

AN OVERVIEW OF FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN CANADA

*Canadian Parents for French submission to the
Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages - Addendum*

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CANADA'S FRENCH IMMERSION MODEL – INSPIRED BY ANGLOPHONE PARENTS

Canada's world-renowned French immersion program began in St. Lambert, Quebec, at the request of Anglophone parents who wanted their children to have the opportunity to become bilingual in the Canadian school system, and who were disappointed with the poor proficiency outcomes from the existing core French program. An experimental French immersion program was established and extensive evaluation by McGill University researchers demonstrated that immersion students achieved high proficiency levels, and that children could learn a second language without jeopardizing their English abilities. After almost 40 years, the original French immersion model has proven its value around the world and been adopted in many countries and many languages. *“French immersion is a proven, successful Canadian approach to second language learning... No educational program has been so intensively researched and evaluated in Canada as has French immersion. The effects of the program on the acquisition of French-language as well as English-language skills, and the academic achievement of French immersion students, have been well documented and research shows that the program works.”*

[Canadian Education Association (1992) French Immersion Today, CEA Information Note, Ottawa: Auhor]

CANADA'S LINGUISTIC DUALITY – EMBRACED BY ANGLOPHONE PARENTS

The French immersion model has contributed, as well, to Canada's national unity. In 1977, Keith Spicer, then Commissioner of Official Language, remarked that the creation of Canadian Parents for French and its support for effective, accessible French immersion education presented “an English-speaking organization able to speak sensibly, perhaps even generously, about the French language.” Originally a small group of concerned parents, CPF has evolved into a proactive national, parent-led organization with Branch offices in nine provinces and two territories and some 150 Chapters in communities nationwide. CPF and its 21,000 members continue to support national unity and diversity by encouraging educators to develop inclusionary policies and practices to ensure that all students in Canada share opportunities to learn both of Canada's official languages, to qualify for employment with the Government of Canada, and to make real contributions to Canada's social and political development.

[Spicer, K. (2004) Speech at the 1984 CPF Conference, Ottawa]

FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN CANADA

Canadian schools offer a variety of French second language (FSL) programs, each designed to produce different French proficiency outcomes. FSL programs fall into two general categories — Core French (also known as Basic French or FSL) and not to be confused with FSL as a general term for both core and immersion instruction and French Immersion. Across the country the types of FSL programs offered, the points at which students may enrol in them, and mandatory periods of French instruction differ by province/territory, by school district and in some cases, by school.

ENCOURAGING ENROLMENT IN FRENCH IMMERSION - EQUITABLE ACCESS POLICIES NEEDED

“French immersion is a proven, successful Canadian approach to second language learning... No educational program has been so intensively researched and evaluated in Canada as has French immersion. Over 40 years of research has concluded that students can add a second language at no cost to their first language competence or to their mastery of subjects taught in French. Currently, about 353,000 students (14%) in Canada are enrolled in Immersion programs, which have generally produced better second-language proficiency results than core/basic French. In fact, high school immersion graduates attained an intermediate or higher level of second-language proficiency on Public Service Commission of Canada tests.⁶ While all French Immersion programs are designed to produce students who are able to function well in a French milieu, to accept a job for which French is the language of work, and to pursue post-secondary education in their second language, It must be

noted that Middle and Late Immersion, unlike Early Immersion programs, attract and accept more highly motivated students with above average academic abilities.

Table 1:
National Core French and French Immersion Enrolment Statistics 2010-2011

Prov / Terr	% in FSL Programs	% in French Immersion	% in Core French	Total in FSL Programs	Total in French Immersion	Total in Core French	Total Eligible Students
AB	32	5.9	26.0	190,319	35,398	154,921	595,460
BC	41	8.3	32.7	235,588	47,624	187,964	574,645
MB	46.8	11.3	35.5	81,775	19,734	62,041	174,739
NB	64.7	23.4	41.3	48,249	17,454	30,795	74,579
NL	59.8	12.7	47.1	40,930	8,698	32,232	68,463
NS	52.5	12.1	40.4	64,893	14,948	49,945	123,497
NT	29.8	7.6	22.1	2,496	643	1,853	8,576
NU	2.2		2.2	183		183	8,435
ON	50.0	7.9	42.1	978,464	155,232	823,232	1,957,016
PE	56.9	21.3	35.6	11,583	4,333	7,250	20,342
QC	100.0	35.8	64.2	105,377	37,729	67,648	105,377
SK	39.5	6.5	32.9	62,417	10,306	52,111	158,172
YU	57.8	14.9	42.8	2,668	690	1,978	4,618
National	48.7	14.0	35.8	1,824,942	352,789	1,472,153	3,873,919

CPF and its members believe that Early Immersion is the most equitable option and is suitable for the widest range of student ability. It is offered at the age and grade when students would begin formal study of their mother-tongue and, unlike middle and late immersion in which students must quickly develop the level of French-language skills required to comprehend sophisticated concepts in their second language, Early French immersion presents no such requirement.

In Canada, the regulation and supervision of education resides with the provinces and territories (Marsh & Willis, 2003) and provinces and territories carefully guard their constitutional jurisdiction over education (Levin, 2009). As it pertains to access to FSL education, however, they have not used their authority to create many formal policies. Such an absence of direction can give way to inconsistent and inequitable access to FSOL education (Mady & Arnett, 2009; Mady & Turnbull, 2010) whereas formal policies may be the most effective starting point to achieving more equitable access. Cooper, Fusarelli & Randall (2004), in fact, posited that the formal policy process is the most effective method to improve education.

Some Ministries of Education have developed informal policies that Delaney (2002) described as *de facto* policies or practices that have become legitimized over time. “These policies develop where no official or stated policy is written down and might be referred to as an “unofficial policy” (Delaney, 2002, p.164). Unfortunately, the ‘spirit’ of an informal policy may be interpreted differently from one school to the next creating further inconsistencies.

There are very few specific, formal policies at the provincial/territorial level to encourage enrolment and to ensure equitable access to FSL programming. Although absence of formal policies pertaining to access to FSL education does not necessarily equate to absence of commitment or equitable practices, their lack does provide more opportunities for inconsistency. Conversely, an increase in formal policies that specifically address the above influential factors of equitable access to FSL programming could provide a foundation grounded in research, where applicable, on which administrators could base their decisions.

Differential Program Fees – only 2 ministries have policies disallowing this. Discourages enrolment of lower income students

Differential transportation fees – only 1 ministry has a policy against and 1 even has a policy supporting differential fees. Discourages enrolment of lower income students

Maintaining a range of entry points – no policies. Limits choice of program, especially in small and remote school districts.

Distance Education – no policies. Especially problematic in small and remote school districts which lack critical mass of students needed to partition the student population in English and Immersion streams.

FSL program information for all parents: No policies. Limits equitable access as some parents are not informed of all entry points as their children progress through the school system. For example, some school districts provide information about late immersion only to parents of above average, self-motivated students.

Restricting enrolment (capping) — no policies. Despite the fact that enrolment in, and demand for, immersion programs is at an all-time high, further growth is now limited by enrolment caps and school districts across the country declining to introduce more programs, citing funding constraints. Decision-makers may also attempt to “protect” the English program by maintaining balanced enrolment in the two programs, reducing parents to entering lotteries or camping out during school registration in hopes of securing one of the limited immersion places. Implementing French immersion programs is particularly challenging for school districts in rural and remote communities which lack the critical mass of students required to partition the student population.

Admission and services for academically challenged students – no complete policies. Only 2 have policies which partially address the issue

Admission and services for immigrant students – no complete policies

Table 2:

Provincial/Territorial Policies Supporting Equitable Access to French Second Language Education

Do the provinces/territories have policies:	AB	BC	M B	NB	NL	NW T	NS	N U	O N	PE I	SK	YT
To ensure that distance education is available to provide FSL learning opportunities to students in small, rural and remote districts?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
To ensure that every parent is regularly informed about French-second-language options and entry points, as well as the French-language proficiency levels which can be expected from each option?	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
To ensure that a wide range of FSL entry points is maintained at the elementary and secondary levels?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
To ensure that ESL students are encouraged and permitted to enrol in core, alternate core and French immersion programs?	N	N	N	P	N	N	N	N	P	N	N	N
To ensure the provision of specialist services for gifted students in core, alternate core and French immersion programs?	N	N	P	N	N	N	P	N	N	N	N	N
To ensure the provision of specialist services for academically challenged students in core, alternate core and French immersion programs?	N	N	P	N	N	N	P	N	N	N	N	N
To ensure the admission of academically	N	O	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Do the provinces/territories have policies:	AB	BC	M B	NB	NL	NW T	NS	N U	O N	PE I	SK	YT
challenged students to alternate core French and French immersion programs?												
To prevent differential program fees for alternate core and French immersion programs?	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
To prevent differential fees for transportation to alternate core and French immersion programs?	N	O	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
to prevent the establishment and use of admission criteria	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
To prevent capping the numbers in alternate core and French immersion programs?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

N = No policy
P = Partial policy
O = Opposing policy

Recommended Reading

Canadian Parents for French (2002) Indicators of Effective National and Provincial Support for FSL Education, Ottawa: Author p.12 <http://cpf.ca/en/files/FSL-2002-ENG-FULL.pdf>

CPF (2001) The CPF School Self-Assessment Tool <http://cpf.ca/en/files/School-Self-Assessment-Tool.pdf>

Netten, J. (2011) Optimal Entry Point for French Immersion; Revue de l'Université de Moncton, 2007, p. 27-35. <http://www.erudit.org/revue/rum/2007/v/nrum2172/017704ar.pdf>

Academically-Challenged Students – Equitable Access Denied

Every Canadian child should have the opportunity to become bilingual so he or she can participate fully in this country's economy, governance and society. However, the reluctance of school boards and school authorities to adapt to the needs of students with learning disabilities in immersion has created an unfortunate dynamic.

- These children are often systematically weeded from immersion and placed in the English stream, despite research showing that academically-challenged students are not differentially handicapped in French immersion. They attain the same first language proficiency as their academically-challenged peers in the English program and attain second-language proficiency commensurate with their first language.
- Unfortunately, myths abound and children who have any kind of learning disorder are often excluded from immersion programs for fear of compounding their problems.
- Little or no specialist support is provided for academically-challenged students who are permitted to enrol in immersion, despite research demonstrating that effective interventions exist, leaving parents to find remediation on their own.
- Research shows that FSL teachers who receive relevant info and training are capable of creating and running effective, inclusive classrooms.
- Research also shows that the learning strategies used in inclusive classrooms are useful for all students, not just those with special needs.

CPF and its members recommend that the Government of Canada encourage ministries of education (a) to implement and monitor compliance with policies designed to ensure that all students in Canada have equitable access to French immersion programs, with particular attention

(A) to removing the French immersion enrolment caps which deny access to interested students; (B) to establishing policies ensuring equitable access and specialist assistance for academically-challenged students;

Recommended Reading

Canadian Parents for French (2011) Proceedings of the CPF Roundtable on Academically-Challenged Students in FSL Programs, Ottawa: Author <http://cpf.ca/en/files/NEW-CPF-Roundtable-Proceedings-jh-2-3.pdf>

CPF Factsheet for Parents of Academically-Challenged Students <http://cpf.ca/en/files/Parent.pdf>

CPF Factsheet for Educators regarding Academically-Challenged Students <http://cpf.ca/en/files/Educator-full.pdf>

Immigrant Students – Equitable Access Denied

Despite immigrant parent support for linguistic duality and official language bilingualism and the impressive performance of their children in core and immersion programs, immigrant students are often overlooked in French-second-official language (FSL) promotional and advocacy initiatives. They are not encouraged, and are sometimes actively discouraged, from enrolling in FSL education despite the impressive performance of those who do.

A small study of immigrant parents showed that, despite the fact that 80% of these parents received no information about French immersion options from the school system, and despite frequent discouragement from educators, immigrant support for linguistic duality and FSL education remains high. Sixty per cent felt that learning both Canada's official languages would benefit their children, and 40% had enrolled their children in French immersion. This figure provides a striking contrast to national immersion enrolment, which hovers at about 8%, with provincial enrolment ranging from 6% to 26% outside Québec.

Immigrant students demonstrate a strong commitment to mastering their second official language, with 50% of immigrant student respondents remaining in French beyond the compulsory period and completed the core French curriculum — an impressive rate compared with provincial completion rates ranging from 6% to 15% (CPF, 2004).

Only 2 ministries of education have policies which even partially address the issue.

CPF and its members encourage the Government of Canada (a) to ensure that all immigration officers and immigrant settlement services provide every immigrant with information about school-based French-second-language education; and (b) to fund a major study comparing the English and French proficiency achievement of immigrant French immersion students with Canadian-born immersion students and with their immigrant peers in the regular English program; and (c) to establishing policies ensuring equitable access to FSL education for immigrant students.

Recommended Reading

Canadian Labour and Business Centre, Trends in Immigration, , Ottawa: Author http://www.clbc.ca/files/reports/ihb_section_a.pdf

Mady, C., Turnbull, M. (2012) Official Language Bilingualism for Allophones in Canada: Exploring Future Research, TESL Canada Journal/Revue TESL du Canada, 29(2), Calgary <http://www.teslcanadajournal.ca/index.php/tesl/article/viewFile/1105/924>

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Sinay, E. (2012) Programs of Choice in the TDSB: Characteristics of Students in French Immersion, Alternative Schools, and Other Specialized Schools and Programs, Toronto District School Board, Toronto
http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/about_us/external_research_application/docs/ProgramsOfChoiceStudentCharacteristics.pdf

Statistics Canada (2012) Population growth in Canada: From 1851 to 2061: Population and dwelling counts, 2011 Census, Ottawa: Author http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-310-x/98-310-x2011003_1-eng.pdf

Statistics Canada, Population growth in Canada, Ottawa: Author <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-003-x/2007001/4129907-eng.htm>

ENCOURAGING ENROLMENT IN CORE FRENCH – MANDATORY STUDY AND ENHANCED PROGRAMMING NEEDED

Core/Basic French

The vast majority (about 1,500,000 students or 48%) of students in Canada are enrolled in core/basic French programs. In Core French programs, the target language is the subject of instruction. Students learn French vocabulary and make a formal study of French grammar. While interviews with students who had studied in core/basic French programs suggest that students are generally positive about their elementary school experience, surveys show that over half of those students who took high school core French had not had good experiences in the program. Students express boredom with grammar review and dissatisfaction that they are unable to converse in the target language. Their disillusionment is reflected in attrition rates as high as 95% from core French studies, and the fact that core French enrolment has been in decline in recent years and these losses are not fully explained by rising rates of immersion enrolment.^{4, 5}

Happily, some jurisdictions have begun offering more intensive core French programs that produce enhanced proficiency outcomes and retain up to 90% of students. Extended core French students study two or three subjects in the French language in addition to the regular core French classes. Extended core French becomes available to students between grades 4 and 8 and may be continued through high school. Intensive (Core) French (also known as Intensive French) is a relatively new program, now being offered or piloted in ten provinces and territories. This one-year program is offered in grades four, five or six and enhances the regular core French program with an intensive period of instruction in French using immersion methods. Students achieve an impressive level of French proficiency in a short time but must continue French studies in enhanced core French programs, not regular core French, in order to maintain and build on their new-found proficiency.

CPF encourages educational decision-makers to address student retention and achievement in core by making alternative core French programs available across the county.

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Please see Table 1: FSL Programs Offered and Mandated French Studies by Province/Territory

Please see Table 3: National Core French and French Immersion Enrolment Statistics 2010-2011

Recommended Reading

Canadian Parents for French (2004) Getting to the Core, The State of French Second Language Education in Canada 2004, Ottawa: Author <http://cpf.ca/en/files/FSL-2004-EN.pdf>

Netten, J., Germain, C. (2005) Theoretical and Research Foundations of Intensive French, Canadian Modern Language Review 60(3), University of Toronto Press, Ontario
http://www.mmecarr.ca/ICF/ICF_PDFs/Theory%20and%20Research.PDF

Rehorick, S. Plan Twenty-Three Strategies for a National Approach in Second Language Education, Official Languages Support Program, Department of Canadian Heritage, Ottawa. <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/CH14-8-2005E.pdf>

Table 3: FSL Programs Offered and Mandated French Studies by Province/Territory

PROV /TER R	Mandatory FSL Grades	Date mandatory French studies introduced	Core French Starting Grade	Extended (Expanded) Core French Starting Grade	Accelerated Core French	Intensive Core French Starting Grade	Post-Intensive Core French (Enhanced French) Starting Grade	Early French Immersion Starting Grade	Middle French Immersion Starting Grade	Late French Immersion Starting Grade	50/50 Bilingual Starting Grade
AB	No	n/a	4 or 10	No	No	5	No	K or 1	4	6 or 7	No
BC	No ¹	Varies by school district	K	No	No	No	No	K or 1	No	5 or 6	No
MB	No ¹		K	No	No	Yes	Yes	K or 1	4	7	No
NB	4-10	n/a	Core French being replaced by Pre-Intensive grade 4	No	No	5	6	No	3	6	No
NL	4-9	n/a	K	10	10	6	7	K	No	7	No
NS	4-9		4	7	No	6	No	K	4	7	
NT	No	No	K	No	No	No	No	K	4	No	No
NU	No		1	No							
ON	4-9	n/a	4 (offered at grade 1 in a few school boards)	5, 6, or 7 (grade 1 in only 1 Catholic BD)	No	Pilot program only	No	SK or 1	4	7	1
QC^{1,2}	K-12	n/a	SK	Yes	unknown	Yes	unknown	K	Yes	Yes	Yes
PE	4-9	n/a	4	No	No	Pilot at Grade 6	No	K	Yes 4 (only 1 program in PEI)	7	No
SK	No	n/a	1	No	No	5 or 6	No	SK or 1	No	6	No
YK	5-8	n/a	SK	No	No	5 or 6	No	SK	No	6	No

¹ Students are required to study one second language from grades 5 through 8. French is the language usually offered, but a school district may choose a different language

² There is great variability in QC FSL programming, as Anglophone school districts decide, in conjunction with parents, which types of programs and what entry points will be offered.

THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION PROGRAM: FUNDING FSL EDUCATION IN CANADA

The Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction is a multi-year, multilateral agreement between the Government of Canada and, on behalf of all provinces and territories, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). The protocol sets the key parameters for collaboration between the Government of Canada and the provincial/territorial governments on official languages in education and provides a mechanism through which the federal government provides contributions to the costs incurred by the provinces and territories in the delivery of minority-language education and second-language instruction. Under the parameters of the protocol, provinces and territories negotiate cost-shared bilateral agreements (commonly known as OLEP Agreements) that are tailored to the jurisdiction's unique priorities. Under the new protocol, the Government of Canada will provide the provinces and territories with \$1,034,388,000 between 2009-10 and 2012-13.

Analysis of provincial/territorial action plans indicates that many plans do not effectively address the need for accountability. Many do not specify parent involvement or access to information about FSL program funding guidelines — few include effective measures to ensure financial accountability for the end use of funds, and models regarding the real costs of providing FSL education have not been developed. We would welcome the knowledge of how the money was spent at the school board level.

CPF always encourages Canadian Heritage to push for greater transparency and accountability when it negotiates agreements with the Council of Ministers of Education. We have also suggested that the Commissioner of Official Languages take a look at these negotiations *vis a vis* accountability. We do what we can as a non-profit, parent-led group, but other actors have a role to play. We would like to work with you to put some teeth into these OLEP agreements that present real goals, ambitious but achievable targets around increasing the number of children enrolled in French language and preferably early immersion programs. We can strengthen existing efforts to select a common proficiency standard to which all children of French second-language studies may aspire.

The members of CPF encourage Canadian Heritage to establish stringent accountability measures for reporting on the end-use of OLEP funds, for reporting on the ways in which school districts comply with ministry FSL policies and guidelines, and for involving parent in FSL Education decision-making. We encourage CMEC to ensure that FSL education policies and practices reflect the views of the wider FSL stakeholder community and to involve the wider stakeholder community in the development and implementation of comparable pan-Canadian measures of student participation and proficiency.

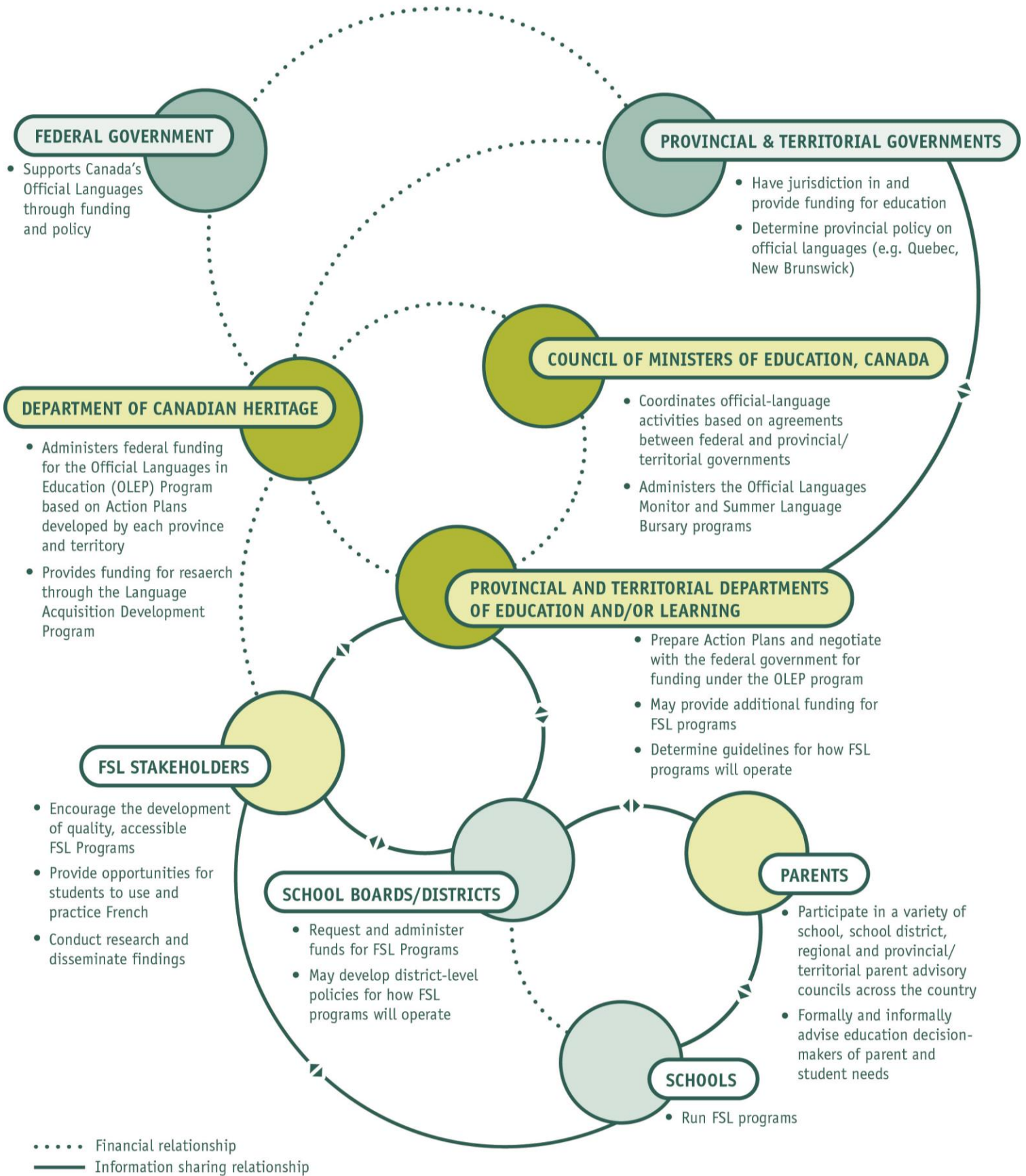
Recommended Reading

CPF (2006) Review of Federal-Provincial/Territorial Agreements on Minority Language Education and Second Official-Language Instruction 2005-2006 to 2008-2009; Ottawa: Author <http://cpf.ca/en/files/FSL-2006-EN1.pdf>

CMEC (2009) Protocol for Agreements For Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction 2009-2010 to 2012-2013 between the Government of Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canadian Heritage, Canada <http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/211/protocol-for-agreements-2009-2013.pdf>

Canadian Heritage (2009) Federal-Provincial-Territorial Agreements in the Area of Education, Ottawa: Author <http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/lo-ol/entente-agreement/education/2009-13-eng.cfm>

Figure 1: A Conceptual Diagram of Institutional Support for French Second Language Programs



CANADIAN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

With over 75% of Canadian students enrolled in post-secondary programs, government can take advantage of the facts that young people are more supportive of linguistic duality and bilingualism and that they can be motivated to enhance their French-language skills by the conviction that knowing both of Canada's official languages will increase employment opportunities. Continued growth in the service industry sector will increase the demand for bilingual staff but, currently, high school French immersion programming is delivered primarily via advanced level courses geared to university-bound students, despite the fact that general level students will enter the service sector in greater numbers, as evidenced by the fact that while 13% of Canadians hold a university degree, while 30% hold post-secondary diplomas or certificates granted by community colleges.

The members of Canadian Parents for French encourage the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Council of Ministers of Education:

- To implement a pan-Canadian post-secondary plan to address the fact that Canada is one of the very few highly industrialized countries that do not have national strategies for post-secondary education;
- To implement policies affording more opportunities for post-secondary students to maintain and enhance their French-language proficiency by establishing more university programs offering French-language courses and appropriate support for students studying in their second-official language;
- To collaborate with francophone community colleges outside of Quebec and with Anglophone community colleges to allow them to accept and support FSL graduates studying in their second official language.

LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN PLURILINGUAL SETTINGS

Immersion not limited to bilingual settings. In Canada, the immersion model has been used to support Heritage languages — for example, a Ukrainian partial immersion program in Edmonton is offered from Kindergarten through high school graduation.

The immersion model has also been used for Aboriginal language recovery in Canada. For example, the early immersion model was adopted in 1979 by a Mohawk half-day preschool class grew with the children into an elementary-level partial immersion program. In 1984 the elementary program became total immersion and, by 2000 the school served students from pre-Kindergarten through grade six.

After almost 40 years, the original French immersion model has proven its value around the world and been adopted in many languages and many countries. A good example is Finland, which adopted Canada's early total immersion and modified it with the addition of non-native languages taught, as far as possible, through immersion. Multilingual education in Finland is realized by providing second-language immersion for 3-6 year old Kindergarten students, by introducing a third language in Grade 1, by beginning first-language instruction in Grade 2 and by introducing a fourth language in Grade three, four or five.

Recommended Reading

Ambrosio, L. (2011) Enseignants des langues internationales au Canada et recherche en multilinguisme : un aperçu en Ontario, Olbi Working Papers Vol 2, Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute, Ottawa
http://www.ccerbal.uottawa.ca/cahiers_vol2.php

Canadian Parents for French (2003) The Canadian Immersion Model Goes International, The State of French-Second-Language Education in Canada 2003, Ottawa: Author

Manzer, K. (1993) Canadian Immersion: Alive and well and working in Finland, Language and Society No. 44, Cambridge, UK

Martyniuk, W. (2011) In support of plurilingual people living in multilingual societies: Policies and frameworks of European language education, OLBI Working Papers Vol. 2, Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute, Ottawa
http://www.ccerbal.uottawa.ca/files/pdf/CAHIERS_Vol2_martyniuk.pdf

CPF Position Statements

Equitable Access to French-Second-Language Programs

The members of Canadian Parents for French believe that every child should have equitable access to the French-second-language program of their choice. French-second-language programs are accessible to all students when:

- There is open enrolment with no admission criteria or enrolment caps so that no child is turned away;
- Transportation is provided at no cost for both urban and rural students;
- Distance learning is available to provide French-second-language learning for students in small and remote communities;
- No additional fees are charged for French-second-language programs;
- Programming and specialist services are provided for gifted, special need and Allophone students;
- Every parent is regularly informed about French-second-language options and entry points, as well as the French-language proficiency levels which can be expected from each option;
- All students receive the information they need to make decisions about continuing to learn French at the secondary and post-secondary levels as well as outside of the education system.

Quality French-Second-Language Programs

The members of Canadian Parents for French believe that Canadian students deserve high quality, effective French-second-language programs. Excellent French-second-language programming is ensured when:

- Ministries of education and school districts have written French-second-language policies and guidelines which provide written goals for student French proficiency for all programs and specify sufficient hours of French-second-language instruction to achieve those goals;
- Graduates receive official recognition of their French proficiency achievements;
- New technologies are used to enhance French-second-language learning in the classroom;
- Research into French-second-language education is supported and used to inform policies, program design and student proficiency expectations;
- There is an adequate supply of quality teaching/learning resources;
- French-second-language teacher qualifications for all programs specify French-language proficiency, second-language teaching methods and subject competence;
- Mechanisms are in place to ensure a sufficient supply of qualified French-second-language teachers;
- There are adequate professional activities for French-second-language teachers to keep up with current pedagogical practices;
- School administrators receive the resources they need in order to effectively plan for and supervise the French-second-language programs in their schools.

National French-Second-Language Proficiency Benchmarks

Canadian Parents for French (CPF) supports the development and implementation of national, standardized French-second-language (FSL) proficiency tests. CPF commends the Department of Canadian Heritage (CH) for its initiatives in promoting national standards, and encourages CH, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and provincial/territorial Ministries of Education to act quickly and co-operatively on this issue.

CPF, in common with other players in the French-second-language education stakeholder community, supports the use of FSL proficiency testing to accomplish a variety of objectives. Accordingly, CPF recommends that the instrument (or instruments) chosen should be so designed as to support the following purposes:

- To establish national, comparable standards of French proficiency outcomes for graduates from various elementary and secondary FSL programs. These proficiency outcomes should be used:
 - To assist parents/students to make informed choices when taking FSL education decisions.

- To ensure that high school graduates are aware of their abilities in French and thus to encourage them to pursue postsecondary studies in French.
- To ensure that potential employers understand the French-language abilities of candidates.
- To assist postsecondary institutions to determine the appropriate placement of students in first-year French courses.
- To assist postsecondary institutions to determine which FSL programs merit advanced standing in French studies.
- To allow secondary French-second-language teachers and students to assess individual student performance and to develop appropriate individualized strategies for improvement.
- To establish national standards for French-second-language teacher accreditation: entrance assessment to determine whether language upgrading is required, and exit requirement to ensure that proficiency standards have been met.
- To establish national French proficiency standards for French-second-language teachers.
- To establish national standards for evaluating provincial/territorial performance in meeting the goals of their Official Languages in Education Program action plans.
- To establish a definition of "functional bilingualism" and to articulate national standards against which to evaluate progress toward the goals of the federal *Action Plan for Official Languages*.
- To ensure that all French-second-language students be accorded no-cost access to French-proficiency testing.

Full Range of French-Second-Language Entry Points and Program Choices

The members of Canadian Parents for French believe that students should be offered a variety of secondary and post-secondary French-second-language program options designed to meet different aspirations. Students have access to a sufficient variety of French-second-language programs when:

- There are multiple entry points to French-second-language programs at the elementary and secondary levels;
- A variety of immersion and core French programs are offered to elementary and secondary students;
- There are sufficient post-secondary opportunities for students to continue French-second-language studies.

Shared Responsibility for French-Second-Language Education

The members of Canadian Parents for French believe that ensuring effective French-second-language programming is the shared responsibility of governments, school districts, teachers, school administrators and support staff and parents. Shared responsibility for French-second-language programming is achieved when:

- Provincial policies and guidelines for French-second-language programs exist and are communicated directly to parents, teachers and administrators;
- Student French-proficiency achievement in French-second-language programs and current research findings are reviewed regularly, and policies and curricula are adjusted accordingly;
- A variety of accessible extra-curricular activities are offered so that all students have opportunities to practice and develop their French-language skills beyond the classroom and the curriculum;
- Adequate, sustainable program funding has been secured when funds designated for various French-second-language programs reflect the amount of time allotted to instruction in French and are used specifically for those programs; and the amount and flow of funds is transparent;
- Information about French-second-language learning is readily available to parents as their children move through the grades so they can support and encourage their children at all levels;
- Parents and other community stakeholder organizations are informed of French-second-language issues to be considered and are actively involved in decision-making at the school, school district, ministry and government levels.