

# The State of French-Second-Language Education 2012

## FACTSHEET FOR PARENT ADVOCATES

Canadian Parents for French hosted a Roundtable on Academically Challenged Students in French-Second-Language (FSL) Programs in June 2012 to initiate a dialogue amongst stakeholders, educators and policy-makers, to develop joint recommendations for more inclusionary practices, and to move the issue of equitable access for all students in Canada from discussion to action.

Roughly forty representatives from the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, ministries of education, school districts, faculties of education and researchers, as well as national associations in the field of FSL education, attended the Roundtable and developed comprehensive recommendations and success indicators. Participants outlined the need for policies, inclusionary practices and appropriate support to enable fair access and to meet the needs of academically challenged students.

You will find an executive summary of Roundtable findings in the State of French-Second-Language Education in Canada 2012 as well as complete Roundtable proceedings on the national website. [insert URL] CPF has completed fact sheets targeted to parents, educators, and school boards, and will soon develop advocacy materials targeted to provincial/territorial ministries of education and the government of Canada.

### KEY PRINCIPLES OF ADVOCACY

Once you have selected an issue you wish to advocate for, the following principles of advocacy will greatly enhance your chances for a successful resolution. CPF was built on the efforts of volunteers, members, chapter representatives, branch and national board members who understood and continue to use the following principals of advocacy:

1. Know your case and document your facts.
2. Whenever possible, ensure that you are familiar with current policies.
3. Know opposing cases and arguments and develop a strategy for countering them. You may find that role-playing will help you to refine your strategies.
4. Advocacy by coalition requires effective collaboration. Ensure that each person has a clearly defined role and that communication within your group is timely and effective.
5. Know your resources and allies. Consult these people, inform them of your issues and enlist their assistance.
6. Intervene at a level that is high enough to get the job done.
7. Take a positive approach. Assume good will on the part of the system and communicate this assumption to those within the system. Use positive documentation and give credit where it is due. Whenever possible, recruit those within the system to your cause.
8. Demonstrate to those in the system the ways in which system interferes with or defeats its own goals.
9. Never engage in an overt power struggle without the agreement of your planning group.
10. Always be aware of the vulnerability of those within your group. The group must assess risks and weigh them carefully against possible gains before choosing confrontation.

### USING THE EDUCATOR FACT SHEET

- Share with FSL teachers
- Share with school guidance counselors and special education co-ordinators
- Share with faculties of education

### WHEN YOU CAN USE THE PARENT FACT SHEET

- Kindergarten evenings
- Public education events
- Excerpts in local newspapers, school newsletters, Chapter newsletters
- Use information in submissions to school and school district administrators
- Share with school guidance counselors and special education co-ordinators
- Share (or develop) lists of coaches/tutors who may be of assistance