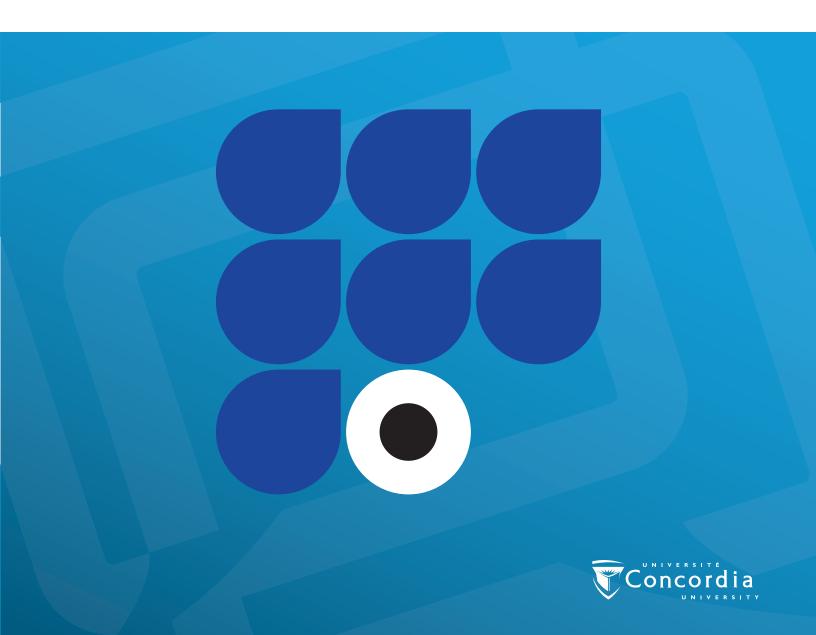


# **RESEARCH AGENDA**

for Education in Relation to English-Speaking Quebec





QUESCREN is a collaborative network of researchers, community members and institutions that provides opportunities to promote the understanding and vitality of English-speaking Quebec through research, knowledge mobilization, networking, and outreach. It is housed at the School of Community and Public Affairs at Concordia University in Montreal.

### Research Strategy series

QUESCREN's Research Strategy series addresses foundational and strategic considerations in the study of English-speaking Quebec. Its focus is setting research priorities and enhancing the mobilization and impact of scholarly knowledge on this official language minority community in Canada. The series supports QUESCREN's development and our provision of strategic science advice to policy and program decision-makers.

Funding for this paper was provided by the Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada



The Government of Quebec and Concordia University also provide funding for QUESCREN.

Legal deposit - Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2025.





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# **Executive Summary**

This document presents a comprehensive research agenda for education in relation to English-speaking Quebec, developed by the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN) in collaboration with sector partners.

# **Purpose and Scope**

The agenda is designed to support both long-term research planning and a current two-year initiative funded by Canadian Heritage. It covers the full continuum of English-language education in Quebec—from early childhood to adult learning—and includes public, private, and home schooling, as well as relevant experiences of English speakers in the French system.

As such, the agenda is an element in QUESCREN's ongoing role of providing strategic science advice to support government policy and program decision-making.

## **QUESCREN's Role and Capacity**

QUESCREN leads this initiative with over 15 years of experience in education research and mobilization. Through its Inter-Level Educational Table (ILET), Research Hub, and network of over 80 researcher-members, QUESCREN brings together diverse actors to produce accessible, high-impact research for community and policy audiences alike.

# Methodology

The agenda was developed through extensive consultations with researchers, education practitioners, policymakers, and community leaders. A key component was the involvement of an Advisory Committee, who were interviewed individually, participated in an in-person meeting to refine research questions, and ranked the top priorities. Additional inputs included:

- A survey of QUESCREN researcher-members.
- Compilation of questions raised in past consultations with the Inter-Level Educational Table (ILET).
- Government stakeholder interviews to align research with policy needs.

# **Strategic Research Agenda**

The research agenda consists of 50 research questions grouped into nine thematic areas. The agenda lays the groundwork for long-term research planning and collaboration. For the full list, skip to **Section 4**.

# **Short-Term Research Plan (2025–2027)**

Under current funding, QUESCREN will produce 16 knowledge mobilization products, including research briefs, films, podcasts, and a book. These outputs aim to inform policy, support community groups, and address gaps in the education sector. For the full list, skip to **Section 5**.

# 1. Introduction

## **Purpose**

This research agenda was developed by the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN), in collaboration with sector partners, to guide and strengthen education research related to English-speaking communities in Quebec. It serves two primary purposes:

- To identify **strategic research priorities** on the topic of education in relation to English-speaking Quebec, laying the groundwork for long-term research planning and collaboration (see section 4).
- To outline a short-term research plan (2025–2027) for a two-year initiative supported by Canadian Heritage<sup>1</sup>, aimed at producing knowledge that informs policy, supports community development, and enhances educational outcomes (see section 5).

This agenda is intended for researchers, policymakers, educators, and community organizations seeking to better understand and support Englishlanguage education in Quebec. In particular, it is an element in QUESCREN's ongoing role of providing strategic science advice to support government policy and program decision-making.<sup>2</sup>

# Scope

The education sector is defined broadly to reflect the diverse and evolving experiences of English-speaking individuals and communities across the province. It includes:

- The full continuum of English-language education in Quebec: early childhood, elementary, secondary, vocational, postsecondary, and adult education
- All educational settings: public, private, and home schooling;
- Where relevant, the experiences of English-speaking students, families, and education rights-holders within the French-language education system.

<sup>1</sup> This research agenda and the priority research and knowledge mobilization products outlined below are funded by Canadian Heritage (Official Languages Support Fund for the Post-Secondary Sector, under the Development of Official-Language Communities Program, Minority Language Education Component). The 2025-2027 project is called the QUESCREN Education Research and Network Strengthening Initiative.

QUESCREN also receives funding from the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise and Concordia University.

<sup>2</sup> To this end, QUESCREN supports efforts of the International Network for Governmental Science Advice (INGSA). For information, see <a href="https://ingsa.org/">https://ingsa.org/</a>

# 2. QUESCREN Leadership on Education Research

QUESCREN is a leader in education research grounded in cross-sector collaboration. We build expertise and networks in English-language education in Quebec through strong partnerships, impactful events, and research that informs policy and practice.

## **Expertise in Education Research**

QUESCREN includes a group of 81 researcher-members. They contribute expertise by validating in-house research, supporting student researchers, serving on committees, co-organizing events, and producing research. Twenty-six of them conduct research on education.

Discover QUESCREN's researcher-members.

Additionally, QUESCREN's own staff includes two Research Associates with master's degrees in education: Lina Shoumarova and Anna Hunt, and a third, Anita Aloisio, M.A., who has created several documentary films related to education in Quebec.

#### **Research Publications**

In collaboration with ILET and our researcher-members over the past six years, QUESCREN has published more than 30 resources on education including research and policy briefs, forum reports, infographics, and datasheets. We have established a reputation for producing accessible, high-quality education research for diverse audiences.

Consult our research publications.

## Mobilization of Education Networks and Knowedge

#### Inter-Level Educational Table

Established in 2017, the Inter-Level Educational Table (ILET) is QUESCREN's flagship initiative in education collaboration. Bringing together over 25 researchers, education practitioners from across the continuum, and community actors, ILET serves as a dynamic platform for exchange, coordination, and research dissemination.

Find out more about ILET.

#### **ILET Research Hub and Other Research Tools**

Research Strategy Series

QUESCREN-produced online tools help users navigate resources on English-language education in Quebec. The ILET Research Hub brings together all QUESCREN-produced research-based resources on Quebec's English-language education ecosystem and offers innovative ways of engagement with that research. In addition, Brendan O'Donnell's bibliography on English-speaking Quebec lists 2,687 education-related references, while our Community Knowledge Open Library (CKOL) offers 1,978 full-text, searchable, and downloadable education publications produced by community organizations.

Visit the <u>ILET Research Hub, Bibliography</u>, and <u>CKOL</u>.

#### **Events on Minority-Language Education**

Since 2018, QUESCREN has hosted a biennial forum on minority-language education, bringing together hundreds of researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and community representatives. We have also hosted a number of online Lunch & Learns and in-person events on education.

See a <u>video about our last forum in 2023</u>, and find out about <u>our upcoming</u> forum in 2025.

#### **Event Videos, Video Capsules and Podcasts**

QUESCREN has produced dozens of videos featuring recorded presentations from our education-related events.

We also have 8 videos and podcasts featuring interviews with researchers on education issues in the province.

See our event videos, video capsules and podcasts.

# 3. Methodology

This research agenda was developed through consultation with a wide range of researchers, policy makers, education practitioners, and community actors.

# **Gathering data**

#### **Advisory Committee and Interviews**

We created a project Advisory Committee and interviewed its members. They are:

Katherine Korakakis	rine Korakakis President, English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA)		
Christine Truesdale	Chief Executive Officer, Leading English Education and Resource Network (LEARN)		
Sylvia Martin-Laforge	Executive Director, TALQ (formerly the Quebec Community Groups Network)		
Rosemary Murphy	President, Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA)		
Adrienne Winrow	Executive Director, Youth for Youth Québec (Y4Y Québec )		
Stephen Thompson	Independent consultant		
Tya Collins	Collins Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa		
David Meloche	Executive Director, Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA)		
Avril Aitken	itken Professor, Faculty of Education, Bishop's University		

In addition, we interviewed two leaders within the domain who do not serve on the Advisory Committee: **Celine Cooper** (Managing Director, Consortium of English-language CEGEPs, Colleges and Universities of Quebec) and **Cindy Finn** (Director General, Lester B. Pearson School Board).

#### Researcher-member survey

We surveyed QUESCREN researcher-members whose work touches on Englishlanguage education. We received **seven responses**, each offering input on research priorities and potential areas for development, along with their availabilities for collaboration.

#### **Past Consultations**

Prior to the current project, QUESCREN consulted with members of our Inter-Level Education Table (ILET), both in regular ILET meetings as part of past project activities—most notably, consultations on priorities resulting in the first 23 QUESCREN research briefs.

#### Research Strategy Series

# **Determining the Research Agenda (Section 4)**

We analyzed our data and developed a long list of research priorities in the form of research questions. These were then discussed during an in-person meeting of the project Advisory Committee, where members contributed additional questions and sub-questions. Following the meeting, all questions were grouped thematically to create the broad strategic research plan.

# **Determining Short-Term Research Plan (2025-2027) (Section 5)**

We asked Advisory Committee members and some ILET members to rank the research questions. The following research question topics ranked highest:

Advisory Committee Rank	Research Question Topics	Question number (section 4)
1	Evaluating French instruction models in English schools (FSL, Bilingual, Immersion) for CEGEP and workforce success	(31)
2	Impact of Bill 96 French requirements at CEGEP on neurodivergent/special needs students	(37)
3	Civics course: implementation and reception	(38)
4	Impact of legal bans of religious symbols in schools (Bills 21/94)	(40)
5	Issues around translation of educational documents	(39)
6	Improving motivation/student outcomes	(45)
7	Teacher retention in English school sector	(26)
8	Graduation rates in relation to rural/urban situations, socioeconomic realities, and lengths of commutes	(14, 20, 22)
9	Teacher education for official-language minority (OLM) contexts	(25)
10	Teacher education and special needs readiness	(27)

In addition to these rankings, we also took the following factors into account when determining Phase I priorities:

- **Usefulness to stakeholders:** Potential for the findings to inform decision-making, improve services, or support advocacy efforts.
- **Feasibility:** Availability and interest of committee members and researcher-members to lead or collaborate on the project.
- Complementarity: Avoiding duplication of research already being led by well-resourced organizations (e.g., PERT, CHSSN, Consortium of Englishlanguage CEGEPs and Universities). Resources and time required for each project.
- **Resource requirements:** Balancing scope and ambition with available time, funding, and staffing.
- Methodological diversity: Balancing qualitative research requiring research ethics processes and other research methods.
- Coverage of gaps: Prioritizing projects that address sectoral gaps not well represented in the ranked research questions or recent QUESCREN outputs.
- **Equity and inclusion:** Giving weight to projects that address systemic inequities or highlight the experiences of underrepresented or marginalized groups (e.g., Black, Indigenous, or immigrant students).
- **Timeliness and public relevance:** Aligning projects with upcoming anniversaries, legislative milestones, or moments of heightened public interest (e.g., the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Charter of the French Language).

Moreover, to enhance the agenda's relevance for decision-makers, we also interviewed government stakeholders. The discussions focused on how research can more effectively inform decision-making processes and contribute to policy development. Insights from these interviews will guide the design of the 16 resulting knowledge products, including both content and format best suited to real-world impact.

# 4. Strategic Research Agenda



No I

On the basis of qualitative data we have gathered over the past 10 years, we developed 50 research questions and grouped them under 9 themes.

Questions that the Advisory Committee ranked as the top ten priorities are **bolded in blue**.

# Theme 1: Language, Identity, and Cultural Continuity

There are broad concerns in Quebec around bilingualism, cultural continuity, and the coexistence of languages. Two contrasting views often shape perspectives on language and identity. The additive view sees learning multiple languages—such as English and French—as enriching and beneficial. The subtractive view sees the use and spread of English as potentially undermining the French language. Many questions under this theme go beyond education and student outcomes to address the future of cultural and linguistic life in Quebec.

- 1. How do English-language schools and programs foster cultural transmission, identity formation, and a sense of belonging in an official language minority community (OLMC) context?
- 2. How do different models of French instruction in English-language schools —bilingual (50-50), immersion (85-15), and regular FSL—shape students' sense of cultural identity and belonging in Quebec, and how do they reflect broader societal expectations around French language integration?
- 3. How do English CEGEPs and universities influence the linguistic practices and identities of Francophone students and the vitality of French in Quebec?
- 4. How motivated or resistant are non-francophone students in Quebec's English-language system to learn French, and what factors influence this?
- 5. What are the implications of the high number of Francophone rights-holders attending English-language schools for the culture and identity of the English-language education sector?
- 6. What innovative practices are educators in English-language schools using to adapt curricula so they better reflect cultural realities in their institutions?
- 7. Does inclusive history education and storytelling strengthen cultural identity among English-speaking youth? How?
- 8. What are the additive and subtractive (zero-sum) models of language and identity in Quebec? Do they shape policy, discourse, and student outcomes in English-language education in Quebec? How?

# Theme 2: Diversity and Equity in Education

Inequities, school models, and policies appear to affect access, inclusion, and success for English-speaking students. This includes students with special needs, from immigrant families, from racialized groups, and with low socioeconomic status.

- 9. What early childhood education (ECE) interventions could help improve the long-term educational and economic outcomes of English-speaking children in Quebec, given research showing they face greater early developmental vulnerabilities than their French-speaking peers?
- 10. What impact, if any, do public/private and "in-between" school models (e.g., alternative, 240 status, "secret" or independent schools) have on equity and success in the English system?
- 11. What are the success rates in the English and French systems for students with special needs? If they are different, what are some reasons for this?
- 12. How do autism services and supports in English-speaking schools compare to those in the French system in terms of quality, access, and effectiveness?
- 13. What is the current state of online/in-person Grade 12 programs that allow students to bypass CEGEP in Quebec, and what are their implications for equity and integration?
- 14. Is there a correlation between travel distance to English schools and drop-out / success rates? If so, what measure might be taken to address positive correlations?
- 15. How do English and French education sectors in Quebec integrate special and inclusive education for students experiencing intersectional barriers and issues, and what are the implications for policy and practice in English language education? More specifically, how do Black and Indigenous English-speaking students experience inclusive education differently, and what culturally responsive strategies could improve outcomes?
- 16. How do the English and French sectors approach equity and intersectionality in terms of theory, policy, and classroom practice? More specifically, are there differences in how issues affecting English-speaking Black and Indigenous students are recognized and addressed in each sector?
- 17. What is the English-language education in its full continuum doing to address student poverty? Do these measures work and if not, why not?
- 18. Bill 101/96 can be circumvented through attendance at private non-subsidized English-language education. What are the current practices in this regard, and their implications for educational equity and linguistic integration in Quebec?
- 19. What are the psychological and emotional impacts on children from immigrant families in Quebec's Francophone schools who regularly serve as language brokers for their FOLS-English parents?

# Theme 3: Geographic and Regional Disparities in Education



Geography and regional differences appear to impact access, retention, graduation, and program availability for English-speaking students across Quebec's urban, rural, and "rurban" areas.

## Research questions:

- 20. What disparities in educational offerings and access (e.g., transport distances, availability of services) exist when comparing urban, rural, and "rurban" areas? What impact, if any, do they have on student retention and graduation rates in English-language schools?
- 21. How does the absence of English-language CEGEPs and universities in many Quebec regions affect the post-secondary choices of English-speaking students from these regions?
- 22. How do socioeconomic differences among Montreal neighbourhoods affect high school graduation rates, and what interventions could address these disparities?
- 23. To what extent is the low enrolment in English vocational programs in Quebec related to limited regional access and availability of these programs?
- 24. How does school transportation in urban, rural, and "rurban" areas compare in terms of reliability, length of rides, etc.? If there are disparities, how do they affect school choice?

## Theme 4: Teacher Education, Retention, and Development

There are known challenges in retaining teachers in Quebec's English schools and ensuring they are trained to understand and work effectively within official language minority community (OLMC) contexts.

- 25. Do teacher education programs at English-language universities prepare future teachers to work effectively in the different official language minority community (OLMC) contexts around the province? If not, what can they do better?
- 26. Why do teachers leave Quebec's English-language education system, and what can be done to improve rates of retention?
- 27. Do teacher training programs in Quebec universities equip future teachers to work effectively with students with special needs? How? If not, what can be done to improve the situation?
- 28. How many nonqualified teachers are employed in the English system versus the French?

# **Theme 5: Student Retention and Trajectories**

English-speaking students stay in Quebec or leave post-graduation due to factors that may include employment, bilingualism, and the impact of French instruction programs on their futures.

- 29. What factors influence whether English-speaking students remain in Quebec or migrate out after graduation?
- 30. What are the employment outcomes, linguistic trajectories and geographic mobility of English-speaking graduates from the English and French systems?
- 31. Are English schools in Quebec providing enough French language and culture instruction to prepare students for success in CEGEP under new Bill 96 provisions and for entry into the francophone workforce? How do the different models compare: bilingual (50-50), immersion (85-15), and regular FSL programs?
- 32. What impact does a student having French-English bilingualism, compared to English or French unilingualism, have on their workforce opportunities and outcomes in Quebec?
- 33. How have the retention and trajectories of English-speaking students changed over time, if at all?
- 34. How can schools act as social anchors to encourage youth retention in English-speaking regions of Quebec?

# Theme 6: Effects of Recent Policy and Curriculum Changes



Recent provincial government laws, policies, and curricula designed to protect Quebec's French language and culture appear to have affected English-language education, student access, and success.

- 35. How have Bills 21, 94, 96, 40, and the tuition hike for out-of-province university students affected the English-language education network?
- 36. How well (or not) does Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protect minority language education rights in light of recent provincial laws and policy changes? How have recent legal challenges from the English sector shaped jurisprudence around minority language education rights?
- 37. How do new French-language requirements at the CEGEP level introduced under Bill 96 affect access, academic success, and post-secondary opportunities for English-speaking neurodivergent/special needs students in Quebec, and affect their families?
- 38. How does the implementation and student reception of the new Quebec civics course in English-language schools compare to that in French-language schools? If there are differences, what does this reveal about the broader integration of ministry curricula across linguistic systems?
- 39. It appears that province-issued French-to-English educational document translations are often required to be literal and often delayed. Does the rollout of the new Quebec civics course illustrate this issue and if so, what are implications for preserving cultural sensitivities and maintaining education quality for English-speaking communities in Quebec?
- 40. Have Bills 94/21 (religious symbols bans) affected volunteerism and staff in English-language schools? If so, how? (case studies)
- 41. What strategies have proven effective in fostering collaboration with government to support minority-language education? What advocacy methods are most effective in promoting equitable funding and service provision?

## Research questions:

- 42. Given recent efforts to integrate cell phone use in learning, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the total cell phone ban in schools across the system (including in rural areas)?
- 43. How is AI being used, resisted, or adapted within English-language institutions, and what trends can we track now to remain ahead of the curve?
- 44. What role can Community Learning Centres (CLCs) play in bridging service gaps, especially in rural and "rurban" regions?
- 45. How does student motivation in Quebec's secondary English-language schools influence academic success and retention rates? Can the *l'Institut* national d'excellence en éducation (INEE)<sup>3</sup> competency to "foster a love of learning" be effectively integrated as a pedagogical innovation to improve motivation and student outcomes?
- 46. Why do evidence-based education proposals often fail to result in actual investment or reform in English-speaking schools? What are the specific barriers to implementation?

# Theme 8: Historical Impacts of Policies and Practices

Education policies and restrictions have long impacted English-language education and communities.

### Research questions:

- 47. Fifty years in, what have been the effects of Bill 101 on the English language school system and consequently on English-speaking Quebec?
- 48. It has been alleged that Anglophone and Allophone students were excluded from French-language public schools in Quebec prior to the 1970s. What do historical and research documents reveal about this?

# Theme 9: Structure of the English-Language Education Network

The structure and organization of Quebec's English-language education ecosystem is complex, especially for a non-specialist audience.

#### Research questions:

- 49. How is the landscape of English-speaking education organizations in Quebec structured? Show it in a diagram.
- 50. What distinguishes the English-language K-12 education network (school boards) from the Frenchlanguage one (service centres) in Quebec in terms of structure, parent involvement, etc.?
  - 3 The Institut national d'excellence en éducation (INEE) is provincial body tasked with evaluating educational research and promoting evidence-based practices to improve student success in Quebec.

4. Strategic Research Agenda

# 5. Short-Term Research Plan (2025–2027)

Research Strategy Series

No

QUESCREN plans to deliver the following 16 products between 2025 and 2027. Please note that some deliverables may be adjusted based on the availability of researchers, data, and other factors.

#	Theme	Product type	Rationale	Question number (section 4)	Summary
1	Evaluating French instruction models in English schools	To be decided (TBD)	Advisory committee priority 1	31	Examines how students from different programs in English K–12 schools (FSL, bilingual, and immersion) succeed in CEGEP and the Quebec job market.
2	Impact of Bill 96 on neurodivergent/special needs students	Film or podcast	Advisory committee priority 2	37	Provides a human face on how new French-language rules for English CEGEPs affect students with learning or developmental challenges.
3	Civics course: implementation and reception	TBD	Advisory committee priority 3	38	Compares implementation and reception of Quebec's new civics course across French and English systems.
4	Impact of religious symbol bans (Bills 21/94)	TBD	Advisory committee priority 4	40	Case studies on how Bills 21 and 94 have affected English-language schools.
5	Issues around translation of educational documents	TBD	Advisory committee priority 5	39	Examines how word-for-word translation policies and practices impact access and quality in English-language education.
6	Improving motivation/ student outcomes	TBD	Advisory committee priority 6	45	Synthesis of strategies to boost student engagement and learning outcomes in English schools.
7	Teacher retention in English sector	TBD	Advisory committee priority 7	26	Identifies causes and solutions for teacher attrition in Quebec's English-language K-12 schools.
8	Rural education challenges	Research Brief	Advisory committee priority 8	20	Case study of challenges faced by the Noranda School, a small K-12 institution in Rouyn-Noranda, Abitibi-Témiscamingue
9	Youth retention	Research Brief	Advisory committee priority 12; also intersects with Advisory committee priority 6; Usefulness to stakeholders: relates to another SRQEAfunded project by Y4Y	29-34	Synthesis of research on why English-speaking youth stay or leave Quebec after graduation.

#	Theme	Product type	Rationale	Question number (section 4)	Summary
10	Racialized students / inclusion	TBD	Advisory committee priority 14*; also included for equity and inclusion reasons	15,16	Focuses on issues related to racialized students and how policies/practices affect them in the English-language sector.
11	Recent section 23 court challenges	Academic book	Advisory committee priority 14*; also intersects with other priorities above (priorities 2, 3, 4)	35-40	Academic book by Raphaël Gani (Professor, Education, Université Laval) & Patrick Donovan (Research and Operations Manager, QUESCREN), on how Section 23 has been challenged by recent laws and court cases, (follow up to Acfas 2025 conference*)
12	Recent section 23 court challenges	Short film (10-15 mins)	Advisory committee priority 14*; also intersects with other priorities above (priorities 2, 3, 4)	35-40	Short film by QUESCREN Research Associate Anita Aloisio explaining Section 23 with interviews and footage from Acfas 2025
13	Exclusion of minorities from French- language schools	Research Brief	Advisory committee priority 15*; Usefulness to stakeholders: relates to another SRQEA-funded project by ELAN	48	Literature review on perspectives related to claims and evidence about exclusionary practices in the French-language school system before Bill 101 (1977).
14	Adult education	TBD	Covers a sectoral gap not included in other research on this list		Highlights needs, barriers, and success stories from adult learners in the English-speaking community.
15	Forum Report	Report	Provides a portrait of current research output in education		Summarizes proceedings, insights, and recommendations from the QUESCREN-led 2025 Education Forum. <sup>5</sup>
16	50th anniversary of the Charter of the French language, Bill 101	Film (1hr)	Timeliness and public relevance; Potential link to advisory committee priority 2	47	Long film by QUESCREN Research Associate Anita Aloisio examining 50 years of Quebec language policy since the watershed Bill 101.

<sup>4</sup> See <u>here</u> for program and details

<sup>5</sup> See <u>here</u> for details

# 6. Conclusion

This research agenda is intended as a flexible and evolving guide to inform research on English-language education in Quebec. Pending funding and institutional support, QUESCREN will review and update it in coming years in light of emerging issues, data, and policy contexts. Continued collaboration with partners and researchers will be key to ensuring its relevance and impact over time.

Beyond guiding QUESCREN's work, this agenda can inform future grant guidelines and funding priorities across the broader community. Developed through extensive consultation and validated by a wide range of community organizations, it reflects diverse needs and priorities within Quebec's English-speaking education sector. Using this agenda as a foundation can help ensure that future funding decisions support research that is relevant, impactful, and aligned with community needs. In this way, QUESCREN is pleased to continue its tradition of supporting policy and program development that is based in scientific evidence.



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