

# English-speaking young people “Seen but not heard” CSSS de La Cote-de-Gaspé



## *The Difference in Your Community*

WORKING TOGETHER FOR  
COMMUNITY HEALTH AND VITALITY

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## Introduction

The English-speaking community of the CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé has experienced enormous change over the past 20 years. Various factors have influenced this dramatic decline in population; employment opportunities, service provision available in English diminishing, families moving to English speaking provinces, and the high rate of ageing. The elements of the CSSS territory that attract and keep people in the area are the beautiful natural surroundings, the positive environmental impact and the relaxed lifestyle that people here live. The exodus from the area relates specifically to the social and economic elements that affect the way people live, these elements can be transformed.

The English-speaking community is relatively unknown within the structures of service provision, and therefore exists in relative isolation. Accurate statistical information on the English-speaking community is rare, as government departments do not currently include a linguistic breakdown within their statistical information. Although two Elementary schools, one High School, and an Anglophone Sector within the CEGEP provide English education to the community, these services are often overlooked and the particular concerns for this population group disregarded. This situation reinforces the invisibility of the English-speaking community and results in service delivery that is inappropriate, failing to recognize the diversity of the population living within the CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé.

The purpose of this document is foremost to improve the quality of life for the English-speaking community. Quality of life is a difficult concept encompassing all aspects of the way we live. Therefore this document will focus on: community stability, community cohesion, community participation and interactions with others, access to health

services and facilities, culture, beliefs and customs. To achieve this objective, the English-speaking community must become visible to service providers, by having statistical data as evidence of their current situation, thereby providing an accurate portrait of the English-speaking community. Furthermore, English-speaking young people should move towards inclusion in local policy making decisions, service provision planning, giving them a vital future with recognition of the past and potential contributions of English-speakers to the Gaspé community.

For the purposes of this document young people includes people aged 5 – 34 years. The CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé includes the entire MRC Côte-de-Gaspé and parts of the MRC Rocher Percé. An agreement has been negotiated by government and communities on the territory.

## Methodology

A project plan was developed to identify the aims, objectives, outcomes and methods of gathering relevant information.

## Project Aims:

To prepare a comprehensive profile of the English-speaking community, incorporating recent demographics, identifying current services and programs offered, and applying strategies to improve the quality of life for young people.

## Project Objectives:

- To develop recommendations that will enhance access to, and usage of, services and programs.
- To highlight local issues of concern for English-speaking young people.

- To strengthen relationships with relevant service providers and present a future presence for the English-speaking community.

### **Project Outcomes:**

- The English-speaking community has appropriate and practical strategies to improve their quality of life.
- Service providers have a clear understanding of the English-speaking community, and means to adapt services and programs as required.
- The English-speaking community is visible, vibrant, and empowered.

### **Methods of gathering information:**

Various research and data has been collected on young people over the past few years from Gaspé Polyvalent, Belle Anse School, Gaspé Elementary School, and the community including: Voices and Choices Questionnaire 2007 (Health Canada), Tell Then From Me Survey 2008, drug and alcohol use questionnaire 2005, breakfast program survey 2007, bus service questionnaire, Statistics Canada Census data 2001, the Quebec Social and Health Survey of 1998, and various Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) publications, including annual Baseline Data Reports from 2004 to 2008. This valuable and credible information has been brought together for the purposes of this document. In addition, relevant youth projects currently being undertaken in the community have been consulted in the scheme of compiling one paramount document.

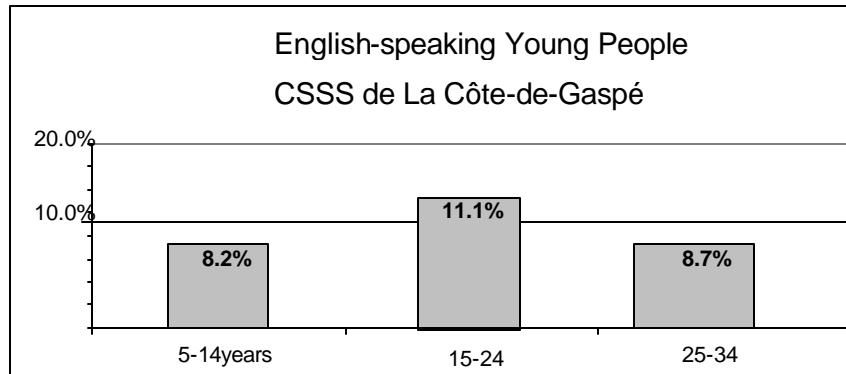
### **Demographics**

A review was undertaken of demographic information from Statistics Canada, Census 2006, 2001 and 1996, and analyzed. Due to the limited information currently available on Census 2006, most of the demographic information is from Census 2001. As the Census population areas are not equivalent to the CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé area, differences may be noticed between total population numbers. The Census 2006 data focuses on the Ville de Gaspé and the 2001 Census data incorporates the CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé.

A general population decline has been evident from Census 1996 through to Census 2006, for the Ville de Gaspé. There was a 9.6% decrease in population from 1996 to 2001, and a minor decrease of 0.8% from 2001 to 2006. The decline from the CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé between 1996 and 2001 was 17.68%; this figure includes an exodus of 565 English-speaking people. Since 1996, 45% of people aged 10 – 19 years have left the Gaspé territory, resulting in a significant loss of young people of child bearing age, providing further indications of the declining population and failure to replace the exiting population.

There are 2630 English-speaking people residing in the CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé, making up 13% of the total population (Census 2001). 735 of these are considered young people, aged 5 – 34 years, accounting for 28% of the English-speaking population.

**Table 1:** Percentage of young people in total English-speaking population.

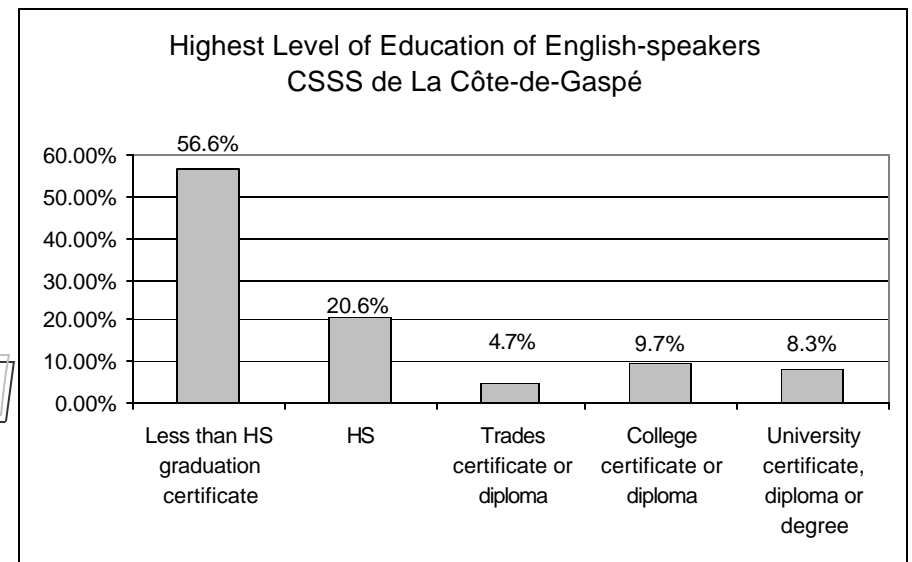


It is clearly evident that the amount of young people is decreasing as they get older. These figures show that an exodus of young people is occurring as young people reach university and working ages. In direct contrast to the older English-speaking population, the proportion of young people is well below that of their French-speaking counterparts, with percentages ranging from 7 to 35%, less English-speakers people. There are also less young people residing in the CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé when compared to English-speaking young people across the province of Québec. In the 24 – 35 years age bracket, there is 47% less young people in the CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé.

47% of English-speakers between 0-14 years of age live below the low income cut off, 9% of these children live in a single parent household. There are 305 English-speaking single parents in the CSSS de la Côte-de-Gaspé, accounting for 15% of the total single parents living in the Gaspésie – Îles-de-la-Madeleine region. Young people and children between the ages of 0-14 are 70% more likely to live in low income households than the same age group of French-speakers.

When comparing the English-speaking community from the Gaspésie – Îles-de-la-Madeleine, those on the CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé have a 42% greater chance of not completing High School, 16% greater chance of not completing college, and a 24% greater chance of obtaining a university degree. This reveals that English speaking people are either poorly educated or alternatively very well educated. Within the English-speaking community, women are 168% more likely to have obtained post-secondary education than men.

**Table 2:** Education levels of English-speaking community



The demographics for English-speaking young people depict a bleak future. Research continues to highlight the crucial connection between socio-economic status, education, employment choices and healthy lifestyles. Furthermore, the generational cycles of government assistance, low value placed on education and limited employment options will continue unless cultural change can be achieved.

## Community Services and Programs

An inventory and description of existing community services, programs and facilities was compiled.

### Service providers:

Service	Function	Contact	Comments
Accueil 'Blanche Goulet'	Shelter for unisex and the homeless, food bank and soup kitchen with 24- hour bilingual service.	368-4700	
Agence de la santé et de services sociaux Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Health and Social Services Agency)	Regional planning of all health and social services, resource management and budget allocation to health and social service establishments.	368-2349	
Association de Défense des Droits de Personnes Handicapées de Gaspé	The association offers leisure activities and respite services to families, as well as working to break isolation, support integration and promote and defend the rights and interests of handicapped people.	368-6585	
CALACS	CALACS assists women who have been, or are currently subject to, sexual aggression. Services include phone support, consultation, referrals, individual visits, support groups, hospital, police and court accompaniment and documentation.	368-6686	
Centre d'assistance et d'accompagnement aux plaints (Complaints Assistance Centre)	The CAAP is a regional community organization mandated by the Quebec Minister of Health and Social Services to assist and accompany individuals filing a complaint to a public institution, the regional board or the Health and Social Services Ombudsman. Its role is not to treat complaints but to assist users in lodging a complaint.	368-7433 1-877-767-2227	
Centre de Santé et de services sociaux de La Côte-de-Gaspé (CSSS)	Hotel Dieu Monseigneur Ross Barachois CLSC Gaspé CLSC Grand-Vallee CLSC Murdochville CLSC Riviere-au-Renard CLSC	368 3301 368 2291 269 2572 368 1616 393 2001 784 2561 269 3391	

Service	Function	Contact	Comments
	Family Medicine Unit	368 6663	
Centre L'Escale	Offers programs in English to assist any person who may face problems associated with alcohol, drug, medication or gambling addictions.	368-2572	Located within the Gaspé CLSC, Level 2.
Centre d'Action Bénévole (Centre for Volunteer Action)	The goals of volunteer centers are to improve the quality of life in the area it serves. The centre organizes different services relevant to surrounding communities such as "Meals on Wheels, friendly calls for seniors, accompaniment and day care. Hospitals within the region require volunteers as well; you can contact your local hospital for further information.	368-6634	
Centre de Réadaptation de la Gaspésie (Rehabilitation Centre)	These centres work to rehabilitate individuals with disabilities. The centres offer evaluation, family support and reintegration into society.	368-2308	Office located in Pavilion Monseigneur Ross
Info Sante	A free bilingual medical information service available 24 hours, 7 days a week serving the entire Gaspé Peninsula.	310-2572	
Les Perliers	A community mental health association which offers a day centre, support, referrals and information to persons coping with stress, violence and mental health issues. Workshops are available for interested groups.	368-1655	
<u>Libraries:</u> Gaspé L'Anse-au-Griffon L'Anse-à-Valleau Rivière-au-Renard St. Majorique Cap-aux-Os Douglastown Barachois Community Learning Centre		368-5080 892-5185 269-3889 269-5066 368-6285 892-5381	Gaspe operating hours: Mon: 2 – 5pm Wed: 6.30 – 8pm Fri: 6.30 – 8pm Sat: 11am – 1pm  Located in Douglas Community Ctr Located in Barachois Recreation Ctr Located at Polyvalent – Wednesday evenings 5 -9pm
Mi-Chemin	Mi-Chemin works to prevent drug and alcohol abuse.	368-6676	
Regroupement des Femmes	The centre holds coffee meetings, themed lunches, workshops and courses on subjects that are of interest to women. The centre also participates in the World March of Women, and other special events throughout	368-1929	

Service	Function	Contact	Comments
	the calendar that pertain to women's interests.		

### Current community projects and programs:

Project/Program	Function	Operation	Comments
<u>Community Learning Centre</u> Gaspé Polyvalent	Schools as places to deliver community programs.		3 year funded project through the Eastern Shores School Board (2006 – 2009)
<u>Diabetes program</u> Vision Gaspé-Perce Now	Raise community awareness around prevention, risk factors, management, healthy living, meal planning and exercise.	Community information sessions.	Public health short-term project, ends March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2009..
<u>ESL Language programs</u> McGill University	Improve basic English language skills of frontline CSSS personnel.		
<u>Pilot internship positions</u> McGill University	Retention program designed to attract bilingual students to the area to complete a stagier within the CSSS, and then return to a permanent position after graduating		3 positions in Gaspé for Summer 2008.
<u>Telehealth</u> Vision Gaspé-Perce Now	Deliver information sessions on current health topics, through Video Conferencing Network (VCN)	Annual sessions from September to June	Sessions held at Gaspé Polyvalent, registration required.

### Community Facilities:

Facility	Function	Operation	Comments
Barachois Recreation Centre	The centre provides an outdoor skating rink, a large room with kitchen facilities which can be rented for parties and events, an ornithological centre and a community library which is part of the municipal library network.	645-2317  Library hours: Cary depending on volunteer availability	
Douglastown Community Centre	Services include a hostel, cafeteria, internet centre, municipal library, game room and year round activities. The center's	368-0288 Library hours:	

Facility	Function	Operation	Comments
	mission is to promote community, social, economic and cultural development.		
Fort Haldimand Camp	Available for rent – family events and activities. Provides Youth camps over the Summer.	368 1820	
York Youth Centre	The centre provides an outdoor skating rink and a large room with kitchen facilities.	368 8044	

### Community Organisations and Groups:

Organisation	Function	Contact	Comments
CASA Committee for Anglophone Social Action	Established in 1975, CASA is a non-profit community organization dedicated to serving the English-speaking population of the Gaspé Coast by representing the community's interests and designing and delivering programs that respond to its needs.	752-5995 752-2127 1-877-752-5995	
Gaspé Cancer Foundation	Provides financial aid to individuals afflicted with cancer and to act as a bilingual information centre from Anse-à-Valleau to Coin-du-Banc.	Office open	Located within Gaspé CLSC, Gaspé_foundation_cancer@yahoo.ca
Gaspésie Literacy Council Douglastown	The Literacy Council's main goal is to combat illiteracy through educational workshops for individuals 18 years and over.	368 4184	
Live and Learn	Dedicated to cultivating and promoting the importance of training and qualification in the region.	368-8103	
Pouvoir des mots	A francophone literacy group which provides some French language workshops and training for English-speakers.	368-7500	
Vision Gaspé-Percé Now	The mission of VGPN is to foster understanding and cooperation among Anglophones who reside in the Gaspé Bay area.	645 2715	
Youth Substance Abuse	Committee representing youth services	361 3727	Quarterly meetings at Gaspé

Organisation	Function	Contact	Comments
Network	working in partnership to reduce youth substance use.		polyvalent.
Barachois Wetlands	To provide information on the ecosystem of the Barachois, activities for all age groups, relating to ornithology and the wetland environment; presentations to groups, acquisitions of lands by purchase or donation, or negotiated right-of-access.	645 2317	
Douglastown Rink Community		368 0239	

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## Analysis/Discussion

This discussion includes what is happening in the community at this point in time, the outside influences and how the English-speaking community can work with service providers to improve their quality of life.

The English community is undergoing dramatic change, and recognises the efforts that must be made in order to retain and enhance the current community. A major area of focus must be towards attracting and keeping young people in the Gaspé territory. This challenge should concentrate on improving language skills (as only 43% of English-speakers in the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region are bilingual), employment options, higher levels of education, and finally valuing and appreciating the English contribution to the development of the Gaspé territory.

It is important to note that responses to student surveys should be treated with caution as it is difficult to verify whether students have been accurate and honest in their responses.

## Access to Health Services

The Gaspésie – Îles-de-la-Madeleine ranks 13th out of 19 regions in regards to regional access to services, concerning accessibility to health and social services in English. The CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé is making efforts to improve this ranking and provide service in English whenever possible.

The At-risk youth program delivered by the CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé had 26 (15%) more interventions in 2006-2007 than the previous year. They also had 28 (7%) more service users of the children, youth and families at-risk program. Québec's Social and

Health Survey found that English-speakers were more likely than their French-speaking counterparts to describe their relationships with their children as frequently problematic, and were less likely to claim no problems.

The challenge with young people is actually encouraging them to access health services when required. Young people are generally unaware of services offered, and utilise the school environment to gain health information, 32% of polyvalent students reported having sought counselling in 2007. A restraint of this pathway to information is that many young people deliberately choose not to seek assistance from school counsellors if they suspect a problem, due to confidentiality concerns.

## Alcohol and Substance Use

Québec's Social and Health Survey identifies the highest percentage of drug users to be between 15 – 24 years of age. Drug users in this age range report using all types of drugs with males being the most frequent users. The Voices and Choices survey completed by Gaspé Polyvalent students in 2007 illustrates that all types of drugs (marijuana, solvents, cocaine, heroin, amphetamines, LSD, medical drugs, ecstasy and steroids) had been tried by at least 9% of respondents. The greatest number of students, 50% reported having tried marijuana, and 22% stated having tried cocaine and

amphetamines. In specific reference to alcohol, there is evidence of binge drinking among polyvalent students, 41% of males and 35% of females report drinking with the purpose of getting drunk and will drink seven or more drinks in an evening to achieve this.

Research from the Minnesota Institute identify that young people less than 18 years of age are five times more likely to become addicted to alcohol and other drugs than adult users. Addiction in young people occurs faster than adults; within 3 years of use a young person may become addicted, whereas it may take up to 11 years to reach addiction in adults. Finally, when discussing alcohol and drug use it is important to remember that these substances are illegal and for people less than 18 years of age it is illegal to drink alcohol, just as it is for adults to supply minors with alcohol. The closest addiction treatment centre for young people (English), to Gaspé is Montreal. This facility, as with all treatment facilities has limited places available and often people must wait weeks or months before receiving treatment. Following treatment, there are currently very few programs available to provide support in Gaspé, particularly for young people.

The CSSS de La Côte-de-Gaspé outlook for 2007 – 2008 includes the development of first-line services for substance dependency; alcohol, drugs or psychotropic medication. They propose four levels in which to offer these services focussing on prevention, early intervention, treatment and social integration. In 2004, a youth substance abuse network was established within the English-speaking community that still currently functions. This Network focuses on reducing substance use among young people, in addition to supporting young people into and following treatment, through a variety of community activities.

## Public Health

Within the english-speaking community information about Public Health programs is accessed in three main ways. 36.3% of the population receive public health information from schools, 35.3% receive this information from community organisations and 15.2% receive the information directly from Public Health. People aged 15 – 24 years are the least likely to receive health information from public institutions, with the majority of these young people (47.1%) receiving health related information from schools.

## Sex Education

Québec's Social and Health Survey identified that 58.7% of people aged 15 – 19 report they are having sexual relations. The highest percentage of persons who stated they had been treated for a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) in the previous 12 months were aged 20 – 29 years. English-speaking respondents reported a higher incidence of risky sexual behaviour and were more likely to state having been treated for a STI over a 12 month period. Student responses to the Voices and Choices Survey suggest that 48% of males, and 59% of females are sexually active, with 7% of females reporting no use of birth control.

Interestingly, Québec's education reform is eliminating time in school for sexual education, resulting in Quebec being the only province in Canada without any specific mandate to deliver sexual health education. As the research shows school aged students are having sex at younger ages and are afflicted with increased rates of sexually transmitted infections. The CSSS de La Cote-de-Gaspe highlights as a priority for 2008 to continue the development, knowledge and training of nurses in STI's focussing on detection and prevention.

### Diabetes and Obesity

The high incidence of diabetes in young children is currently prominent throughout media outlets. Combined with low levels of physical activity and poor nutrition, the community has the challenge of educating and ultimately reducing the impact of Diabetes. Vision Gaspé-Perce Now delivered a diabetes program in 2008, this program will continue through the next 12 months. It is important to build on the information provided to school students, and progress with follow up sessions to consolidate the knowledge students have gained. Gaspé Elementary School proposes a continuation of the program through its Healthy Schools model.

Québec's Social and Health Survey indicates the relationship between schooling level, income level and obesity. The percentage of respondents who were obese increased in those people with poor incomes and low schooling levels. The Voices and Choices Survey indicates that 31% of students state they never receive physical activity during class time and 40% state they do not participate in physical activity in school free time. 70% of students do not participate in organized activities, and 17% report watching more than seven hours of television per day.

Breakfast programs can have a profound effect on students' health and learning. Eating a healthy breakfast promotes medical benefits through good nutrition and recognising breakfast as the key meal of the day. Breakfast programs equally contribute to the learning environment for students, and are a fundamental priority for maximising student learning capacity. Gaspé Polyvalent currently incorporates a daily breakfast program for students but requires more resources in order to sustain and ensure the continued success of this project. The vulnerability of the English-speaking community puts its members at risk of diabetes and obesity simply due to the economic and education situation this community faces.

### Stress and Anger Management

Many students (40%) attending the Polyvalent report that schoolwork is a major cause of stress for them, with over 50% of females indicating that thinking about their future is a cause of stress. Family arguments were a source of stress for 47% of females responding to the Voices and Choices Survey. More than 50% of students reported that stress reduction programs should be a school priority.

The rate of bullying is higher among high school students in Gaspé than the Canadian norm, according to the Tell Them from Me Survey. Types of bullying include: physical, verbal, social and internet. Boys tend to be victims more often than girls with 38% stating they were victims of moderate to severe bullying in the month preceding the survey; this is 41% higher than the Canadian average.

### **Education**

The current failure rate for high school students is 60%; the school is working to improve this statistic with the implementation of a Homework program, and the establishment of the Community Learning Centre, offering after school activities. Although this percentage is high, 80% of students would like to continue into further studies following school, 51% are interested in post-secondary education which is well below the Canadian average of 72%. Gaspé students spend 50% less time reading than the Canadian norm, and 30% of students' claim they receive less than 6 hours of sleep per night.

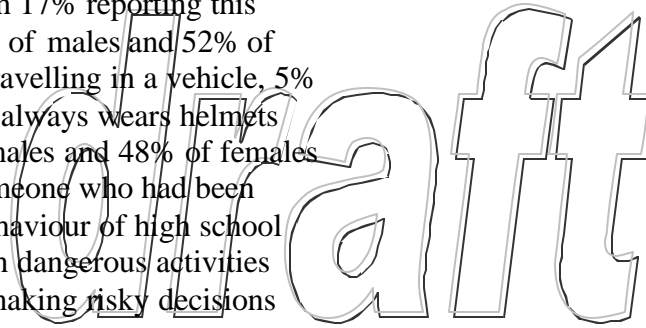
## Lifestyle

### Smoking

24% of high school students smoke regularly, according to responses from the Tell Them from Me Survey; this is twice as much as the Canadian average. Quebec's Social and Health Survey suggests that young people who smoke cigarettes are more likely to smoke marijuana and consume other drugs. Reducing the level of smoking may have a positive influence on the use of other substances as well.

The Voices and Choices Survey reports that 20% of students stated they have a disability or long term illness, with 17% reporting this affects their participation in school. Only 41% of males and 52% of females report always using a seatbelt when travelling in a vehicle, 5% wear helmets when riding a bicycle, and 28% always wears helmets when using snowmobiles or ATV's. 24% of males and 48% of females report they would travel in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol. These results suggest the behaviour of high school students as very risky; they are participating in dangerous activities without the required safety mechanisms and making risky decisions that may impact their future health.

To improve health and quality of life for young people better coordinated, strategically planned and partnered approaches to developing and implementing community programs is required. A cooperative process whereby community priorities are established through a consultative basis and the best positioned organisation is identified and supported to deliver each project, would follow best practice principles.



## Strategies

A range of recommendations was developed and focuses on what the community and organisations can realistically do, to improve service delivery and alleviate social conditions where possible.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Youth substance abuse network continues to function	Implement action plan and review annually	Youth Network Vision Fraser Recovery Program	Federal and provincial opportunities	Ongoing	Substance use by young people is limited
Encourage students to access school health services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the 'Healthy Schools' program as implemented at Gaspé Elementary School</li> <li>School counsellors become the first health access point for students</li> <li>Schools demonstrate confidentiality for all students</li> </ol>	CLSC school counsellors Healthy Schools Committee Schools	N/a	Ongoing	Young people are aware of and access health services as required.
Health institutions use schools and community organisations as a method to distribute information to the English-speaking community	Relevant information on specific health issues of concern to the English-speaking community is available and distributed to the community	Agence CSSS Schools Community organisations Community Learning Centre	Federal and provincial opportunities	Ongoing	Health information is reaching the English community, encouraging prevention and early intervention.
Public health delivers a sexual education program in the Schools	An appropriate sexual education program is selected, translated, and delivered to students	Public Health Schools Community organisations	Federal and provincial opportunities	Annually	Sexual education is delivered to students, and students know how to access health services

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
The polyvalent breakfast program continue with enhanced resources	Financial support is acquired to continue to breakfast program	Schools Community organisations	Federal and provincial opportunities	Annual subsidy	Students receive nutritional and learning benefits, along with preventative strategies for diabetes and obesity
Stress management workshops be considered for high school and Cegep students	Students receive strategies to manage stress	Schools Cegep Community organisations Public health	Federal and provincial opportunities	Annually	Students learn to manage stress thereby improving their general health
Students participate in bullying workshops	Telehealth bullying sessions take place with school students	Schools Vision	N/a	Annually	Students have strategies to identify and manage bullying tactics
After school activities are available for students	Community Learning Centre continues to offer after-school activities to students	Schools Community Learning Centre	Federal and provincial opportunities	Ongoing	Students have after school options improving participation in physical activity and school success
Young people recognise and value the importance of volunteering as vital to sustaining the English language and culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Young people are encouraged and rewarded for volunteer activities</li> <li>2. Young people develop leadership skills through intergenerational activities and learning</li> </ol>	Community organizations Schools Cegep	Federal and provincial opportunities	Ongoing	Community organizations have some sustainability and young people learn the role of becoming community leaders
Education is valued and supported by the English-speaking community	Encourage young people to complete high school	Community Schools Cegep	Federal and provincial opportunities	Ongoing	Young people reach their full potential with more students completing Cegep and University degrees

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