



# **DOWNTOWN SCHOOL PROJECT: IDEAS FOR A SCHOOL BASED ON THE EXPECTATIONS OF LOCAL FAMILIES**

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# DOWNTOWN SCHOOL PROJECT: IDEAS FOR A SCHOOL BASED ON THE EXPECTATIONS OF LOCAL FAMILIES

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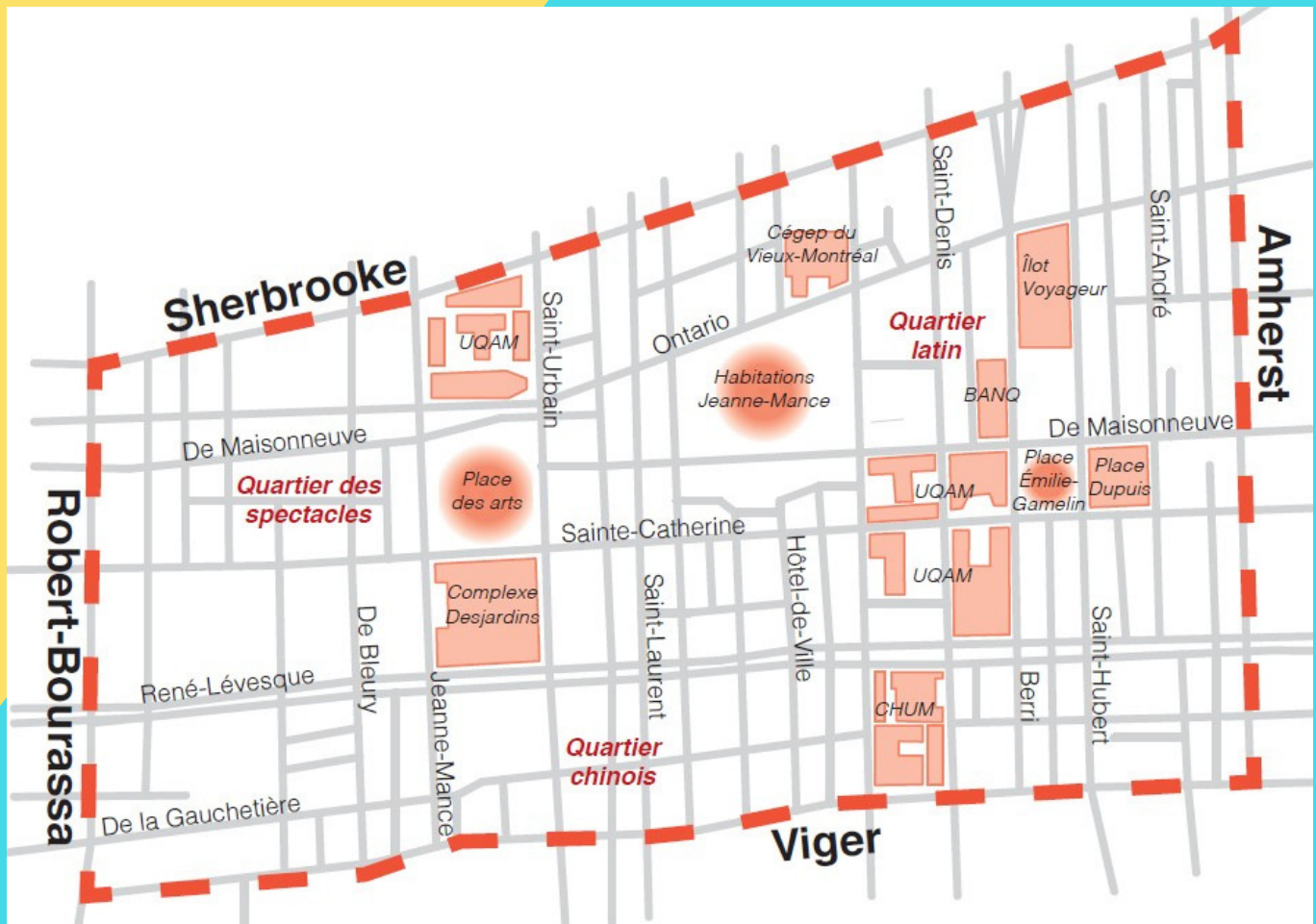
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This document is a simplified version of the original research.

The text has been simplified by Simplicom.

To learn more about the organization, visit [www.simplicom.org](http://www.simplicom.org)

# WHY AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN FAUBOURG ST-LAURENT?



- Montreal's city center is home to a lot of families.
- Many families leave the neighbourhood when children are of school age, presumably because there is no primary school.

## Children (0-14) in Faubourg St-Laurent

○ 0-4 years: 445 children

○ 5 to 9 years: 260 children

**Total: 955 (2016 Census)**

○ 10 to 14 years: 250 children

- Having an elementary school in the neighbourhood makes life easier for families, especially in terms of transportation.
- An elementary school is an important community place for families of various origins.

## Families' profile in Faubourg St-Laurent

**(2016 census)**

○ Almost 2 families out of 3 are from another country, most notably from China, France, Bangladesh, Morocco and Viet-Nam.

○ More than half of the families live below the low income threshold

- The development of an elementary school would help create a complete living environment for families downtown.

# THE URBAN SCHOOL



An urban school is located in a densely populated area, such as the city center. In an urban school, there are many different cultures. Families have very different levels of incomes. In studies found on urban schools, families surveyed have a similar profile to the families living in faubourg St-Laurent.

According to the research, an urban school faces certain challenges:

- Many students have different cultures, religions and languages.
- Every students' culture and history must be integrated in class to contribute to everyone's success.
- Parents participate in various ways.
- Some families do not have a lot of money.
- Equitable measures must encourage parents' involvement in school.

Community school and inclusive school models are good choices for the faubourg's future urban school according to:

- Quebec government's policy *Le plaisir d'apprendre, la chance de réussir*
- The Commitment-To-Success Plan of Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM)
- The reflections held at the Table de concertation du faubourg St-Laurent (Neighbourhood Round Table)
- The Reflections of the parents' committee of faubourg St-Laurent

Many studies provide information on urban schools around the world, but they don't give any information on inclusive schools and community schools located in a city center.

# COMMUNITY SCHOOL

A community school promotes the exchange of services between the school, the local community organizations and other community partners.

- A community organization sometimes helps the school by providing a specific social service to the students or parents.
- The school builds strong relationships with the community. It supports the community by:
  - o Lending spaces to an organization
  - o Having access to premises in certain community organizations.
  - o Participating to some of the community organizations' activities
  - o Letting Community workers lead an activity in school
  - o Allowing community activities in the school's premises
- Premises can be shared for different reasons:
  - o Physical activities
  - o Social services to the community
  - o Educational purposes
  - o Creating a new living environment in the community

To reach its objective, a community school needs to hire a coordinator.

This person is in charge of tying bonds with community organizations and families. It ensures collaboration and communication between the school's principal, teachers, parents, partners and the community organizations.

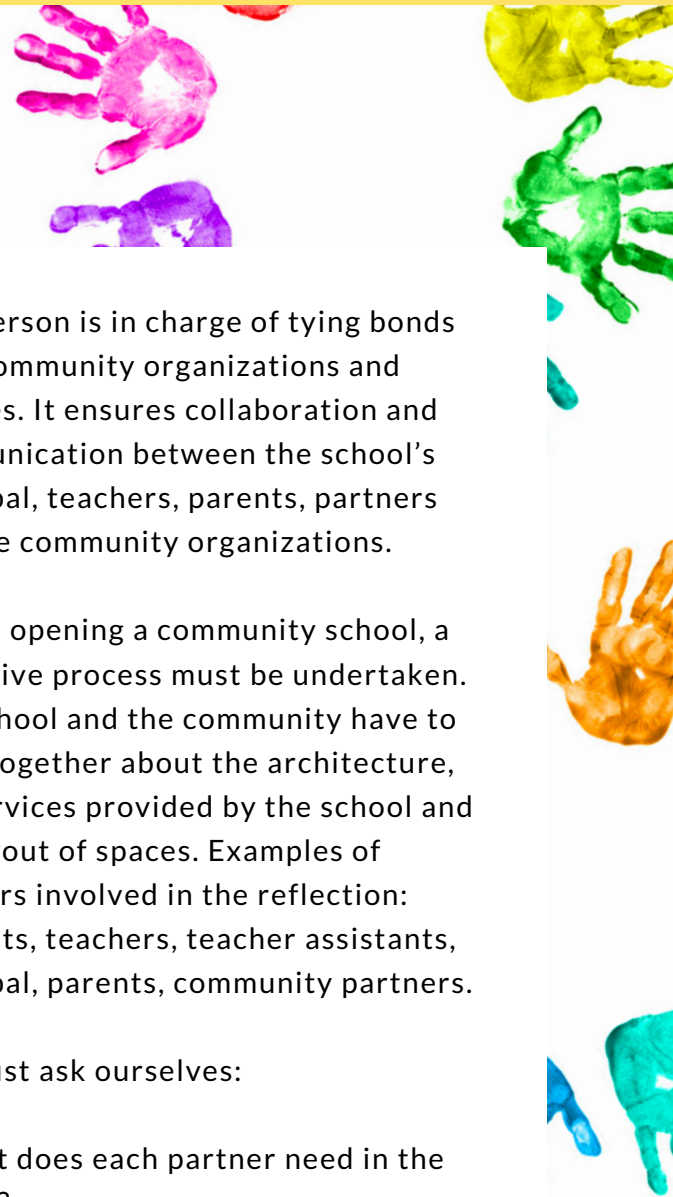
Before opening a community school, a collective process must be undertaken. The school and the community have to think together about the architecture, the services provided by the school and the layout of spaces. Examples of partners involved in the reflection: students, teachers, teacher assistants, principal, parents, community partners.

We must ask ourselves:

- What does each partner need in the school?
- What are the community's resources?

Everyone's opinions must be expressed. Marginalized people have to be consulted. This process needs stable partners in order to maintain flexible and sustainable links between the school and the community.

Great organization skills are required to ensure the good sharing of premises. Sometimes, the school's opening hours have to be adjusted. Other services have to be shared, like cleaning and security, so as not to disturb the teaching.



# INCLUSIVE SCHOOL



The inclusive school's main goal is to remove obstacles to student success. Everyone works together to sustainably adapt the school to the student needs. Everything is thought to promote inclusion. The environment is set up to accommodate cultural diversity. People involved strive to make learning and social participation accessible.

The inclusive school promotes an inclusive culture. Inclusive culture means great collaboration and communication between the school staff, students, parents and the community.

Inclusive policies written and applied by the principal's team structure life in the inclusive school. This team shares its decision-making power with the staff, parents and students.

Inclusive practices in teaching are the school's core. Teachers have a lot of freedom. Parents are included in school's life. Parents are encouraged to be a part of the decision-making process.

- Inclusive schools make decisions towards greater social justice.
- Inclusive schools promote collaboration and communication between students, staff, parents and the principal.
- The principal's team needs to think about including all students.
- In an inclusive school, teachers can:
  - o Teach as a team
  - o Form groups of students with the same needs
  - o Teach differently for each student
  - o Adapt programs
  - o Review the definition of success

In the spirit of inclusion, students are also members of the school community. Students' requests have to be heard and students can be trusted with responsibilities.

Participation of all students must be encouraged.



## TO WELCOME DIVERSITY, CAN WE CREATE AN ALTOGETHER URBAN, COMMUNITY AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL?



Our research shows no opposition between urban schools, community schools and inclusive schools. However, urban and community schools have different values than the inclusive school ones.

The inclusive school model welcomes students with disabilities. According to the research, the inclusive school is also open to all diversities:

- Diversity in the way of moving
- Diversity in the way of thinking
- Diversity in thinking skills
- Diversity in the ability to feel
- Diversity in ways of interacting
- Diversity of countries of origin
- Diversity of languages
- Diversity of beliefs

The community school model focuses on families from different cultures and different income levels. The community school does not talk much about students with disabilities but could include all forms of diversity.

Warning: developing partnerships that target certain categories of students could lead to exclusion. School services must be designed and offered to all students. All students can learn and benefit from the involved partners.

Community schools and inclusive schools both want to build strong and stable links with the local community.

The parents must think carefully about what type of school project they want to develop. They must think about the values they want for their school. Urban schools and community schools are not always inclusive schools. To achieve inclusivity, we must embrace diversity as much as possible. The school must be able to build strong relationships with the community and involve all students. Everyone has to work for the success of all students.

**CHALLENGES FOR A NEW URBAN SCHOOL IN FAUBOURG SAINT-LAURENT:  
ALL STUDENTS ARE DIFFERENT**

- More than half of the families with children have very low incomes
- Nearly 2 families out of 3 come from another country
- More and richer families move into the neighbourhood
- Some students might show difficulty in school because of their cultural difference, their poverty background or a specific disability.

**What are the possible solutions ?**

**COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

A community school promotes the exchange of services between the school, the community organizations and other community partners.

- The school builds strong relationships with the community.
- There are different kinds of partnership and reciprocal exchange:
  - o The school lends its premises to an organization
  - o An organization lends its premises to a school
  - o The school participates in the community organizations activities
  - o Community workers lead an activity in school
  - o Community activities are organized in school

**INCLUSIVE SCHOOL**

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- Inclusive schools promote collaboration and communication between students, staff, parents and the principal.
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**TO WELCOME DIVERSITY, CAN WE CREATE AN ALTOGETHER URBAN, COMMUNITY AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ?**

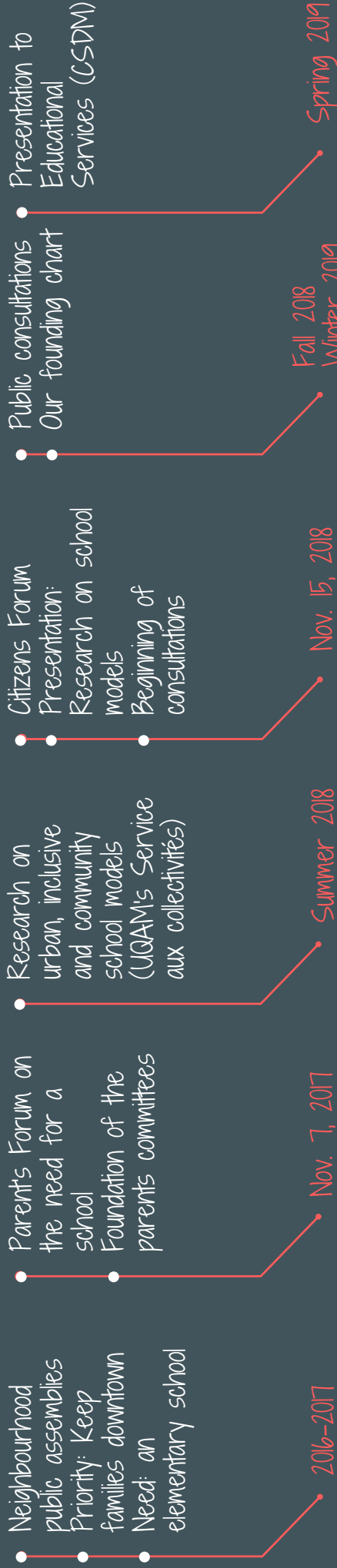
**Similarities between community and inclusive schools**

- The community school focuses on families' diversity in terms of cultures, income and living environments.
- The inclusive school strives to lower barriers in learning and integrate students with disabilities.
- The community and the inclusive schools want to develop strong links with the community.

**Differences between community and inclusive schools**

- A community school might not be inclusive if not all students can participate.
- It is important to assess whether the help of partners in the community ensures the participation and success of all students.

## PROJECT TIMELINE



Monitoring potential locations for the school (by the CSDM and the Table de concertation) - Continuously

## CONSULTATION

### Key questions for collective reflection

- A) What would be the characteristics of the school of your dreams?
- B) How should the school work so that all families want to register their children?
- C) How should the class work so that all students learn?
- D) What can the school share with its community?

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SHARE YOUR OPINION,  
CONTACT US!!  
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514.288.0404

Table de concertation du  
**faubourg Saint-Laurent**