

Building Education Together: The Trafalgar-McGill CoLab

“The most dangerous experiment we can conduct with our children is to keep school the same at a time when every other aspect of our society is dramatically changing.”

Professor Christopher Dede,
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the
Upcoming Federal Budget
By:

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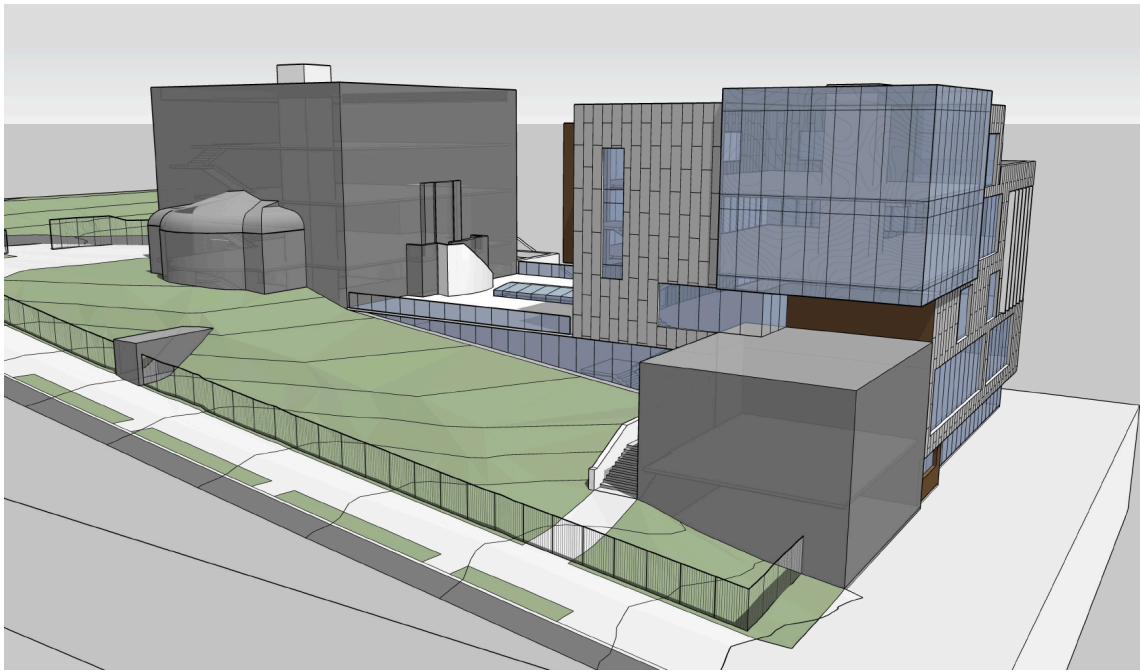
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Recommendations:

The CoLab and its respective school partners recommends that the federal government invest \$12.5 million in the CoLab and the construction of the new facility, including the renovation of the heritage properties.

The investment will be complemented by a \$13.5 million in-kind contribution from the Trafalgar School and Trafalgar Ross Foundation, in addition to ongoing \$10 million in contributions from donors and foundations.

Executive Summary:

Trafalgar School and McGill University's Faculty of Education are set to make a bold new mark on education in Canada. Together McGill and Trafalgar have formed a multifaceted partnership that sets the stage for world-class educational innovation and growth.

The rationale and impetus for this partnership has evolved through the dynamic and compelling collaborative research and teaching initiatives undertaken in the last several years between Trafalgar School and McGill University's Faculty of Education that include inquiry based action based research in STEAM. The upsurge of interest and enthusiasm for this project to date is confirmation of its timeliness and relevance. Our partnership establishes a shared strategic vision for making the world a better place through new ways of teaching, learning, discovering, and disseminating knowledge.

The development of a CoLab school is at the heart of this bold plan. In understanding the rich value of the lab school model and with regard to the collaborative nature of learning, we have called this bold school-university partnership the Trafalgar-McGill CoLab.

The Need for an Innovative Approach

The world is facing increasingly complex economic, environmental, and social challenges. We, more than ever need learners and educators who are creative problem solvers and address these issues in a holistic and compassionate way.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has suggested that in order for education to remain effective and relevant, it must

- a) make learning and learner-engagement central,
- b) ensure that learning is collaborative,
- c) be highly attuned to learners' motivations and emotions, and
- d) remain sensitive to individual differences including prior knowledge.

Current talk in K-12 education involves much discussion of renewed expectations of what kinds of knowledge, skills, and dispositions students need for an unknown future that is characterized by change more than anything else. In addition to traditional skills, expectations for students today include critical and creative approaches to decision-making and problem solving that will enable them to not only live in a multi-faceted world but also actively engage in its citizenship. *If these are the expectations for students, they must also be the expectations for educators.*

The Solution: The Trafalgar-McGill CoLab

The design of the Trafalgar-McGill CoLab is a first in Canada. Our innovative and collaborative learning environment will challenge all of its school and university educators to work together to transform education in ways that enable and empower its members to respond to local and global challenges.

Building on highly successful models at the University of Chicago, Columbia, UCLA, and Oxford, Trafalgar and McGill will collaborate to create an environment where:

- **Research hubs are integrated into every teaching area**
- **Teachers-in-training learn within an environment where research and practice are seamlessly combined**
- **Students benefit from relevant, experiential and high-tech learning**
- **Practicing teachers can share expertise and engage in lifelong-learning**

Our **new facility** will include Purvis Hall, a heritage building on McGill's campus and a new facility south this building where we will:

- Create an expanded, re-conceptualized, and state-of-the-art teaching, learning, and research facility;
- Promote a fluid and integrative model of teaching and learning where research and practice are inextricably linked, and where new knowledge emerges through a shared pedagogy and research partnership;

- Establish multidirectional, collaborative research hubs focused on high-quality teaching and learning, wellness, mental and physical health and neuro-education, and optimal educational environments;

CoLab as Change Leader in the Field of Education

By virtue of the partnership itself, and its innovative nature, McGill University and Trafalgar School will be positioned as leaders in the international Teacher Education landscape. Through active participation from members of the Trafalgar community, the McGill Faculty of Education will be able to include current and dynamic practitioner perspectives on program offerings, including revision, development, and design of new initiatives. Finally, being identified as change leaders will also aid in the recruitment of innovative educators for both partner organizations.

By strategically acquiring physical space in close proximity to McGill's Faculty of Education, Trafalgar is perfectly situated to allow for authentic, local and immediate world-class research. Being able to work with our student body and dedicated, faculty will allow McGill students and researchers to follow outcomes, year after year and therefore, conduct long-term research projects in a controlled environment.

The following description of the Trafalgar-McGill CoLab aims to map out in more detail the bold vision itself, its potential for growth and impact, and its critical relevance, not only for today's world, but also for the dynamically changing future that we face.

Evidence-based Practice and Policy Development

At the provincial level, building on our role as change leaders, we will demonstrate clearly to the Ministry of Education that schools are ideally situated to play an active role in determining best practices for the improvement of education within the province. The Ministry will see this as an innovative step forward and will want to be a part of its development in a supportive role. Moreover, local and international NGOs focused on education have already expressed interest in our work's implications for research/practice-informed policy development.

Access to Support and Funding

Through external academic (i.e. Tri-Council grants) and non-academic resources, we will create innovative funding initiatives dedicated to collaborative research which will actively engage learners and educators as part of the research process, of which they would otherwise have only be subjects. External funding will also create opportunities for collaboration with organizations focused on entrepreneurial spirit for innovation in education.

CoLab team members are currently pursuing support through a series of grants and funding opportunities, specifically the Talent, Insight and Connection programs of the SSHRC. These opportunities for research funding will allow us to meet the mandate of

the SSHRC by developing strong research, research training (for participant who might otherwise only be subjects) and knowledge mobilization which will be shared at both the local and international levels.

CoLab Drivers for change



Benefits and Impact of the CoLab and State of the Art Learning Facilities

Benefits for Montreal and Beyond

As a hub for social and economic development, Montreal is a vibrant, world-class city known for its fusion of culture and innovation. The Trafalgar-McGill CoLab provides an opportunity to utilize the exceptional resources that are at our disposal. The collaborative CoLab model is one that can be scaled to a wide variety of public, private and independent schools and organizations similarly committed to educational innovation and change. The result of this expanded interdisciplinary collaboration has the potential to benefit members of our local and global educational communities in ways that current disciplinary and institutional silos do not.

The unique partnership creates a multidirectional hub for cutting edge educational research led by dynamic teams of practitioners and university researchers. By setting this new, high standard for education, the impact across the greater Montreal region could be significant, given that McGill University's Faculty of Education is one of the largest teacher education programs in Canada. The new and situated learning that takes place within the CoLab will help in disseminating the latest evidence-based research. This paves the way for greater collaboration between schools, and builds stronger networks amongst educators and related parties, both locally and internationally.

Developing Best Practices In Education

This partnership will create accessible pathways between researched best practices in education and active teaching and learning. Traditional institutional and disciplinary teaching and research silos will be replaced by open access, multidirectional research clusters. These pathways will have an immediate positive impact on learning for young women at Trafalgar and teacher candidates at McGill.

Building A Learning Community

We will build a dedicated learning community that includes groups of teachers, academics, and students working together to address shared questions, concerns, and challenges.

Enriching High-Quality Professional Development

Contextual, relevant and shared professional development becomes part of the CoLab social infrastructure through expanded access to authentic educational and research environments. Access to such high-quality professional development becomes a key component in recruiting world-class educators.

Strengthen External Partnerships

We will give voice and evidence to McGill and Trafalgar's willingness to play an active role in establishing education as an integral part of the community landscape. We will share our current and developing best practices in pedagogy and curriculum development with external partners. Our learning community approach will include partnering with local organizations like the YMCA, McGill Libraries, and McGill Faculty of Education's Institute for Human Development and Wellbeing.

Reviving Heritage Properties Montreal

The project will ensure that significant heritage properties on the McGill Campus will be revived both through renovation and through breathing life into the existing and underused facilities. State of the art educational facilities will exist both in the heritage buildings, with underground connections to adjacent new construction. Purvis Hall, built in 1907, is considered a heritage property, and is in need of significant renovation and restoration

Implementation

The first \$5 million of the federal investment will be directed to the implementation of the partnership objectives, while the second \$7.5 million will go towards supporting the new construction of the state of the art educational facility and the renovation of the heritage sites.

Trafalgar will work with the federal and provincial governments to lead the effective implementation of the project and scale it out for future modeling and implementation in other locations. A strategic federal investment is needed now to sustain and maximize the potential impact of the Trafalgar-McGill CoLab and enable us to transform education in Montreal, Quebec and Canada. Without this support, momentum will be severely constrained and the impact of a model of educational practice and research will be hindered and potentially significantly delayed

<i>CoLab</i>	<i>Costs</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Acquisition/Construction & Renovation (required by Spring of 2021)	\$25.5million	Detailed budgets and architectural drawings are available
CoLab Programming and Development (required by 2021)	\$10million	An endowment that will support the operations of the partnership and programming
Access (required by 2030)	\$10million	To support more financial aid for students to attend and experience the CoLab benefits
Total	\$35.5million within 24months \$10million in 120months	Have acquired \$16million in funding towards first \$35.5million Silent phase of donor and corporate campaigns have begun successfully.

Investment in Infrastructure:

The proposed construction project alone would generate thousands of local jobs. It is estimated that this would be in the range of 15,000 person-days for direct on-site construction labour, approximately 18,000 person-days for the material supply component going directly into the project, in addition to another approximately 7,500 person-days of work required for preparatory, consultants, off-site and other non-direct work.

The CoLab would provide researcher recruitment opportunities for Canada and provide work for through internships, teaching positions at both the secondary and higher education, chair-ships and expanded opportunities for research at the graduate level

Investment in Human Capital:

In a recent OECD report, higher investment in education was proven to have a direct impact on higher voter rates; reduced costs to the health care system; savings in welfare costs; reduced costs to the criminal justice system; increased rates of volunteerism; and, because more educated populations are more socially engaged, increased feelings of safety and trust. Nobel laureate, James Heckman's work indicates that increased investment in education results in "increased productivity, higher income, better health, more family investment, upward mobility, and reduced social costs."

