable goals for themselves. By supporting them in the process of developing a more accurate understanding of their qualities, adults help them to develop more realistic images of themselves and, by extension, greater self-esteem. Some students have trouble adapting to different learning situations and maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships with their peers.

Their difficulties may become more pronounced or frequent, or they may need support when their needs are not met. Adults have a responsibility to ensure that the environment takes their needs into consideration. Adults are also responsible for welcoming gifted students in a caring and open manner, for working in partnership with them and for acknowledging and validating their emotions.

### 3.7.3 *Supporting Social and Emotional Learning*

Social and emotional learning enables students to understand and manage their emotions, to feel and show empathy for others, to establish and maintain harmonious relationships and to make responsible decisions. Some gifted students need support to understand why they may feel uncomfortable within the groups they frequent. Although some gifted students benefit from opportunities for collaboration and learning with other gifted students, it is essential that they develop a set of skills that will allow them to establish harmonious relationships with their peers and with the adults in the school. Social and emotional learning

refers to key components of personal development, particularly self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, social awareness and interpersonal skills. All students, including gifted students, need to become more aware of the impacts of their behaviour in society, learn to work as team members, assert themselves in a positive manner and show positive leadership within a group. To help them to contribute to today's and tomorrow's society, it is essential to provide them with guidance in social and emotional learning.

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In the interest of both individual development and community life, people must learn to appreciate personal and cultural differences in others, while ensuring that their own distinctiveness is respected. Schools must act as agents of social cohesion by helping students learn how to live together and by fostering a feeling of belonging to the community.

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2007), QEP, Secondary Cycle Two, Chapter 1, 6.

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Complementary educational services are intended for all students, whether or not they are experiencing difficulties or are gifted students.



# 4 TAKING GIFTEDNESS INTO ACCOUNT IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

## 4.1 Basic Principles Underlying the Organization of Services

The principles underlying the organization of services<sup>13</sup> to meet the needs of gifted students are the same as those for other students. As stated above, the QEP provides learning for all students. It is designed to foster synergy between instructional services and student services, which together help students make progress in their learning. These services support students so that they have a feeling of belonging to their school and can develop their potential. The QEP specifies the broad educational orientations to focus on as well as the learning deemed essential to the education of today's young people.<sup>14</sup> In light of the schools' mission, it embodies an educa-

tional approach that encompasses all dimensions of students' development.<sup>15</sup> The various school stakeholders are steered toward interventions that facilitate the development of the QEP's competencies in relation to students and the characteristics of their community.

In order to take the uniqueness of every student into account along with their context and aspirations, the Ministère recommends a non-categorical approach to the organization of services in the school system. This implies that decisions with regard to intervention must be based on a thorough knowledge of students and their needs, apart from any diagnosis or assignment to a level of difficulty. The interventions selected vary from one class or school to another to ensure that they are suitable for the

students in question and the characteristics of their community. Schools and educators have significant latitude to implement the most relevant actions on behalf of all their students, including gifted students.

For example, a teacher who uses pedagogical flexibility to take the students' interests into account helps all their students to develop at their own pace. Collaboration between the teacher and the guidance counsellor makes it possible to consider the needs of all the students in the class, which, in turn, makes academic and career guidance content (ACGC) meaningful for the students and the teacher alike. The school administrators is ultimately in the best position to facilitate collegial work by all the stakeholders to foster the students' progress

<sup>13</sup> The services are: preschool education services, elementary and secondary instructional services, complementary educational services student services and special services.

<sup>14</sup> QEP, Secondary Cycle Two, Chapter 1, Foreword.

<sup>15</sup> QEP, Secondary Cycle One, Chapter 1, Foreword.



**“Being open to others and valuing diversity make learning how to live together in harmony extremely important for schools and educational childcare centres.”**

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2017), *Policy on Educational Success*, 47.

and educational success. All stakeholders prepare the students to become responsible citizens who actively contribute to democratic and social life as well as to their community and its economic and cultural life.

When a student encounters difficulties, it is important to keep in mind that the adaptation of educational services must be considered, first of all, in relation to the services offered to all students and, then, in relation to more specialized adapted services.<sup>16</sup> Gifted students may experience difficulties in school. In certain situations, IEPs will be the proper approach. We will come back to them later in this document.

<sup>16</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2007c), *Organization of Educational Services for At-Risk Students and Students With Handicaps, Social Maladjustments or Learning Difficulties*, 4.

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[...] The school principal, together with teachers and other educators such as student services personnel, is responsible for meeting the educational needs of each student in [their] care. It is up to the school team to identify these needs and to devise the necessary measures, since the school team is better acquainted with the students and the environment in which they are being educated.

”

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2007c), *Organization of Educational Services for At-Risk Students and Students with Handicaps, Social Maladjustments or Learning Difficulties*, 3.

## 4.2 Knowing Your Students

As mentioned earlier, it is important to keep in mind that some gifted students tend to go unnoticed at school. There are various reasons for this: they may learn at the expected pace or adapt their behaviour in order to feel like the others; or a problem may conceal their giftedness. Nonetheless, these students can have problems that create psychological distress.

The great heterogeneity of the gifted student population implies a great diversity of needs. This can result in differences with respect to commitment, the desire and ability to learn, motivation, expression of creativity and the quality of interpersonal relationships with peers or teachers. Gifted students also come from diverse backgrounds. Some of them excel in several areas while others excel in one. Aside from the importance of knowing the students, their educational paths, their socio-cultural and linguistic contexts and their cultural and sports activities, it is also essential to be thoroughly familiar with the strengths and challenges of gifted students in relation to their competency development in school.





### 4.3 Determining the Needs of Gifted Students

It is important to have a global vision of the individual student and their interests, strengths, concerns and socio-affective development. To determine the needs of a gifted student, it is essential to study their specific profile. An analysis of their overall situation makes it possible to identify the means most likely to provide them with effective support. While there are various lists of observable signs of giftedness, prudence is called for because giftedness manifests in various ways that depend on the individual student. No one gifted student can present all the signs identified on any given list and some students will display only a few of them. In some circumstances, it might be wise to obtain a professional evaluation; but the purpose of this must be to identify the student's needs and not to diagnose or categorize them. Many other sources of information—the student's recent school work, the development of their knowledge, information gathered from parents and school staff who know the student and are familiar with their socio-affective development—are required to identify the student's needs. These various elements make it possible to focus on the factors that influence the student's learning and motivation. Having the student participate in their evaluation is a good way to better identify their needs and the appropriate course of action to take, because it gives the student an opportunity to express themselves and their concerns and to know what is likely to help them.

# 5 COURSES OF ACTION TO FOSTER THE SUCCESS OF GIFTED STUDENTS



**Different actions can be taken to maintain the motivation of each student and foster the development of their full potential. This section describes a variety of possibilities for gifted students. The proposed courses of action are not mutually exclusive and can be combined depending on the educational needs of gifted students. Analysis of their needs and of the organization of services in your school community will make it possible to determine which courses of action are the most relevant.**

The location of the school in a large urban centre or in a rural area will influence the decision as to the best course of action. For example, the form that collaboration with a CEGEP or a university takes will vary according to the case. The use of digital tools can facilitate access to many resources and collaboration with distant partners. Schools are invited to draw on the examples presented and to develop other initiatives in the context of the evolution of the knowledge of giftedness.

## 5.1 Differentiated Instruction Within the Framework of the QEP

Differentiated instruction is a promising educational approach for fostering the educational success of all students and taking their diverse range of needs into consideration. The QEP, the foundation of the work of Québec's teachers and other education system stakeholders, provides for student competency development projects in a number of subjects while offering ample latitude for adjustment. Making adaptations to take the diversified needs of students into account is the best approach. Differentiation requires knowledge of the concepts to be taught and an understanding of the students: their profiles, what they know and what they need to learn. Differentiated instruction takes various forms in the schools and can be developed in additional ways in order to support gifted students, among other things.

When we base interventions on the needs of gifted students (the needs mentioned above), we see that many benefit from learning situations in which they progress more quickly or in greater depth and complexity. Some gifted students may exhibit troublesome behaviour in class, which happens when a gap develops between their learning situation and their zone of proximal development. It is sometimes worthwhile to suggest that certain

**Some schools enrich learning by proposing a variety of stimulating projects, organizing outings or trips, publishing a school newspaper and holding competitions in mathematics and other areas and having science camps or chess clubs.**

students engage in less familiar or more abstract activities, while others may benefit more from activities in which they can express their creativity or develop their leadership abilities. Allowing them to choose how to go about their work, giving them study projects and fostering their autonomy are other helpful options. Finally, there are also students who do best when their learning time is optimized and relatively free of repetition and revision, or when less time is devoted to each new subject.

## 5.2 Enrichment

Enrichment can take a variety of forms. It can make it possible to concentrate content to cover a shorter period of time than what was planned (quicker learning pace). It can also foster a deeper understanding of concepts by taking students to a higher level of analysis (more complex concepts), diversify the range of topics studied (particularly by making connections with themes that interest the student) and going into greater depth with respect to specific subjects (by proposing ideas for projects that students would like).

“

Teachers who practise differentiated instruction understand the dynamics at work in their classes and are sensitive to the diversity of the students in them. This means they use a broad range of strategies and take advantage of interactions that occur naturally in class.

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2007), QEP, Secondary Cycle Two, Chapter 1, 20.

”



### 5.3 Class Diversification

Research has demonstrated the importance of contact among gifted students. This can be done within the framework of pedagogical flexibility in the classroom or by varying the composition of the class for learning and evaluation situations. It can also take place within the context of school projects that enable gifted students to work together to learn in greater depth and to develop competencies such as project management or leadership by, for example, setting up a student newspaper or a blog.

Gifted students can share their school experiences among themselves but should also have an opportunity to learn among a diverse range of students since this is more representative of the kind of society in which they live. Gifted students can be grouped together to study some or all subjects in the QEP. A special full-time or part-time class can also be a way to meet the needs of students experiencing difficulties. The Ministère provides financial support for a variety of student groupings.

The various groupings should not be seen as steps or part of a sequence but, rather, as means for meeting different needs. In all cases, gifted students must be given opportunities to be in the company of their peers, whether in school or in the context of learning activities, particularly extracurricular activities.

### 5.4 The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Approach

Some gifted students excel in school despite feeling anxious. Others are not at the head of their class or avid readers, and can cause trouble in the classroom or exhibit adjustment or learning difficulties. It is important to be attentive to their needs, as with all students, and to guide them so that they do not become bored, disengaged, unmotivated, rebellious or oppositional, or drop out.

Some gifted students have handicaps or struggle with social maladjustments or learning difficulties. An IEP fosters stakeholder cooperation in order to meet

The education system prepares students for integration into society. Young talented and gifted students already feel marginalized at school. It is essential to find means and modes of organization that avoid marginalizing them even more on the pretext of the existence of differences with respect to other students.

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (1985), *Les Élèves doués et talentueux à l'école : État et développement*, 37. [Translation]

their needs. This is the case, for example, with students who have significant learning difficulties or major challenges related to socialization.

Apart from student profiles, an IEP should be established when one or more of the following situations arises:

- The student's complex situation is such that a more sustained and coordinated effort is required on the part of the student, teacher(s), parents, school administrator and, in some cases, other players inside or outside the school, to find solutions to the difficulties encountered and thus enable the student to progress.
- The student's situation calls for the introduction of specialized resources or for certain adjustments (teaching strategies, adapted materials, specific resources, etc.) in addition to the actions normally taken by the teacher, in cooperation with the cycle team, to adjust their actions to the student's needs.
- The student's situation requires certain decisions that will have an impact on the student's educational path, such as decisions concerning adjustments to evaluation methods, departures from the *Basic school regulation* or special orientations regarding the student's educational path or placement.<sup>17</sup>

The IEP makes it possible to analyze the student's abilities and needs in the context of the school. Responses to students' needs must be based on evaluation that focuses not only on their difficulties, but also on their achievements and abilities in the context of their lives. Once stakeholders have clearly grasped a student's situation and how it affects their learning, evaluation can be used to determine arrangements that will help them overcome their difficulties, draw on their strengths and make progress. The means provided for in the IEP can be applied for a more or less extended period and at an appropriate frequency. Since the IEP is revised periodically, it can be used and adjusted as long as the student's needs warrant.

<sup>17</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation (2004), *Individualized Intervention Plans: Helping Students Achieve Success, Reference Framework for the Establishment of Individualized Education Plans*, 22.

## 5.5 Tutoring

Tutoring can help some gifted students to develop their work methods or sustain their interest in school. This is true particularly of students whose cognitive or metacognitive strategies are in need of substantial development, or who need to learn how to know themselves better. This kind of guidance is generally provided by teachers.

Gifted students can also act as tutors to other students and thereby develop their ability to explain things, to take positive action and to enrich their relationships with their peers. Caution must be exercised, however, to ensure that using this means does not prevent gifted students from having opportunities to learn new things commensurate with their capacities in order to meet their need to take up challenges.

## 5.6 Mentoring

Mentoring<sup>18</sup> in schools can involve pairs of students who are not of the same age, and it can focus on an area that is of interest to both. A gifted student can be paired with an older gifted student who can relate their experiences and share their perceptions of factors that had a positive effect on them.

Mentoring can also involve a partner from the community associated with an organization, a business or an educational institution, like a university. The mentor benefits from the arrangement and the person being mentored has an opportunity to develop their competencies, skills and feeling of personal effectiveness in the area in question, while the mentor develops their interpersonal and leadership skills. The mentored student can then be open to other realities.

<sup>18</sup> The Grand dictionnaire terminologique defines mentorship as individual, voluntary and free assistance, confidential in nature, that is provided by a mentor over an extended period in order to meet the specific needs of a person in terms of objectives related to their personal and professional development as well as to the development of their competencies and learning in a given activity. [Translation]



Some examples of mentoring:

- A student who is enthusiastic about archaeology is put in contact with a university professor.
- Retirees spend a few hours with young people to inspire and motivate them.
- University students lead workshops on topics of current interest.

For some students, preventive measures or more specific interventions implemented by the teacher in conjunction with the parents, in a regular classroom setting, could be sufficient and allow them to make progress in the areas of learning and socialization. For other students, a set of coordinated actions could be planned by the cycle-team, the parents and the students when interventions are not sufficient to help the students make progress in the areas of learning and socialization. An individualized education plan could then be drawn up in such cases.

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2007c), *The Organization of Educational Services for At-Risk Students and Students With Handicaps, Social Maladjustments or Learning Difficulties*, 4.



## 5.7 Accelerated Learning

Accelerated learning can be appropriate for some students who can thereby meet the requirements of the QEP at a faster pace than that originally anticipated, insofar as the new pace is better suited to their needs and abilities. The *Education Act* and the *Basic school regulation* mark out the path of accelerated learning.<sup>19</sup>

Some children are ready to start school earlier than others. They clearly stand out in terms of intellectual, social, affective and psychomotor skills and are particularly well equipped to begin their preschool education or their first year of elementary school before having reached the usual age of admission. In such cases, it is important to conduct careful and rigorous analyses of their overall situation, abilities and needs, along with the possible consequences of accelerated measures on their affective and social development and educational success. Some professional orders in Québec have provided guidelines for evaluating a child with a view to applying for an exemption from the mandatory age-by-admission requirement.<sup>20</sup>

### 5.7.1 Early Admission to Preschool Education

To be eligible for preschool education, a child must have reached the age of five before October 1 of the current school year. In other words, the child must be five years old around the time they start attending preschool for five-year-olds. A child may be admitted to preschool education earlier, however, if they are expected to reach the age of five during the school year. This is contingent upon acceptance of a substantiated request to this effect submitted by the parent(s).

### 5.7.2 Early Admission to Elementary Education

To be eligible for elementary education, a child must have reached the age of six before October 1 of the current school year. In other words, the child must be six years old around the time they start attending elementary school. A child may be admitted to elementary school earlier, however, if they are expected to reach the age of six during the school year. This is contingent upon acceptance of a substantiated request to this effect submitted by the parent(s).

### 5.7.3 Skipping a Year

A child may skip a year in elementary or secondary school under certain conditions outlined in the *Basic school regulation*. For example, students are generally promoted to secondary school after successfully completing six years in elementary school. In the case of accelerated learning, a student may be eligible for promotion to secondary school after five years of elementary education if they have attained the objectives of the QEP and acquired the requisite emotional and social maturity.



<sup>19</sup> Sections 96.17 and 241.1 of the *Education Act* and sections 12 and 13 of the *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary*, as well as the *Regulation respecting exceptional cases for admission to preschool and elementary school education*.

<sup>20</sup> Ordre des psychologues du Québec (OPQ), *Lignes directrices pour l'évaluation d'un enfant en vue d'une demande de dérogation à l'âge d'admission à l'école*, 2006.

## 5.8 Sports-Study and Arts-Study Profiles and Concentrations

Many schools are creating projects that enable students to become more involved in areas that interest them. These projects, which vary in name and composition, are not intended exclusively for gifted students but can pave the way for them to develop their potential and talents. Projects can include, for example, visual arts or multisport profiles, or concentrations in music or science. The international education program is also offered in a number of places, and there are alternative schools that offer project-based learning that allows students to learn at their own pace and affords them greater flexibility. Sports-studies programs<sup>21</sup> have also been set up to give student athletes more opportunities to practise their sports and succeed in secondary school. Also, arts-studies programs provide enriched training in an art subject in preparation for higher learning in the fine arts.<sup>22</sup> These diverse learning options support motivation and a feeling of belonging in the school, which helps students to stay in school. These same options can meet the needs of gifted students by allowing them to learn more quickly, in greater depth and in a balanced manner.

The education system has ample latitude in how it responds to students' interests. Decisions relating to the establishment of concentrations (which correspond to local study programs) are taken locally, while ministerial recognition is required for sports-studies and arts-studies programs (which correspond to special pedagogical projects).

### Examples of initiatives in the school system:

- Schools dedicated to specific subjects such as science and arts education
- Schools offering concentrations, particularly in sports, arts education, music and science
- Schools offering a variety of multidisciplinary enrichment activities that explore in depth certain aspects of such subjects as mathematics, French, the social sciences and science

## 5.9 Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities can meet various needs of gifted students. Whether through sports, the arts, entrepreneurship, science, the community, literature or other areas, students can develop their potential and bolster their feeling of belonging in the school. There are many contests and sports competitions in various areas as well as student committees and clubs (e.g. chess, school event planning, drama, improvisation). Gifted students can develop their leadership and other talents along with their interests in the course of extracurricular activities. Participation in these activities can also give them opportunities to share their interests with other gifted students.



<sup>21</sup> Sports-studies programs need to be accredited by the Ministère.

<sup>22</sup> Recognition for arts-studies programs is contingent upon compliance with the recognition rules established by the Ministère (scholastic and arts components and coordination of interventions in each).

## 5.10 Personal Educational Project (PEP)

In its desire for innovation to develop the strengths of gifted students and their communities, the Ministère has advanced the concept of the personal educational project (PEP). Students who complete their tasks more quickly than others may want to have such resources at their disposal. These tailored projects may have benefits for students in terms of recognition, validation and motivation, and may also encourage students to stay in school by making learning meaningful to them. Students use the time available to them after quickly completing learning tasks to develop projects that yield tangible results such as goods, services, websites, books, events, socially relevant activities or presentations.

Even though students decide on the kind of PEP they wish to have, based on their interests and strengths and what elements they wish to develop, they may need guidance in preparing their PEP. In addition to the aim of the PEP, students have to indicate the means they plan to use to achieve it. They can show their PEP to a teacher, a non-teaching

professional or the school administrators, who could then go over the means needed to complete the project. These might include, for example, guidance, the time required, resources, partnership with the community and any needed adjustments that could make the plan more feasible.

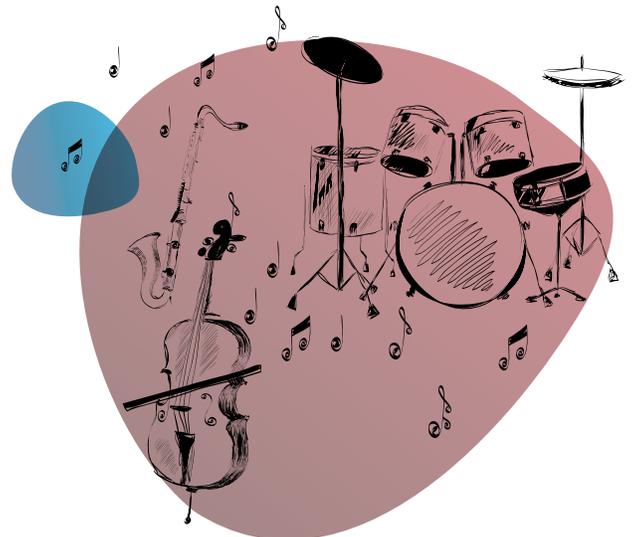
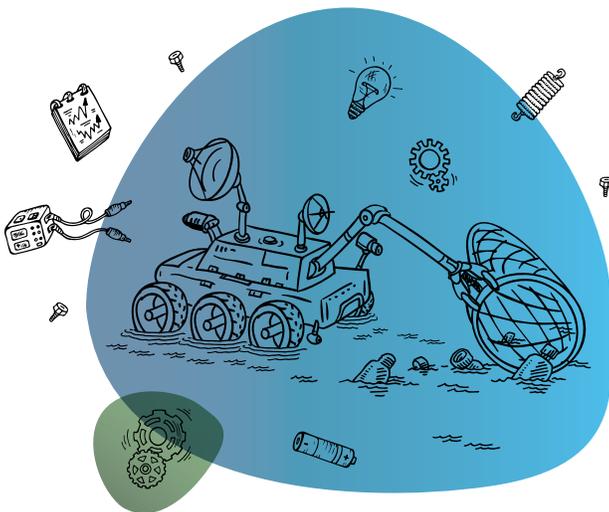
The most important aspect of the PEP is the process involved. Students carrying out a PEP must receive regular guidance in seeking solutions and to ensure that their project is progressing as it should. Such guidance could be provided by a teacher or a tutor or someone designed to meet with the students individually or as a group. With proper guidance, students can take stock of their progress, identify and develop their strengths, particularly with regard to project management, leadership and communication without forgetting their ability to overcome challenges. Within the framework of their PEP, students can be organized into groups in order to expand their perspectives, develop their communication skills and learn how to work well in a

team.

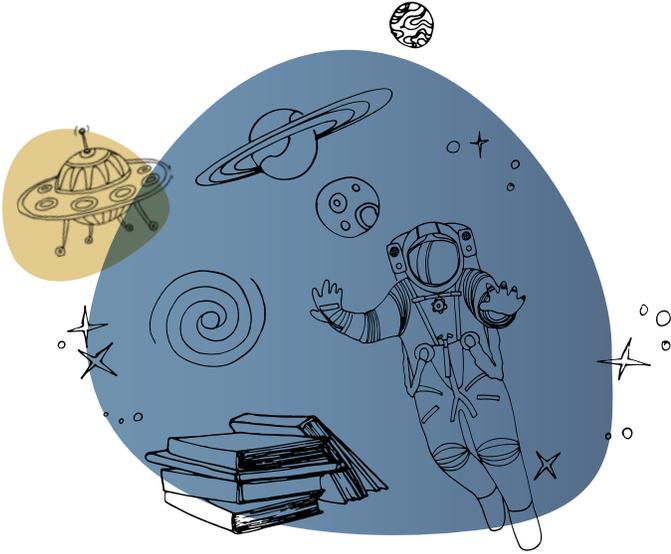
These projects can deal with a wide range of subjects and areas (e.g. archaeology, environment, music, astronomy, computer science, robotics, entrepreneurship). Since PEPs are developed by the student with the support of school staff, they are adapted to the student's situation and allow them to benefit from the possibilities offered by their community. PEPs provide good opportunities for students and their school to develop collaboration and networking through the involvement of various stakeholders (for example, a leading research organization, university researchers, media, community organizations, businesses, associations representing communities in terms of socio-cultural or linguistic references). This can reinforce the school's openness to the community.

# HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF PEPs:

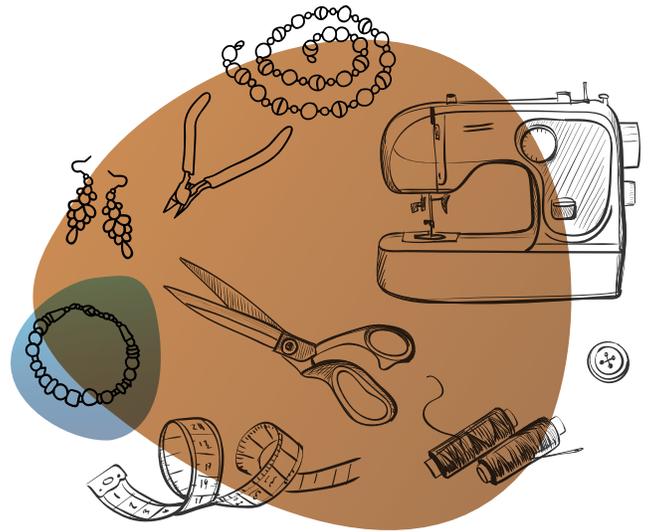
- An environmentally conscious student who is also passionate about robotics wants to develop a robot that is equipped with a large net and capable of moving over bodies of water and collecting floating objects. The student meets with businesses in their community, has online discussions with college- or university-level specialists in the area and presents their achievements to municipal councillors.
- A student with a gift for music takes part in workshops given by professional musicians, devotes time to making music at school and rehearses for a performance to be included in the school's year-end concert. A teacher validates the student's talent by asking them to perform in front of the class.



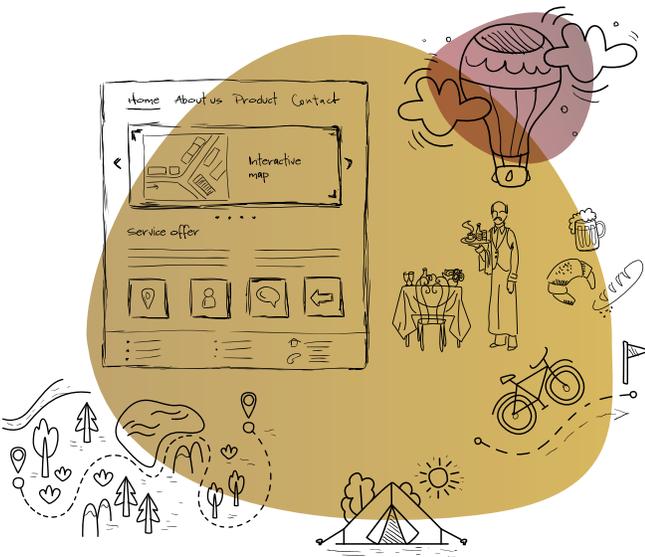
- A student with a very lively imagination and a passion for astronomy writes stories about space expeditions that lead to the discovery of unknown planets and new forms of extraterrestrial life. The student's teacher puts them in contact with a student in another school who has an exceptional talent for drawing. The two students approach a publishing house and sign a publication contract for a children's book.



- A student who loves fashion design draws and makes clothing and accessories, and would like to know how to get started in business. The student signs up for a course on entrepreneurship for independent learners and joins forces with another student who makes jewellery. They eventually decide to set up their own business. A third student with a good knowledge of computer science helps them to develop their website. Together, they devise a logo and slogan for their school. They also sell sports jerseys and accessories to encourage the school's various sports teams to develop a feeling of belonging in their school. The business profits go toward a charity that they have chosen as a way of giving back to the community.



- A student with a keen enthusiasm for computer science decides to develop a website equipped with an interactive map featuring the tourist attractions in their region, as a way to draw tourists and contribute to local economic development. The student involves their classmates in the project to help target places for tourists to visit and identify activities they could participate in and local restaurants they could try. To give the region more exposure, the student translates all of the content on their website into French and their mother tongue.



- A student who is very fond of science studies the issue of waste management in their northern community. They contact specialists in the fields of waste management and recycling and collaborate on the development and implementation of a project to facilitate the reuse of waste materials, in order to reduce the impacts on their environment.





# 6

## PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE MINISTÈRE

In order to foster educational success for all students, the Ministère supports a variety of initiatives encompassing knowledge development and recognized educational practices. All of these initiatives can directly or indirectly affect the educational success of gifted students.

### 6.1 Research Program on Student Retention and Academic Success – RPSRAS

Together with the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture, the Ministère has established the Research Program on Student Retention and Academic Success. As part of this program, the action-research project on teachers' attitudes and practices regarding the educational inclusion of gifted students (in French only),<sup>23</sup> headed by Line Massé, was funded from 2016 to 2019.

### 6.2 Partnership Projects in Special Education (Measure 15350, volet 1)

The Ministère provides the school system with financial support for partnership projects related to pedagogical development and the organization of services to meet the needs of students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties. The goal of such projects is to try new pedagogical approaches and practices that foster educational success for these students. Budget measure 15350 is intended to support the creation of partnerships between the school system and the various partners who, through their expertise, help to meet the student's needs and facilitate their academic success. Working with external partners makes it possible to improve initiatives, be innovative and offer complementary expertise. For a number of years, the Direction de l'adaptation scolaire, which is responsible for this measure, has added the needs of gifted students to its call for projects under Measure 15350.

**In the past three years, at least two projects that address the issue of giftedness were accepted:**

**2017-2019: Gifted and talented secondary school students— Impacts of an enrichment mentorship program delivered by university students in the giftedness section of the SEUR\* project (\*Sensibilisation aux études universitaires et à la recherche) (CSS Marguerite-Bourgeoys)**

**2019-2020: Better identification and intervention with respect to twice exceptional elementary school students (CSS des Premières-Seigneuries)**

<sup>23</sup> *Attitudes et pratiques des enseignants quant à l'inclusion scolaire des élèves doués, conditions de réussite et validation d'une démarche d'accompagnement des enseignants pour favoriser leur inclusion, 2016-2019.*

# CONCLUSION



Giftedness has many facets. Knowledge in this area, which is constantly growing, sheds very useful light on guidance options for gifted students. Helping them to develop their potential necessarily involves knowing them well, understanding their needs and selecting interventions that will enable them to progress in a harmonious manner. Taking gifted students' needs into consideration assumes its full significance in our society, which attempts to give everyone an opportunity to develop and reach their full potential.

Whether it is the way in which the teacher creates a welcoming environment and makes good use of each student's differences in the classroom, or the way the teacher makes use of a specific project or involves partners, the possibilities are as numerous as they are interesting. The school system, which already has a range of ongoing initiatives, is invited to improve its work by pooling expertise and relying on collaboration.

Gifted students can be found in every region of Québec and some regions are working together to provide a variety of services designed to meet these students' diverse needs. For example, some collaborative ventures target common concerns and share expertise to offer the guidance required for the development of students' competencies.

All students need guidance and help to have confidence in their abilities. Acting to foster the educational success of gifted students must be seen as taking into account the diversity of students and their needs. In keeping with the steps taken to support all students, the school promotes equal opportunities for all. The development of each student's full potential implies that they have an opportunity to learn alongside others, to learn to know themselves and to interact with others so that they are ready to actively participate in the construction of Québec's future.

By fostering the mobilization of concerned stakeholders, supporting research and partnership projects and applying various budget measures, the Ministère continues to help the education system take giftedness into account when organizing educational services in accordance with students' needs, particularly through collaboration, training and project development.

# APPENDIX 1

## MAIN THEORETICAL MODELS OF INTELLIGENCE AND GIFTEDNESS

**This appendix gives an overview of the main theoretical models of intelligence and giftedness. Readers who wish to know more are invited to consult the references given at the end of this document as well as the abundant scientific literature on this subject. Moreover, the evolution of research has led contemporary researchers to question certain aspects of intelligence and giftedness, particularly those that are now considered neuro-myths. It is important, therefore, to be discerning and to take the most recent research in education into consideration.**

Interest in the concepts of intelligence and giftedness goes back many years. Definitions of them have developed and varied according to time periods and countries, influenced by the work of pioneers in psychology such as Galton, Piaget and Binet-Simon.

Two major trends seem to emerge from the scientific literature: “schoolhouse giftedness” is based on cognitive aptitude tests while “creative-productive giftedness,” which draws on individuals’ problem-solving abilities, cannot be measured by intelligence tests.

Researchers’ theoretical perspectives or standpoints influence how they see and define giftedness, the procedures they use to identify gifted students and their choice of interventions. Joseph Renzulli does not see these two major profiles as mutually exclusive; rather, each is just as important as the other.



A number of these various models are often mentioned in the scientific literature. The following summaries provide an overview of the main ones for readers, who can consult other sources in accordance with the extent of their interests and concerns.

## Theoretical Models of Intelligence

### *The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*

In the early 1980s, Howard Gardner published *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, which advanced the idea that the concept of intelligence is broader than that of the intelligence quotient (IQ). Gardner's model identified seven types of intelligence, each independent of the others: linguistic-verbal, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, intrapersonal, interpersonal, bodily-kinesthetic and musical. A few years later, the author added another category, namely, naturalistic intelligence.

### *The Three-Stratum Theory of Cognitive Abilities*

In 1993, John Bissell Carroll, who admired the psychometric approach, proposed a three-stratum theory of cognitive ability to account for individual differences observed in intelligence tests. His model, based on an exhaustive analysis of a very broad range of data sets extending over a period of 70 years, has three strata. The first, which can be attributed to a general success factor, comprises some 30 factors encompassing the *primary mental abilities*. The second stratum corresponds to eight forms of cognitive ability and comprises more complex factors including all the previous ones; these are fluid intelligence (logic, induction, reasoning), crystallized intelligence (involved in verbal tasks...), broad retrieval ability, broad visual perception, broad auditory perception, processing speed, etc. The third stratum, which is the most complex one, comprises some 40 more complex specific abilities.

### *The Triarchic Theory of Intelligence*

Between 1985 and 2003, Robert J. Sternberg developed the triarchic theory of intelligence based on the interactions of three main components: **1)** analytical abilities, **2)** practical abilities and **3)** creative abilities. The *analytical abilities*, which can be measured by IQ or cognitive ability tests, make it possible to carry out academic tasks such as analyzing, comparing, judging, criticizing or validating the quality of new ideas. The *practical abilities*, which facilitate adaptation to problems associated with daily life and one's environment, include applying, putting into practice and making use of knowledge and prior experience. Finally, the *creative abilities* refer to the ability to successfully negotiate new situations; they make it possible to create, invent, form hypotheses and imagine, and are conducive to new ideas, inventions and discoveries. Sternberg's system underscores the importance of context in the concept of intelligence. Some elements of his theory have been incorporated into many explanatory models of giftedness, such as that of Renzulli.

## Explanatory Models of Giftedness

The theoretical models of giftedness led researchers to look more closely at explanatory models of giftedness.

### *The Three-Ring Model*

Drawing on the work of Sternberg, Renzulli advanced the idea that giftedness is composed of a set of traits clustered around three basic components (the three-ring theory) that interact in the behaviour of gifted children. These components, which are found in varying degrees in normal populations, are highly developed in gifted people. They are: **1)** *above-average intellectual ability*, **2)** *creativity* (referring to fluidity, flexibility, originality and curiosity) and **3)** *task commitment* (defined as interest, enthusiasm, determination, motivation, self-confidence and energy directed toward the performance of a task). The gifted student does not only present a set of traits within each of these components but is also able to use them in specific areas of interest.

### *A differentiated model of giftedness and talent*

In Québec, François Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent makes a clear distinction between the two concepts named. According to this model, giftedness is made up of high-level natural abilities in at least one ability domain, for example in the intellectual, socio-affective or sensorimotor. Talent, on the other hand, is associated with high-level abilities and the subsequent development of exceptional skills in a specific field of activity, particularly in academic, artistic and sports activities, as well as in recreation and technology. The development of talent is influenced by catalysts relating to the person and their environment. And chance, whether it involves the student's genetic inheritance, the family environment or daily life, plays a key role in the development of talent. This reminds us of the importance of the educational context and of the role that education system stakeholders are called upon to play in order to foster the development of the full potential of every student entrusted to their care.

# APPENDIX 2

## EXPRESSIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS FREQUENTLY ATTRIBUTED TO GIFTEDNESS

**This appendix presents additional information on the indicators and characteristics often attributed to giftedness. As indicated in the section on concepts relating to giftedness, this information is used by school system stakeholders to gain a better understanding of students' needs.**

### **Giftedness . . .**

#### ***Is not determined by IQ alone***

Some approaches determine giftedness only by measuring IQ or by the performance results on standardized tests. Although intelligence tests can yield interesting data, giftedness is broader than what these tests measure. In addition, intellectual performance represents only one aspect of giftedness.

#### ***Includes a variety of profiles and needs***

Since the scientific literature presents many different types and profiles of "giftedness," it is important to have a vision of the phenomenon that reflects this variety and is consequently more inclusive and up to date. To meet the needs of gifted students, the school does not have to place them in any specific categories. Current research is oriented toward a broader vision of what giftedness is. Accordingly, most experts recommend observing behaviour and other indicators of giftedness instead of identifying students as gifted.

#### ***Takes the form of a developmental process***

The features and characteristics of giftedness change and vary throughout a person's life. A significant amount of the scientific literature states that giftedness is not a fixed feature but evolves and is expressed differently at certain times and in certain contexts. Moreover, it develops on the basis of aptitudes and competencies and in accordance with possibilities and opportunities conducive to its expression. Giftedness, therefore, is a phenomenon influenced by the interactions between the student and their environment.

#### ***Is influenced by a person's culture and geographic and economic situation***

Ethnocultural background, geographic situation and socio-economic status all influence the understanding and expression of giftedness, which is related to the socio-cultural context in which it occurs. Some groups may consider a given situation to be exceptional, whereas others may not. In a formal evaluation context in which standardized tests are employed, measurements may be influenced by socio-cultural factors. IQ tests use references that children may or may not understand, depending on their background,

socio-cultural references or environment (rural or urban). These can have built-in biases associated with mother tongue, cultural references or socio-economic environment, which can lead to an erroneous interpretation of a child's potential. It is important to be particularly vigilant in the case of immigrant or allophone students.

#### ***May go unnoticed***

Not all students show obvious signs of giftedness. Moreover, when it is expressed it may appear only as certain characteristics, not all. In some cases, behavioural indicators associated with agitation or lack of motivation mask giftedness indicators. When this happens in reaction, say, to an unmet need such as a need for challenges or stimulation that has not been taken into consideration, the intervention strategy may be in vain if it focuses on signs instead of real needs.

***Can coexist with a disorder***

Giftedness can coexist with a disorder, particularly an attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity or an autism spectrum disorder. Giftedness, as such, is not a disorder; indeed, some gifted people are said to be “twice exceptional.” There are a variety of ways in which giftedness can coexist with a disorder. In some situations, the inherent characteristics of giftedness can lead students to compensate for difficulties associated with a disorder. In such situations, giftedness will be said to mask the disorder. Such students are more at risk of experiencing difficulties in school, particularly due to the increasing complexity of learning situations. Among students who have a disorder that masks their giftedness, the indicators of the disorder predominate. There are also other situations in which the person’s disorder and giftedness mask each other. These situations mostly go unnoticed since their school marks are generally within the average range.

***Is not synonymous with success in school***

Contrary to popular belief, giftedness is not synonymous with success in school. Although the majority of gifted students adapt and succeed well in school, others may encounter difficulties along the way. These problems may be occasional or ongoing; they stem from the interaction of factors that are specific to the person but also related to subject-specific competencies, social skills and the management of stress and emotions. Some students may experience success only intermittently in the course of their studies while others end up dropping out. When students succeed easily without having to work very hard from the time they start elementary school, special attention must be paid to them to ensure that they develop work habits they can use in dealing with the increasing challenges they have to face in school. The school has a major role to play in offering a conducive environment and learning conditions that enable gifted students to develop their full potential.

***Manifests differently in boys and girls***

With respect to gender differences, even if there seem to be just as many gifted girls as boys, the latter are more frequently identified as such. Gifted boys apparently express and manifest their suffering in ways that are observable to educators (anger, aggression, agitation), which partly explains why they are identified more often than gifted girls. The latter are apparently more discreet, conceal their differences more and exhibit a greater capacity for adaptation, which would explain why giftedness in girls goes unnoticed more often than it does in boys.



## Indicators of giftedness

There is no single profile of gifted students and no list of observable indicators could ever encompass the full range of the forms giftedness takes. Those alluded to in this document make it possible to understand how some gifted students function.

Although each gifted student is unique, some authors claim that all of them share the same observable characteristics. Learning pace, curiosity, creativity and intensity do indeed seem to be universally shared.

**Other characteristics that may be associated with giftedness include:**

**Is interested in the causes of things**  
**Demonstrates critical thinking**  
**DEMONSTRATES A DEVELOPED USE OF LANGUAGE**  
**Considers justice to be important** **IS SELF-TAUGHT**  
**Is sensitive or feels**  
**Becomes involved misunderstood**  
**to varying degrees, depending on the context**  
**Has extensive knowledge in specific areas**  
**IS PERFECTIONIST** **DEMONSTRATES ORIGINALITY IN PROBLEM SOLVING**  
**Desires and appreciates challenges**  
**NOTICES INCONSISTENCES AND POINTS THEM OUT**  
**Feels out of sync with other students**  
**IS ACTIVE** **of the same age**

Given the possible range of expressions of giftedness and the needs they reflect, we should think about the needs of gifted students in ways that lead to appropriate intervention strategies. It is essential to take expressions of giftedness into account since giftedness is inscribed within a more global context, namely that of the whole person.

**Is creative**  
**Learns quickly**  
**IS CURIOUS**  
**Is intense**



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