

# Dropout rate for girls in the Townships hits record low

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The annual drop-out rate for girls in the Estrie region is improving, while that for boys remains stable, according to a report from the Projet Partenaires pour la réussite éducative en Estrie (Projet PRÉE). The region is seeing the lowest dropout rate among girls in ten years for the year 2014-2015, at 14.4 per cent. That compares to a rate of more than 20 per cent a decade ago, when efforts to counter dropping-out in the region began.

Among boys, the rate is fairly stable at around 25 per cent. It was close to 40 per cent a decade ago, but despite the work that has been done, efforts to stop boys from dropping out need to continue and address the obvious gender differences.

Girls and boys do not have the same relationship with school, which influences the dropout rate of young people. Some factors play a greater role in dropping out for girls and others for boys.

For more than 11 years, the partners of the Educational Interrelationship Table (ÉCTÉ) and the PREE project have promoted actions in favor of perseverance and educational success in the Estrie region. In light of the latest data from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MES), these efforts have not been in vain.

## Economic Impact

The consequences of dropping out are also distinct between the sexes, PREE says, and are greater for girls. "Statistics also show that women have lower incomes than men with equivalent education and are more affected by poverty. And don't forget that the mother's educational path has a direct impact on that of her children," a press release says.

"Acting against girls dropping out is essential, not only to enable them to have a better future, but also to promote the educational success of their children and ultimately to get closer to a more egalitarian society."

## Social Impact

Regardless of sex, the stakes involved in dropping out of school are many, both for the individual and society. "Dropping out of school has an impact on work integration, living conditions, self-esteem, and citizen involvement, as well as creating significant societal costs. A young person who drops out, in addition to having to deal with skills gaps, is more likely to suffer from isolation and depression, or to develop consumption problems," said project co-ordinator Josée Bergeron. "Dropouts are also less involved in society, not to mention the important economic stakes. Consider the shortage of skilled labor, the unemployment rate, and social assistance that are significant costs to society. School retention is a societal issue that must be at the center of our priorities."

