

A key moment for educational success

Students who experience a smooth transition to CÉGEP:

- ✓ Are more likely to pass their first semester, recognized as being key to long-term perseverance.
- ✓ Are more likely to graduate, thus gaining access to better working conditions and enjoying better physical and mental health as adults.

Good to know!

In Québec, though the rate of CÉGEP enrollment has increased by about 10% over 10 years, the rate of graduation four or five years after starting CÉGEP has remained unchanged at about 65% since the late 2000s.¹

This is even more worrisome given that a high school diploma is not a qualifying diploma, and that few young Montrealers undertake vocational training.

During the current labour shortage, attractive job offers may entice some young people to favour working over getting an education, especially among those with already low engagement at school or who live with financial insecurity.

Jobs that require little qualification are at greater risk of becoming automated. Students who take these jobs rather than continuing their education risk lacking the skills to transition to jobs that require higher qualifications.

Distinctive aspects of the high school-CÉGEP transition

Young people are no longer obligated to attend school



For the first time in their schooling, young people can choose to abandon their studies – for example to take a break or join the workforce.

Young people are faced with a dizzying choice of educational programs



For the first time, young people must make choices about their educational path (e.g., vocational training, technical or pre-university diploma, program selection), which can be a source of indecision and anxiety.

Young people begin the passage to adulthood



Many young people are simultaneously experiencing the first responsibilities of adulthood (e.g., leaving home, managing a budget, making their own applications for assistance as needed, etc.).

¹Carole Lavoie, *La réussite au cégep : regards rétrospectifs et prospectifs*, Fédération des cégeps, 2021; and Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, *Plan d'action pour la réussite en enseignement supérieur, 2021-2026*, 2021.

Factors that increase the risk of a difficult transition

Learning disabilities or mental-health problems



Young people living with handicaps, who have learning disabilities, or who suffer from anxiety may experience greater challenges when transitioning to CÉGEP and are more likely to experience setbacks.

Underprivilege



Youth from underprivileged communities are more likely to lack the support needed to navigate the prerequisites and requirements for postsecondary education.

Age of admission to CÉGEP



Students who enter CÉGEP later (19 or older), often due to accumulated academic delays or following a foray into the labour market, are more likely to drop out.

Previous grades

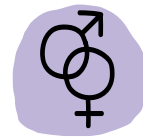


Youth whose average in high school is under 75%, and those admitted conditionally (lacking six or fewer high school units) are among the sub-groups considered at the highest risk of setback or dropping out.



Students affected by multiple such factors are at greater risk of having severe difficulties and, ultimately, of dropping out before earning a CÉGEP diploma.

Gender



In general, more boys than girls drop out of CÉGEP. Youth with diverse gender and sexual identities are also more likely to experience difficulties, in particular those of a psychological nature, in the face of exclusion and discrimination.

The situation of the most vulnerable youth

As part of the *Parcours* project, researcher Véronique Dupéré and doctoral student Éliane Thouin studied the transition experiences of youth in socioeconomically or academically vulnerable situations.

Their results showed that:

- Among students in the project, the CÉGEP registration rate (35%) was about half that of the general population (≈ 65%).

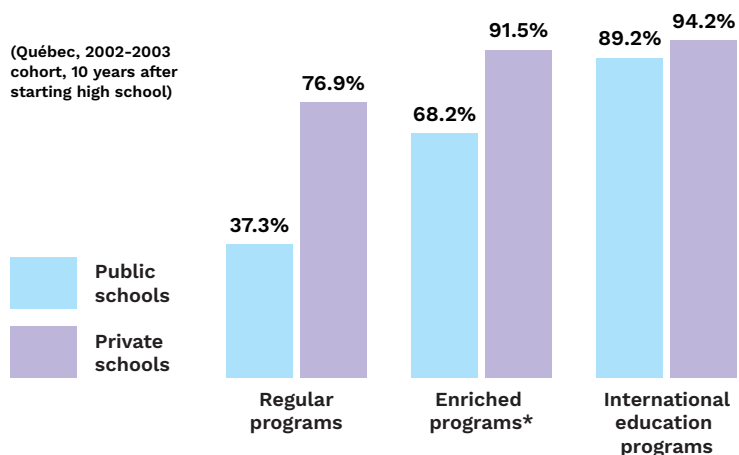
- Specific factors that seemed to favour these students' success included:
 - High academic aspirations in high school
 - Knowing someone who could refer them to support resources (e.g., financial, academic, or psychosocial assistance)



Inequality of access to CÉGEP for some youth

Students who attend regular programs in public schools are significantly less likely to attend CÉGEP.

Percentage of students who attended CÉGEP for at least one semester, according to type of high school and high school program



*Specific programs, either a concentration, an option, or specialized stream in science, sports, arts, etc.

Source: Laplante, B., Doray, P., Tremblay, É., Kamanzi, P. C., Pilote, A. et Lafontaine, O. (2020). *L'accès à l'enseignement postsecondaire: l'effet de la segmentation scolaire au Québec*. Québec: Chaire-réseau de recherche sur la jeunesse du Québec.

Actions to promote a smooth transition



In high school

- Invite CÉGEP students to speak to future students about their experiences.
- Provide clear, comprehensive, and high-quality information about CÉGEP programs.
- Organize meetings between high school teachers and CÉGEP professors to coordinate educational content and teaching methods.
- Develop a transition plan for students at risk of experiencing a difficult transition.



Over the summer

- Encourage enrollment in educational or preparatory camps that integrate peer support, mentorship, and active learning.



In CÉGEP

- When welcoming new students, express that the CÉGEP staff believe in their ability to succeed.
- Foster a sense of belonging to the CÉGEP, in particular by encouraging participation in student life.
- Identify students at risk of experiencing academic or psychological difficulties and take action to support them.

For more information, see our key topic page (in French):

www.reseautreussitemontreal.ca/dossiers-thematiques/transition-secondaire-collegial

(This page also links to the sources used to produce this infographic, further courses of action, and other resources.)

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