

The Governance by Results in the Québec Educational System: Issues and Challenges

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Pixel International Conference

New Perspectives in Science Education

Florence, Italy

20-21 March 2015

Plan

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(RBM) in the Québec Educational
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1. Context

Canada and Québec



Canada

Population: 35,16 million
(Bank World, 2013)

10 provinces as well
as **3** federal territories

Policy: The provinces and
the Federated States of
sovereign powers,
independently of
the federal Government.

Languages: English and
French

Québec:

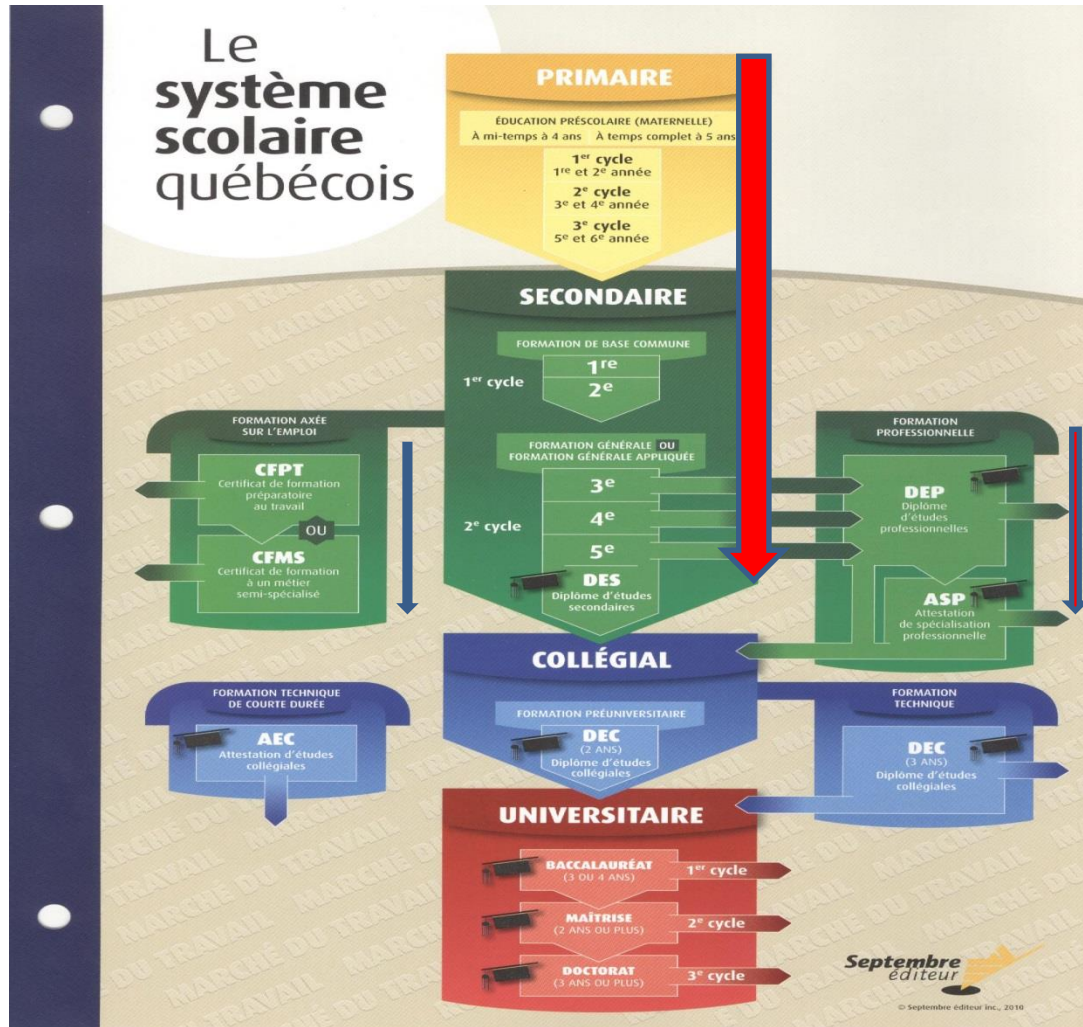
Population: 8,21 million

Language: French

(Statistiques

Canada, 2015).

Education System in Québec



The Result Based Management takes place in the pre primary, primary and the secondary schools. The adult education in the professional centers are also concerned.

2. The Result Based Management (RBM) in the Educational System in Québec

The Result Based Management in the Educational System in Québec

Where does it come from?

- RBM is a management approach developed in many countries over at least the last two decades (Djédjé, 2015)
- In Québec, it was adopted in the public service and was formalized in the 2000 Law 82 on Public Administration by the Secretariat of the Council of the Treasury Board (The Treasury Board , 1999)

The Result Based Management in the Educational System in Québec

What does it mean?

- RBM is a management system focused on the achievement of results in all governmental departments and agencies. (The Treasury Board, 1999)
- It is considered as the emergence of an accounting approach to education.
- It can be defined on the basis of the triple-E: economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

The Result Based Management in the Educational System in Québec

Issues raised by the RBM in our Schools

- Schools are responsible for achieving fixed objectives and for publishing their results.
- 100% of Québec youth should be qualified (Québec Youth Summit, 2000).
- The Minister of Education, Recreation and Sport (MELS) at this time hoped to achieve this target by having all schools in Québec implement plans for success, although many saw these as mere imitations of corporate business plans (the major challenge).

The Result Based Management in the Educational System in Québec

Issues raised by the RBM in our Schools

- In 2008, the government took an additional step toward evaluating schools based on results compelling schools to produce results.
- With the adoption of Bill No. 88, new amendments to the Law on Public Education were adopted, further extending the establishment of managing based results throughout the schools and school boards.
- Thus, each school board now has established goals, measurable objectives and targets for graduation rates.

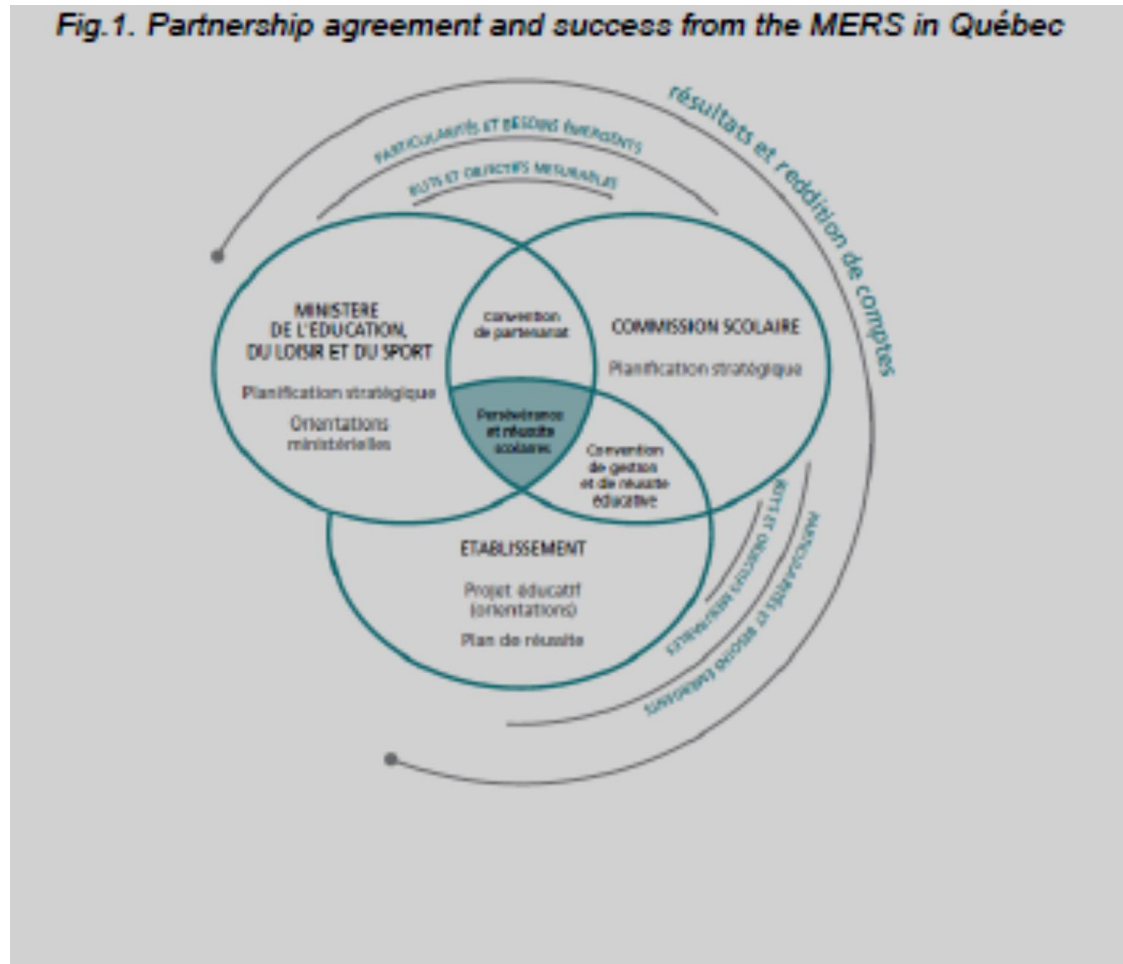
The Result Based Management in the Educational System in Québec

Issues raised by the RBM in our Schools

- A contractual approach with a partnership agreement was established between the department and the school board, and between the school board and its establishments, with agreements on management and success.
- These conventions specify the contribution of each in achieving their goals, as well as measurable objectives, such as the reduction of delays at the primary level or an improvement in the graduation rate in secondary school, with graduation targets determined by the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sport (MERS) in Québec.

The Result Based Management in the Educational System in Québec

Fig.1. Partnership agreement and success from the MERS in Québec



The Result Based Management in the Educational System in Québec

Challenges: Strong pressure on schools in underprivileged neighborhoods

- This accounting vision has negative effects, particularly for schools **in disadvantaged areas**.
- In 2009, partnership agreements (between the MERS) and school boards) and management agreements (between school boards and schools) **put pressure on teachers**.
- Under these agreements, all school boards **must meet predetermined graduation targets**.
- For Québec as a whole, the target was set at having **80% of students graduate before the age of 20 by 2020**. This provincial target was determined **using variable geometry for each school board**.

The Result Based Management in the Educational System in Québec

Challenges: a control mechanism which requires a lot of energy

- Partnership agreements and management and educational achievement conventions may negatively impact the direction of the entire education system (Brassard, 2008)
- It could result in increased management activity requiring greater expenditure of time and energy for the department, school boards and institutions (Brassard, 2008)

The Result Based Management in the Educational System in Québec

Challenges: a control mechanism which requires a lot of energy

- The implementation of the conventions demanded greater efforts on the part of boards and institutions to develop content, **construct indicators to assess the performance of institutions and ensure the accountability** demanded by these conventions (Brassard, 2008)
- Thus, the vice-principals assigned to educational success multiplied in school boards to meet this governmental order (Brassard, 2008)

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Challenges: a control mechanism which requires a lot of energy

- In the context of governance in education, Brassard suggested more extensive research into effectiveness through continuous improvement.
- To do this, education systems are turning increasingly towards international tests, the implementation of compulsory education programs with minimum learning levels that must be attained by the students, a substantial increase in ministerial examinations, increased accountability and greater participation of users (Brassard, 2012).

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Challenges: a control mechanism which requires a lot of energy

- However, research increasingly confirms that the culture stemming from the accounting approach to education, with its propensity to always favour improved performance, **does not produce the expected results** (Brassard, 2012).

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Challenges: a control mechanism which requires a lot of energy

- For example, a meta-analysis of the literature, carried out in the United Kingdom indicates that a learning-centered approach can improve student results, while an approach focused solely on performance may have a negative impact (Watkins and Reed, 2010).

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Challenges: a control mechanism which requires a lot of energy

- Children who develop a perspective based on performance rather than on learning tend to need more help.
- In addition, they adopt less strategic thinking and give more importance to feedback during assessments.
- Finally, they are more likely to retain strategies which prove ineffective.
- The children's attitude and behaviour, as well as results, improve when teachers and schools consider it more important to help them learn rather than push to get better results on a given test (Watkins and Reed, 2010)

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Challenges: a control mechanism which requires a lot of energy

Watkins and Reed (2010) stresses two challenges facing schools if they want more students to succeed:

- recognizing that successful completion of examinations is not the purpose of education; it is, instead, the result of effective learning;
- recognizing that the pressure and the adoption of a performance-centric approach fail to improve student performance.

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Challenges: a control mechanism which requires a lot of energy

- In another example, in Sweden, the results of an investigation by Lindberg and Wilson (2011) have similar results.
- In a recent article, the authors sought to measure the impact on student performance of the adoption of results-based management in the survey they speak of management by objectives, but this is the same approach in Swedish secondary schools.
- Their longitudinal study indicates **a lack of correlation between this practice and improvement of educational outcomes, or even a negative effect.**

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Caution in the application of an accounting approach in education

- It will require "much care in the application of RBM, to avoid the excess and damage observed elsewhere" (Lessard, 2010)

The Result Based Management in the Educational System in Québec

Caution in the application of an accounting approach in education

- RBM was a cumbersome process which restricted the flexibility of personnel;
- RBM quickly led to a drift towards "easily measurable" indicators;
- Almost all school boards assigned additional resources to the implementation and follow-up of the agreements;
- Since RBM led to the implementation of conventions on measurable results, this did not favour the mobilization of personnel;
- There was pressure on teachers to be "less severe in their corrections" to improve the indicators of success;
- The researchers are not certain that RBM implementation "will contribute significantly to improving success and school retention."
(Brassard, Lusignan and Pelletier, 2013)

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Caution in the application of an accounting approach in education

Brassard (2012) went further by indicating that:

- RBM gives few results and can even have negative consequences.
- However, he indicated that other approaches are possible, such as that of professional and organizational development.
- This is a local approach based on professional, individual and collective accountability and is twofold. It includes:
 - 1) a self-assessment that is done as part of a reflexive process, leading to changes in individual and collective practices (ideally in a community of practice);
 - and (2) an identification of the specific situation of each student to prevent problems and tailor the provision of educational services accordingly (Brassard, 2012).

Conclusion

I have, with humility, presented the issues and challenges of the implementation of RBM in the Québec education system.

- Is a genuine culture of RBM in Québec public education networks synonymous with good school governance?

I hope this paper will help to enrich the debate on RBM in education.

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for your kind attention!

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