

EDUCATIONAL PROJECT 2023-2027

JOHN GRANT HIGH SCHOOL

English Montreal School Board

The educational project is a strategic tool for an educational institution that defines its policy orientations, priority actions and expected results. It is a tool to inform its community with a view to ensuring educational success for all students regardless of age. The educational project reflects the characteristics and needs of the students who attend the educational institution, as well as the community's expectations regarding the education they receive. The educational project is prepared and implemented through the collaborative efforts of the various school stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, and other school staff members as well as community and school board representatives.

The educational project is part of a process designed to promote coordinated action and synergy among the various levels of the education system (MEQ, school boards and educational institutions), with due regard for their specific areas of autonomy and characteristics. This educational project must align with the English Montreal School Board's Commitment to Success Plan.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

According to the Education Act, Sections 37 and 97.1, an educational institution's educational project must include:

- a description of the context in which the institution acts and the main challenges it faces, particularly with respect to educational success and, in the case of a vocational training centre, the relevance of the training to regional or provincial labour market needs,
- the specific policy orientations of the educational institution and the objectives selected for improving educational success,
- the targets to be achieved by the end of the period covered by the educational project,
- the indicators to be used to measure achievement of these objectives and targets,
- the intervals at which the educational project is to be evaluated, determined in collaboration with the school service centre or school board.

The educational project must:

- respect the students', parents', and school staff's freedom of conscience and of religion (EA, Section 37),
- cover a period that is harmonized with the period covered by the school service centre or school board's Commitment to Success Plan and the period covered by the MEQ strategic plan (EA, Section 37.1, 97.2 and 209.1),

- comply with the terms established by the Minister to coordinate the entire strategic planning process between the educational institutions, the school service centre or school board and the MEQ (EA, Section 459.3),
- be consistent with the school service centre's or school board's Commitment to Success Plan (EA, sections 37 and 97.1).

COMPOSITION OF THE SCHOOL TEAM

This educational project was created by a school team that included the principal, staff assistant and teachers.

GROUPS CONSULTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

The development of this educational project was a collaborative process, engaging staff, students, families, Staff Council, Governing Board and the Educational Project Committee to ensure that the priorities of John Grant High School align with both the EMSB Commitment to Success Plan and the MEQ Strategic Plan.

SCHOOL PROFILE

John Grant High School (JGHS) is a high school in Côte-St-Luc, Montreal, serving students with Special Needs. With just over 100 students, JGHS provides a structured, supportive learning environment tailored to those who require individualized instruction. Many of our students come from underprivileged backgrounds, presenting additional challenges related to resources, accessibility, and academic progress. JGHS remains committed to fostering academic success, life skills development, and independence through personalized learning, structured routines, and strong community partnerships.

JGHS does not offer a traditional high school diploma. Instead, students receive certifications tailored to their individual abilities and goals. While our school is distinct from mainstream institutions, we strive to provide enriching high school experiences, including sports, dances, numerous field trips, and an outdoor education program, ensuring a fulfilling and well-rounded school experience.

Our facilities provide students with a diverse range of learning spaces that support both academics and personal growth. JGHS has a full-sized gym, weight room, sensory room, library, and a large outdoor field, giving students access to movement-based learning, structured physical activity, and recreational opportunities. The Chill & Chat

lounge offers students a calm and comfortable environment to socialize, relax, and build social skills. Our home economics room includes four fully equipped small kitchens, where students develop cooking and independent living skills in a hands-on, practical setting.

Our learning environment is built on differentiation and individualized planning, allowing each student to progress at their own pace. Teachers implement a variety of instructional strategies, including learning centers, individualized work folders, hands-on experiences, and assistive technology, ensuring that each student receives the support needed to thrive. Each classroom has both a teacher and support staff, and class sizes remain small to allow for individualized attention. Students also have access to specialized workspaces, including a woodshop, professional kitchen, home economics room, hair salon, greenhouse, and outdoor garden, where they develop essential practical and vocational skills. Through specialized programs, work placements, and community engagement, JGHS prepares students for meaningful, independent lives beyond high school.

JGHS serves students aged 11 to 21 with significant academic or developmental delays. Admission is determined through a case conference process, involving school professionals and families, ensuring that JGHS is the right fit for each student's needs. Many students experience intellectual impairments, learning disabilities, or social-emotional challenges, often functioning at an elementary academic level.

JGHS fosters a safe and nurturing environment, where students are encouraged to express themselves, develop confidence, and grow academically and socially. Predictable routines are maintained to support emotional regulation, and changes are communicated in advance whenever possible. Staff recognize and respect the varied levels of communication, anxiety, and understanding among students, meeting them where they are—both in academic settings and during unstructured periods like recess and lunch. In addition to core academics, students participate in structured in-school groups, such as classroom cleaning teams, a recycling collection program, coffee order and delivery service, a school newsletter team, and a composting initiative that incorporates vermicomposting. These experiences provide students with a sense of responsibility, teamwork, and independence.

The school places great emphasis on celebrating student success and building a sense of community. Monthly assemblies, a musical concert, and a talent show provide opportunities for students to showcase their abilities, develop confidence, and receive recognition from their peers and staff. Students also engage in lunch clubs, including Chess, Cards, Calisthenics, Botanical Buddies, Art, and Sewing, allowing them to explore interests and develop social connections in a structured and supportive setting.

JGHS is staffed by a dedicated team of educators and professionals, ensuring a comprehensive support system for all students. The school has 22 teachers and 18 support staff, including a full-time guidance counselor and career advisor who assist

students in planning for life beyond high school. The leadership team includes a full-time principal, a secretary, and a part-time vice principal, with additional support from a Staff Assistant who helps coordinate school-wide initiatives. This collaborative team ensures that students receive personalized guidance, emotional support, and career readiness training.

Thanks to the Breakfast Club of Canada, students have access to nutritious snacks, helping to ensure that every learner is ready to engage and succeed throughout the school day. Additionally, all lunches at JGHS are prepared by a teacher with the help of students completing their practicums, providing them with hands-on experience in meal preparation, food handling, and teamwork while fostering a sense of responsibility and skill-building.

JGHS thrives on strong community partnerships, which provide mentorship, workshops, funding, and real-world learning experiences for students. Key partnerships include Giant Steps, McGill University, Concordia University, Vanier College, the City of Côte-St-Luc (especially the Aquatic and Community Center and Library), the City of Hampstead, the Breakfast Club of Canada, the President's Choice Children's Charity, Royal West Academy, the SPVM, and Autism House. These collaborations allow students to engage in cross-school mentorship, skill-building programs, and community-based learning opportunities, reinforcing academic and vocational development.

For our Work-Oriented Training Pathway (WOTP) students, real-world experience is a critical component of their education. JGHS partners with local businesses and organizations to provide supervised work placements that help students develop practical job skills, workplace independence, and confidence. Our older students participate in stages at Home Depot, Pharmaprix, Dollarama, Lufa Farms, The Salvation Army, Canadian Tire, gaining experience in retail, customer service, warehouse operations, food service, and urban agriculture. These placements allow students to apply classroom learning in real-world settings, ensuring a smoother transition into employment and adult life.

According to the IMSE report, JGHS has a rating of 10, identifying it as one of the most financially supported schools in the province due to the significant needs of its student population. This funding allows JGHS to provide specialized programming, assistive technologies, and enriched learning experiences that help bridge educational gaps and promote student success in academic, social, and vocational areas.

JGHS is built on a culture of belonging, inclusivity, and empowerment, where students are supported at every step of their educational journey.

MISSION AND VALUES

John Grant High School is dedicated to fostering independence, self-worth, and resilience in students with Special Needs. We emphasize academic development, social engagement, life skills training, and emotional well-being, ensuring that every student is equipped with the tools needed to transition successfully beyond high school.

The core values that guide our school community include:

- *Respect and Dignity – We honor the individuality and potential of every student.*
- *Belonging and Acceptance – We create an inclusive atmosphere where students feel safe and valued.*
- *Lifelong Learning – We encourage curiosity, skill-building, and continued personal growth.*
- *Excellence and Passion – We are committed to fostering meaningful and engaging educational experiences.*
- *Resilience and Hard Work – We empower students to develop perseverance and confidence in overcoming challenges.*

THE CONSULTATION

The consultation process included:

- *Discussions with Staff Council and broader staff meetings to identify key challenges and priorities.*
- *Formation of a committee to design and distribute a school-wide survey to teachers and support staff.*
- *Classroom-based student input sessions, where educators adapted survey questions to ensure accessibility for all students.*
- *Review and synthesis of results by the consultation committee, which included administration, teachers, and specialists.*

Through this process, several key issues emerged that shape the goals and strategies of this educational project:

1. *Strengthening academic assessments to ensure meaningful literacy and numeracy progress.*
2. *Enhancing communication support for students with diverse speech and language needs.*
3. *Fostering leadership opportunities through structured school climate initiatives.*
4. *Expanding community engagement and work-based learning experiences for real-world skill development.*

These findings reinforce the need for a student-centered approach that prioritizes differentiated instruction, structured routines, and strong community partnerships to support the success and well-being of all students at JGHS.

ORIENTATIONS

The academic component of this educational project aligns with the English Montreal School Board's Commitment to Success Plan, ensuring that all students receive the support they need to reach their full potential. While all subject areas contribute to student development, traditional academic reporting focuses primarily on core subjects. However, for schools serving a higher population of students with Special Needs, a more individualized approach is necessary to accurately reflect student progress.

JGHS recognizes that standardized provincial report cards may not fully capture the diverse learning paths of our students, as many experience complex academic and developmental challenges that result in progress measured below traditional grade levels. Therefore, in addition to standard assessments, JGHS places emphasis on personalized learning objectives, alternative assessments, and ongoing communication with parents and caregivers to provide a more holistic view of student growth.

A key component of student success at JGHS is the use of differentiation and targeted interventions to support learners at their individual levels. Teachers implement a variety of strategies, including learning centers, individualized work folders, and hands-on experiences, to ensure students receive the necessary support while fostering independence and confidence. Small class sizes and collaborative teaching with support staff enable educators to tailor instruction, reinforcing progress in core academics, life skills, and social-emotional learning.

The goals outlined in this educational project are designed to ensure comprehensive, meaningful feedback, highlighting not only academic achievements but also progress in life skills, communication, and independence—key indicators of student success in our setting.

The educational orientations of John Grant High School focus on fostering independence, communication, academic growth, and student well-being. Our approach ensures that students receive personalized learning, structured routines, and real-world experiences that prepare them for success.

Communication

Effective communication is fundamental to the well-being and development of all individuals, particularly for students with Special Needs. The ability to express one's needs, wants, and thoughts is not only a basic human right but also a cornerstone of meaningful education and

social interaction. For many students at John Grant High School, verbal communication alone is not always sufficient, requiring alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) tools to ensure they can effectively interact with others.

Recognizing this, JGHS integrates a variety of visual supports and assistive technologies to aid communication. Students benefit from visual schedules, pictograms, core boards, visual reminders, and cues, which help them process information, follow routines, and express their needs in structured and unstructured settings. These tools provide essential scaffolding for understanding expectations, reducing anxiety, and fostering greater independence.

The Board is committed to ensuring that all students have access to the necessary tools and support to communicate effectively. Where appropriate, students are provided with communication devices and assistive technologies to enhance their ability to express themselves and engage with their environment. By empowering students with multiple communication strategies, we foster their independence, self-advocacy, and overall quality of life.

Goal: Ensure that all students have access to devices, visual tools, and assistive technologies and are efficient in using them to appropriately and effectively communicate their needs and desires.

Regular and meaningful communication with parents is essential, particularly for students with moderate to severe Special Needs. Parents play a crucial role in supporting their child's development and education, and keeping them informed about their child's progress is key to this partnership. While all students in the province receive a provincial report card, JGHS recognizes that these report cards do not fully capture the wide array of student needs, strengths, and challenges.

To provide families with a more accurate and comprehensive picture of student growth, JGHS implements regular updates beyond report cards, ensuring that parents and caregivers are aware of their child's achievements, challenges, and overall development throughout the school year. This approach fosters collaboration between the school and families, allowing us to work together to offer the best possible support and learning experiences for every student.

Goal: Provide parents with regular feedback concerning student progress in addition to report card marks, incorporating ongoing communication and individualized progress updates.

Academic Progress

In Quebec, all elementary and secondary students receive a provincial report card three times a year, providing parents with feedback on their child's progress based on the Quebec Educational Program competencies. However, these report cards do not fully reflect the diverse learning profiles of students in a Special Needs setting, where progress is often measured through individualized benchmarks rather than standardized grade levels.

At John Grant High School, teachers maintain ongoing communication with parents and caregivers, ensuring that student progress is monitored beyond traditional report cards. Academic progress at JGHS is measured through differentiation and targeted interventions, allowing educators to tailor instruction to meet each student's unique learning needs.

To support literacy development, JGHS has a literacy specialist who benchmarks every student in the school three times a year, tracking progress in reading and comprehension. Students who require additional support participate in one-on-one literacy interventions, where individualized strategies help them build foundational skills. In addition to literacy assessments, JGHS is actively working with a math consultant from the school board to develop a math diagnostic test similar to DIBELS, ensuring that both early intervention and family feedback are data-driven and effective.

JGHS implements learning centers and individualized work folders, allowing students to engage in tasks suited to their specific abilities. These methods promote independence, confidence, and personalized academic growth. Teachers work closely with support staff and families to implement data-driven strategies that support student success across all subject areas.

Goal: Implement a structured math diagnostic assessment to track student progress, provide targeted interventions, and ensure families receive meaningful feedback on their child's numeracy development. Continue benchmarking literacy skills three times a year and providing one-on-one literacy interventions to support students in reaching their full potential

School Climate

Creating a positive school climate is essential for the holistic development of all students, especially in a Special Needs setting. At John Grant High School, we understand that a nurturing and inclusive environment significantly impacts student learning and well-being. One of the critical components of fostering a positive school climate is actively seeking and incorporating feedback from our students. Their insights and perspectives help shape a supportive, responsive, and engaging educational experience.

When students feel accepted, respected, and heard, they develop confidence and are more motivated to learn. JGHS prioritizes structured routines and flexible accommodations to create an atmosphere where students feel safe, valued, and empowered. Recognizing that students have different needs for emotional regulation and engagement, we provide alternative spaces for students to recharge and self-regulate when required.

Our sensory room includes a treadmill, bean bag chairs, and a busy board, allowing students who are anxious or overstimulated to decompress in a quiet, supportive setting. Additionally, we offer a student lounge that includes an Xbox, foosball table, and a comfortable couch area, where students can take breaks from the classroom environment, socialize, or engage in structured downtime. These spaces also serve as an alternative setting for one-on-one discussions, fostering peer connections and staff-student support.

To further enhance school climate and student voice, EMSB schools use a survey tool to gather feedback about student experiences. At JGHS, due to our small student population, we will implement an annual focus group format, allowing students to share their thoughts on school life and suggest areas for improvement.

Goal: Implement an annual focus group for students to discuss their well-being, provide feedback on school climate, and identify areas for improvement to ensure a continuously supportive and inclusive environment.

Community Partnerships

Building strong community partnerships is essential for Special Needs schools to foster equity, provide real-world learning opportunities, and promote meaningful inclusion. At John Grant High School, we actively collaborate with local organizations, educational institutions, and businesses to create diverse and enriching experiences for our students. These partnerships offer opportunities for students to engage with their peers, develop vocational skills, and participate in community-based initiatives that support their social, academic, and career readiness.

Our partnerships with McGill University, Concordia University, and Vanier College provide students with mentorship opportunities, skill-building programs, and access to specialized workshops. The City of Côte-St-Luc, including the Aquatic and Community Center and Library, and the City of Hampstead allow our students to take part in civic engagement activities, community events, and recreational programs. Through collaboration with Giant Steps and Autism House, we ensure that students with diverse needs receive specialized support and programming tailored to their growth.

JGHS also benefits from corporate and nonprofit support, with organizations such as the Breakfast Club of Canada and President's Choice Children's Charity helping to fund school initiatives, provide meals, and support student well-being. In addition, the SPVM (Montreal Police) partners with JGHS to offer educational workshops that help students understand personal safety, community involvement, and law enforcement roles in a positive and supportive way.

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Through these heartfelt collaborations, we ensure that our students are not just included, but cherished and celebrated as integral members of the broader community. These partnerships

bridge the gap between school and the outside world, reinforcing academic learning with hands-on experiences that build confidence, independence, and social skills.

Goal: Expand student engagement with local schools, businesses, and community organizations to provide more work placements, real-world learning experiences, and collaborative initiatives that support student development and inclusion.

Digital Competency

In 2018, the MEQ launched its Digital Action Plan, providing a blueprint for integrating digital technology and innovative pedagogical practices into the education sector. This was followed in 2019 by the MEQ's Digital Competency Framework, which outlines 12 key dimensions to guide both student learning and teacher development in digital literacy and technology integration.

At John Grant High School, digital competency is not just a student-focused initiative—it is also a priority for educators. Our staff regularly undergo professional development in a variety of digital learning tools, ensuring that technology is effectively integrated into the classroom. Teachers receive training in Minecraft Education, coding for the classroom, robotics, Raspberry Pi, and other emerging technologies, equipping them with the skills to engage students in hands-on, technology-driven learning experiences.

In addition to fostering computational thinking and problem-solving skills, JGHS is committed to enhancing accessibility through assistive technology. Staff participate in assistive technology workshops to ensure that students can effectively use their devices to support their academic progress and everyday independence. By leveraging technology tailored to individual needs, students gain the skills necessary to navigate both academic settings and real-world environments with confidence.

As the educational landscape evolves, JGHS remains dedicated to exploring the role of AI in education, particularly in helping students overcome learning challenges. We are actively seeking ways to integrate AI-driven solutions that can support students in communication, organization, and adaptive learning, ensuring that technology serves as a tool for empowerment rather than a barrier.

Goal: Continue building capacity in digital competency through ongoing professional development, assistive technology integration, and AI exploration, ensuring that both students and staff are equipped with the digital tools needed to succeed.