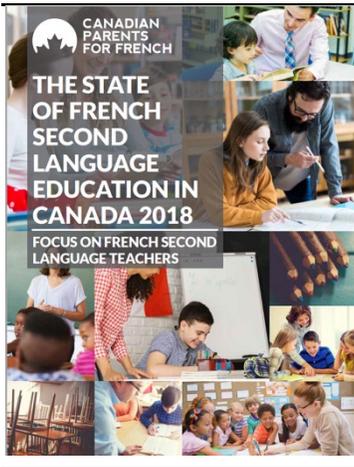




# Making Our Voice Heard

## Canadian Parents for French

### *The State of French Second Language Education in Canada Report 2018*



## HOW TO USE THIS RESEARCH REPORT

This report reviews research published between 2000 and 2017 that focused on French as a second language teachers, identifies current research trends and makes recommendations for further studies needed to address gaps in the research.

The report can be used in your Branch and Chapter FSL advocacy work to:

- optimize our credibility as a research-informed organization
- ensure CPF advocates speak with an accurate and unified voice
- respond to information needs by disseminating existing research & CPF recommendations for enhancing FSL education programs
- influence the FSL research agenda with factual information

### You can...

- **Issue** a media release announcing the report, highlighting key points that resonate in your jurisdiction.
- **Distribute** the report electronically to your Minister of Education, Ministry staff, Superintendents, School board trustees, FSL coordinators, and our stakeholder partners.
- **Highlight** that the research report broadens one's understanding of the role of language- and language teaching-competencies in delivering quality French Second Language (FSL) education programs.
- **Reinforce** how the report identifies new directions in professional development proven to motivate FSL teachers, strengthen their teaching skills and measure and provide opportunities to enhance their own French language proficiency. Each of these areas in the report is supported by the latest research.
- **Promote** the report as a "must read" to understand why there is a need to support FSL teacher recruitment and retention to meet the growing demand for quality FSL programs.
- **Learn** about the latest trends and proven practices that develop competent, confident, engaged FSL teachers. Our FSL students will reap the benefits with measurable positive outcomes.
- **Deliver** the report to school principals and **start a conversation** highlighting suggestions offered in this tool.
- **Shine a positive light on FSL teachers**, their professionalism and pursuit of improving their practice.
- **Use the report as a tool to promote French Second Language teaching** as a valued and sought-after career.

## CPF NETWORK POSITION STATEMENTS

Canadian Parents for French (CPF) furthers bilingualism by promoting and creating opportunities for students to learn and to use French. The CPF Network position statements state the organization's position on issues related to French as a second language education practice, policy, and/or professional development for which there are controversial or critical opinions.

### Canadian Parents for French stands for:

#### Universal Access

In Canada, all students have the opportunity to learn French and to access the French as a second official language program that meets their needs and aspirations.

How are these quotes on best practices reflected in your community?

*p5 FSL teachers believe in the inclusion of ELLs in their classrooms. This research helped counter ideas of FSL as an elitist and exclusive program and redefine the role that teachers play as gatekeepers to FSL programs.*

*p14 The most successful of these involved embracing an alternative, plurilingual identity as FSL teacher, which emphasizes professional expertise beyond native-speaker competency and provides a much more relevant, suitable model for the linguistically diverse students in our FSL classrooms.*

*p16 The resource "I Can: Empowering Language Learners" is designed to help teachers promote learner autonomy as they work with learners who have diverse needs and interests in a variety of language learning contexts (e.g., French immersion, core French, intensive French programs, English as an additional language).*

#### Effective Programs

All students have access to a wide variety of effective, evidence-based French as a second language (FSL) programs from Grades 1 to 12 and at the Post-secondary level.

How are these quotes on best practices reflected in your community?

*P4. Research shows that teaching digital literacy skills can expand FSL students' learning experiences and identity development (Pellerin, 2013; Taylor, 2015). Still, recent studies suggest that FSL teachers need more support integrating technology in the classroom (Taylor, 2015).*

*P4 FSL teachers from another study (Faez, Majhanovich, Taylor, Smith, & Crowley, 2011) noted how CEFR-informed instruction increased student motivation, built learner self-confidence, promoted authentic language use in classroom, and encouraged learner autonomy.*

*P4 Teachers need time to lead their own PD (Kristmanson et al., 2011) and benefit from blended (face-to-face and virtual) PD opportunities (Kitchenham & Chasteauneuf, 2010). Research also shows that teachers can develop innovative resources, such as the *Écriture cohérente et raisonnée en immersion (ÉCRI)* process writing model, when they use collaborative inquiry and democratic dialogue (Kristmanson, Dicks, & Le Bouthillier, 2009; Kristmanson, Dicks, Le Bouthillier, & Bourgoin, 2008).*

*p5 Lyster (2004) specifically focused on determining "the effects of form-focused instruction (FFI) and corrective feedback on immersion students' ability to accurately assign grammatical gender in French" (p. 399). Findings suggest that FI students benefit from form-focused instruction (FFI), especially when combined with the use of prompts.*

*p15 Weekend immersive events can encourage teachers to pursue more extended language and professional learning experiences during summer institutes or week-long courses.*

## Recognized Proficiency Levels

The proficiency levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and French-language proficiency testing (such as the DELF) are used to provide language learners, parents, educators, post-secondary institutions and employers with a common understanding of each learner's French-language skills and the expected outcomes of each respective FSL program.

How are these quotes about this identified need reflected in your community?

*p6 There is a clear and pressing need for research on FSL teacher language proficiency, whether it be to assess and develop linguistic and/or cultural proficiency, or to create a standardized assessment measure to assist teacher education programs, school boards and teachers in setting benchmarks and goals for success in French proficiency.*

*p10 School boards were asked if they include assessment of FSL teacher applicants' French language skills as part of their recruitment and hiring processes in order to secure FSL teachers with high levels of language competence.*

## Leadership Accountability

Education leaders, school jurisdictions and provincial/territorial and federal governments are accountable for student achievement in French as a second language programs. Parents and community stakeholders are actively engaged with educational leaders in their decision making. Reporting is meaningful, timely and available publicly.

How are the following quotes on the identified needs reflected in your community?

*p11 Because so few boards (4%) reported using international standards such as the CEFR criteria to evaluate FSL teacher applicants' French proficiency, it is not possible to correlate the self-ratings of new FSL teachers' proficiency levels with board-by-board hiring thresholds. This lack of board-to-board consistency was reported as a source of considerable frustration among new FSL teachers.*

*p12 ...how to achieve provincial learning outcomes given the limited instructional time and low value allocated to core French, and generally low levels of teacher language proficiency and background in core French methodology.*

*p12 Time allotments for teaching elementary core French vary greatly from school to school - from a low of 30 minutes per week to 120 minutes per week. This inconsistency, coupled with varying levels of teacher competence, suggests very uneven program delivery.*

*p16 In our increasingly plurilingual world, language teaching and learning are becoming more important than ever.*

## CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH

Canadian Parents for French represents 25,000 members across Canada. We are a nationwide, research-informed, volunteer organization that champions the opportunity to learn and use French for all those who call Canada home. Canadian Parents for French is the 2016 recipient of the Commissioner of Official Languages Award of Excellence – Promotion of Linguistic Duality.

## 1. Universal Access

Write a few key words or phrases. What does this mean to you?

Go on a virtual walk of your school. What did you see and/or hear on your walk?

Why was it like this?

## 2. Effective Programs

Write a few key words or phrases. What does this mean to you?

Go on a virtual walk of your school. What did you see and/or hear on your walk?

Why was it like this?

### 3. Recognized Proficiency Levels

Write a few key words or phrases. What does this mean to you?

Go on a virtual walk of your school. What did you see and/or hear on your walk?

Why was it like this?

### 4. Leadership Accountability

Write a few key words or phrases. What does this mean to you?

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Why was it like this?

## CPF State of French Second Language Education in Canada 2018

### KEY POINTS FOR MEDIA

#### Focus: FSL Teachers

- Demand is outstripping supply:
  - Canadian ministries and school boards report concern about French teacher shortages,
  - Faculties of Education report space in French teacher preparation programs.
- CPF's State of FSL Ed Report, 2002, noted similar conditions. These have worsened in recent years, exacerbated by BC Supreme Court ruling (requiring the hiring of 3000 more teachers), extension of key ON teacher education program from 1 to 2 years, and ongoing increase in demand for immersion programs across Canada (approx. 50% increase in last decade).
- Recent Federal Government investment of \$31 million in **teacher recruitment and retention** (part of 2018-23 Action Plan) needs to be strategically deployed.

#### *CPF recommends:*

- incentivizing mobility of Francophones across country,
  - supporting mentorship of early career FSL teachers (to excel and remain in FSL posts),
  - subsidizing teacher professional development in **language** and pedagogy,
  - increasing **cohesion** among ministries of education, school districts and parents to work together strategically to increase supply of FSL teachers,
  - supporting **calibration of French proficiency assessment** to Common Framework of Reference (CEFR) for teachers and students – focus on charting language learning,
  - supporting **teacher-directed research** into their classroom practice (to learn more about what works well and what could be improved to increase student learning).
- There remain challenges in elementary **Core French programs** (where 85% of Canadian children learn French). Many teachers still do not feel confident, competent &/or valued.
  - There are continuing challenges in retaining FSL teachers across all programs, necessitating research into teachers' experiences and support for career-long professional development (including linguistic).

#### *CPF recommends:*

- school districts ensure that core French teachers receive equal opportunities for professional development, mentorship and space for teaching,
  - use of **language portfolios** calibrated to the CEFR to track and celebrate language learning (for all FSL teachers and learners).
- By focusing on and supporting FSL teachers to feel confident, competent and valued, CPF is supporting quality learning experiences for Canadian youth.