

ADVOCACY PRACTICES

for CLC Schools

May 2026

CLC advocacy is a strategic practice that mobilizes people, partnerships, and systems to create the conditions for student success and community vitality.

In Quebec's English-speaking context, this work is particularly important. Community Learning Centres (CLCs) operate within an Official Language Minority Community (OLMC), where access to services, opportunities, and institutional support is not always equitable.

CLC teams often work in environments where they have influence rather than authority, and where impact depends on how effectively they build relationships, identify shared challenges, align with institutional priorities, and mobilize partners across sectors to collectively address those challenges.

Research¹ shows that CLCs are most effective when they strengthen:



Institutional Completeness
(systems, partnerships, access to services)



Community Vitality (belonging, participation, identity)



Educational Success (holistic student development)

This tool is an introduction for CLC leaders to move from describing what they do to articulating why it matters and how it creates change.

It guides you through a structured process to:

- Anchor your work in purpose
- Define the challenge
- Select intentional advocacy actions

1 Villella, M., Corrigan, J., Anvari, F., & Caruana Aroz, M. K. (2024). *Extended-model community learning centres and educational success: A mixed methods case study*. Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec.



What system are we building or strengthening?

Before identifying actions, CLC teams must clarify the system they are trying to influence.

CLC advocacy is fundamentally about building Institutional Completeness, which represents the ecosystem created through formal and informal partnerships that support the development and sustainability of the community, i.e. the network of relationships, services, and structures that allow a school community to thrive. This includes:

- Access to services in English (health, social, educational)
- Strong school–community partnerships
- Presence and visibility of the English-speaking community in institutions
- Coordination between schools, community organizations, and public systems

Guiding Questions

- What system are we trying to build or strengthen?
- What gap currently exists in access, coordination, or support?
- Who is missing from the system (partners, services, student/parent voices)?
- How does this connect to the needs of the English-speaking community?

Examples

- Strengthening access to mental health services in English
- Building partnerships between schools and community organizations
- Increasing representation of English-speaking families in decision-making spaces
- Expanding bilingual and culturally relevant programming

Consider

- What influence do we actually have in this context?
- What relationships are already strong? Which are weak?



What challenge are we addressing?

The next step is to define the specific challenge or opportunity your advocacy is addressing.

Guiding Questions

- What is the specific issue or gap we are trying to address?
- Who is affected, and how?
- What evidence do we have (data, observations, stories)?
- Why does this matter for students, families, and the community?

Research¹ highlights that English-speaking communities in Quebec face persistent socio-economic and access-related challenges, including higher risks of poverty, limited access to services in English, and gaps in opportunity.

Examples

- Students lack access to local extracurricular opportunities
- Families are unaware of (or not accessing) available community services
- Limited collaboration between school and majority language institutions and health partners
- Low participation/representation of English-speaking families in community decision-making

Consider

- Who/What group might be working on this challenge already?
- Who/What group has the authority to address or influence these challenges?

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Select the Advocacy Tactic and Supporting Strategies

After identifying the system being strengthened and the challenge being addressed, CLC teams select the advocacy tactic that best fits the situation.

How to Choose the Right Tactic

If the challenge is mainly about...	Consider using...
Securing support, funding, approval, or recognition from people with authority	Direct Access to Decision-Makers
Building public awareness, participation, or collective voice	Community Mobilization
Aligning multiple partners around a shared issue or goal	Coalition-Building
Strengthening minority-language identity, belonging, visibility, or heritage	Cultural Advocacy
Understanding a need, documenting a gap, or building an evidence base	Research
Influencing rules, plans, funding structures, agreements, or institutional priorities	Policy Advocacy

The tactic describes what kind of advocacy action is needed.

The strategies describe how the tactic can be carried out effectively.



TACTIC (The What)	STRATEGIES That Most Strongly Support It (The How)
Direct Access to Decision-Makers	Data: stats, participation, outcome tracking Stories: student voice, testimonials Photo Ops: visibility and relationship reinforcement Education: briefings, presentations Finding Common Ground: aligning with board/school priorities Letter Writing / Video Clips: targeted communication
Community Mobilization	Stories: CSL projects, testimonials, videos Promotion: print and social media Letter Writing Campaigns: collective voice Education: awareness-building Finding Common Ground: shared concerns
Coalition-Building	Finding Common Ground: consensus and/or alignment Education: shared understanding Stories: building trust across sectors Promotion: shared messaging Data: shared metrics Photo Ops: joint visibility
Cultural Advocacy	Stories: student voice, family voice, testimonials Promotion: visibility of minority-language identity Education: cultural awareness Finding Common Ground: within diverse sub-groups Data: demographic or participation trends, where relevant
Research	Data: stats, participation, outcome tracking Education: sharing findings Finding Common Ground: aligning with institutional mandates

Sources

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