

Canadian Parents for French

**Provincial and National French
Second-Language Education
Stakeholder Consultations**

Pan-Canadian Report

April 2004

The Vision for Canada's Official Languages

Over the last few decades, Canada has made significant strides in the perception of the real value of bilingualism in the educational, government, public, and private spheres. Today, about 86 per cent of Canadians express support for bilingualism.

In 2003, the federal Action Plan for Official Languages responded to the fact that, despite public support for linguistic duality and second official language education, the rapid growth of French immersion in the 1970s and 1980s did not continue through the 1990s.

The plan sets an ambitious objective of doubling the number of high school graduates who are functionally bilingual by the year 2013, identifies strategies to achieve this goal and allocates additional monies for French second-language education.

In March 2004, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, in partnership with Canadian Heritage, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Canadian Parents for French organized a symposium entitled *Vision and Challenges for the 21st Century*. Stakeholders from various sectors of Canadian society discussed issues and proposed strategies that would help to achieve the *Action Plan's* goal for 2013.

In March 2004, Canadian Parents for French held 12 Provincial and Territorial French Second-Language Education Stakeholder Consultations across the country. These FSL stakeholder consultations, sponsored by Canadian Parents for French with funding from the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, will provide an opportunity for provincial and territorial French second-language education stakeholders to respond to recommendation and strategies articulated at the *Vision and Challenges* symposium. The consultations generated numerous recommendations that are summarized herein.

Promoting the Benefits of Bilingual Education

The *National Symposium on Official Languages* stressed the need to make learning a second language a genuine experience. Concrete efforts are needed to motivate students to continue their second language studies through the end of high school and beyond and their achievement should be recognized through incentives and celebration. A more deliberate effort should be made to promote the benefits of being fluent in two languages and highlight the strong position that a bilingual Canada can occupy in a growing, cultural diverse global economy. There were concerns about the number of hours and method of delivery for French language instruction, and about the need for continuity across levels of education. Student retention and access to student exchange programs emerged as key concerns, and many participants agreed that students, parents, and guidance counsellors need to know about the post-secondary and employment opportunities that are available to bilingual graduates.

Provincial and territorial question:

What are the first steps to be taken in marketing bilingual education to students at all levels—from elementary to high school entry, from high school graduation to post-secondary education and life-long learning—and making it a genuine experience to learn a second language? How can resources and support from outside the classroom be mobilized to enrich FSL instruction and capture the magic of bilingual education?

Learning French as a second language (FSL) in Canada brings lifelong benefits—culturally, socially, and professionally. Stakeholders developed a number of recommendations on marketing bilingual education.

Promote the practical career benefits:

Bilingualism leads to better career opportunities in all sectors of the economy—tourism, business, health care, the arts, and beyond. Participants in the British Columbia consultation noted that FSL education needs to take place in the schools: workplace FSL training is generally not provided, and employees are often expected to arrive with bilingual skills in place.

Participants in the Newfoundland and Labrador consultation highlighted the importance of developing awareness of the value of bilingualism, the career advantages, and how it is more useful and relevant than ever in today's globalized context. In New Brunswick, participants recommended the development of a directory of bilingual jobs. Ontario participants stated that guidance counsellors are crucial in underscoring the value of bilingualism.

Beyond career opportunities, being bilingual also brings cognitive and intellectual enhancement and cultural enrichment, participants in Manitoba noted.

Target campaigns at parents:

Participants across the country acknowledged that parents are key to bilingual enrolment. Participants in Manitoba and New Brunswick suggested reaching out to parents early about the benefits of early FSL instruction, and maintaining an ongoing connection. Information sessions should be held for parents in core French as well as French immersion programs, participants in the Northwest Territories said.

One barrier to improving bilingualism is the concern among some parents that learning a second language may have a negative impact on first language acquisition. However, participants in Quebec cited research findings that those who learn a second language actually see benefits in their first language.

Parent awareness campaigns need to provide hard data, statistics, and results on the value of bilingual education, British Columbia participants stated. They recommended producing materials in a variety of languages to reach the growing number of new Canadians.

Start promotion early:

Quebec participants observed that child care centres have an early opportunity to teach children and shape parental attitudes. They suggested that qualifications for early childhood educators be augmented to include FSL instruction. Participants in Ontario and Saskatchewan also supported preschool FSL learning opportunities.

Provide meaningful cultural exchanges:

Across the country, participants emphasized that cultural exchanges, field trips and experiences outside the classroom are invaluable—they enhance learning and passion and stimulate interest for FSL, while putting the language in a real-life context. Cultural exchanges and study opportunities need to be better promoted.

In Saskatchewan, participants said cultural exchanges should involve francophone communities across Canada, not just in Quebec and France. Links with local francophone communities provide a rich everyday experience of French culture, without the costs and liability issues associated with travel, Alberta participants noted.

Champion bilingual success stories:

Prominent personalities in business, sports, and the arts could promote FSL education with personal anecdotes that show how French has enriched their lives and careers, participants in British Columbia and New Brunswick said. Bilingual graduates are also important role models.

In Prince Edward Island, participants felt that it is equally important to celebrate the achievements and success stories of ordinary families and communities living in linguistic duality. They stressed that the ultimate champion has to be the Ministry of Education.

Reach out through different media:

The British Columbia consultation suggested that teachers use information technology to extend learning beyond the classroom and textbooks. Participants in Prince Edward Island expressed concern about accessibility and cautioned that IT is not the answer to everything. Still, given the Internet's ubiquity among youth and its immense information capacity, Web-related initiatives emerged as a crucial piece of the puzzle in facilitating bilingualism, in the classroom and beyond. In Manitoba, participants identified distance education as a good tool for reaching rural and remote communities.

Participants in Northwest Territories recommended posters and paid advertising (TV, radio, newspaper, and magazine), all including an Internet address for follow-up, as a way of reaching a broadly based audience. Participants also endorsed the production of video vignettes promoting French language use and success stories.

Attracting, training, and sustaining teachers

The *National Symposium* underscored the important challenge of attracting, training, and supporting quality FSL instructors. Current teaching methods for FSL teachers must be improved and expanded, and there is a need to better define the qualifications an instructor needs before being thrust into a second-language teaching environment. Participants acknowledged that second-language teaching comes with its own special set of challenges, including unclear curriculum, limited materials, and the need to tailor programming to rural, remote, and small schools with smaller class sizes and/or split grades. There was wide agreement that teachers need more support, as well as encouragement to modernize FSL instruction and experiment with cutting-edge teaching methods.

Provincial and territorial question:

What are the prospects for attracting and training the next generation of competent, enthusiastic FSL instructors, and for ensuring that they have the resources and support that they need to succeed?

The shortage of FSL teachers is a pressing concern across Canada. Participants emphasized the importance of attracting quality teachers and providing adequate resources, support, and professional development opportunities. Competency standards were also recommended. Sufficient, long-term funding is required to train and retain qualified and enthusiastic FSL teachers, stakeholders stressed.

Recruit and train more FSL teachers:

The shortage of FSL teachers is the biggest challenge and barrier to bilingual education, participants in Alberta noted. FSL students should be made aware of the shortage and the specific benefits and career opportunities that come with French language training, participants in British Columbia said.

Students should be targeted in high school, college, and university as they are making career choices, Quebec participants suggested. They also proposed teacher training scholarships, with some assurance of a fast track to jobs to make the profession more attractive. In Nova Scotia, participants suggested recruiting within Bachelor of Education programs, and monitoring and supporting bilingual students throughout university. Requirements for becoming FSL teachers need to be made better known, participants in New Brunswick said. Manitoba participants said the assessment of applicants should look beyond Grade Point Average to life experiences and volunteer work.

Participants also discussed the challenge of recruiting FSL teachers with specialized subject knowledge, pointing to the demand for FSL teachers in math and science. Participants in Manitoba agreed that more subjects need to be taught in French and noted the challenge of attracting FSL teachers to rural areas.

Provide adequate resources and teacher support:

FSL teachers need more support, including networking opportunities and bursaries for training and professional development, said participants in Prince Edward Island and British Columbia. They advocated increased support for FSL retraining programs to help teachers upgrade methodology and proficiency. Saskatchewan participants noted that FSL instruction is demanding and requires a great deal of preparation to accommodate the wide range of skill levels among students.

New Brunswick participants said greater support and better resources are required for FSL teachers in rural areas, and for those teaching students with special needs.

Participants underscored the importance of adequate funding and called for a review of current budget allocations. In Manitoba, participants highlighted the need for decent and competitive wages in the profession.

Improve training for FSL teachers:

Universities need to examine how they can help train more and better second-language teachers, Quebec participants stated. In New Brunswick, participants emphasized that training at the university level needs to be consistent across Canada, and proposed an inter-university model for FSL teacher training, involving shared resources and student exchange programs.

In Nova Scotia, participants stated that the next generation of FSL teachers should be equally qualified to teach core French and French immersion; the dichotomy that currently exists in many schools needs to be eliminated. Alberta participants suggested setting a date after which teaching degrees would only be issued to those who have achieved proficiency in a second language.

Increase professional development opportunities:

FSL teachers need more opportunities to refresh their linguistic skills and rejuvenate their passion for French language and culture. Participants in Saskatchewan stated that this enthusiasm is vital to student recruitment and retention.

Participants in Manitoba focused on the value of mentoring programs, as did Quebec participants, who agreed that mentoring should be an institutionalized part of training. Teaching exchanges among the provinces are effective, they added. However, as usual funding emerged as a challenge

Participants also underlined the need for increased support and opportunities for FSL teachers to exchange ideas and methodologies. Professional development opportunities, tools, and resources must be specific to the French immersion classroom, participants in Saskatchewan added. Prince Edward Island participants asserted that French and English tools should also be available at the same time.

Ongoing, in-service professional development with proper release time for teachers is essential. Teachers should be able to take three weeks of professional development during the school year, instead of having to upgrade their skills on their own time over the summer. New Brunswick participants called for intensive, short-term teacher training opportunities. In Nova Scotia, participants advocated reinstating sabbaticals as part of an extended skills program.

Improve the work environment:

The correlation between working conditions and teacher retention needs to be established, participants in Quebec said. Participants in Saskatchewan and Ontario also advocated an improved work environment as an important measure for making FSL teachers feel valued and respected within the community. FSL teachers often lack adequate physical space, and large class sizes present a major impediment to effective instruction.

Better salaries and more support and resources are critical to attract new FSL teachers, participants in Newfoundland and Labrador and Ontario stated.

Enhancing FSL instruction across Canada with program and policy changes

The *National Symposium* grappled with the possibility that current levels of access and instructional infrastructure will be insufficient to meet the goal of doubling the number of bilingual high school graduates by 2013. Discussion touched on a number of specific measures—ranging from “carrots” to “sticks”—to improve the consistency of FSL instruction across Canada and ensure adequate funding, monitoring, accountability, and senior government buy-in.

Provincial and territorial question:

What major program and policy changes would enhance FSL instruction across Canada? What are the first, most practical steps that can be taken to build a more effective, more accessible system, and who should be involved?

A strategic, comprehensive approach is needed to infuse French and English in everyday life throughout Canada and boost the number of bilingual graduates by 2013.

The priority is to expand the quality and range of programs and course offerings and increase the number of places for students, especially at the post-secondary level, participants in Prince Edward Island said.

Participants agreed that the continuity of opportunities throughout the learning spectrum is vital. In Saskatchewan, participants stressed the importance of acting at all levels at once. Recommendations tended to reflect the particular educational models and realities of each provincial jurisdiction.

Funding for local initiatives and infrastructure:

Funding for community-based campaigns needs to be more accessible, particularly to smaller and rural communities, participants in Newfoundland and Labrador said. At the same time, it was felt that funding needs to be applied towards building French-language infrastructure, rather than just focusing on cultural exchanges. For instance, provincial governments could undertake initiatives such as bilingual signage along highways and within communities—indeed, all government agencies should be responsible for promoting French as an official language. In Saskatchewan, participants discussed a provincial campaign targeted at students, parents, and the public.

More points of entry:

Greater accessibility is fundamental to enhancing FSL learning and bilingualism in Canada. There is a need for more inclusive programming that allows students on different pathways to learn French at their own pace, participants in Manitoba said. The group highlighted the need for more French immersion entry points and more opportunities to further French studies beyond high school.

Expand French curriculum:

FSL curriculum options need to be expanded at the high school level to make French a stronger presence in the classroom, said participants in Nova Scotia. Newfoundland and Labrador participants felt teachers in all subject areas ought to be trained in FSL. In the Yukon, an alternate program in French—Experiential Science, Music, Arts and Drama—has strengthened French-language participation.

Saskatchewan participants stressed the need for more intensive core French programming, with appropriate funding. New Brunswick participants suggested mandating intensive FSL learning experiences at the elementary level.

Nova Scotia participants advocated regular mini-immersion sessions in core French for effective FSL learning. In particular, they stressed the importance of French studies for academic credit in the senior years of high school.

Mandate FSL:

French learning must be given the same importance as other subjects; just as math is necessary to graduate, French should be as well, Quebec participants felt. They recommended introducing FSL requirements in university. The University of Ottawa, for instance, has a second language admission requirement, while Memorial University has introduced a second language graduation requirement.

British Columbia and Nova Scotia participants agreed that compulsory French from kindergarten

through high school should be reinstated.

Some participants said the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) should issue a policy statement on French education in Canada and endorse the aim of teaching French across all jurisdictions. Participants in Manitoba focused on the need to define “functionally bilingual.”

French language programming needs to be universally available as early as possible across education systems, Newfoundland participants said. The group added that FSL studies must be promoted more effectively at the university level.

Certification of bilingual proficiency is essential at all levels, participants emphasized.

Post-secondary requirements:

Mandating French as a requirement for post-secondary entrance and graduation (particularly for teaching programs) would go far in communicating the value Canadian society places on the use of the French language as part of its social and cultural fabric, participants in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec stated. However, the gap between high school FSL competency levels and university entrance requirements would have to be decreased. Prince Edward Island participants recommended establishing a second-language entrance requirement for university. In British Columbia, participants said professional development programs should specify Grade 12 core French as an entrance requirement.

Participants in Saskatchewan said pressure should be put on post-secondary institutions in the province, especially universities, to reinstate the requirement for a second language upon graduation. Some participants said second-language requirements can be a good recruitment mechanism for universities: the idea that success includes completion of a second-language requirement sets the bar higher.

In Alberta, participants focused on the need for more post-secondary courses in French, agreeing that university students need more opportunities to pursue their field of study in French. British Columbia participants recommended French immersion courses at the university level.

At the same time, post-secondary education encompasses more than university. The post-secondary level also includes career-oriented programs, noted Prince Edward Island participants, and courses ranging from culinary arts to resident care to youth work can also be delivered in French to better prepare students for the workplace. However, they acknowledged the challenge of finding teachers proficient in both French and the various subject areas.

Develop competency standards for teachers:

Participants in Prince Edward Island and Alberta stressed the critical importance of a national framework to define and enforce levels of competency for teachers. This would include a clear policy on minimum oral and written proficiencies for teachers, and a requirement for FSL teachers to upgrade competencies through courses. Specific strategies and national proficiency

standards and tests for French fluency are key aspects of a more effective system.

Competency is a matter of providing support for professional development, participants in New Brunswick stated. They did not support the implementation of competency tests, on the premise that the teacher's university degree constitutes proof of competency.

Monitor progress:

Better data and assessment tools are needed to understand the impacts and benefits of French immersion programming, participants in Prince Edward Island said. Ministries of education have a role to play. In Manitoba, participants recommended research on public perceptions on the value of FSL.

Augment resources and funding:

Higher salaries and more support and resources are critical to attract new FSL teachers, participants in Newfoundland and Labrador and Ontario stated.

Nova Scotia participants asserted that funding and political commitment to FSL education programs are key to reaching the 2013 target, adding that more funding will be needed to expand French curriculum and learning opportunities across Canada.

Institutional support for teacher training and professional development must be strengthened, participants in Saskatchewan said. The federal government has a significant role to play.

In Northwest Territories, participants underlined that there must be appropriate resources to support a global vision for increasing bilingualism across all age groups.

Incentives for students:

Participants generally agreed that scholarships and bursaries are important ways of encouraging second-language learning at higher levels.

Nova Scotia participants suggested establishing scholarships for Bachelor of Education students who pursue French studies. At the high school level, summer language bursary programs and exchanges are effective.

Participants in Prince Edward Island and Alberta stressed the critical importance of a national framework to define and enforce levels of competency for students as evidence of their abilities.

Stakeholder consultation:

To move forward, the federal and provincial governments must engage in meaningful consultation with all major stakeholders. British Columbia participants said teachers, in particular, must be represented.

Dimensions of a community-based campaign for FSL instruction

It takes a village to raise a child, and the *National Symposium* made it clear that public opinion is an important factor in capturing the benefits of learning French/English language and culture. Some participants called on all levels of government to join with private organizations in a comprehensive national campaign to promote the virtues of second-language education. They noted that second-language instruction is at its best when it enjoys strong community support and stressed some of the benefits that come back to the wider society when graduates are fluent in both languages.

Provincial and territorial question:

What are the dimensions of a community-based campaign to promote FSL instruction and support Canada's Vision for 2013 objectives? What are the first steps, and who should be involved?

Although it is sometimes perceived as involving only students and teachers, education is really a community responsibility, participants in Newfoundland and Labrador observed. Society as a whole must cultivate interest in linguistic duality and bilingual young Canadians.

Grassroots messages:

In Nova Scotia, participants suggested a national community campaign on bilingualism along the lines of *ParticipAction*, as well as targeted campaigns for specific markets and stakeholder groups.

Participants in Saskatchewan felt that local campaigns at the grassroots level are equally important for creating awareness and enthusiasm, and for generating key partnerships. Manitoba participants emphasized that bilingual strategies must arise from local stakeholders.

Interaction among francophone and anglophone communities:

FSL learning takes place when students experience French as a living language. Participants across the country stressed the need to cultivate more interaction between anglophone and francophone communities.

In New Brunswick, participants suggested that French and English educational sectors work together to foster linguistic duality. Schools could share resources and collaborate on second-language student exchange programs, and on shared activities like bilingual theatrical productions. Inter- and intra-provincial student exchanges were also recommended.

Francophone and anglophone interactions must extend beyond the classroom to the larger community. Extracurricular activities in the arts, music, and sports should be provided in French, participants in Saskatchewan said, as a way of nurturing a cultural and social mindset of

speaking both official languages. Real-world experiences of French lead to true enjoyment of the language, participants in Prince Edward Island added.

Participants in Newfoundland and Labrador called for better coordination among cultural organizations to promote the French language and deliver more bilingual events and programming. They also highlighted the value of twinning francophone and anglophone communities.

Bilingual community resources:

Participants in Nova Scotia recommended early and ongoing promotion of FSL, supported by community language centres.

A strategic plan is needed for the post-secondary level, particularly for those who may not go on to university, British Columbia participants said.

New Brunswick participants said the media could be effective in getting students interested in continuing French language education, suggesting that bilingual television programs could be developed to engage student viewers.

A central data bank of French language education opportunities and resources would be useful to the public and teachers alike, participants in Ontario stated. A similar idea came up in Northwest Territories, where participants suggested a dynamic national portal to bring together all the FSL resources and information on the Internet. FSL teachers, in particular, would benefit from such a resource. In Nova Scotia, participants proposed a database of bilingual professions.

Participants also recommended a booklet for parents on using French at home, emphasizing the importance of French music, television, and radio programs.

Participants also suggested French language community courses on light topics, such as hobbies, as a vehicle for reaching the public. In Ontario, French courses are being offered to parents to help them feel comfortable with the language as their children gain exposure to it in school.

Leadership and collaboration:

All sectors of society have a role to play in cultivating linguistic duality through everyday use of French and English across Canada, participants in Ontario stated. Participants in New Brunswick emphasized that commitment from political and community leaders, school boards and administrators is critical. Media support is also extremely important. Partnerships will be a key element of any effort to promote the value of bilingualism and moving forward.

Ambassadors and champions of linguistic duality:

FSL champions and role models can be found in the arts, culture, sports, business, and political spheres. Young bilingual Canadians also make effective ambassadors to both students and

parents, participants in Manitoba noted. Participants in Nova Scotia and Northwest Territories suggested identifying a national champion, while in Newfoundland and Labrador, participants focused on finding political champions at the provincial level. In Ontario, participants discussed the possibility of reaching youth through francophone music stars and graffiti artists—going beyond the stereotype of French culture.

Fostering collaboration between the business and education sectors

Discussion in the business action stream focused on identifying, quantifying, and promoting the bottom-line benefits of a bilingual workplace. The *National Symposium* heard examples of companies that had reaped unanticipated benefits from bilingual policies, from the Mountain Equipment Co-op to a small business entrepreneur in Sussex, New Brunswick. But values like an open mind and an ability to learn are difficult to link to a balance sheet, so it can be challenging to make the case for a corporation to commit to a long-term investment. The result may be that business owners are failing to link their own self-interest to their employees.

The business stream addressed the definition of bilingualism, with some participants stressing the difference between being “fully bilingual” and “functionally bilingual”. While some speakers expressed concern about setting the bar too high for graduates, others warned that businesses lack the time or resources for workplace FSL training and need job-ready employees who can function in either language, easily and effortlessly.

Provincial and territorial question:

Is there scope for ongoing collaboration between the business and education sectors to increase the proportion of high school graduates with a working knowledge of both official languages? If so, based on the initial list of strategies developed at the National Symposium, what are the most promising opportunities for early action?

The relevance and advantages of bilingualism in the global business world need to be promoted more effectively, participants in Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan stated. Participants across Canada saw many opportunities for collaboration among business, education, and government to promote bilingualism. Participants in Saskatchewan said “bilingual business” needs to be defined and publicly recognized.

Job fairs and school visits:

Participants in Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan said business leaders and professionals should be invited to visit schools to talk about how French has boosted their careers and could benefit students in different career paths. Job fairs are an ideal venue to highlight the value of bilingualism and the bilingual career opportunities to be found in different professions, participants in Manitoba and Nova Scotia noted.

Career development and support:

Across the country, co-op programs were highlighted as a vital and effective way of introducing students to work in a bilingual professional environment. Businesses and governments should be encouraged to develop co-op placements, internships, and summer work opportunities for FSL students—New Brunswick participants said this would have a significant impact on bilingual proficiency. In Nova Scotia, participants proposed bilingual job shadowing.

Participants in Newfoundland and Labrador asserted that businesses and governments must provide FSL training for employees, for example, through immersion in a French-speaking community. In New Brunswick, participants recommended the development of courses and programs to bridge the gap between the level of French achieved at school and the proficiency level required in the business world.

Incentives for business:

Businesses tend to view matters from a return on investment perspective and need to be persuaded to see the potential benefits of investing in bilingualism, participants in Nova Scotia said. Research on business benefits and opportunities for bilingual firms needs to be communicated, and businesses need resources to help them find skilled bilingual employees.

Various tax incentives were proposed to encourage businesses to hire bilingual employees, provide FSL education to employees, or make the transition into offering bilingual services.

Sponsorship and involvement:

Businesses should be encouraged to sponsor bilingual events and promote the use of French in day-to-day activities. Local chambers of commerce should be involved in promoting bilingual activities and programs in their communities, New Brunswick participants suggested. In Prince Edward Island, participants endorsed a “traveling road show” highlighting the importance of French and business opportunities in bilingualism.

Fostering collaboration between the arts, culture, and sports sector and the FSL education community

Arts, culture, and sport are globalized arenas where it is essential to set aside differences in linguistic and cultural background. The *National Symposium* discussed the need to address mobility and accessibility issues and ensure that all students have the opportunity to “live the experience” of another language—including Aboriginal languages as well as English and French.

Provincial and territorial question:

Is there scope for ongoing collaboration between the arts, culture, and sport sector and the FSL education community to increase the proportion of high school graduates with a working knowledge of both official languages? If so, based on the initial list of strategies developed at the National Symposium, what are the most promising opportunities for early action?

Cultural institutions, the arts and sport play an important role in providing bilingual experiences. Cultural experiences bring vital insight into the nuances of French language and culture, participants in Prince Edward Island noted. In Ontario, participants agreed that cultural exchanges among different communities across Canada need to be encouraged and funded. Adequate resources are critical to the ability to offer services in both English and French, participants in Manitoba emphasized.

Promote extracurricular experiences in French:

Fusing arts and sports with FSL language instruction is a good strategy that supports a more broadly based approach to learning, participants in Ontario and Prince Edward Island said. Children can explore the arts and sports in another language, learning a basic lexicon as well as developing artistic or athletic skills.

FSL learning should continue outside the school year. British Columbia participants suggested that teachers be employed during the summer months in community-based activities involving French. Extracurricular activities in French help foster the normality of easy, back-and-forth bilingualism. A local and national inventory of cultural resources and events should be developed, New Brunswick participants suggested.

Bring role models into the schools:

Francophone artists, authors, musicians, and athletes should be invited to schools to give hands-on workshops and encourage students to learn French, participants in Newfoundland and Labrador said. These role models can motivate and inspire students to take a stronger interest in French language programs, Saskatchewan participants noted. A directory of French-speaking role models would help schools find the right speakers, participants in British Columbia suggested. They added that initiatives should be sustained throughout the year for a richer, longer-lasting impression of French language and culture.

Collaborate on cultural activities:

Schools and community organizations ought to work together on French activities, such as theatrical productions and community events, Saskatchewan participants said. British Columbia participants noted that such collaborations lead to volunteer opportunities for students in French cultural activities. Participants all around emphasized the importance of experiencing the French language outside the classroom.

Youth competitions such as the Jeux de la Francophonie and Jeux de l'Acadie are good models for developing games for FSL students, participants in Nova Scotia said.

Participants in Newfoundland and Labrador suggested that libraries could initiate a French Book of the Month program, followed by a French Personality of the Month. In Nova Scotia, participants recommended increasing French holdings and activities at libraries.

Encourage bilingual information at cultural institutions:

French is not universally available at cultural institutions, but British Columbia participants said statistics on students in French immersion might encourage them to produce bilingual information. Senior French immersion students could also be engaged in translating information, for instance, for tours for elementary students.

Promote bilingual and French programming:

Bilingual and French-language television and radio programming should be more widely available, said participants in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. Northwest Territories participants suggested distributing a list of current French-language television shows appropriate for different levels and ages, to help teachers extend the learning experience.

Moving Forward

The Provincial and Territorial French-Second-Language Education Stakeholder Consultations held by Canadian Parents for French generated numerous recommendations and strategies for strengthening bilingualism in communities across Canada, while highlighting the fundamental challenges of teacher shortages and limited funding and resources. Stakeholders expressed unequivocal support for the federal government's goal of doubling the number of bilingual high school graduates by 2013, and they were eager to work together to develop strategies to resolve the issues, overcome barriers to linguistic duality, and ensure continuing momentum.