The following performance needs assessment will summarize the project, explain how data was collected, explore the background of the issue or underlying problem, the business need, how parents are currently looking for and selecting the schools or academic structure of choice, how they will ideally look for and select academic institutions or educational programs, the performers as part of three groups, the context, constraints as well as what are the objectives or requirements for reaching the ideal scenario, the cause analysis and how to evaluate whether this has been attained on four levels.

# Background

In this section I will name the problem and give it context.

## Purpose

Parents relocating to Montreal, within Montreal or even growing up in Montreal have a very difficult time navigating the complex and fractured process of identifying and obtaining admission to schools. Through a collection of complaints made to the city for their lack of participation, provincial governments as well as school boards concerning the complexity, the lack of support and dissatisfaction with the process as well as the application of and navigation of Bill 101 laws in education. The city, through its visits of Montreal neighbourhoods for potential buyers realized that schools were a key question for families and the city had nothing to offer parents to answer their questions and, in fact, could see it was a complex system that could not be easily explained or the issue rectified through a simple hand-out, and there wasn’t a hand-out that existed. They estimate that 50% of students in Montreal will change education options at least once and 33% upwards of three times outside of normal transitions between different levels of school. This does not include parents and kids that are dissatisfied but haven’t made a change as there was never a study done to gauge parent satisfaction with their current education choice. The school system lacks an evaluation of the parents as performers or any data about parents and focuses more on “student success” or the numbers of children that graduate and is therefore missing a key piece. School boards and service centres also documented a general confusion amongst parents and lack of a central resource to help parents navigate policy and the process of identifying and obtaining admission to schools. More kids are being moved as well because of COVID, many to homeschooling or even out of the city, with some parents fighting for a distance education option and this also skews the situation and raises numbers in terms of moving children around. The goal of this performance improvement program is to help parents to better identify the available options, which is most appropriate for their child and family and create the best chances of admission to a school they will be happy with to the tune of reducing children moving education options by 50% over three and gauge parent satisfaction after the performance improvement program and have satisfaction raise by at least 50% over three years. This performance needs assessment will focus on parents as the main performers but will also look at children as performers and the institutions that form the school system. We will look at how parents interact with these other performers and how individual parents navigate this process and how the environment, ressources and motivation impacts them.

## Research Strategy

#### Online research and Grey Literature

I obtained most practical information online about government legislation of different types of schools and home schooling as well as their respective traits and limitations. I read articles in parent online magazines and in newspapers about selecting schools, as well as advice pieces by relocation companies and universities trying to help their new arrivals get set-up. I scrolled through parent and mom Facebook groups looking for what parents expressed about the process. I used school board websites for general information but also for selecting a school in a parent’s zone. I scanned school websites and attended virtual “open houses”. What is particular this year is that you cannot actually visit schools because of COVID and so opinions must be formed based on videos or video conferences.

Although, the boards, service centres and schools have records of complaints, I do not have access to them, and was only given a broad summary of what was contained in them as mentioned in the introductory paragraph: frustration with the process, frustration with the application of Bill 101, frustration with there being a lack of support and resources and generally confused parents and much administration in moving students around between institutions. The actual levels of satisfaction have not been documented, but based on this high numbers, up to 33% of students will change schools more than two times. it is not clear what is because of family circumstances and what is because of dissatisfaction, however.

I consulted so many online resources because that is all there is really. When you actually call or contact most boards and even schools there is generally a desire to get your request off their desk and send you packing, more as a parent than researcher unless there is a sale to be made for a private school. There were some exceptions to this. COVID also meant that resources were strictly online Online resources worked for the nitty gritty of finding school zones, English school eligibility certification, maps of private schools. In the absence of a guide that helps parents in this identification and selection process, I found a few articles in parenting magazines and newspaper articles. They care about the academic ratings alot. It was found in the literature that I read that ratings tend to be more important to wealthy families whereas extracurricular and after school programs and daycare is more important to families of modest means because school is also childcare. (Harris & Larsen, 2015) Online was also the way to find school ratings for high school, but there aren’t ratings for elementary schools in Quebec, so it is especially important at the high school level. For many foreigners ratings are important and difficult to find or non-existant, but for others, the pressures of relocating and beginning a new life mean that all of this extra research is extraneous.

I also consulted some popular literature meant to guide parents in their selection of schools or guiding principles.

**General Grey Literature:**

Baby, A., Simard, D., & Bibliothèque numérique canadienne (Firme). (2017). *Le goût d'apprendre : une valeur á partager.* Presses de l’Université de Laval. <https://www.deslibris.ca/ID/453075>

Gray, P. (2013)*Free to Learn: Why Unleashing the Instinct to Play Will Make Our Children Happier, More Self-Reliant, and Better Students for Life*. Basic Books.

Grégoire, I. (2008) Comment choisir une école? *L’actualité*. https://lactualite.com/societe/comment-choisir-une-ecole/

Hewitt, B. (2014). *Home Grown: Adventures in Parenting off the Beaten Path, Unschooling, and Reconnecting with the Natural World*. Roost Books.

McGill University. *Schooling in Quebec* https://www.mcgill.ca/familycare/schooling/schooling-quebec

Travers, E. *The ABCs of registering for school* https://www.montrealfamilies.ca/dream-comes-true-for-girl-with-cancer/

## **Grey Literature Resources on the Learner**

Officer of the Commissioner of Official Languages. (1999). <https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/html/stu_etu_011999_e.php>

Harris, D.N. & Larsen, M.F. (2015) What schools do Families Want and Why? New Orleans Families and their choice Before and After Katrina. *Education Research Alliance of New Orleans.* https://educationresearchalliancenola.org/files/publications/ERA1402-Policy-Brief-What-Schools-Do-Families-Want.pdf

Parillo, F. (2020). Increase in number of Quebec parents turning to homeschooling: Ministry of Education. *Global News*. https://globalnews.ca/news/7284444/coronavirus-quebec-homeschooling/

Swift, A. (2003). *How not to be a hypocrite : school choice for the morally perplexed*. Routledge.

#### Peer-Reviewed Literature

I read a few peer-reviewed articles about learner motivation and the conditions found for children to thrive at school to gauge success or satisfaction from the point of view that if the child is thriving, the parent is more likely to be satisfied. I chose to read these as they are guiding principles for parents, but the information is not always very accessible to parents. I also read it because most of the literature is about the success of children and what is important in selecting a school, but there is very little written about parents in the process, who actually make the decision.

Below are the peer-reviewed articles that I consulted:

Black, A. E., & Deci, E. L. (2000). The effects of instructors' autonomy support and students' autonomous motivation on learning organic chemistry: a self-determination theory perspective. *Science Education*, 84(6), 740–756. https://doi.org/10.1002/1098-237X(200011)84:6<740::AID-SCE4>3.0.CO;2-3

Chouinard, R., Levasseur, C., Bergeron, J., Bowen François, Lefrançois Pascale, & Poirier, L. (2017). L’incidence du volet scolaire du projet ruelle de l’avenir sur la motivation et la performance d’élèves de milieux défavorisés. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne De L'éducation*, 40(3), 219–244.

Chouinard, R., Archambault, J., Rheault Andréane, Noël-Gaudreault Monique, & Kalubi, J.-C. (2006). Les devoirs, corvée inutile ou élément essentiel de la réussite scolaire ? *Revue Des Sciences De L'éducation,* 32(2), 307–324. <https://doi.org/10.7202/014410ar>

Deci, E., Vallerand, R., Pelletier, L., & Ryan, R. (1991). Motivation and education: the self-determination perspective. *Educational Psychologist*, 26(3-4), 325–346.

Vallerand, R., Gagné Françoys, Senécal Caroline, & Pelletier, L. (1994). A comparison of the school intrinsic motivation and perceived competence of gifted and regular students. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 38(4), 172–175

#### Interviews

I informally interviewed the sponsor delegated by the city of Montreal, to understand the request. I also spoke to the delegated person from the *Ministère de l’éducation.* I spoke to four mothers over the phone that I am friends with who had finished this process in the last two years. I interviewed them to help construct the scenarios and tasks in the desired and current performance as well as the performance personas. I consulted a specialist in teaching, evaluation and student engagement named Roch Chouinard who is referenced in the peer-reviewed literature. I also used popular literature about homeschooling and about the values imbued in selecting different types of education or institutions that was referred to me by interviewees. All interviewers names have been kept out, in order to offer them confidentially and anonymity and because the process was informal and not commissioned research. I also had informal conversations with people that worked at school boards and with people involved in in-school parent groups and with *La Fédération des établissements d’enseignment privés,* one in particular, a mom who is involved in an in-school parent fundraising and activities committee who has a child in public school, one in private school and one homeschooling.

#### Performance Testing

Because I am in the process of identifying, selecting and enrolling my own son in school right now, I am not only able to observe, but experience how the system works and how the “performance” is determined by the parents, the children, partners or the family’s network, the environment (geography, zones) and the institutions and policy parents navigate in the process. I enlarged my search for a school for my son, in order to get a larger perspective on the possibilities and the processes that one might go through in finding schools and obtaining admission.

All of my sources can be found in detail in the bibliography.

# Performance Needs Assessment Results

In this next section, A) Restate the request B) Identify the underlying business need C) I will then describe the current and ideal performance D) Describe three groups of performers E) Describe the context F) Describe the constraints

## The Request for a Performance Improvement Campaign

The city of Montreal’s branch that promotes relocation to and purchasing property in Montreal and organizes visits of the boroughs, has commissioned this performance improvement program in partnership with Le Ministère de l’Éducation. The program was initially initiated by a real estate agency, but it was found that the problem is larger and systemic and the resource for parents developed to support them in identifying, selecting and enrolling in Montreal schools was limited because of the oneness put on the parents. The two levels of government took an interest in the project and wish to facilitate the process for families and especially new arrivals to Montreal or those families relocating within Montreal or just looking for a school. This program will be an asset to many organizations the government deals with pertaining to education, relocation as well as the boroughs themselves.

* The school of attendance has much importance to families as they try to evaluate if their child will have access to good schools in neighbourhoods with their desired homes. Even in the first contact, the first thing potential house buyers mention is the composition of their family and their need for a home to fit the family in a neighbourhood that is good for raising kids and with good schools. Montreal is trying to attract and keep new families and the Ministère de l’Éducation is responding to repeated complaints from parents at the difficulty of navigating education in Quebec. The program is meant to increase inclusivity.
* Parents are totally daunted by the process, especially when arriving from overseas and being faced with school zones, the boards that serve them, English, French and bilingual schools, english education eligibility as well as private, alternative schools, religious and cultural schools, different vocationally focused schools, Montessori and Freinet and the option of not sending one’s child to school at all but homeschooling if they have a spouse at home and are able to navigate the scholastic and legal parameters of home schooling. This has been more of a consideration with COVID.
* Many families relocating are looking for English schools, but do not know which neighbourhoods to look in as not all neighbourhoods have english schools and don’t understand eligibility.
* They want to create a resource that helps simplify the process so they can decide if the neighbourhood is good for them quickly and buy a home in a certain neighbourhood and have a program to help all families in Montreal as this is a recurrent issue across the board.
* They want to drop the number of kids moving education option annually by 50% over three years and make sure that at least 80% of parents that have gone through this performance improvement campaign (pic) feel satisfied after a year of education in their resulting option.
* There isn’t a one-stop solution for parents, they are left to deal with many different bodies and have a different process with each one and in the process they often get overwhelmed and settle for a recommendation or the most convenient option soon to find-out that it doesn’t suit their needs. There is a desire to improve this.
* Different families have different needs. Some families want an easy solution and others prioritize the “best” solution, but it is not always clear what that is. The idea is to be able to help parents measure what is best for them
* The goal is also to improve the performance of the school system and get feedback from parents on how to do this.

## The Business Need

The City of Montreal wishes to increase its attractivity to those buying property in Montreal, relocating to or within Montreal and generally increasing quality of life for families as well as inclusivity for those who encounter many barriers upon arrival. As education is provincially run, the two bodies of government united on this front to make the program possible. The provincial government hopes this will simplify work for the the school boards and French “service centres”. The goal is to reduce the number of students moving schools by 50% within three years as well as parent satisfaction to: firstly, be measured through an evaluation campaign after each year of a new education options after the pic and secondly, to have parent satisfaction increase by 50% over three years.

I will now describe the desired performance around getting one’s child(ren) into the best education option for them in Montreal. I will then describe the current scenario and I will continue on to describe the tasks involved in both the ideal and the current process.

## The Desired Performance

Greg and Amy Chin have recently relocated to Montreal. He is an engineer in the hydro-power sector originally from France and she was an english and cantonese speaking engineer from Toronto but has started doing free-lance journalism casually since they had their three year-old daughter Emily. She is currently pregnant with their second child. They have been living abroad for 8 years living in India, China and France and would now like to be in Quebec where Gregoire can speak his mother tongue and she can be closer to her family in Toronto whom she wants closer with the demands of child-rearing.

Both are highly educated and come from families that had high expectations for them and they also have high expectations for their children. They were initially moved into a hotel by the company for 6 weeks while they made the decision of where they wanted to live. They wanted a vibrant and off-beat neighbourhood to keep themselves entertained but they wanted to make sure there were good education options for their daughter and son on the way.

They received upon arrival a hand-out from the government and their relocation agency that outlined with a link to get them started on a website that would direct them to a questionnaire that helped them to determine which paths might be best for them to explore accompanied by a resource the help them understand and navigate what was available by neighbourhood and by education type. They hesitated between the hip and trendy St-Henri and the even hipper Mile-End, but wondered if either was suitable for families. They watched the virtual visits of the neighbourhoods of interest. Using the guide provided, Amy followed the steps to find, and select a school by keeping the search narrow and knowing which criteria were most important to them. They were able to find several options in or close to the Mile-End that suited their needs, but not in or very close to St-Henri. This pushed them in favour of The Mile-End. They purchased a condo there and eventually would go on to enrol their children in F.A.C.E. in french, an alternative school with a focus on projects, music and the arts in the same borough, the Plateau Mont-Royal, as the Mile-End. They luckily won the admission raffle, but had two other schools lined-up that they would have been happy with.

They love the school, and more importantly, so do their children who get to create through projects and love the music program, have many friends and are also very proud of their creations and speaking french fluently, despite coming from a mainly english-speaking household. They love the parks, their vibrant neighbourhood and the value of their condo in the Mile-End has been increasing exponentially. They are also happy to have regular visits to and from Toronto with Amy’s family and yearly visits to France. They are happy in Montreal and plan to stay.

## The Current Performance

Anne Walsh is a pilot for Air Canada and grew-up in a bilingual home and went to French-emersion and her husband Evan Moorehouse is a commercial plane pilot and also bilingual. They both grew-up in Toronto but Montreal was a more affordable option that worked with Air Canada, as novice salaries weren’t very high. They bought a building in 2009 in the up and coming Verdun and got pregnant two years later. They hadn’t really thought alot about schools. They were lucky to have found a daycare that they liked that was subsidized at $8/day, but they had to drive their kids there on the other end of the borough. When it came time to select a school, they were both doing alot of shift work. Most of the parents who were at the daycare lived in a different school zone than them so they didn’t really consult with them about where they were planning to send their kids, even the kids who were very close to theirs.

They tried to find out what their zone was and which schools were available. It was a tedious process of calling the school boards as it wasn’t easy to find online. They had an English and French school available to them. They thought the yard of the French school looked dreary and the school seemed over-crowded. When she contacted the school she was sent packing about meeting teachers. Even though they didn’t feel great about the French school, they spoke French at home, despite being English Canadians and wanted to make sure their kids maintained high written and oral French skills. The english school seemed too English, even though it was a French emersion school. Anne saw a recommendation for a public International Baccalaureate school in neighbouring Lasalle on a parent Facebook page. The kids had to go through a rigorous selection process. The school was an English run school with a strong immersion program and had great standings in language performance: English, French and Spanish. They also had a bus service to take the kids there. They realized that they needed to get an English education eligibility certificate from the government. Evan was able to obtain it as he did most of his studies in English in Toronto and Anne was never sure if she could since she had studied in French in Toronto. They were torn between the neighbourhood Notre-Dame-de-la-garde in French and Children’s World IB in Lasalle. Anne’s Mom was a teacher and suggested because they had to be accepted to Children’s World they should take it and they can always switch them out.

Since their children have been there, their son is thriving, but their daughter didn’t speak for the first six months, as it was half in English and she felt overwhelmed, leaving daycare and losing her friends, and because she didn’t speak English at all. It took her three years to make friends but she also isn’t doing well academically with the heavy homework load. Anne felt she didn’t fit in with the parents whom she found “snobby” and she also said because all the kids are “cherry-picked”, there’s no resources for the children who have issues. In fact, they are stigmatized, and it is handled poorly until parents eventually pull their kids out.

In retrospect she says she would have wished she would have thought about community and having her kids be close to neighbourhood classmates, be able to walk to school in the morning and not have long days to and fro on the bus and for her to be connected to parents she feels close to in her community. She said she also hadn’t considered a school with a breakfast program and that saves time and money.

Every year, she considers moving her daughter, but feels it took her so long to get settled that she doesn’t want to start over when she knows her daughter doesn’t handle change well. She is painfully aware this school is not ideal for her daughter.

## Tasks for the Ideal Performance in getting kids to their ideal education option in Montreal

Indexing, researching and selecting schools is not simply an exercise in knowledge but in needs, preference, available time, performance and availability. Each step will be pursued or eliminated based those criteria which performers will dictate.

**End Result:** More parents can make an informed decision and obtain admission to a desirable school that leads to a 50% increase in satisfaction with their choice.

1. Define Montreal schools both forms and defining characteristics
2. Define the different academic institutions and homeschooling
3. Define school boards in Montreal
4. Define school boards and service centres in Montreal
5. Define the legislative foundation of school boards

* Define French school boards
* Recognize the history of the French Catholic school
* Recall the French Catholic school boards
* Define Bill 101
* Define English school boards
* Recognize the english protestant history of their definition
* Recognize the particular status of English school schools in Quebec

1. Define how they relate different aspects of school admission and regulation

* Define how they oversee different educational institutions
* Define their role in school zones

1. Define regular public schools
2. Define public schools legislatively and by their characteristics
3. Define who may want to attend them based on what they offer
4. Define alternative public schools
5. Define public alternative schools legislatively

* Define vocational programs
* Define the values of public alternative schools

1. Identify who may want to go there based on their characteristics
2. Define independent schools
3. Define independent schools based on their legislation
4. Define their funding and its impact on price
5. Define what type of schools can be found in the category of independent schools

* Define private religious schools
* Define private vocational schools
* Define private cultural schools

1. Define homeschooling
2. Define homeschooling legislation
3. Define homeschooling characteristics- very diverse
4. Define who might choose homeschooling
5. Define the institutions at each level of schooling
6. Define primary school
7. Define who goes to primary school
8. Define Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten
9. Recognize how zones apply to elementary school
10. Define Secondary School
11. Define who goes to Secondary School
12. Recognize that admission is much more stringent to secondary schools
13. Recognize that zones do not apply to secondary schools
14. Define Cégep
15. Recognize the particular legislation of cages in Quebec
16. Define who goes to Cégep
17. Recognize how cégep connects to university and who goes directly to university
18. Recognize the limitations on applying to different cégeps
19. Define education options pertaining to French and English language in Quebec
20. Define Law 101
21. Define English Instruction Eligibility Certification
22. Recognize tat English language instruction eligibility is available to the children of Canadians that did the majority of their studies in english
23. Recognize that english eligibility certification is available to those with severe learning disabilities
24. Recognize that english instruction eligibility certification is available to those awaiting legal status in Canada or only living here temporarily.
25. Obtain english eligibility certification, when eligible
26. Evaluate whether one is eligible or not for English Instruction Eligibility
27. If one is eligible, contact the english board in their zone

* Follow their instructions, sometimes it is through the school associated and sometimes through the board directly
* Obtain the necessary documents
* Obtain the child’s birth certificate
* Obtain the parent’s birth certificate
* Obtain the parent’s Permanent Student Record
* In some cases, obtain a written attestation from the detainer of the Permanent Student Record required to attest English instruction in core courses

1. Define the three types of English language instruction and the amount of French in each type
2. Define a bilingual program
3. Define an immersion program
4. Define English Core
5. Identify academic characteristics in order to evaluate academic institutions
6. Define Academic characteristics
7. Academic performance and ratings
8. Consider mathematics programs
9. Consider language programs
10. Consider Science programs
11. Consider the arts

* Consider fine art
* Consider dance
* Consider theatre
* Consider music

1. Consider Play

* Consider free play
* Consider time outdoors
* Consider physical education

1. Define special features
2. Consider Policies

* Consider anti-bullying policy

1. Consider Resources

* Consider meal programs
* Consider Special Needs Resources
* Consider extra-curricular activities

1. Consider the school culture

* Consider connections to the community and community programs
* Consider field trips and outings
* Consider parent involvement
* Consider mixing ages
* Considering a garden, environmental or waste reduction program

1. Define vocational programs
2. Consider a technology, math or science focused program
3. Consider a music, fine arts, dance or theatre focused program
4. Consider a project management focused program
5. Consider a community focused program
6. Consider an outdoors or nature discovery focused program
7. Consider a language focused program
8. Consider a sports focused program
9. Identify educational methods and institutional values in order to evaluate academic institutions

a) Recognize the principles of self-actualization and the importance of autonomy, self-esteem and belonging in thriving at school

1. Present Deci
2. Define autonomy in a scholastic context
3. Define self-esteem in a scholastic context
4. Define belonging in a scholastic context

b) Define an educational method

1. Define Freinet
2. Define Montessori
3. Define traditional education

c) Define institutional values

1. Locate where can you find an institution’s values
2. Reflect on examples of institutional values
3. Identify logistical and practical concerns
4. Consider the school board and your zone
5. Consider the price of a school
6. Consider uniforms
7. Consider meals at schools
8. Consider after school programs or daycare
9. Consider the surrounding neighbourhood
10. Consider getting your child to school and home
11. Consider walking
12. Consider driving
13. Consider biking
14. Consider school bus transportation
15. Consider public transit
16. Consider relaying with other parents
17. Research foundational concepts in selecting a school

a) Discuss school selection and enrolment with resource people

1. Identify resource people in researching school selection and enrolment

* Consider friends
* Consider family
* Consider colleagues
* Consider parents in the community
* Consider parent social media groups

1. Identify some questions you have that require guidance
2. Interview resource people

b) Read resources about selecting a school in order to gain a foundational knowledge

1. Identify blogs, websites, journal articles, newspaper articles and books that offer guidance on school selection
2. Read these resources that seem to offer the most pertinent guidance

B. Identify the family’s needs pertaining to a school

1. Consider your needs values and priorities

a) Define your needs pertaining to school choice

1. Define need
2. Define your needs pertaining to a school

b) Define your values pertaining to a school choice

1. Define value
2. Define your values pertaining to a school or education

c) Define your priorities pertaining to a school choice

1. Define priority
2. Define your priorities pertaining to a school
3. Weigh the needs, priorities and values of family members in order to arrive at a consensus

a) Define the needs, vales and priorities of your child

b) Define the needs, vales and priorities of your partner

c) Discuss what the family values, needs and prioritizes collectively

1. Document what the collective family needs, values and priorities are
2. Identify the family’s needs, priorities and values
3. Document the characteristics that need to be evaluated
4. Index the schools that are available in your area
5. Create a file in order to index available schools

a) Consider the type of document that will be used

1. Consider a pen and paper
2. Consider a word processing document
3. Consider a spreadsheet
4. Consider a mapping software
5. Consider zotero or an information organizing software
6. Create the document
7. Integrate the characteristics defined as being evaluated as sections or columns as well as their open house or information session dates
8. Identify the schools available

a) Search on the website corresponding to the school type

b) Repertoire available school suggestions from other parents

1. Document the traits being evaluated that are in the file
2. Find information about the characteristic on the website
3. Call if there is information that cannot be found on website
4. Note any unanswered questions for an open house or information night
5. Attend open houses with the goal of supporting the selection process and maintaining the possibility of admission
6. From the index of schools, identify which open houses or information nights you wish to attend based on schools that correspond to what the family needs, values and prioritizes

a) Analyze the index

b) Determine which schools it is worthwhile attending open houses or information sessions for

1. Determine who will attend the in-person or virtual open houses and information nights.
2. Consider who is available
3. Consider who wants to attend the open house
4. Elect who will attend
5. Consider yourself
6. Consider your partner
7. Consider yourself and your partner
8. Consider one parent and the child (ren)
9. Consider the whole family
10. Recognize what you can understand about the school from an open house or information session
11. Determine what can be discerned by an in-person or virtual open house or information session
12. Consider the facilities
13. Consider the teaching strategies and preparedness of teachers
14. Consider the smell and general feeling and aesthetics
15. Consider the culture of the parents and students
16. Consider questions that were unanswered in indexing
17. Create a strategy for obtaining the most information during an open house or information session
18. Define parameters of evaluation
19. Prepare a plan for evaluating
20. Attend the open houses or information sessions in-person or virtually
21. Attend the open house or information session
22. Execute pre-planned strategy
23. Debrief afterwards with family
24. Register child for any schools that admission does not want to be lost for after the open house or information night
25. Inform oneself on registration process
26. Complete registration forms
27. Obtain any necessary documents
28. Pass any assessments
29. Create a hierarchal shortlist of preferred schools

1. Evaluate which schools correspond best to the family evaluated characteristics

1. Consider how each school corresponds to the family’s needs, values and priorities
2. Consider the gut feelings each family member holds about the schools
3. Consider for each school how it will promote autonomy in your child
4. Consider for each school how it will promote your child’s self-esteem
5. Consider for each school how it will contribute to a sense of belonging in your child
6. Talk to resource people or those familiar with the schools to be even more informed

2. Rank in a hierarchal order from first to last in order of preference

a) Based on your evaluation of the schools, identify which schools are preferred

b) Note the schools in descending order of preference

1. Select a school based on admission
2. Compare which schools the child was admitted to the hierarchal shortlist
3. Verify where admission was granted
4. Compare the schools where admission was granted to the hierarchal shortlist
5. Choose which school your child will attend
6. Validate that the shortlist still applies
7. Choose the school definitively
8. Complete any next steps for accepting admission
9. Cancel registration at any schools including a school that may have been used just to get the english eligibility certificate that may not have been on the short list

**Pre-requisite Tasks**:

* Deep reflection on and investigation of child’s needs
* Living in Montreal
* Get access to a centralized resource that gives a simple profile of each school along the same characteristics (Ideal)
* Get access to a material that structures the steps to indexing, evaluating, registering and selecting a school.
* Dedicate copious amounts of time, unless you have an in to and privileged information about a school you feel very good about and your child is eligible to attend.
* Know how to use a spreadsheet software, Google Maps or something else to document research and the process
* Most likely has decided against homeschooling for the moment

## Tasks in the Current Performance

End Result: **Selecting a school in an overly simplified way or an overly complex way that leaves the parent feeling unsure.**

1. Hear about either a school zone or school boards
2. Look up school boards
3. Find out where to look for available schools in your zone
4. Get the names of two schools and their boards
5. Look up the schools online
6. Look at the distance from home
7. See that there is an english school or there isn’t an english school available in your neighbourhood
8. Asking around amongst parents you know, on social media pages and with your child’s daycare when appropriate

B) Realize that you need an English school eligibility certificate for your child to study in English

1. Start searching online
2. Find the government site
3. Decide whether or not you are eligible to send your child to english school
4. Decide whether you want to send your child to english school or not
5. Go through the process or getting the certificate or not

C) Looking for and registering child in different schools through researching, sleuthing and asking around

1) Become aware that there are private schools

a) May or may not look into private schools

b) There may or may not be private schools available close to where you live or are looking to live

c) Research some private schools on the basis of:

1. Price
2. Focus
3. Ratings or reputation

d) Decide if private school is of interest or if certain ones are

e) Note their open house or arrange a visit

2) May or may not hear about alternative schools

a) Look online, but can’t find that much information

b) Ask around about alternative schools

1. Collect some rave reviews about one
2. Obtain feedback from another parent about it being too demanding on them as a parent

c) Decide if interested in alternative school

3) May or may not book some open house nights

a) Forgot about one

b) Couldn’t make another

c) The one you manage to make is just a recorded video on their website because of COVID. Watch it.

d) Find out you must register your child with the local school in the board affiliated with the alternative school

e) Had to register your child right after the open house nights.

f) May or may not have to do additional testing or interviews for certain private and alternative schools.

g) Forgot to register for some in time

h) Registered for a few

i) Wait for their selection raffle at the alternative schools or responses from the private schools

j) Continue talking to other parents, trusted advisors and seeing posts on parent Facebook groups

k) Perceptions change based on feedback and discussion with partner and in some rare cases child

D) Select a school based on the one or two that you managed to get your child registered for, they were accepted at and you like the most

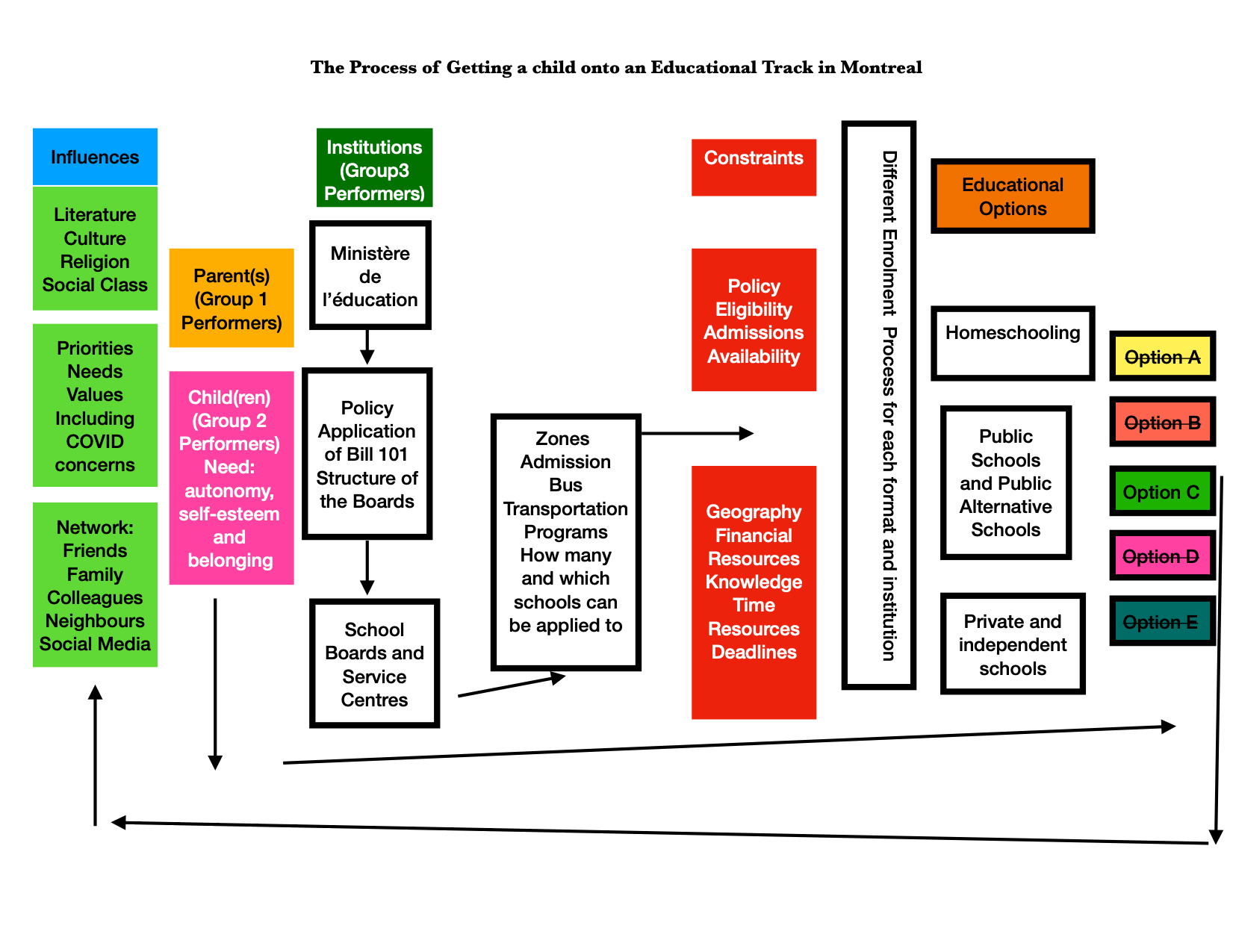
1. Choose amongst the two or three eligible schools based on one or two main preferences such as:
2. Recognize convenience (daily life, enrolment, daycare program etc)
3. Recognize location and distance from home
4. Recognize fun or happy looking children
5. Recognize good ratings or strong programs
6. Recognize your gut feeling
7. Recognize advice from friends, family or educators that you know

2) Remove your child’s registration at the schools you have decided against

**Pre-Requisite Tasks:**

* Be living in a Montreal school zone or planning to move to one
* Gather some contacts to be able to ask questions
* Identify what has an influence on your choices
* Has decided against homeschooling

## The Performers

In this section, I will look at three groups of performers in the equation of children being connected with a school that is best for them: the parents (the target group), the children and the institutions that define Montreal’s schools through law and administration (La Ministère de l’éducation, school boards and service centres. and the city of Montreal where education takes place, but is not legislated nor administered by the city.) The process or “performance” is an interaction between these three groups. Although, the choice mainly concerns children, I think younger children are often not included in the process and parents assess on their behalf. Ultimately, though, the “performance” will be how they fare and how the school fares in their regard based on their parents’ decision and many constraints and factors of circumstance. Figure 1 below, is a map of this process where parents navigate many factors to get their child to an educational option. Later, that attendance and subsequent interaction feeds back into the beginning of the cycle reinforcing the choice or causing reevaluation of the educational choice. When I look at Figure 1 and because I am currently going through the process, I feel that at every interface there is a bottle-neck. This can be seen as some major interfaces and a series of many minor ones. The influences, priorities, needs and values of children are often not the same for children as their parents. Parents must enrol their children in multiple educational institutions in order to obtain their second or third choice if their first choices are not available. This means going through many unique enrolment processes. Some include exams, others multiple information nights, some requesting special permissions from the board of their zone to even apply.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Common Problems or Bottlenecks | Common problems include:   * Lack of a centralized place to go through the steps of enrolment * Difficulty to even identify what is a available as there is a lack of a centralized source of information and that details schools along the same guiding features and geographically * Too much is put on the parents and the work done is lost as each parent starts over at square one * Limited time and desire from the schools and boards to spend time with parents or to convey information * Limited knowledge and almost no resources to guide parents or even identify what options are available * Parents don’t realize what is important to them or works for their child until the child is already enrolled in a school and starts attending * Limited time and energy of parents to be able to adequately complete this complex process and meet the requirements for each school where they are seeking admission * Advice from resource people may or may not be useful or have a positive impact on the selection process * Inability to meet requirements (attend an information night, English eligibility, raffles, possibly financial barriers) * Disconnect from the provincial government that runs schools in Montreals cosmopolitain and bilingual reality * There is nothing for newcomers to get started * English eligibility issues, issues around residency and a generally precarious situation for newcomers that trickles down to their child’s education situation and often a feeling of exclusion or being unsupported. |

In this next section we will look at the performers and constraints on them, the desired end result and performance program. I will describe the high, low and medium maintenance parents first, as they are my target group, their demographics, personas, the performance limitations or constraints both internally and externally, causes and motivation later. I will also broadly describe children second and institutions third in the context of performance pertaining to the desired end result.

**High Maintenance Performers:**

**1. Olatz and Cyril Aguado** have moved Montreal from Quebec City having spent a year there. He is originally from France and she is from the Spanish Basque country, but they had lived in France for five years together and then in Spain for 12 years where both their 12 year-old and 8 year-old were born. She works for an airline, booking private jet flights, but was a flight attendant for many years and he was in tourism for 15 years, but moved into HR for a large company. They both left the tourism industry six years ago and tried to start a new life in Canada. They started in Moncton and lived there for 2 years where Cyril got into HR. They loved it there and loved the kids local public school and found the teachers very invested, but then they were in Quebec City for a year and their kids couldn’t make friends and there was no communication with the teacher. They were transferred to Montreal where Cyril's head office was and Olatz started to work for the airline she worked for in Spain remotely again.

Their children are trilingual, speaking French and Spanish fluently and English on an intermediate level. They selected Verdun as a neighbourhood because they have a friend there that recommended it and they would like to be close to another Spanish ex-pat. They found an affordable condo and have decided to purchase it. Things happened really quickly. She had found an alternative school far out of Verdun, and has tried to apply every year, but her kids weren't accepted. She had a friend recommend a public school in Verdun and they met with the principle and liked her and her philosophy. The school wasn't in their zone and they needed special permission to go. The principal left and the school’s culture changed, and not in a way they like. Their oldest is struggling and although she has done research, everything they like is far away. The oldest’s teacher believes that having regular communication with them is beyond his job. They went back to Spain for 3 months, but the economy was so bad that they came back and since the pandemic they feel more committed to living here. They are ready to relocate within Montreal if it means being close to a good school they can get their kids into, but so far admission has been impossible. She is discouraged, but also determined to find a better solution.

**2. Linda Cooke and Ewan Fentiman**

Are two academics relocating from New York City. They have both found faculty jobs. Moving, however during a pandemic and being new residents has meant that they do not have child care and childcare is being shared on top of working at home and unpacking. Ewan is originally from England and Linda from Ireland. They are here on a work visa but will have to get tenure and residency. It is a long road. They want a school for their five year-old starting school in September. They are very concerned about academics and their child being able to later enter the best universities in the world. They are having trouble understanding if they qualify for English schooling and if not, why not. It is seeming they will have to pay for private English school if that is what they want on the long-term. Ewan is also Jewish and would like a Jewish school. They are trying to navigate all of this from an Air BnB and it seems they have missed many of the enrolment periods. They like both the draw of private school in both status and keeping their child in an elite bubble and so that they can study mainly in English in case they move back to the US after a few years. They have contacted the boards and and were referred to an organization that regroups private schools, sifting through and starting the process late in the game during COVID is proving difficult, almost impossible. They may have to just pick a neighbourhood and send their child to the local public English school until they can get admission to and settle on the best private school and neighbourhood. They want to learn but don’t know where to start, lack information resources, do not speak French and lack time. They are frustrated and COVID is adding an extra layer.

**3. Alejandra Jimenez and Pedro Luz** have moved from Mexico. They are fluent in French as they have ties to the *Alliance Française* and a language school. They would like their child to go to a French school, but it is very important to them that their children go to school with other Catholic children. They are realizing that Catholic schools in Montreal are independent private schools and some are costly and not necessarily in the neighbourhoods they are looking for, but this is important to them. They are surprised at how few Catholic schools there are in a French province. They have started visiting and some of them seem very nice, but also very old and somewhat austere compared to Mexico. They want to be somewhere quiet and on the water but the one school they found in Lachine in a neighbourhood that is perfect for them, they are not sure they can afford the real estate and it will cost them about $5000 per year per child and they have four. It will also be very difficult to obtain admission for four children and they are not sure what to do and may have to search for several schools and back-up options. This makes the process so uncertain.

**Medium-Maintenance Performers**

**1. Frances and Louis Gordon** are both born and raised Montrealers. Frances had a British Father and Brazilian mother. She grew-up in the affluent Senneville but in a home fraught with problems. Louis came from a picture-perfect affluent home. His father was the head of the education department at a prestigious university for many years and his mother was an early childhood educator for many years then went on to be a shop-keeper. He grew-up in Westmount and went to a mix of Jewish and alternative schools. She is a cégep teacher and Louis is in a career transition after years in journalism and tour guiding.

They relocated to Pointe-Saint-Charles a few years ago because they found a great deal on a condo as their first property purchase. Since moving though they have had to go through the headache and financial stress of dealing with a rat problem, a mold problem, a roof problem and an expensive part was stolen off their car. They explored and went through the registration process for their daughter for 11 schools. They didn’t get a spot in their first choice, Roslyn.

Their five year-old just started school at the same alternative school that Louis went to as a child, F.A.C.E.. Although they did alot of research and were quite savvy about what to look for, the pressure from Louis and his parents for their children to go to the same school as him was strong. Although their daughter loves the school which has a focus on art and music, their son will start in two years and driving across the city daily and not knowing parents to share the task with and the school moving further away, they are faced with the question of whether this is what they really want and if it is sustainable. They are considering moving closer to the school, but that would take them further from France’s steady work at the Cégep or reevaluating which school is really best for them and choosing an area in proximity to Frances’ work and if they can afford it. Unfortunately, an instructional material only helps their complex situation in a very superficial way.

**2. Jonathan and Joanne Lefèvre** live in the Mile-End and looked into the alternative school in Rosemont with a focus on the projects for their four year-old. They both work in tech. Although, it looks great, they only take 25 kids annually. After attending three obligatory information sessions where you were obliged to keep your camera on and even had to take time off work, they got discouraged and started to think why bother? They also started to feel that the child-led style of learning might make for a kid that can’t deal with the harsh realities of the work world after. In the end, they will likely enrol their child at the closest neighbourhood school as they also wouldn’t get bus service to the alternative school. They are not super enthused, but don’t see other options.

**3. Miruna Corircu** is a single mom originally from Romania that lived in Spain for 15 years and Lebanon for three years, where she met her now ex-husband and the father of her youngest daughter Mia. She has an older 18 year-old daughter from a previous relationship who is about to finish high school. Her ex-husband is not involved in choosing a school for her daughter. When her daughter was four her daycare let her know that they thought she might be on the autism spectrum and her sister expressed the same concern. She started a long process to get Mia diagnosed. They found she had issues with her eyes. She was diagnosed prematurely with autism while waiting to see a specialist and put in a program for autistic kids at a public school. Because of the pandemic, she had a hard time seeing the specialist, when she finally did, they said she was not autistic and referred her to a neurologist for a diagnosis of what they feel is a more serious neurological disorder. She was pulled out of the public school and in limbo for two weeks while she awaited assessment. She is now being transferred to another public school. Her mom who works 50 hours a week in a kitchen in a long-term care facility didn’t have the luxury of missing work, so she had to stay with her sister. She doesn’t get a choice of where to put her daughter. She also needs school for childcare. She finds the school hard to deal with and communicating with all of the different people involved in her daughter’s care and assessment overwhelming and she gets different stories from all sides. Her dream is to buy a house and move to the Laurentians, but her daughter likes this school and is adjusting and the small town she is looking at won’t have as many resources at the school for special needs kids. They speak English and Romanian at home and she was very angry that her daughter couldn’t study in English either but she doesn’t have the time or money resources to change the situation.

**Low Maintenance Performers:**

**1. Julia Lopez** is a single mother and entrepreneur. She owns a company that imports Canadian beer into Spain with her father and has a six year-old daughter named Africa. She is originally from Aragon, but grew-up in Valencia. She lived in Toronto for a stint to get a foothold here in Canada. She had Africa in Toronto when she was still with her partner. They moved back to Spain and then separated. She started a new life in Montreal with her daughter three years ago. She is still waiting for and going through the process of getting her residency. She went through the federal government. She moved to Verdun because various people recommended it. She loves the area because it is affordable, vibrant on a community level and right by the St. Lawrence River.

She enrolled her daughter in an english government run daycare that was the closest to her house that is operated out of an elementary school. Her daughter only spoke Spanish upon arrival. She learned English quickly. The daycare filled her in a bit about how to find out which schools her daughter could attend by looking on the websites of the school board. She had read a book called *Free to Learn: Why Unleashing the Instinct to Play Will Make Our Children Happier, More Self-Reliant, and Better Students for Life.* (P. Gray, 2013)That talks about how traditional school is essentially a prison that forces kids into passivity and that they have lost their autonomy and freedom to play freely inside and outside of school without adult supervision. Because of this book, Julia had been leaning towards alternative school for her daughter that she had heard about from a friend in the neighbourhood. She registered her daughter in the French alternative school in her neighbourhood which requires a special form for all applying regardless of their location in the hopes of getting her daughter in. She did not want a school with a heavy workload or that was very strict or rules and discipline focused. She felt many of her friends were focused on academics, but she said that emotional intelligence was more important to her. It was important for her that her daughter be happy and have fun. She thought the alternative school seemed amazing when she went to the open house, but later a friend of hers whose son is there said that it is very demanding for the parents and that he found himself there 4-5 days a week and other parents never came at all and that because it was such a new school, there were organizational problems and that the principle was not ensuring that the work the parents did was equitable between them nor that parents held-up their end of being involved like in the admission contract. As a single mother and entrepreneur, the idea of having to give regular hours to Africa’s school was not very appealing. She waited to see, but Africa wasn’t chosen for the raffle, regardless of how close kids live to the school. They usually take between 20-25 kids a year that don’t have a sibling at the school.

In the meantime, she had heard great things about the local English elementary school. In fact, she had been to some conferences for parents when her daughter was at the daycare affiliated with it. She read their website and liked the values and when she visited them she found them warm and welcoming and their curriculum balanced. She realized she would need an English schooling eligibility certificate. She did research with the government and she could have one while she waited for her residency, but once she got her residency, likely after two or three years of schooling, she would likely lose the certificate. She has to find out how much English school Africa needs to do before she earns the ability to keep her certificate. She cannot afford private English school. She is not sure if she should look for another school in Montreal or look for a place in Ottawa for residency and school eligibility certificate reasons. She was interested in the learning material because she feels like she has to start the whole process over and has many questions. She wants things to be as simple as possible though. She does not want to have to spend too much time but get some answers and guidance. Unfortunately, a learning resource does not resolve her issues around residency or English eligibility, nor how she feels they are falling through the cracks and not able to have a solution that is ideal for them through the current process and government policy.

2. **Mireille Corriveau and Jean-Pascal Beaulieu** are originally from Montreal’s South Shore. they met in Montreal in their mid 20’s. They have three children. He is an engineer and often works abroad. She worked in advertising, but left it shortly after coming back from her first maternity leave and has been a stay-at-home mom since with her children attending daycare. She will send her kids to the local French school in her zone in Verdun Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. Most of the kids from her children’s daycare are going to go there. She has heard good things. They have alot of resources because it is a public school in an impoverished neighbourhood. They also have a breakfast program, so they will feed her kids since she has to get them there so early and it is only a ten minute walk from home. She really wants the most convenient option. She plans to help with the breakfast program as she wants to stay connected to her kids and other parents. Since the pandemic she has a small nagging question about whether she should homeschool so she can be with her kids more and because she doesn’t want to go back to work and because she really enjoyed spending time with them during the lockdown.

**3. Jennifer Tremblay and Mathias Morf** have a 4 year-old and a newborn. She worked for Air Canada, but had her baby at the beginning of the 2020 lockdown and isn’t sure if she has a job to go back to or wants to go back to it. She has also been battling with breastfeeding issues and postpartum mood disorder. She is thinking about getting her certification to be a sleep training coach, so she can be home more and not give so much for a a job she doesn’t really like. She is from Lasalle. Her husband is German. They met six years earlier. He is a computer scientist. This second child teamed with the pandemic has been hard on their relationship. She couldn’t wait for the daycares to reopen. They were torn about whether to send their son to English or French school and have settled on the English school with French immersion that is a bit further than the one on the corner, that they find too English. They qualify for bus service, which makes convenient. It wasn’t an easy decision as she grew-up fully bilingual. Their son speaks French at daycare and English and German at home. This seems the most convenient and she is looking forward to him starting school, so she can focus on the baby and her next move more. She really didn’t have the energy to investigate more options.

## Demographics of the Parent Performers

Below is a Table that details the demographics of the learners.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Demographics | * The learners in this program will generally be heterosexual couples in their thirties and early forties * They generally have one or two children between infant age and 6 years-old * Those that are expected to use the program to the fullest are middle-class and have a household income of $70,000 and higher * They are generally professionals and possess university-level education * They are generally relocating from Overseas (51%), the rest of Canada (22%) or looking to relocate within the city (27%) * Although this performance program targets parents, in general, it is expected that 80% of its viewers will be women |
| Previous Knowledge | * These parents have usually started doing research on their own and have a handle on some of the choices that need to be made or what to expect eg. zones, english school eligibility. * Many have actually enrolled their children in schools that they are not happy with for one reason or another and are looking to find a better solution * Some clients are educators themselves and have a deep knowledge of teaching and learning * Knowledge of what is important to them varies from parent to parent, and sometimes they are wrong about what they thought was important to them and have to rethink their priorities as the process unfolds. * Few truly understand what will suit their children most. They usually try to mold their child to theirs and the schools combined expectations as opposed to seeking solutions that are adapted to their child. * Much of their knowledge comes from their gut feeling comes from their personal experiences with education * They rely heavily on recommendations by other parents and family * Some enter a neighbourhood without knowledge of the schools * Others enter a neighbourhood without alot of knowledge of the neighbourhood or the schools |
| Influences | * Parents are heavily influenced by word of mouth and advice from people they trust * For some parents school ratings are the main influencer * For some the more difficult a school is to get their child into makes it more valuable * For some parents, their values and the feeling they get, such as feelings of belonging and a school being welcoming are most important * For some, the issue of convenience is the biggest influence * The language: english, french or bilingual * The way they were treated when interacting with people from a school * The aesthetics, equipment and cleanliness of a school * With COVID, how the school is presented in a video is the main way they can evaluate * Focus on different features * Social Media and online mom and parent groups are huge * Keeping kids together * The idea that they are getting the best for their child * They want to use this material because they feel stuck and dissatisfied with the options they have for their children’s schooling * Each parent has a different amount of time they can spend on the process and learning as well as different constraints on the amount of money they can or are willing to spend * Divergent priorities interests within the family * The family’s position on COVID regulations and whether anyone in their family or bubble have an immune-deficiency or are vulnerable to COVID. * Their time and financial situation also will play a role in dictating their position on distance learning and homeschooling and their needs for school during COVID |

## Constraints in the Learning Environment

Because the first phase was a failed learning program, this section will explore the constraints on the learning environment as well as in the application of the skills. The table below details these constraints

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Issues affecting Learning | * Preconceived notions and built-up frustration and discouragement * Inertia and the need to start all over * Does not provide individual accompaniment or coaching and so is not adapted to cover every individual situation * It is difficult to access all of the necessary information * There are limitations to what you can learn about in theory about choosing and enrolling your child in school. This is essentially an educated guess, but you will not truly know if it was the right choice until they are in the school. * Learning isn’t simply a how-to, but also a reflection on needs and values |
| Issues affecting the application of the Learning | * Outside influences, like friends or family * Even with a tool to help navigate and define the components of making a choice, without a central place with all of the information, the task is still overwhelming * Regardless of all of the research done and preparation and hoops jumped through, parents may still not get their child(ren) into the school of their choice * Children’s needs change, so does the culture of a school. This type of learning may need to be reapplied in order to reanalyze if a school is still appropriate and that is okay * Professional, life and legal status may usurp this process |

## Other Performers

## 

## Children

The ultimate “performance” is that children will happily thrive in the selected education option. Children are not, however, the focus as they do not have the ability or autonomy before a certain age to carry-out the selection process. What they value may also be incongruent with what their parents value or prioritize. Parents need to be attuned to their children’s needs and who they really are. That said, in many ways, the judgement of the parent is required to mitigate these conflicting interests. A child may be mostly concerned with free play, being with the kids of the neighbourhood and doing things that are of interest: art, sports, music, spending time outside. These things are all important and valid as they recognize the child and their needs in the present moment. They also contribute to belonging, self-esteem and autonomy. A way to predict that the child will thrive and the parents ultimately be satisfied is to seek-out schools that promote autonomy, belonging and self-esteem. Another way is to include the child in the selection process: information nights and videos, to hear those connected more to the child than the parents (teachers, daycare, their friends and friends and friends’ parents.)

Another way that the child’s “performance” can be impacted is looking specifically at whether a child has any special needs and whether an option can accommodate those needs. We often try to impose the values of a school on a child instead of seeking a school that will be able to adapt to and accommodate a child’s needs and learning. Once the child is in a school, the real “performance” begins and the performance of the child and the educational option with a child feed back to feed satisfaction or dissatisfaction or a feeling of whether academic progress, happiness, wellness and rich and healthy relationships are being achieved.

“Performance” also pertains to children when it comes to admission based on grades or exams, which increase as children get older. Parents may have high expectations, but their child may not perform satisfactorily. Alternatively, children may have high hopes of high-ranking schools and parents may not have the desire to go through the rigamarole or have time or money resources for the dream school of a child.

**High Maintenance Child Performer**

Sophia is 8 years-old. She grew-up speaking French at home with fully bilingual parents from Ontario. She thrived in her daycare, but they could always find that she had trouble with change and transition. The kids from her daycare all went to the neighbourhood public French school. Her parents wanted her to be fully bilingual, including in her writing. They weren't convinced the French immersion program at the neighbourhood English school was strong enough. She passed an interview and assessment at an International Baccalaureate school for which admission is low and was selected. She wanted to be with her daycare friends at the local French school. Her parents chose the competitive IB school. She didn’t fit in, didn’t speak a word of English when she began and spent the first three years in isolation socially and struggling with the schoolwork. She spends 90 minutes a day bussing there. She has adjusted, but since COVID and its added stress at school and at home, she is suffering from severe anxiety and her family is beginning the process to assess whether she is on the autism spectrum. Although her parents realize her school isn’t a good fit for her, they are afraid to make her start somewhere else again. That also causes her anxiety. She also doesn’t have any friends in her neighbourhood and motivation at school and her social isolation is compounded by COVID. Because her school cherry-picks students, they also do not have resources for children with special needs nor a culture of inclusion or supporting them.

**Medium Maintenance Child Performer**

Amadea goes to F.A.C.E. Her parents believe she is gifted and have high expectations for her. She was concerned with wanting to play and is loving F.A.C.E. She is social, motivated and extremely articulate. There are many expectations on her but also on her school to continually bring out high academic performance and ambition in her. She is 5. Although she fits in at school, her friends outside of school are the families her parents choose to see and she is not able to develop relationships of her own. It also isn’t clear yet if she has a penchant for art and music yet and in two years, her school is moving even further from her home. Although she is a performer, many environmental circumstances will impact her performance and where she studies.

**Low Maintenance Child Performer**

Edmund is the younger brother of Sophia. He is easy-going, athletic and gifted academically. He completes schoolwork and projects with interest and ease and loves his IB school. He thrives as well because he collaborates easily and fits in with other kids and he is able to pursue his sports interests. In some ways, he feels bad though because his older sister struggles so much at the same school and his parents are on the fence about moving them because he is thriving and she isn’t.

## Institutions

This is a broad category that bunches *Ministère de l’education* together with schools, school boards, service centres*.*

**High-Maintenance Institutional Performer**

The provincial *Ministère de l’education,* Jean-François Roberge is the Minister of Education of Quebec. He makes high level decisions and has a background in teaching, educational administration and administration. He is married and has children. He also presided with various youth organizations. He is ambitious and bright. He is motivated by being with the party with which he can advance his career. This motivated him to align with François Legault and le CAQ. Although he is married and has children, he does not live in Montreal, is white, male, francophone and lives in Chambly in a place with few immigrants and few schooling options although there is a small English community, he lives in total isolation with the English community. For the changes proposed through the PIC to reach him and for him to propose changes is both slow and in many ways, may go against the party line.

**Medium-Maintenance Institutional Performer**

Sherry works for the English Montreal school board. She has been there for 15 years. She likes her colleagues the benefits and job security, but was panicked when the CAQ tried to abolish English school boards. This entrenched her in her disdain for the provincial government and the *Ministère de l’education.*  She feels for the parents that come in or call asking for information, guidance or want English eligibility but do not qualify. She feels for the people trying to figure this all out that are new to Montreal, but she also has several clerical responsibilities to tend and feels a little annoyed always having to spoon feed what she knows or brush parents off when she cannot help them or tell them things that they don’t really have a way to know, but she doesn't know that because she does work inside the system. She wants to help, but she has already gotten comfortable in the current system and doesn’t know how to fix a complex system and has settled into her job the way it is. She also finds it kind of annoying that parents want so many privileges to send their kids to schools out of their zone, expect bussing and to apply to many schools and boards. She asks herself also why they don’t know what they want or what their kids need. She is from the West Island and her kids went to the same Elementary and High School all the way through their education in an immersion program.

**Low-Maintenance Institutional Performer**

Nathalie is the principal at a neighbourhood Francophone school in Verdun. She is motivated and loves her job. She has brought many changes as the last principle was very focused on discipline. She is expanding programs with parents and the larger community. This has brought her to have much dialogue with parents. She has learned alot through that dialogue and is canalizing parent involvement and feedback. She is interested in running a focus group or interviews to check-in with parents and get more feedback so they can better plan the future and take the pulse of where the families which compose their community are at in relationship to the school. She also wants to have a good way to define and communicate the school’s values as they do not have open house nights nor is their website up-to-date and indicative of their current values.

## Constraints on the Performance Program

This section will explore the constraints on the program, or the design of the program and its format as well as constraints on the project which concern declines, budget and who is involved. The choices and available options are dictated by government policy as is the level of support of parents through the process of selecting schools. The provincial government applies laws about English eligibility, the structure of boards and service centres, funding and much more. Choices, whether for public, public alternative, private school are homeschooling are heavily impacted by the legislation of education. Boards and service centres act as an intermediary between parents, schools and the provincial government. Parents depend on them for: identifying the schools in their zone, for bus transportation, for permission to study outside of their zone, for english eligibility certification, watching for the video links for virtual open houses planned months in advance that come out on one particular day, for information, for registration in schools and to clarify which schools can be applied to or not. They also oversee the curricula of private schools and parents for homeschooling. Their roles are significant, but they are not easy to navigate or get information from. They can be extremely inefficient and it can be painful getting information, getting documents for them or to them or getting confirmation that documents have been received or to find out about special rules that apply to so many schools (Eg. applying to a neighbourhood school inside the child’s designated school as a special provision or one school that has waved kids being with their board’s zone). From school to school the admission process is different, so one might be pursuing several different admission processes through several boards, requiring special permissions at times or being expected to give up their child’s spot at one board or school without a guaranteed spot at another.

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| --- | --- |
| Issues affecting the performance program | * Inertia in the institutions and governments concerned and a general resistance to change * Unifying two levels of government towards a common goal with different objectives and jurisdictions * Language that is accessible to the parent performers * Need for government, boards, service centres and schools to take on more of a supportive role and to facilitate the process * An evaluation program has yet to be adopted * A program of updating on the long-term has yet to be planned or integrated * Unclear the capacity beyond a budget that both levels are willing to invest in terms of non-financial resources (management and manpower) |
| Issues affecting the Program | * Drop-Dead Deadline: June 25th, 2022 * Budget: $500 000 for the initial design and implementation of the program. A budget to maintain the program has yet to be established * Annual updates have not been established yet |

Requirements for a Performance Improvement Program to Help Parents Identify, Select and Enrol Children in a Montreal School in an informed way

The requirements for a successful instructional program in going through the process of getting one’s child in the best school for them in Montreal will be outlined in this next section. Both the business objective, or what the *Ville de Montréal* and the *Ministère de l’education* will gain, will be covered as well as the performance objectives, or what the learners should be able to do after having completed the instructional program, and the environmental issues to be addressed.

## Business Objective

The *Ville de Montréal* and the *Ministère de l’education* have different business objectives. The goal of the *Ville de Montréal* is to be able sell Montreal and its boroughs to perspective home buyers and to be able to direct new arrivals to a program to help them figure-out the best educational option for them. The goal is to increase the quality of life in Montreal and retain families, immigrants, increase property values and collect more property tax. The *Ministère de l’education* is seeking to reduce administrative costs by having a branch dedicated to supporting and informing parents and, therefore, lightening the administrative burden on boards, schools and service centres and also saving money in moving children around in the system due to insatisfaction. The campaign aims to reduce the number of kids moving institutions within Montreal by 50% within three years and to document parent satisfaction after one year in a new education option and have dissatisfaction amongst parents reduce by 50% over three years.

## Performance Objective

Parents will be able to make an informed decision about which school to send their children to by being able to navigate each step of the complex process, define clearly what is important to them and apply a systematic and predictable process in a complex series of decisions and actions guided by preference. Although, there will stil be constraints, they will better be able to aim for what they want with conviction and have back-up options if their first or second choices don’t work-out. The goal of this program is that the other performers come and support this process both institutions and children.

**Desired Performance:** Identify, rank and apply to eligible desirable school options for one’s child in a confident and informed way, increasing the chances of satisfaction with the result.

1. Define Montreal schools both forms and defining characteristics using a centralized informational or resource or person.
2. Identify the family’s needs pertaining to a school, using a tool to help identify values, needs and priorities.
3. Index the schools that are available in your area based on a central resource that shows the available options by borough.
4. Attend open houses or virtual information nights with the goal of supporting the selection process and maintaining the possibility of admission.
5. Execute the registration process for each desired option through a streamlined process possible through the collaboration of multiple institutions.
6. Create a hierarchal shortlist of preferred schools based on registration and demands of admission. A more informed parent will feel more comfortable with their choices and the results.
7. Select a school based on admission and one’s list. Cancel registration with all other schools. this could be streamlined through a central portal.

## Environmental Factors

The environmental issues are highlighted above. The disjointed way each institution operates and that parents have to pursue multiple processes down multiple avenues is a nightmare. The lack of resources, support and even basic information impedes “good performance”. It’s this cryptic black box that requires parents to jump through many hoops and makes them highly dependent on administrators to cross all their t’s and dot their i’s at every step, yet it is hard to answer very practical questions. It isn’t clear how many and to which schools parents can apply and multiple steps require phone calls to boards and divergent responses between boards, schools and employees, if there is an answer at all. There has to be a way to unify this process and streamline it. Just obtaining the names of available schools in an area requires university level research skills if one is unfamiliar with a neighbourhood, the city or doesn’t have a knowledgeable person to walk them through. Parents are looking, but often don’t know what they are looking for. Guiding principles, repertoires of what is available, information and support needs to be made available. Other environmental factors include things like raffles, zones and english eligibility.

**Pre-requisite Tasks to improving performance**:

-Establish the common goal for all performers to find the best option possible for the child

-Establish a goal of supporting and informing parents

-Establish a goal of being available

-Establish the goal of streamlining and simplifying the process

-Establish the goal of undying different organizations to streamline the process

-Document practical information in an accessible way and not just high-minded values

-Unity between borough, municipal and provincial government to manage education in a way that reflects the local needs and reality and the citizens that use it

## Evaluation

What follows are the proposed ways that the performance program will be evaluated. Evaluation helps us to determine if the instructional program achieved what it set-out to achieve. There will be evaluation on four levels: Level 1 Reaction, Level 2 Learning, Level 3 Behaviour, Level 4 Impact.

## Level 1 Engagement Evaluation

This is meant to measure how learners felt about the performance program, the tools and to self-assess. This would require the data about who used the program, how many people and in which capacity. Follow-up with those that used the program in order to measure their satisfaction with the program’s ability to facilitate the desired performance: identifying, selecting and admission to a desired school in an informed way, resulting in satisfaction. It would be important to measure in the end: their satisfaction with support, their self-efficacy (feeling prepared to go through this process) and the resulting performance of the school their child went to, their satisfaction with how their child is doing at that school as well as if they are satisfied enough to keep their child there. If there is a lack of parents using it, abandoning it due to overwhelm, disappointment with the program, disappointment with the resulting school, their child is not doing well or they wish to change educational options in any of these departments in a significant way, there is a lack of engagement on some level from the parents or other performers. It should also be evaluated how important the choice of a child’s school is.

## Level 2 Criterion Evaluation

This section is meant to give questions to evaluate learning. Because the performer is under no obligation to do this learning or pass a test, these questions are for them to self-assess what learning they did and to correct where the learning was insufficient. The criterion is that 50% more parents are satisfied after three years of the program and monitoring parent satisfaction and that by doing this program learned enough to feel they had the knowledge to navigate this process. There would also have to be an evaluation for each of the steps:

1. Rate understanding the characteristics of education options in Montreal and the school system
2. Rate the definition the families priorities, needs and values
3. Rate ability to identify the available education options
4. Rate ability in evaluating schools during open houses and information nights
5. Rate having the tools to complete the registration process for multiple institutions
6. Rate ability to clearly rank the schools of interest hierarchally in-terms of priorities, values and needs
7. Rate satisfaction with current education option
8. Rate ability to seek out another with confidence if dissatisfied

## Level 3 Behaviour Evaluation

This would document to what extent parents consulted or used the program. This could be done through automated monitoring of the program itself. A survey may also help in identifying which strategies, tools or sources of support we used by parents and would they have achieved the same result without the tools and were they happy with the resulting outcome.

Ideally this would also look at how other performers, like the institutions and their employees changed their behaviour. This could be monitored through interviews with those involved in the performance program to evaluate how it impacted their work and the process.

## Level 4 Impact Evaluation

1. Did the program achieve what it set out to?
2. Did 50% more parents think they had made the right choice?
3. What percentage of kids were happy in their educational option?
4. Did Montreal attract and retain more people and families?
5. Did property tax revenue increase?
6. Did La Ministère de l’Éducation reduce administrative costs?
7. What has changed in practice for the institutions?
8. For parents that used this tool to change their child’s school, were they able to obtain a better result or feel more confident this time around?

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