



STUDENT SERVICES

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ConnexionMcGill: Post-Secondary Education Engagement and Access Program

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Overview

- 1) Quebec PSE challenges
- 2) McGill's Engagement and Access program
- 3) Lessons learned
- 4) Challenges
- 5) Next Steps
- 6) Discussion/Questions



McGill at a Glance...

- International university
- Students come to McGill from over 150 countries.
- Main language of instruction is English
- Located in Montreal, Quebec, a French-speaking province
- Medical/ doctoral research-intensive university
 - *2 campuses*
 - *11 faculties*
 - *> 300 programs of study*
 - *> 36,000 students*
 - *Partners with 4 affiliated teaching hospitals to graduate over 1,000 health care professionals each year.*

<http://www.mcgill.ca/about/>



Educational systems: in Canada

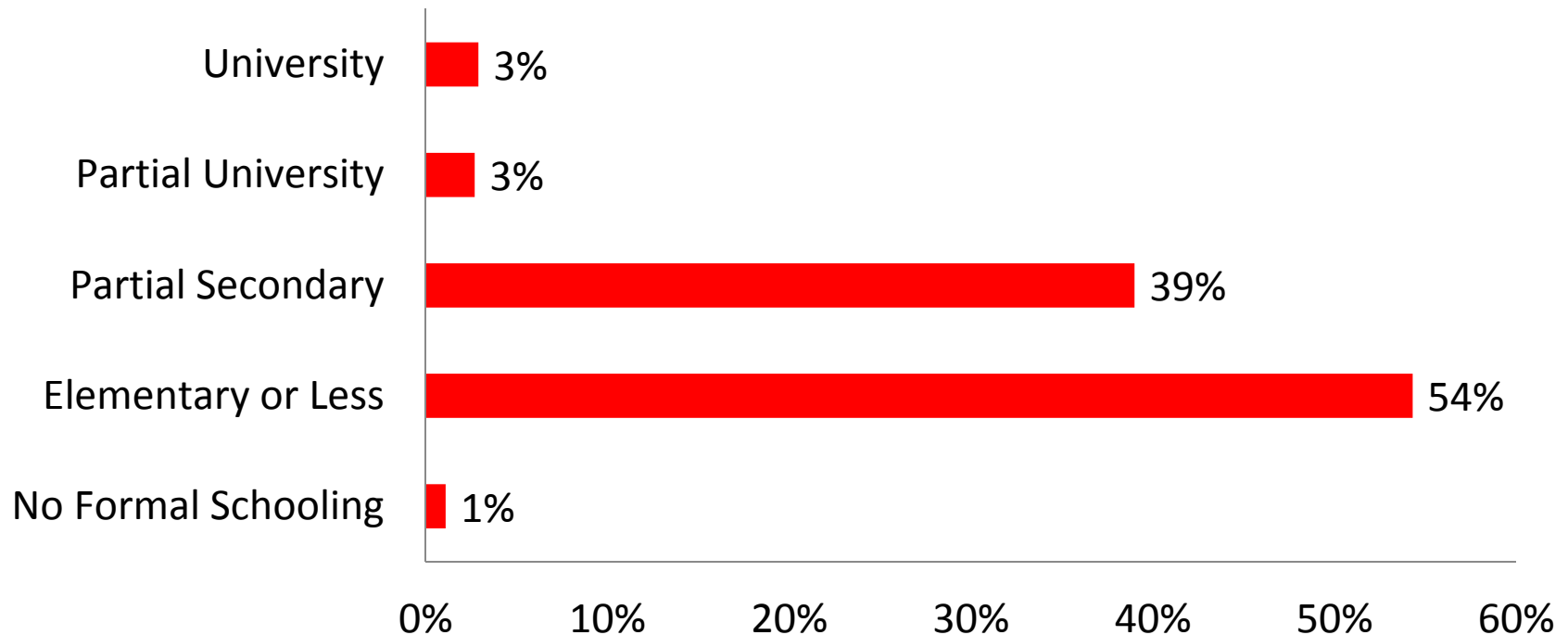
- Quebec students start high school at 12 years of age, unlike in other provinces where this transition is made at the age of 14.
- High school ends at Grade 11 in Quebec and Grade 12 in the rest of Canada.
- Quebec has a CEGEP system which acts as an intermediate step between high school, university and professional schooling.



Quebec PSE Challenges

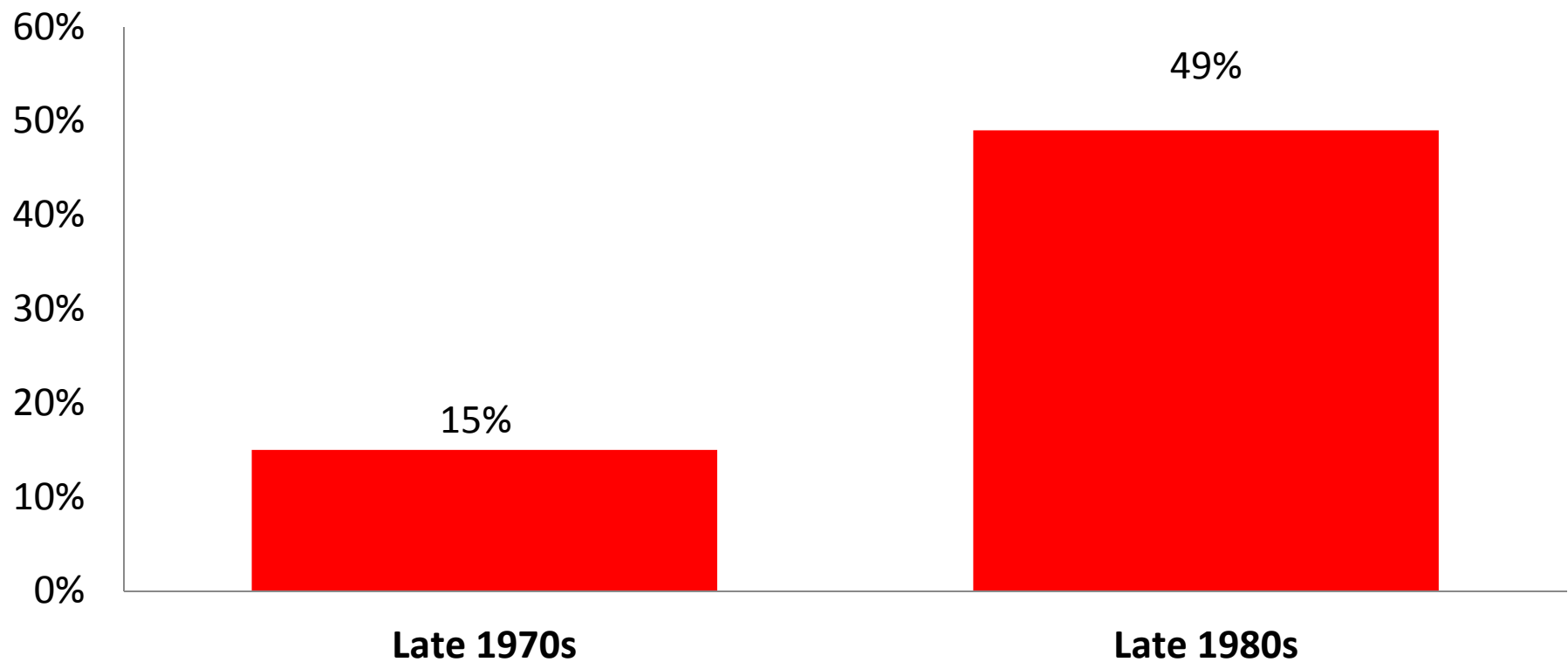
➤ Brief history:

Educational Attainment in Quebec (1960)



Quebec PSE Challenges

PSE Participation Rates for Students Over 25 Years Old



How do Quebec completion rates compare to Other Canadian Provinces? (20-24 year olds)

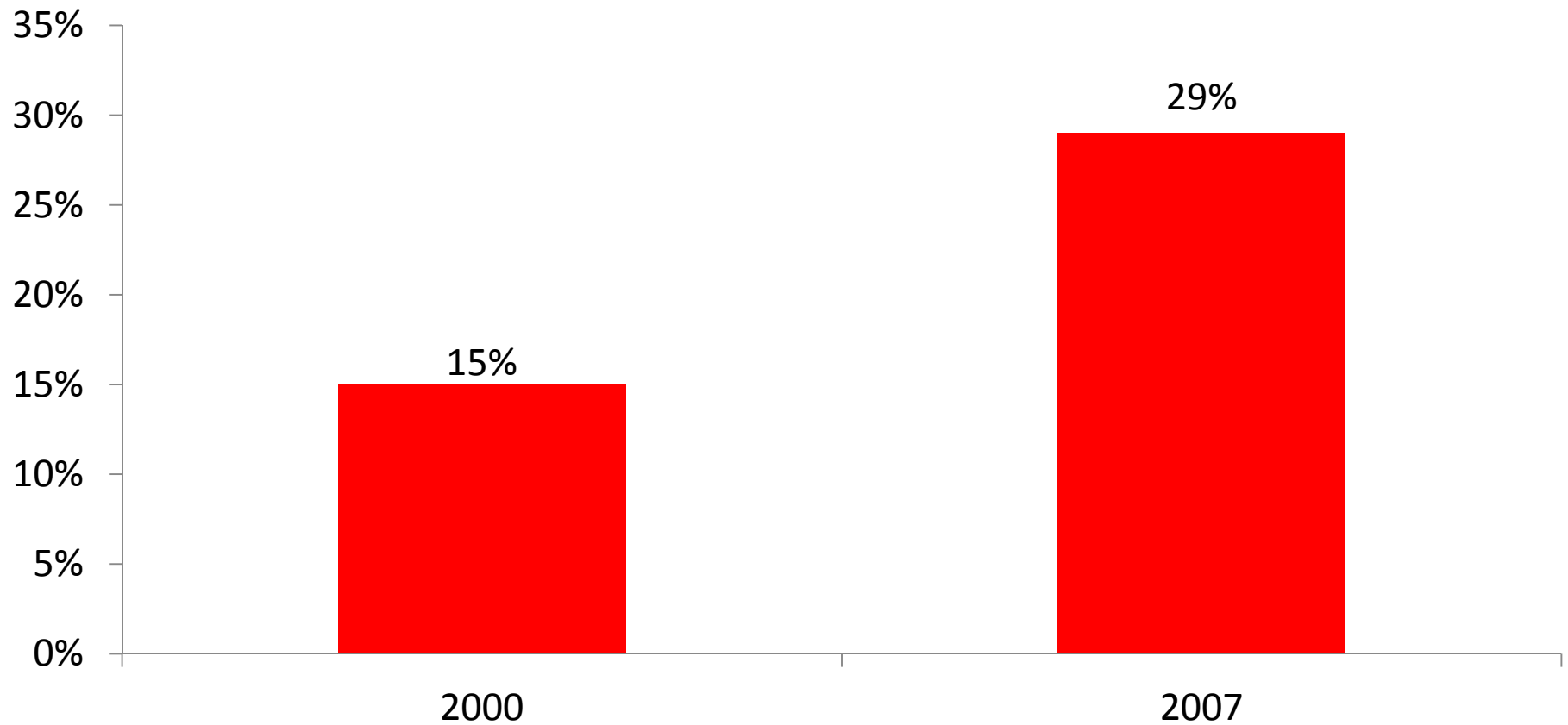
Rank	Province
1	British Columbia
2	Ontario
3	New Brunswick
4	Nova Scotia
5	Saskatchewan
6	Newfoundland and Labrador
7	Prince Edward Island
8	Alberta
9	Quebec
10	Manitoba

http://www.fcsq.qc.ca/accueil/quoideneuf/savoir_pouvoir.pdf



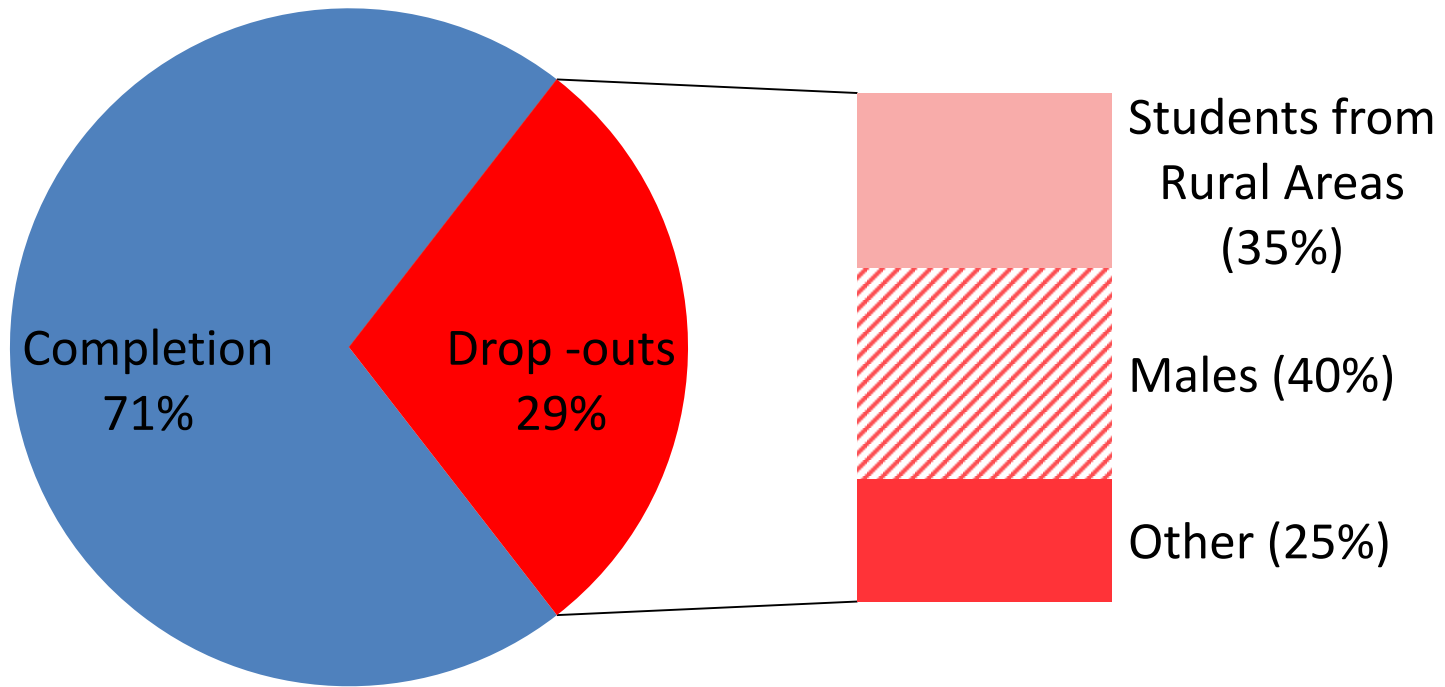
Quebec PSE Challenges

Quebec High School Attrition Rate from 2000-2007
(Youth < 20 years of age)



Quebec PSE Challenges

Quebec 2007 High School Attrition Rates for Youth <20 years old



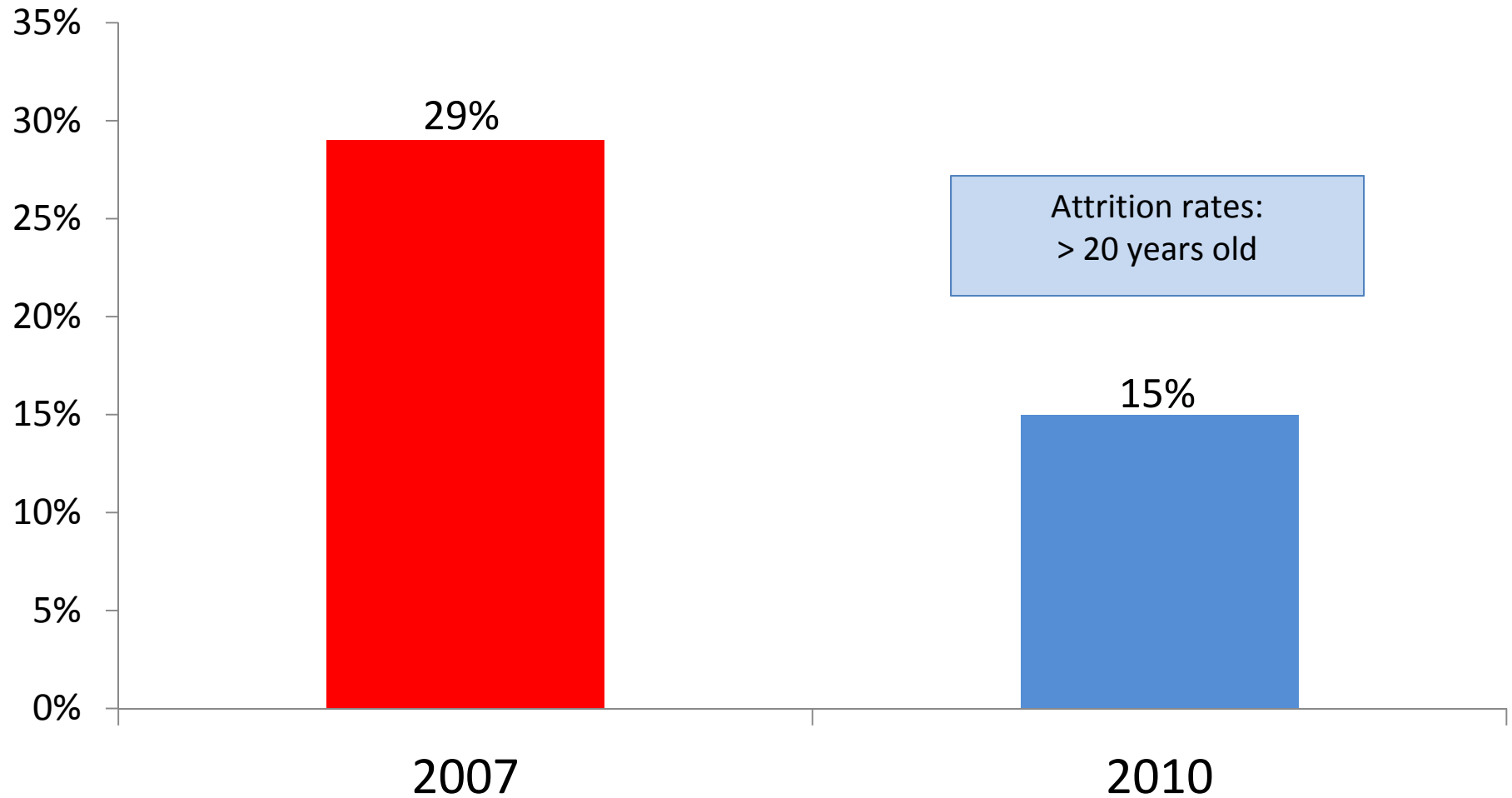
Quebec PSE Challenges

- **Barriers from High School to PSE:**
 - School
 - Family
 - Economic
 - Personal
 - Social
- Historical undervaluing of education in Quebec among parents, society in general (*Michel Perron, Professor, University du Québec à Chicoutimi*)
- ***There is hope for students:***
 - return to complete Secondary education, and
 - access PSE



At-Risk Students: Follow-up

A Closer Look at Attrition Rates....



McGill's Engagement & Access Program

- **Student Services' Program Vision:**
 - Expand educational opportunities (not just McGill) based on ability and interest not perceived obstacles;
 - Identify barriers that block PSE access;
 - Provide information on navigating the educational system.

- McGill uniquely positioned to offer PSE access programs for at-risk communities and students in the Montreal-surrounding area:
 - *English language institution rooted in a French speaking province and nestled in a diverse urban core, McGill hosts a student body composed of over 20% international students with residences located in different neighborhoods of downtown Montreal.*



McGill's Engagement & Access Program

➤ Research:

- Guided by Dr. Rona Abramovitch
- Participatory research

➤ Summary of Needs Assessment:

- Seek out existing initiatives, improve networking, and avoid implementing projects that take place in isolation.
- Identify gaps where services could be supplemented or improved.
- Work in a complementary way with external groups that direct programming aimed at marginalized communities.
- The communities must be full partners and assist in the identification of needs and the development of programming.



McGill's Engagement & Access Program

- Adopt a two-pronged approach to PSE programming:
 - Community engagement
 - Access

- Create a support centre

- Guided by suggestions from the McGill interviewees, a deeper and more intensive approach is preferable and more likely to impact youth more profoundly than adopting programs that aim to reach a greater number of students for a shorter period of time.



McGill's Engagement & Access Program

- 1st iteration:
 - Engagement should begin with students in Secondary III (Grade 9) and higher.
 - Access components will be focused on Secondary V (Grade 11), CEGEP and, in the future, Adult and Continuing Education students.

- Long term:
 - Aspire to connect with students in Secondary I (Grade 7), and work with the same youth over the course of their secondary school and CEGEP career.



McGill's Engagement & Access Program

- **Implementation Plan**
 - Immediate: Organizational structure and mandate decided
 - Medium term: Plan and launch activities
 - Long term: Monitoring, assessment, adjustments, expansion
- Funding possibilities (Gov: Municipal, Provincial, Fed, Foundations; Alumni relations, Private funding, etc.)
- Social Equity and Diversity Education Office (SEDE):
 - Community Engagement Coordinator position was created in June 2011;
 - Community Engagement Advisor position hired September 2011



Lessons Learned

- **Successful Engagement and Access programs are sustained by several guiding principles:**
 - *seek existing initiatives, improve networking, and avoid silos*
 - *participating communities must be full partners*
 - *groups are more likely to choose institutions with which they have had contact*
 - *early intervention*
 - *individualized approach to problem-solving and be responsive to the specific needs*
 - *visible and active member of the community*

PSE programming is a process, not a one-time event.

It must be approached in a comprehensive and holistic way and adopted as a long-term initiatives.



Challenges

- **Quebec's educational system**
- **Need to work with pre-existing attitudes and perceptions of the institution**
- **Pragmatic factors**
 - Daytime-only class scheduling
 - Limited resources for working and/or parent-students, etc.
- **Finding right administrative home**
 - Avoid the perception that the only valid outcome of involvement in community engagement activities is admission to and graduation from McGill



Next Steps

- Follow-up from Principal's Task Force on Diversity, Excellence and Community Engagement:
 - *Recommendations include:*
 - Encourage academic units to include an outreach component in their undergraduate majors programs
 - Designate a person or office to document, coordinate, and facilitate community-outreach projects across the University, in collaboration with Faculty- and department-based champions.

❖ *For more information, please visit:*

<http://www.mcgill.ca/principal/diversityexcellenceandcommunity/>



**Questions?
Discussion**

Merci!
Thank you!

