



Changing Black Youth's Futures

**Stop Anti-Black
Racism in Education
in Quebec**

June 2025



“Like—the
grade eight
year, I haven’t
really been
getting
suspended,
but in grade
seven, I find
I’ve gotten
suspended
a lot.”

« Quand on
parle des Noirs
(à l'école), on
est *toujours* à
l'esclavage ...
Il y a plusieurs
autres choses
que l'esclavage,
c'est ça. »



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The support of the Community Research Ethics Office (CREO), which provided ethical oversight for the research, was significant. Through the CREO's ethics review, the LMRC was able to overcome a major hurdle which allowed them to maintain ownership, direction, and management of this community research. Thank you to the parents, teachers, and students who agreed to participate in the study and share their experiences. Thank you for your confidence and trust.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Lerona Dana Lewis, the principal researcher, whose passion for teaching, community engagement, leadership, and equity inspired the successful completion of this research. Gloria Ann Cozier's brilliance and unwavering dedication to community development in pursuit of equity and justice have been paramount in the realization of this project. The LMRC is especially thankful to the research assistants who demonstrated diligence and commitment throughout the research process.

Our research began in 2021 when COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were still in effect and the memories of the murder of George Floyd were still omnipresent. The sense of urgency that his death invoked, especially within Black communities, was palpable. Black and other racialized community organizations in Montreal rallied for institutional change. The LMRC was honoured to be part of this movement but we look forward to a time when Black people will always be treated with respect and dignity and this type of work will no longer be necessary.

Message from the director

As Administrative Executive Director of the Lasalle Multicultural Resource Center, having the opportunity to work closely with grassroots community members and vulnerable populations, I have witnessed many Black and racialized families in distress resulting from their children's school experiences in Quebec. We see numerous parents who, with high aspirations for their children, send them to school; these parents are unaware that education is not an equalizer in Quebec schools. Instead, it continues to marginalize Black youths. Parents and children are disheartened when they experience the various unfair practices and inequities in the school system.

Decades-long practices in Quebec schools have continued to harm Black and racialized children. There is an urgent need to address this ongoing crisis. It is hoped that this study will highlight the places where resources are most needed and that it will be used in policy development by governments, school service centers and those with decision-making power. Further, we hope that they will finally enact changes based on the actionable recommendations made in this report. It is time for each and all of us to collectively realize a future for Black youths in which their full humanity and unique life experiences are honoured and valued instead of being arbitrarily excluded within Quebec schools.

Respectfully,



Auvril Edwards

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Message from the creator of the project

For many decades, social service professionals reported their concerns about Quebec school practices which have marginalized Black youth. They reported that Black youth are placed in hostile spaces that limit their opportunities for academic success. Black children are persistently labelled as having learning difficulties and “maladjusted behaviour,” resulting in them being systematically placed in special education classes/schools. In my experience as a social worker and psychotherapist, these deficit accounts of Black students were proven to be unequivocally false on numerous occasions.

LMRC made several interventions based on Black parents’ complaints that their children are subjected to a comparatively higher rate of disciplinary measures such as suspension. The parents’ complaints, the jarring police presence around the schools, the high rate of unemployment among Black youths prompted the LMRC to conduct this research. The LMRC project aimed to gain a better understanding of Quebec school practices and their impact on Black students and to ultimately find ways of changing the trajectory of Black youths’ future. This research highlighted, among other crucial elements, the silent emotional suffering that Black children and their parents endure because of Quebec school practices.

Respectfully,



Gloria Ann Cozier

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Executive summary

Changing Black Youth's Futures examines the experiences of Black youth in the Quebec Education Program, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, from the perspective of parents, children, and teachers. There were fifty-three (53) eligible participants enrolled in the study. The majority of the participants, forty-one (41) or 77%, were Anglophone. Data were collected using individual interviews and a focus group. Our data analysis identified four central themes about current school practices that affect Black youth. They are:

Exclusionary academic practices

This describes actions such as routinely placing Black children in *de facto* segregated alternative programs like the Formation à Metier Semi-Specialisé or classes for students with learning disabilities, or preventing students enrolled in French Welcoming Classes from participating in certain team sports. The transfer of students from one school to another within the same school board is also a type of quasi-school expulsion that interrupts their educational trajectory.

Unfair resource allocation and support practices

Examples include allocating insufficient hours to staff who support students with learning disabilities, or allocating resources for police in schools which contributes to making Black students feel unsafe in their educational environment.

Marginalizing pedagogical practices

These include using textbooks with the N-word, having low expectations of Black students, and teaching historical events such as Transatlantic Slavery without appropriate context and without concern for potential negative impacts on the well-being of students.

Inadequate decision-making and accountability practices

This includes refusing to consistently account for Black presence in schools by not collecting data on the academic progress of Black students, and by not providing specific programs to support Black students' learning success.

While the impacts of COVID-19 on students were also examined, our analysis reveals that existing school practices were magnified by the effects of COVID-19 but not superseded by them. This finding is unsurprising because, in other sectors, COVID-19 was shown to have exacerbated existing issues of equity and inequality in areas like health care.¹

A surprising issue in the data was the extent to which the [Charter of the French Language](#) negatively affected the school experience of the Black Anglophone students in this study. The study's results, therefore, raise a crucial question: Is protecting Quebec's linguistic and cultural uniqueness antithetical to ensuring the success of Black children and youth? Our data suggests that Black Anglophone students are at severe risk of failure in the Quebec education system. Our findings reflect those of a study published in 2012, which showed that Black Anglophone youth are the least likely Quebec students to complete high school within five years.² Since Black students' academic performance is not tracked annually, the specific reasons for this crisis are unknown.

None of the teachers we interviewed reported knowing about programs to support Black youth in their high schools or CEGEPs. However, they all reported that Black youth are adversely affected by stereotyping and teachers' low expectations. The results of this research underscore that Black students' academic trajectories must be addressed by education policymakers in Quebec.

In this research, there was a notable absence of discussion about students' religious experiences in school or their gender identity. Thus, the findings do not capture how school practices impact Black youth who live at the intersection of race, religion, and gender diversity in Quebec. Future research in this area is recommended.

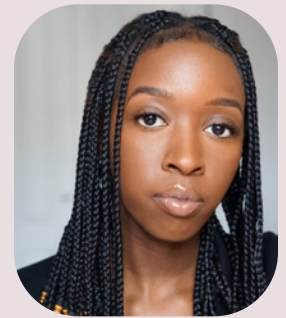
Black families, parents, children, researchers, and scholars are unlikely to be surprised by the findings of this research, which affirm the ongoing presence of anti-Black racism in education in Quebec. This is the reality our report seeks to change.

The research assistant team



Jodania Ossé graduated from UQÀM in 2022 with a bachelor's degree in pre-school and elementary education. She also has a certificate in administration and social sciences. Of Haitian origin, she is mainly interested in researching the advancement of Black people and other visible minorities in Quebec. She is also interested in research on education, human behaviour and psychology.

Blandine Mbonyumuvunyi has a bachelor's degree in urban planning from the Université de Montréal. A second-generation immigrant, her interests converge on the study of neighborhoods that are considered disadvantaged. Her research project focused on the study of the evolution of social and spatial fragmentation in the Little Burgundy neighborhood, the first historically Black borough in Montreal.



Saba Raja received her master's degree in sociology from the University of Toronto. She has a variety of research interests and currently specializes in immigration and the systematic barriers experienced by racial and cultural minorities in Canada.

Other Research assistants associated with the project are:

Meg Erb, Marcus Garvey Parley, Misanka Mupesse of the University of Ottawa, and York University graduate **Salina Berhane**.

We are grateful for their contribution to the realization of this community research project.

Key terms used in this study

Anti-Black Racism: Refers to the specific forms of racism and racial discrimination that affect Black people. It is rooted in the history of Transatlantic Slavery and the enslavement of Africans who were treated as property. Anti-Black racism is defined here as policies and practices that are rooted in Canadian institutions such as education, health care, and justice. These policies and practices mirror and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping, and/or discrimination towards people of Black- African descent. It operates invisibly to maintain the inequalities that disenfranchise Black people.³

Black: Refers to an identity constructed by political and historical oppression and based on notions of racial inferiority, which persist in present times. The term does not refer to biology or genes.⁴

BlackCrit: An extension of Critical Race Theory that theorizes the specificity of anti-Blackness in racial discrimination and its impacts on the Black body, mind, spirit, and psyche.⁵

Charter of the French Language: A law that protects and promotes French as the official language of Quebec, which also restricts access to English schools. Most children, including newcomers to Quebec, are mandated to attend Francophone schools.⁶

Colourblindness: Describes the refusal to see race while inadvertently acting on implicit racial biases. For example, noticing student's racial differences makes some people uncomfortable, which results in them adopting policies that ignore the inequities and inequalities that exist because of racism, thereby reinforcing the advantages given to whiteness in school. "I don't see colour" is a statement that teachers should avoid.⁷

Critical Race Theory: A theoretical explanation for our observations that Black and racialized communities are disproportionately or over-represented in prisons and special education classes, and underrepresented in school management positions and academic stream programs. One of the main tenets applied to this research is that racism is an ordinary everyday experience of people of colour.⁸

Hierarchy of Oppression: A term that implies that some forms of oppression are more important than others, which we counter with the acknowledgment that freedom from oppression is the right of all marginalized communities and not only of one particular group.⁹

Race: A categorizing process based on shared physical and subjective characteristics that is used to produce and reproduce racial inequalities and allocate rewards and opportunities based on racial classification.¹⁰

Transatlantic Slave Trade: The United Nations estimates that over 15 million men, women and children became victims of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, which lasted for 400 years. They were taken from Africa to North and South America and the Caribbean. This form of enslavement is referred to as chattel slavery, wherein Black people were treated as property. The last enslaved person was sold in Montreal on August 25th, 1797. The implications of the Transatlantic Slave Trade reverberate to this day.¹¹

Welcoming Class (*Classe d'accueil*): A class that aims to promote linguistic competence (oral, reading, and writing) among students who do not speak French to allow them to be integrated into regular classes. Children who do not speak French may be enrolled in the Welcoming Class in the French public school system.¹²

Introduction

The LaSalle Multicultural Resource Center observed that Black youth were experiencing grave difficulties in school, leading to academic delays and placement in alternative programs. The LMRC wanted to gain greater insight into the problems facing youth in the Quebec school system so that we could share this information with policymakers, educators, other community organizations, parents, and students. We undertook this research with funding from Heritage Canada.

Our research question was: What are the school practices that impact the trajectories of Black youth from high school to work or higher education?

This report includes a brief discussion of what is already known about the experiences of Black students in schools in Montreal, followed by a discussion of the methods and assumptions underlying the research. The results of our analysis of the school practices that impact Black youth and accompanying recommendations follow. The report concludes by suggesting directions for future research.



Literature review

In Quebec, only a few studies compare the academic outcomes of Black students with those of their non-Black peers.^{1,13-14} The Ministry of Education does not appear to collect or record this data in its reporting.¹⁵ The general consensus of Black communities in Montreal is that Black students are not attaining educational success in Quebec schools at the same level as their non-Black peers. The existing research highlights the following observations:

Studies of Black youth were often framed through the lens of immigration or socioeconomic status, not race.

Black students experience low teacher expectations and over-disciplining compared to their non-Black peers.¹⁶⁻¹⁷

Black students are often misdirected to classes for students with learning disabilities.¹⁸

In Montreal, Black youth between the ages of 18 and 25 experience comparatively high levels of unemployment.¹⁹

Methodology

This study is qualitative and uses participants' accounts to develop an understanding of Black youth's trajectory from high school to work or higher education. Its specific approach draws on constructivist grounded theory,²⁰ which is based on the assumption that knowledge is constructed throughout the research process by all participants, including the researchers. As such, it is acknowledged that the researchers' values and beliefs can shape how we ask questions, study, and write up our research findings. Understanding this, we follow methods and procedures that produce credible and trustworthy knowledge.²¹

The assumptions underlying our research are based on the principles of [Critical Race Theory \(CRT\)](#) and BlackCrit.^{3,9} The fundamental principle of CRT that this research draws from is that anti-Black racism is an everyday experience for Black people. Therefore, the goal of the research is not to determine *if* racism exists. Instead, the research seeks to understand *how* school practices that occur in the context of anti-Black racism impact Black students' pathways through school.

Another key principle of CRT is that Black people themselves are best positioned to tell and interpret their experiences. This principle is reflected in the composition of the research team and the advisory group that supported the research planning. As a predominantly Black research team, we are able to critically interrogate the dominant narratives that have traditionally cast Black youth and parents in a negative light in education.

School practices are defined here as the everyday actions that are undertaken in schools by various social actors. We are primarily interested in the social practices of those actors (people) who make decisions on behalf of the institution.

Methods

We obtained ethics approval from the Community Research Ethics Office in Waterloo, Ontario, and the University of Ottawa.

We used a purposive sampling method and snowball technique to recruit participants.²²

We obtained data through semi-structured, open-ended interviews with 53 participants from June 2022 to October 2023, and one focus group in October 2023. We conducted individual interviews with 47 respondents and held a focus group with six respondents in French or English based on the participants' preference.

We submitted access to information requests to school service centres to ascertain the number of students expelled from school between 2017-2022.

We transcribed the audio-recorded interviews in the language in which the interview was conducted, either French or English.

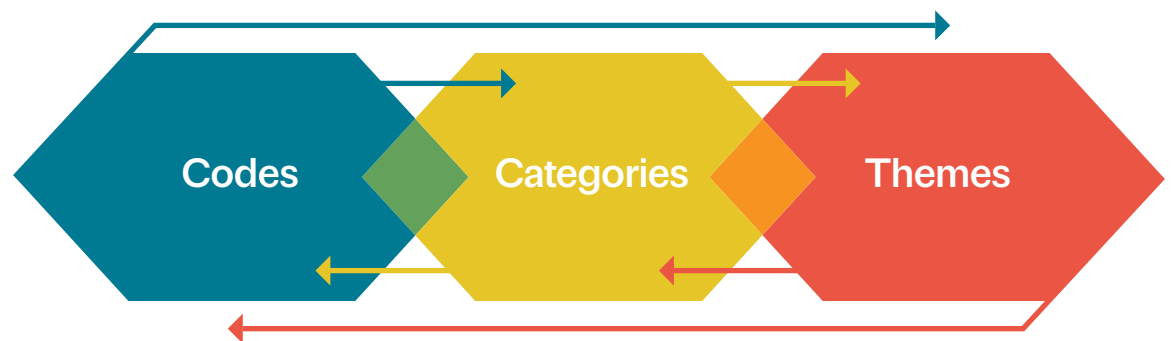


Data analysis

We analyzed the data by coding interview transcripts inductively. We then developed categories and themes using the constant comparison method (CCM).^{23, 24} With this method, we compared codes, categories, and themes by going back and forth between each of them to arrive at four major thematic practices affecting Black students' school pathways.

Below, we provide an example of how we arrived at one of the themes.

Figure 1 Iterative comparison of codes, categories, and themes in the CCM to arrive at major themes.



When parents said they could not find a school nurse to support their daughters; when the psychoeducator said they did not have enough hours to work and could not support all children who needed help; when the student who was suspended was left without care because they were suspended on the day that the therapist came to the school, we asked, “What is happening?” The response to this question was that students were *lacking access to support*. We then ascribed the code *lacking access to support* to these data.

When we compared this code to the code *presence of police in schools*, we then created the category *Resources for students*. To arrive at the conceptual or overarching practice, we decided that the practice was about how schools were choosing to allocate funds to schools for students. This led us to the theme *Unfair resource allocation practices*.

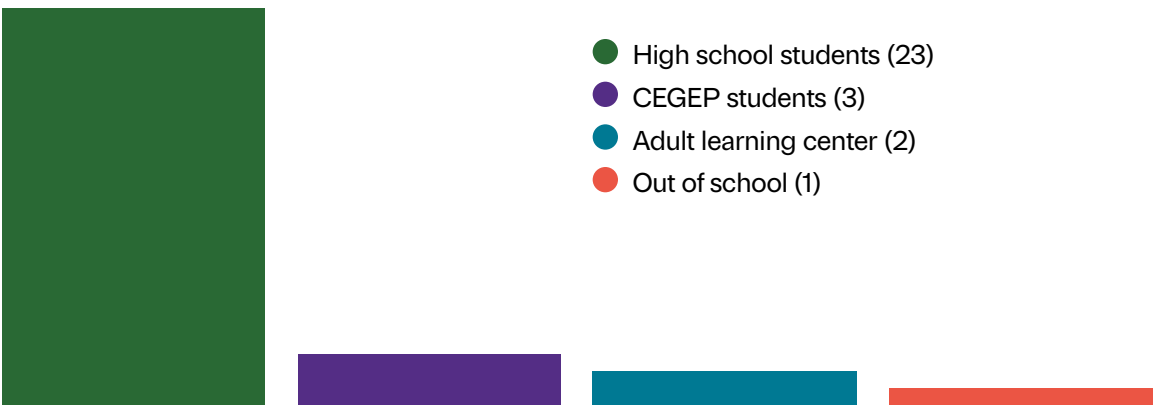
Findings and implications



Descriptive data

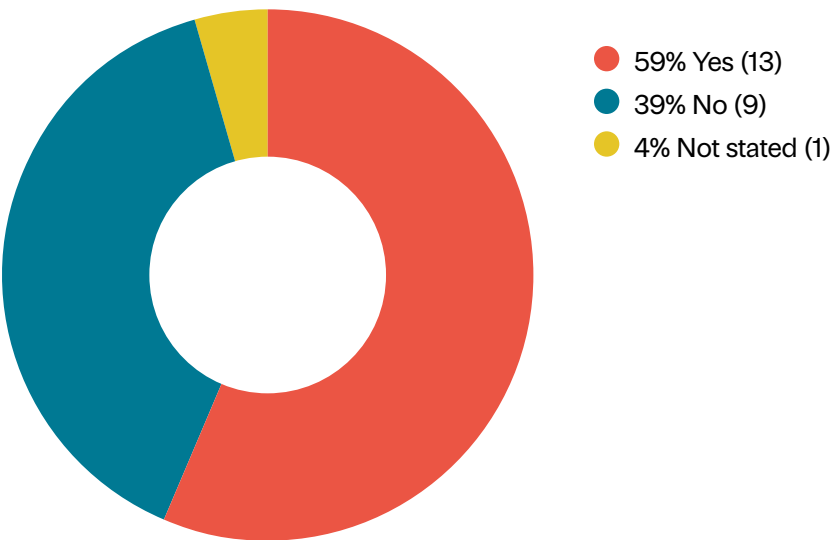
Among the 53 participants, n=23 were high school students, n=13 were parents, and n=11 were teachers (see Appendix). The majority were Anglophone (77%) and spoke English during the interviews.

Figure 2 Breakdown of student participants by school level



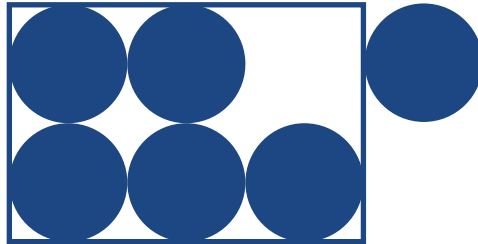
More than half of the high school students that we interviewed had experienced or were at risk of academic exclusion.

Figure 3 Students experiencing academic exclusion

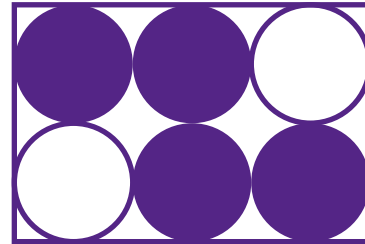


Findings

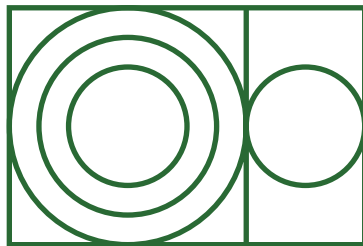
The data analysis reveals four main school practices that shape Black students' academic experiences and pathways.



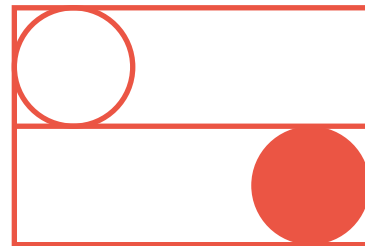
Using exclusionary academic practices



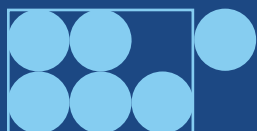
Allocating inadequate or insufficient resources and support



Marginalizing students through pedagogical practices



Ignoring race in decision-making and accountability practices



Exclusionary academic practices

School practices that keep students out of the regular educational stream by placing them in Welcoming Classes, classes for students with learning disabilities or behavioural problems, and/or work-study programs.

“

I feel like I would have graduated earlier if I did not have to learn French ... it looks good to speak two languages, but I feel like it is a barrier ... I am not going anywhere, I am just learning French and not doing other important classes.”

— Phyllis, August 2, 2023

“

I finished my welcome class this year, the advanced level of the welcome class, but now I have to go directly to adult training. They sent me to the people who helped me to choose the option.”

— Aaron, July 2022

“

Well, I definitely think that they should allow kids like me to be more involved in school. I remember I tried joining the volleyball team, but I really couldn't because I actually needed to be in regular classes. I feel like because I'm going to be around more kids who speak French, maybe I will be able to learn from what I see and hear.”

— Jackie, July 2023

Excluding Black youth from regular classes, including by placing them into the Welcoming Class, appeared to increase their chances of being delayed in high school. These students also experienced social exclusion. Some students reported having to complete high school in an adult learning center in English.

In the following excerpt, a parent, Jennifer, describes her frustration with the exclusion of her child from the regular school stream on the basis of unspecified learning issues.

Interviewer: Did you get anything in writing from the school to say what his learning issues were?

Jennifer: Just difficulty paying attention. The pediatrician never said that [child] had ADHD or anything like that, so I don't know, I just think they wanted to get rid of [child].

She tried to get him into English school. Her request was rejected.

Jennifer: They said we don't see where [child] needs it ...They say [child] must be really behind, like [have] either dyslexia or ADHD, for them to approve that.

Interviewer: So essentially, your child has been placed in a school for special needs, but they have not told you what special needs the child has?

Jennifer: Exactly! And it delayed [child] tremendously up to today. (June 2022)

When schools exclude children from the regular stream without providing adequate explanation to parents, the school-parent relationship can break down, causing mistrust to grow. From this parent's perspective, the placement of her child in classes designed for students with learning disabilities is causing academic delays.





Marginalizing pedagogical practices

Refers to white teachers' practice of holding low expectations of Black students and not taking into account their prior knowledge of and experience with aspects of the curriculum.

The Black students said teachers questioned their intelligence, focused exclusively on enslavement when teaching about Black history, and centred whiteness even when speaking about Black accomplishments, as illustrated below.



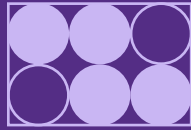
It feels unfair because, let's say, the teacher will ask us a question, and then when we answer with the right answers, she's like, 'Well! I didn't know you knew the answer!' Saying that we didn't know you knew the answers, like, that's calling us stupid."

— Mark, August 2022



When we speak about Black people it is *always* about slavery, but there are other positive things about Black people that they don't talk about enough." — Rachel, February 2023

These examples highlight the low expectations that white teachers have of Black students. Students came to class with prior knowledge about school subjects, but their teachers did not employ strategies that accounted for students' existing knowledge.



Unfair resource allocation and support practices

When insufficient resources are allocated to support Black students and/or when resources are redirected to police in schools.

Insufficient support for student counselling

Francine's experience illustrates the inadequacy of allocated resources. She was suspended often in Grade 7. When her suspension days coincided with the single day that the therapist came to the school, she would miss the time with the therapist. She said,



She only comes on Wednesdays ... if there is, like, a bad situation, then I will talk to her about it. Most of the time, I would be suspended on Wednesdays, and I wouldn't be able to see her.” — July 2022

This example is representative of many instances when respondents, parents, teachers, and students reported the problem of insufficient access to social supports in school.

The resources allocated to police are disturbing to students.

“

Sometimes I'll be getting out my class, and I just see two police officers right there, and I'm like, here we go again. They'd be walking around the school to be, like, "Hi, kids we're just looking." Like, that's not it. They're probably looking for drugs even though nobody has drugs in the school, [or] weapons 'cause like our school is mad ghetto ... We know our school's bad, but you don't have to keep reminding us that we're in a bad school... We're still, like, just students.” — Angus, August 2022

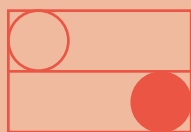
“

When the police come, I'll be praying for those kids ...'cause it's not easy. Whenever they come, I am so afraid.”

— Luanna, July 2023

We were not able to ascertain the reasons for the frequency of policing in schools during our research. However, some students reported that there were physical confrontations among students.

The students attending schools where there was a high police presence and physical confrontations felt that their school was the worst school in Montreal, with the lowest standard (“ghetto”). Is there a correlation between the low morale of students and the conflict in their schools?



Inadequate decision making and accountability practices

Decision-making and accountability practices refer to the presence or absence of targeted support programs for Black students.

A positive example of Black-centred decision-making was the hiring of Black teachers in schools. Both Black children and parents reported that Black teachers were a source of support and advocacy. However, Black teachers reported experiencing a hostile work environment and difficulty getting hired into permanent positions. One senior teacher reported that Black teachers often leave Quebec.

When schools recognize and act on the importance of Black teachers' advocacy role on behalf of Black students their students clearly benefit, as seen in the excerpt below.

Mark recalls that a Black member of staff assisted Black students: "... she is a Black lady, but she was there for us Black kids."

Mark also recounted that when a white student was racially bullying him, this staff member intervened. He said the white teachers were trying to say, "Come here; you have to go to the principal's office." I said, "No, I'm going inside Madame Rachel's office." I rushed into her office... She stood up and said, "Mark, what's wrong?" I told her what these kids were saying. She took things into her own hands and the kids were suspended from the school. (Mark, August 2022)

The school's support of a Black teacher's initiative in the school was another example of decision-making that could positively impact students. George, a Black high school teacher, decided to start a club "for Black students to have somewhere to go [at] lunchtime ... The minute I said I wanted to do this, they were, like, yes!" (George, October 2022)

One teacher highlighted the difficulty that Black education graduates face in getting hired and then remaining in the job. He described the hiring process as a "struggle" and pointed out that "Black educators do not stay in Quebec. They keep going [to] Toronto."

“

I would say it's the relationship. As a racialized teacher, the expectations and treatment of racialized teachers are different than for white teachers. Okay, racialized teachers are also excluded ... they are ostracized ... (voice increases) I myself was targeted ... I did not eat with some teachers because they say negative things about immigrants [when] talking about students.” — Pierre, May 2022

While welcomed by students, the practice of hiring Black teachers appeared to come with negative consequences for the teachers themselves, as this quote above shows.

If Black teachers feel targeted and ostracized and experience discomfort when white colleagues make negative comments about immigrants, this raises questions about the level of accountability for Black students as well. To what extent can Blackness be truly considered in decisions made at some schools?



Discussion

This study raises troubling questions about the school practices that affect Black students' academic trajectories in Quebec. Several of these questions are highlighted in the following discussion.

Exclusionary academic practices

Some students reported that they moved from the Welcoming Class to adult learning centres to try to complete high school. Access to English education is dwindling as laws are enacted to protect the French language. Will Black students still have access to English education at adult learning centres in the future?

Questions can also be raised about the rationale behind the practice of excluding children enrolled in the Welcoming Class from participating in certain extracurricular activities at some schools. How does this practice impact a student's sense of belonging in their school?

The practice of placing students in classes for students with learning disabilities without a clear diagnosis or communication with parents should also be questioned. Students and parents did not understand why they were placed in these classes, leading to frustration and a deep sense of mistrust of the schools. How can communication between parents and school administrators be improved to avoid this?

Resource allocation and support practices

This report highlights a value conflict in the practice of resource allocation and support for students. On the one hand, there were insufficient resources available to serve students' academic needs. Students who required remedial support were expected to attend sessions during their lunchtime. *Some students preferred to be with their friends at lunch time. The account of the therapist being in school once per week raises the question:* Is the limited presence of therapists in schools—no more than once per week—due to resource misallocation or scarcity of resources.

On the other hand, student accounts indicated that there was a strong police presence in some of their schools. Students reported feeling afraid, upset, or demoralized when they saw police in their school. A paradigm shift away from repression and punishment and towards the health and well-being of students should be strongly considered to avoid the traumatizing presence of police in schools. Without using a deficit lens and colourblind

ideology, how else can the reasons for frequent conflict and unrest be addressed instead of turning to the police?

The experiences of Black teachers and staff must also be addressed. Two Black male teachers reported that they experienced hostility in their schools. This finding is also reflected in the existing literature from Quebec. Based on these accounts, it is evident that Black teachers find it difficult to get hired.

Questions should be asked about whether decision-making at the school level serves to welcome and retain Black teachers entering a predominantly white teaching profession. Given their clear benefit to Black youth, what decisions are being made to train, hire, and retain them?

Marginalizing pedagogical practices

Students' perceptions of racism in the classroom raise important questions about the pedagogical practices of their teachers.

These reports provide evidence of a well-documented pattern of the low expectations that white teachers have of Black students.

Students were also critical of the approach taken to the teaching of Black history in schools. Students often reported watching films on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and feeling very traumatized and enraged. Students also expressed that there was more to Black history than enslavement.

[Recent research](#) highlights inadequacies in Black representation and history in the Canadian curriculum.²⁷ In Quebec, scholars like Williams have tried to correct shortcomings in the history curriculum that invisibilize Black people's presence in the province.²⁸ However, these efforts have not reached the youth interviewed for this study.

Decision-making and accountability practices

Both parents and students welcomed the schools' decision to hire Black teachers. These teachers advocated for Black students and intervened on their behalf when problems arose.

As evident in the incident recounted by the student who was being racially bullied in school, the actions of Black teachers helped students feel that their side of the story was heard by the school. It can be inferred that when schools make the decision to support

Black teachers and staff intervention, a greater possibility exists for Black students to achieve fair treatment.

Existing research highlights the positive role that Black teachers play in schools.²⁹⁻³¹ Apart from their advocacy and ability to act as cultural brokers for students, they can positively impact youth by having high expectations of them. The teacher who wanted to create a space for Black students to have somewhere to go during lunchtime was creating a space for Black students to feel a sense of belonging at their school. When schools make the decision to support Black teachers' initiatives like this one, Black students benefit.

There was no publicly available information on Black students' academic performance in Quebec at the time of this study. However, we ascertained that more than half of the students we interviewed were at risk of being excluded from academic programs.

The prevailing colourblind approach, which ignores race in the collection and publishing of data on student academic performance, indicates a lack of accountability for their success. Being concerned about Black students' success should not be viewed through the lens of a zero-sum hierarchy of oppression. Supporting Black students does not lead to the neglect of the legitimate needs of other students. Instead, we should examine the intersection of students' racial, religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds as potential causes of oppression as well as wellsprings of diversity and strength.

Disaggregated trends in student performance can be used to develop targeted supports for students, while data on disciplinary measures such as expulsion and suspension can be used to understand their negative impacts on Black students. In the absence of this information, it is not possible to determine the extent to which Black students' trajectories are affected by common school practices in Quebec.



Recommendations

- Acknowledge that anti-Black racism exists in the Quebec education system. This study did not set out to prove that anti-Black racism exists. Rather, it is based on the established premise that anti-Black racism exists in Canadian institutions.
- Collect and publish data on student academic performance that is disaggregated by race. This information is needed to make actionable decisions about resource allocation. It can also help to keep school service centres and, ultimately, the Minister of Education accountable for Black students' school success.
- Reassess the role of police in schools and provide easily accessible annual public reports on the number of school interventions and the reasons for these interventions. Consider adopting a health and well-being approach to youth development instead of a criminalizing approach. By shifting the paradigm from criminalization to health and well-being, schools can reduce their reliance on the police.
- Continue collaborations with Black community organizations. Provide funding to allow them to provide enriched learning opportunities for Black students, such as robotics.
- Conduct further research on the ways that school practices impact Black children living at the intersection of disability, gender diversity, and religious intolerance, and whose immigration status is precarious in Quebec.
- Create pathways for Black and other racialized groups to enter and remain in the teaching profession in Quebec. Universities should provide mentorship to post-secondary students throughout their teacher education programs. Once hired, Black teachers should receive ongoing mentorship that recognizes the specificity of their racialized experience in the teaching profession in Quebec, with the goal of supporting their retention in the profession.

Conclusions

Changing Black Youth's Futures reveals systemic school practices comprised of the everyday actions school personnel take that shape how schools work. These everyday actions were grouped under four broad headings:



The study used qualitative methods so its findings cannot be generalized. However, as Black researchers, we can confidently say that the experiences recounted by the study participants are reflective of research undertaken in the rest of Canada and the United States, and wherever Black people are a minority in a white education system.²²⁻²⁵

Qualitative research is occasionally dismissed as being comprised of anecdotes. As researchers, we disagree with this view. The persistence of academic exclusion, stemming from low expectations of Black students in the classroom, and an overall lack of accountability for Black students' school success at the highest level are far more than anecdotal. The findings of this study reflect both past and ongoing challenges faced by Black youth in Quebec schools due to practices that are shaped by anti-Black racism.

Anti-Black racism is not an unusual experience for Black people. Therefore, the role of anti-Black racism cannot continue to be ignored through colourblind policies and programs in schools.

Our study suggests that the intersection of race and language puts Anglophone youth at a double disadvantage in education and increases their risk of school failure. Efforts must be made to protect Black youth's access to English language education, especially in the adult education sector.

We hope that the recommendations provided in this report will further this discussion and lead to action that will result in a positive change in Black youth's futures in Quebec.



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Appendix

List of participants

| Name (Pseudonym) | Occupation | Name (Pseudonym) | Occupation |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alana | Teacher | Megan | High School Student |
| Amadou | High School Student | Melissa | Parent |
| Amanda | High School Student | Merrik | Adult Learning Center |
| Angus | High School Student | Natalie | Parent |
| Anita | High School Student | Nicole | CEGEP Student |
| Anthony | Parent | Phyllis | High School Student |
| Ariel | High School Student | Pierre | Teacher |
| Aruda | High School Student | Rachel | CEGEP Student |
| Beswick | High School Student | Robert | High School Student |
| Caroline | Parent | Sally | Teacher |
| Chole | High School Student | Scott | Teacher |
| Christina | Parent | Simon | Teacher |
| Christine | Adult Learning Center | Sylvia | High School Student |
| | Student | Sophie | Teacher |
| Christopher | High School Student | Talia | Parent |
| Cindy | Parent | Travis | High School Student |
| Cryl | High School Student | Venus | Teacher |
| Debbie | High School Student | Véronique | Parent |
| Erica | Out of School | Xavier | High School Student |
| George | Teacher | | |
| Gladis | Parent | | |
| Ian | Teacher | | |
| Jackie | High School Student | | |
| Janet | Parent | | |
| Jennifer | Parent | | |
| Jessica | CEGEP Student | | |
| Johanne | Parent | | |
| Jones | High School Student | | |
| Joshua | High School Student | | |
| Kahli | High School Student | | |
| Lancelet | Teacher | | |
| Luanna | High School Student | | |
| Marie-Eve | Teacher | | |
| Mark | High School Student | | |
| Mary | Parent | | |

