

Townships colleges respond to school retention survey data

Record Staff
SHERBROOKE

As part of *Hooked on School Days*, (JPS), February 12-16, the Cégep de Sherbrooke, Champlain Lennoxville, and the college sector of the Séminaire de Sherbrooke have responded to some of the items reported by the Léger Survey on school perseverance and educational success in Quebec.

The survey was carried out among 1,009 Quebecers aged 18 to 34 who had challenges related to school perseverance, including those who have dropped out, have thought of dropping out, or have returned to school.

The three colleges want to take the opportunity to introduce steps to promote educational success and perseverance. At the Cégep de Sherbrooke, the focus will be on new stimulating projects and the integration of internships in education.

The Cégep de Sherbrooke is particularly concerned by two observations that emerged from the survey, the first being that 75 per cent of young people said they were bored at school. The Cégep is actively working to enrich and revitalize its programs to meet the interests of students. Substantial effort has been made to ensure that the college experience is anything but boring and things like research projects, laboratories, numerous opportunities for educational stays abroad, sports, cultural and artistic activities, entrepreneurial projects, and

theme weeks such as the Human Sciences Week. The college also holds conferences and seminars featuring experts in different fields

The second observation that piqued the interest of the Cégep from the survey was that 34 per cent of interviewees said they have been positively influenced by work experience. Recognizing that experimenting and implementing learning has a positive effect on student retention, the Cégep de Sherbrooke has put in place several work-study opportunities.

Staff support, the strength of Champlain-Lennoxville College

For a number of years now, Champlain-Lennoxville has invested a great deal of effort in supervising students who continue their studies at the college. According to the survey of an older dropout clientele, 32 per cent of young people who thought of dropping out but did not do so, claim that it was the encouragement they received that made the difference in their decision to stay in school. Armed with this evidence, the conclusion is that the role of teachers, professional staff, and support staff is crucial when encouraging students to persevere in their studies.

"In our smaller CEGEP context, we are privileged to be able to get to know our students well and to have the opportunity to offer them such encouragement whether in class, in our sports teams, or during extracurricular activities," said Champlain Director Nancy Beattie. "We believe that it is our responsibility as a society to foster perseverance and to offer sincere encouragement to the students we meet."

