

Tackling the French Teacher Shortage by Asking Canadians, What's your Raison D'Être?

By Marcos Salaiza

Much has been written and researched about the French Second Language (FSL) teacher shortage across Canada.

In 2016, Canadian Parents for French (CPF) shared its first position paper, *FSL Teacher Supply and Demand in Canada*, in which it identified the challenges and established key calls to action.

In 2018, the federal government announced major investments to address the recruitment and retention issue. CPF National hosted a roundtable in Ottawa with key educational and government stakeholders to discuss strategic projects that could have a major, lasting impact.

In 2019, the Office of the Commissioner of Official

Languages (OCOL) released the report, *Accessing Opportunity: A study on challenges in FSL education teacher supply and demand in Canada*, including a recommendation to “engage in a promotional campaign to raise awareness among FSL high school students of the opportunities and requirements involved in pursuing a career in FSL education—the campaign should promote and affirm the value of all FSL education programs, from Core French to French Immersion.”

Along with partner organizations leading public awareness campaigns, CPF National has the reach to lead an overarching public education campaign focused on positively



impacting others—the primary purpose behind choosing a career in teaching. CPF Branches are rolling out several local awareness campaigns to attract students to consider a career as a French teacher.

What's your Raison D'Être?

To get to the heart of why anyone might consider a teaching position, Canadian Parents for French is inviting

Canadians to reflect on and embrace their Raison D'Être.

Teaching is about more than sharing knowledge. It's about making a difference and impacting the lives of students for the better. **Teaching in French is no different.** Being a French teacher means spending every day setting students up for success, growing as a teacher, and opening eyes to the importance of the French

language. CPF believes French teachers are vital to shaping Canada's future.

The "My Raison D'Être" campaign features real French teachers from across Canada at different career stages. Running on social media channels, public advertising, and through local CPF Branches and Chapters, the campaign features teachers of all experience levels—from current students to retirees—sharing their personal stories of how teaching in French has fulfilled their Raison D'Être. See the campaign at [TeachInFrench.ca](https://www.teachinfrench.ca).

SayOui.ca

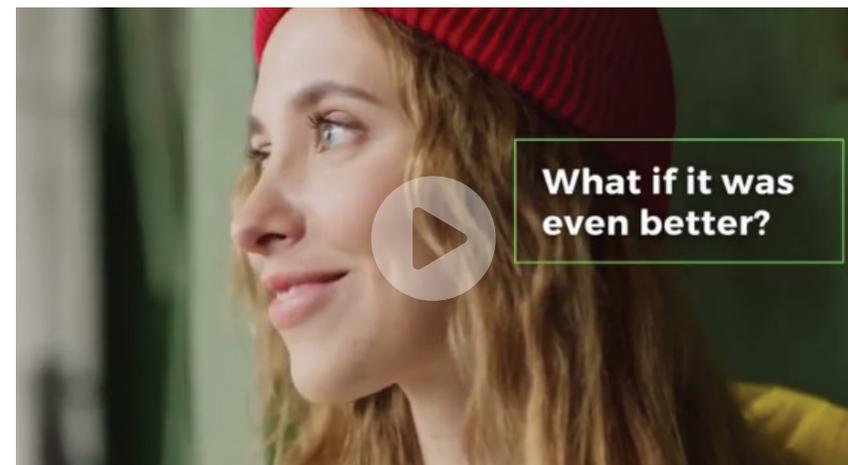
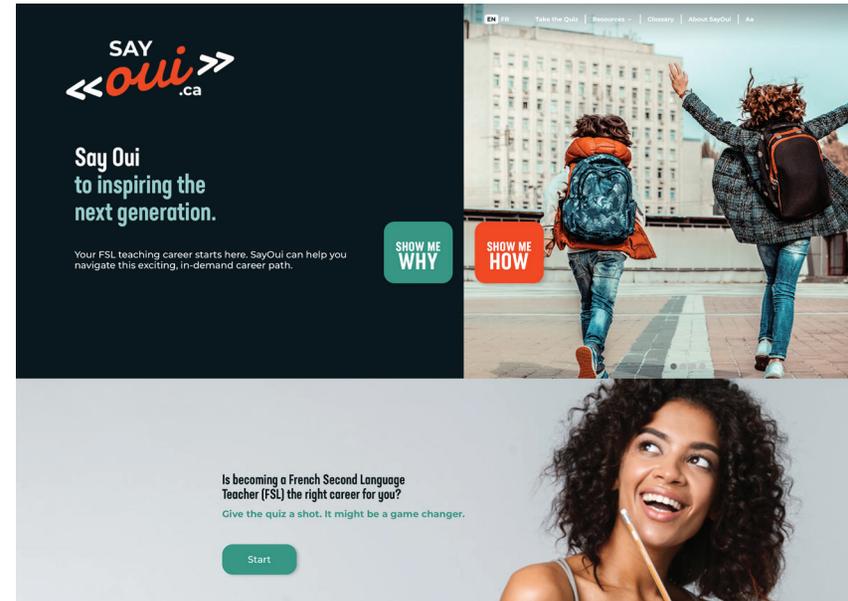
Last year, CPF Ontario launched the [SayOui.ca](https://www.sayoui.ca) website, the first step in a broader campaign to increase awareness of the high demand for French teachers. The site encourages secondary and undergraduate university students to explore teaching as a career. It also outlines the educational pathway to becoming a French teacher in Ontario and additional

experiential opportunities to hone one's proficiency in French, preparing them for a confident start to their chosen career.

Phase two of [SayOui.ca](https://www.sayoui.ca) is underway, which includes a marketing and promotional campaign using social media, bus shelter ads, and radio promos to drive the target audience to the website. In December 2021, CPF Ontario hosted a Pathways to Bilingual Success Youth Conference featuring teaching in French as a sought-after, flexible career for those who are seeking to inspire the next generation.

Take Your Career Further as a French Teacher

With their Take Your Career Further as a French Teacher campaign, CPF Nova Scotia is aiming to bridge the growing gap between French teachers and French teacher demand in the province. The goal is to reach out to university students in key French immersion academic areas such as STEM and Arts



[Watch the video](#)

programs, encouraging them to enhance their current career path by becoming a French teacher in their area of expertise, rather than switching career paths.

Take Your Career Further is also reaching out to faculties that offer a Bachelor of Education to promote a French teachable among their students. The next phase of the campaign is organizing events and launching promotional materials such as videos for use in the classroom and on social media.

In 2022, the Take Your Career Further campaign will redevelop the program to include promotion to junior and high school students.

Besides addressing the retention and recruitment of French second language teachers, this campaign is also contributing to the strengthening of French language and culture in the Atlantic region. For more information visit [TakeYourCareerFurther.ca](https://www.TakeYourCareerFurther.ca).



[Watch the video](#)



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Teach in French – Give the Gift of Language & Culture

CPF Manitoba is enhancing French teacher recruitment by providing informative and interactive presentations across the province. The presentations are available for a variety of target audiences, ranging from grade 5 to undergraduate students.

Through the presentations, the audience is made aware that teaching in French and teaching

French are viable, worthwhile, personally enriching, and rewarding career options. This project aims to inspire students at an early age and encourage them to consider a career teaching French. The presentations also provide parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and post-secondary educators with more knowledge about teaching in French and teaching French as career options.

In addition to the presentations, CPF Manitoba administers [FrenchForLife.ca](https://www.frenchforlife.ca), which is a website that contains information about the benefits of learning French with resources for parents and students. The website also hosts resources for those considering a career as a French teacher and general information for those who are only starting to consider one.

C'est ta route!

CPF Alberta partnered with Edmonton Public Schools to develop a "teaching French as a career pathway toolkit." The result was the *C'est ta route* website: [BeAFrenchTeacher.ca](https://www.beafrenchteacher.ca).

A useful tool for students, teachers, administrators, and parents, the *C'est ta route* website contains cultural and learning opportunities, advocacy documents, program information, language assessment, among other things. The goal is to motivate students and spark an interest in a potential career as

teachers while also helping them embrace their ability to speak French and encourage them to continue learning the language.

A series of videos has been created, showcasing the experiences of teachers and students alike and providing a glimpse into the unique pathways that lead to language proficiency. They can all be located on the above-noted website.



From east to west, CPF is working hard to address the French teacher supply and demand issue, this is only the beginning. With more than 40 years advocating for French second language education, CPF keeps engaging with stakeholders at all levels to ensure young Canadians have the opportunity to learn and use French.

While we know it will take years to address the French teacher supply issue in many regions of Canada, Canadian Parents for French is hopeful public awareness

campaigns such as these will:

- Increase the visibility and the viability of the profession of teacher of French among Canadians;
- help French language teachers attain a higher profile and raised self-esteem as to the importance of their contributions to Canadian society; and
- shift public perception and instill a pride in the career of teaching, and teaching French in particular, impacting long-term retention in the profession.