



CPE Magazine

CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH

SPRING 2022

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**41 YEARS OF FRENCH
IMMERSION IN THE YUKON**

**WHAT CANADIANS
THINK ABOUT
OFFICIAL BILINGUALISM
AND THE OFFICIAL
LANGUAGES ACT**

**GIVE THE GIFT
OF LANGUAGE
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career where I can
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Canadian Parents for French is a nationwide, research-informed, volunteer organization
that promotes and creates opportunities to learn and use French for all those who
call Canada home.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bonjour! Time flies, we are almost halfway through 2022! Spring is a time for renewal, when nature reminds us of new beginnings and that is time to make the most out of the warmer and longer days ahead. It is with this idea in mind that we have put together this issue of *CPF Magazine* for you to enjoy.

As we head towards the end of the school year, we have included some updates on projects as well as research-based articles to reflect on what has been, undoubtedly, another challenging year. So far in 2022, we also have very good news, a new public opinion survey published in February shows that 87% of Canadians support bilingualism and the Official Languages Act; the survey was released by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. You will find more information about this survey in an article written by the Commissioner, Raymond Th  berge, and in the infographic that goes with it.

At the National Board and throughout the Network we are having a busy spring focused on advocacy and other key issues.



Across the Network, several advocacy events took place in April; we published a new advocacy-oriented research brief "Learning French in the Early Years. For a Bright Bilingual Future!" Finally, we are gearing up for the CPF Leader Networking Event taking place in the summer and we are also looking forward to your participation this fall at the CPF Network Virtual Conference. Stay tuned as details about the conference and other opportunities become available.

As always, I would like to thank all our volunteers, members and parents for their commitment to French as a second language education and the work we do.

We hope you enjoy this issue, stay safe! *   la prochaine!* ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derrek Bentley".

DERREK BENTLEY
CPF NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Bon vent! Glyn Lewis Departs CPF BC & YT

In March we said goodbye to Glyn Lewis, who served as the CPF British Columbia & Yukon Branch Executive Director for more than 14 years. He demonstrated a strong commitment to the organization's mandate.

The CPF Network greatly benefited from his strengths in advocacy, media relations and outreach. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavours.

Merci Glyn!



Glyn Lewis at the 2019 CPF FSL Awareness Breakfast in Ottawa.



Bilingualism:

A Gift From My Father

BY MICHAEL VANDERGRIFF, DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

THIS ARTICLE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 03, 2021 IN THE LANGUAGE PORTAL OF CANADA'S OUR LANGUAGES BLOG. A TRANSLATION BUREAU INITIATIVE, THE LANGUAGE PORTAL PROVIDES CANADIANS WITH A WIDE RANGE OF RESOURCES TO HELP THEM COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH, AND PUBLISHES WEEKLY ARTICLES BY LANGUAGE LOVERS ON THE OUR LANGUAGES BLOG.

> <https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/blogue-blog/bilinguisme-un-legs-bilingualism-a-gift-eng>

When Lucie Séguin, Chief Executive Officer of the Translation Bureau, gave me the opportunity to write this post for the Our Languages Blog, I knew I would want to reflect on how bilingualism and French as a second language have played a special role in my life, even though my own skills and confidence have varied over the years.

I grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, and studied French as a subject in school, as many other students did. However, there was one small difference between the other students and me: my father was the high school French teacher. I remember that it was occasionally awkward to be in his class. However, I now value the memory of seeing his love of language and teaching in action. As for my relationships with my classmates, all I can say is that it was a good thing I was captain of the basketball team!

When I was in Grade 11, my father/teacher organized an exchange for our class with a school in St-Georges de Beauce. I believe he applied to a federal program in place at that time to support these exchanges. The family of my *Québécois* counterpart generously hosted me for a week, and this visit left a lasting impression. Not only did I taste poutine for the first time, I also experienced what French was like when you actually live it, not just read it in the pages of a textbook. Later, the richness of this experience motivated me to spend time immersed in the French language in Jonquière and in Trois-Rivières during my university years.



**I resolve to not let the pendulum
swing back but instead do more
and push myself out of my comfort
zone in my second language.**

I credit those experiences of lived French with helping me to acquire the language and appreciate its complexity. It was also humbling to experience the challenges of living in a second language. Clearly, it was only by consistently using the language that I could truly improve.

However, these episodes are on one end of the pendulum marking my level of ease in my second language throughout my life. It often swung back the other way. As is true for many people, these learning experiences weren't always followed up with continued practice and use, and I have only myself to blame for allowing my skills to become rusty at times and my confidence to wane.

But thankfully the pendulum hasn't stayed there. I'm drawing on the foundations of my past experience to use my second language more naturally and

regularly at work. And I'm happy that there are language resources, such as those of the [Language Portal of Canada](#), available to help me to continually improve. I'm grateful to those whom I work with every day for their patience.

These efforts have paid off throughout the pandemic with the many opportunities I've had to engage with colleagues at Public Services and Procurement Canada in town halls, team meetings and other events in both official languages. Communication was and is vitally important. I'll take with me those positive experiences, and I resolve to not let the pendulum swing back but instead do more and push myself out of my comfort zone in my second language, as francophone colleagues so often do. I also know

I can do more to create a space for others to work in both official languages.

How have you created a space for people to use both official languages at work? What do you do to maintain and improve your skills?

Now, back to my father who started it all. He took a mid-career risk to follow his passion and obtained a doctorate in second language education, with a focus on listening acquisition. He later taught future educators at the University of Ottawa and had an active research program that reached teachers all over the world. He passed away all too soon five years ago, and as I reflect while writing this piece, I wish I could thank him for giving me those formative experiences and an appreciation for bilingualism in Canada. ■



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ACCESSIBLE SPACE





TEACH IN FRENCH

Give the Gift of Language and Culture

BY JANET STEINTHORSON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH MANITOBA



In an effort to encourage the recruitment and retention of teachers of French, Canadian Parents for French - Manitoba (CPF MB) facilitates the initiative ***“Teach in French – Give the Gift of Language and Culture”***.

The initiative includes public promotional campaigns and informative and interactive presentations that are available for a variety of target groups and range for audiences from grade 5 to undergraduate students.

The ***Teach in French*** presentations are available in French, English, or bilingual and inform audiences that teaching in

French (French immersion program) and teaching French (English program) are viable, worthwhile, personally enriching, and rewarding career options. The presentations also provide parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and post-secondary educators with knowledge about French language teaching as a career option so that they are better informed as mentors to give guidance/direction to their children/students.

Teach in French – Give the Gift of Language and Culture raises awareness about the rewarding careers of teaching in French or teaching French courses

and focuses on the lifelong benefits while encouraging and supporting students in Manitoba to explore careers in French language teaching. Together with its partners, CPF MB promotes the importance of recruiting and retaining qualified FSL teachers, to ensure that quality FSL programs are available to youth in Manitoba. ■

To learn more, visit:
<https://mb.cpf.ca/en/cpf-projects/teach-in-french-give-the-gift-of-language-and-culture>

COMMISSIONER'S LETTER:

Two Years into the Pandemic, Canadians' Support for Core Values of Official Bilingualism and Diversity Remains High



Good news hasn't exactly been easy to come by lately, but we could all use some, and I've got some good news that I'd like to share. According to a recently published telephone [survey](#) conducted by Environics and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, an impressive 87% of Canadians support the aims of the *Official Languages Act*, which promotes the equality of English and French and ensures federal services in the two languages. A number that speaks volumes.

What's more is that this level of support is virtually unchanged from a similar survey conducted for our office in 2016.

Why is this such a big deal?

For starters, the federal government recently tabled a new official languages bill, so these results are timely.

But more broadly, the results are important because of what they tell us about ourselves and the resiliency of our shared values under trying circumstances.

In the last half decade, we have experienced a creeping populist majoritarian discourse south of the border and around the world, two federal elections resulting in two hung parliaments, a proliferation of knee-jerk responses and disinformation on social media that has undermined trust in academia, in journalism, in science and in government, and a once-in-a-century global pandemic that has stretched the patience and tolerance of us all. In spite of everything, an

overwhelming majority of Canadians continues to support official bilingualism, one of the core principles that lie at the heart of Canadian diversity, inclusiveness and human rights.

That is why this is such a big deal.

The **national consensus** in favour of official bilingualism has held, and the naysayers, although loud and never shy about sharing their negative views, clearly do **not** speak for any one particular group or region. Indeed, support for the *Official Languages Act* was high across the board, including

- in Western Canada (82%), Ontario (87%), Quebec (95%) and Atlantic Canada (86%)
- among English (85%), French (96%) and other (87%) mother tongue populations
- among younger (90%) and older (84%) adults
- among racialized groups (87%)
- among people born in (88%) and outside of (86%) Canada

In addition to supporting the Act, Canadians are in general agreement with other specific measures in support of official bilingualism and official language minorities, for example, minority language education and better access to **second-language education**.

The survey also found that support for official bilingualism is consistent with support for other forms of **diversity**. Too often we read commentary that reduces diversity to a “zero-sum game,” weighing different minorities against each other – not for the purposes of expanding language rights, but rather to roll them back. This is why I was encouraged to see that Canadians agree that official bilingualism and other forms of diversity can work well together. For instance, most agree that having two official languages, instead of just one, “sends the signal that Canada values linguistic diversity” (86%), and that it “has made Canada a more welcoming place for immigrants from different cultures” (79%).

Perhaps most encouragingly in the context of reconciliation, 78% agree that Canada can and should promote both official languages and Indigenous languages at the same time.

All this being said, we must never take public support for our core values for granted. Governments at all levels and in all regions must work hard to advance official languages and minority language rights, policies and programs and help promote them among Canadians. In the Prairies, where

people are more likely to feel disconnected from the federal government, support for the Act remains high (79%) but below the national average. The survey also shows that in Quebec, people continue to have far greater exposure to the two languages than elsewhere, which may help to explain some of the mounting anxieties about the future of French. Across Canada, problematic myths persist. An online component of the survey revealed that: many still think all federal employees must be bilingual (not true, only 42% of positions in the core administration are designated bilingual); most Anglophones and most Francophones think that outside Quebec French is no longer the second-most common language (it still is, and by far); and nearly half of Francophones think that the English-speaking minority in Quebec is more socio-economically privileged than the Francophone majority (which is not the case).

But if the glass is 13% empty, let’s not forget that it’s also 87% full. Too often, we amplify the negative voices in our public discourse. It’s time to acknowledge the quiet majority of Canadians.

Support for cultural-linguistic minority rights does not always fare well in times of crisis, want and hardship. Remarkably, however, support for official languages today is just about as strong as it was in “the beforetimes,” in the halcyon pre-pandemic days of 2016. Much has changed since then, and not a great deal of it for the better. In spite of it all, when it comes to the fundamental value of official bilingualism, we have remained true to ourselves. We may have lost our innocence, but in this respect, at least, we have hung on to our humanity. ■

Raymond Th  berge, Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada

Raymond Th  berge is the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada, an independent Agent of Parliament.

The survey by Environics Research and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages was carried out in September and October 2021 and included a national telephone probability survey of 1,507 adult Canadians (margin of error +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20) and a national online panel survey of 1,500 adult Canadians. Specific figures mentioned in this article refer to the telephone results unless otherwise indicated.



In English:

<https://twitter.com/OCOLCanada>



En fran  ais :

<https://twitter.com/CLOduCanada>



In English:

<https://www.facebook.com/officiallanguages>



En fran  ais :

<https://www.facebook.com/languesofficielles>

continued >>



Office of the
Commissioner of
Official Languages

Commissariat
aux langues
officielles

WHAT CANADIANS THINK

about official bilingualism and
the *Official Languages Act*

SUPPORT FOR THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT REMAINS STRONG ACROSS CANADA



of 18- to
34-year-olds

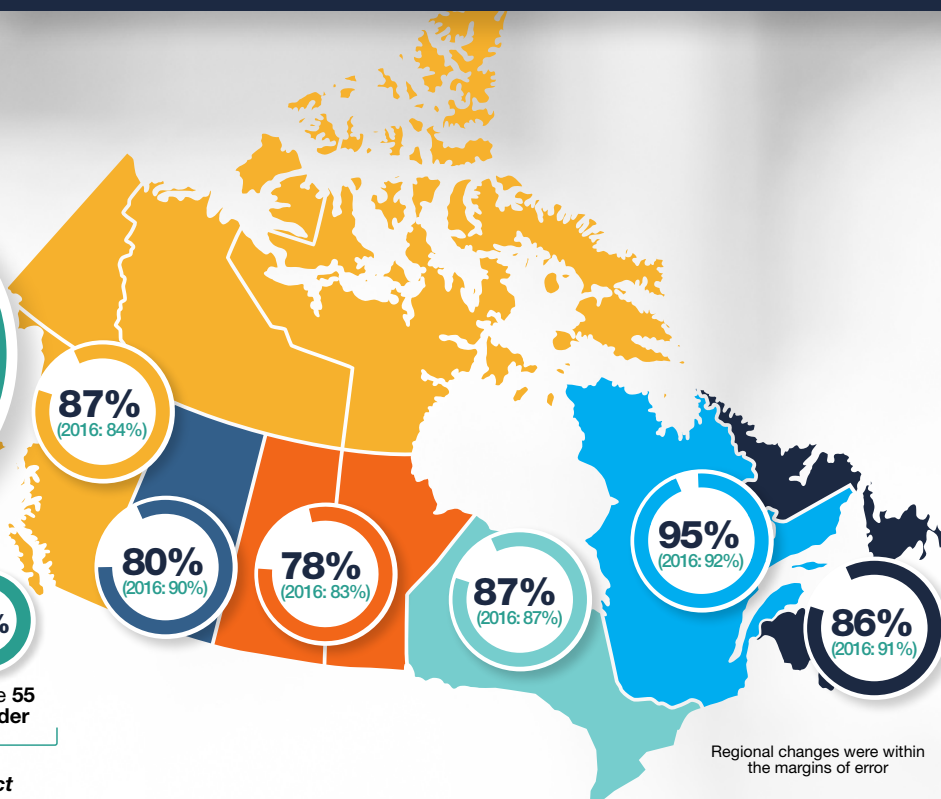


of 35- to
54-year-olds



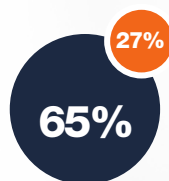
of those 55
and older

support the *Official Languages Act*

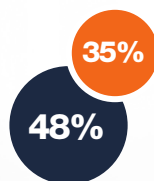


SUPPORT ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE OF RESPONDENTS

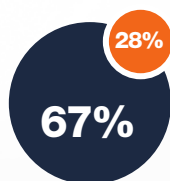
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BILINGUAL



UNILINGUAL



FRENCH



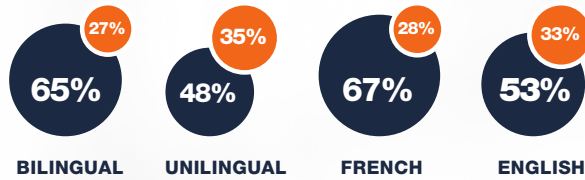
ENGLISH

MOST COMMONLY CITED REASON FOR SUPPORT, IN ALL REGIONS:

The Act recognizes
Canada's history,
status and culture as
a bilingual country.

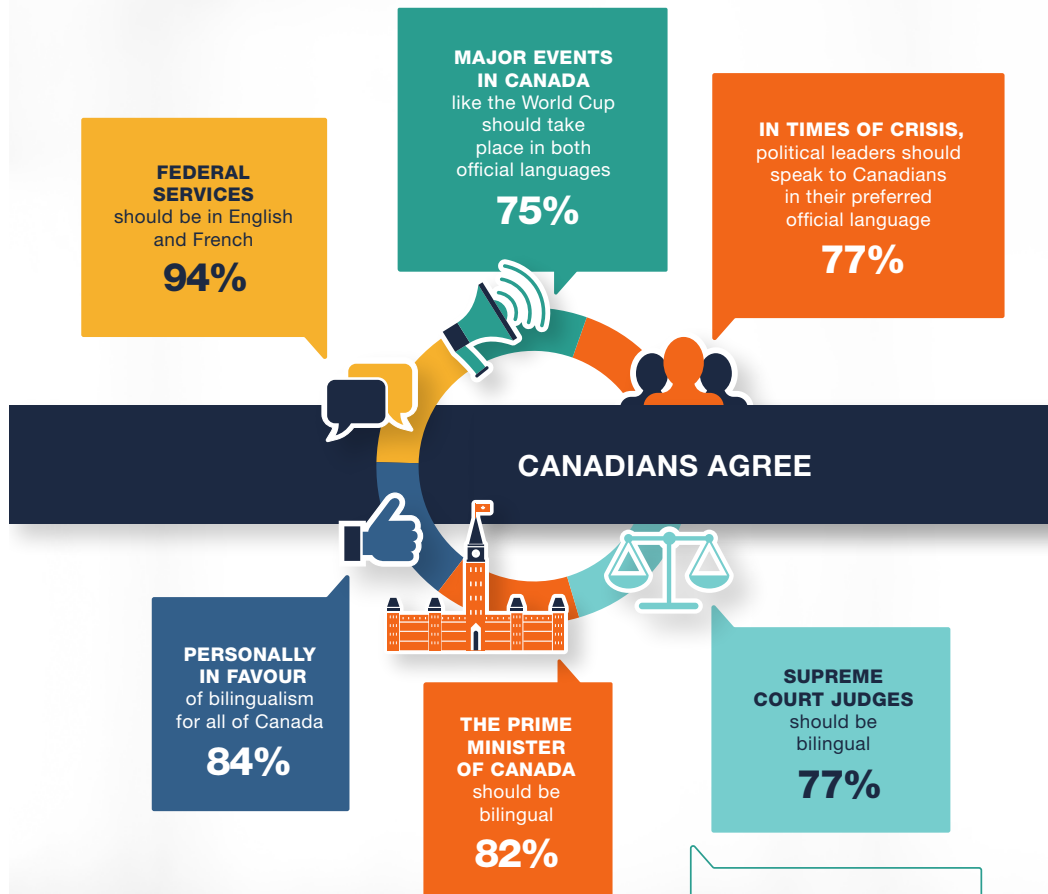
SUPPORT ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE OF RESPONDENTS

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support



MOST COMMONLY CITED REASON FOR SUPPORT, IN ALL REGIONS:

The Act recognizes Canada's history, status and culture as a bilingual country.



ADVANTAGES OF BILINGUALISM

Percentage of respondents who agree



Because English and French are part of our history, **IT MAKES SENSE THAT THEY HAVE EQUAL STATUS**

79%

HAVING TWO OFFICIAL LANGUAGES is one of the things that really defines Canada

78%

Survey conducted by Environics for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages in September and October 2021. The telephone survey results (sample: 1,507 respondents) have a margin of error at the national level of +/-2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

[OFFICIALLANGUAGES.GC.CA](https://www.officiallanguages.gc.ca)



Dyslexia in French Immersion: *Believe It or Not, It is Still Okay*



BY DR. BOBBI WEGNER CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

THIS ARTICLE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED ON MARCH 11, 2018 IN DR. BOBBI WEGNER'S BLOG

<https://www.drbobbiewegner.com/blog/2018/03/11/2018-3-11-dyslexia-in-french-immersion-believe-it-or-not-it-is-still-okay-y6hel>

You know how at kindergarten orientation night, they say French Immersion is good for everyone except for the kids with Language-Based Learning Disabilities? Well, my kid falls into that category in a pretty real way, although I did not know it at the time. It has not been explicitly stated but my maternal radar says he is probably a worst-case scenario for the program. Oops. Sorry Bud. Probably a first in one of many future parenting fails. Well, not quite.

Mark and I sat in Cam's third grade IEP meeting and we no longer could live in denial – Cam has serious reading issues that fall outside of 'he is behind because he is in French'. His decoding is BAD, which means he cannot make sense of the sounds that go along with letters. Long and short of it, he can't read on his own. And now in third grade when the program moves to 50% English, his deficit is glaringly obvious.

I felt like we had done all the right things, focusing on just one language (French because he was already in it when the reading issues were suspected halfway through first grade), private weekly French tutoring for 2 years, regular reading support in class, French camps. The works. Emmanuel Macron would be pleased in my little Francophile. Unfortunately, it has been at the complete detriment of his English, and now the gap between the other kids and he has widened. Ugh.

Although I spent the first weeks after the IEP meeting on every Dyslexia blog possible and thankfully went as far as to meet with Thomas Hehir, the ex-director of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and who responsible for federal leadership in implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). He helped me re-direct the mother ship that was quickly sinking.

During our talk, it became clear to me that despite Cam's reading challenges, there are many successes – he is well-liked by teachers and peers, he is hard working, motivated, and most importantly, he loves French. My view of success and academic goals widened. Dr. Hehir gently let me know that Cam's reading issues are going to be lifelong and although it is crucial that we intervene aggressively, his happiness and willingness to do school is paramount. "Our prisons are filled with dyslexics", he said, as these kids end up hating school, acting out, and unfortunately leave as soon as they can. Unfortunately, many kids do not have the support they absolutely need to flourish. He also shared some of his research from his book *How Did You Get Here? Students with Disabilities and Their Journeys to Harvard*; what he found was that one important factor in helping kids succeed is having a "caring mother."

I felt sad that my little boy will always struggle with reading, but my hope for Cam blossomed. Dr. Hehir helped me think about how to support Cam through tutoring and accommodations (text to speech, speech to text, Learning Ally, C Pen, Lexia, Chrome book/iPad), and the school suggested we focus on bilingualism rather than biliteracy.

My job is not to close the reading gap per se but to help Cam read as best as he can while "not burning him out" and help him understand how to use tools that he will probably need forever. That I can do. My role was more clearly defined, I felt empowered, and now I can empower Cam. Despite mourning

the loss of Cam being a natural reader, his picture is clearer, my maternal hunch was validated, and we have an achievable plan. I know he can have academic success despite reading struggles, and most importantly, I can help him see this in himself.

So, for all you parents out there with struggling readers, who either know their kids have language-based learning issues or have a hunch they aren't reading like their peer, don't panic. Here are some suggestions:

- Ask the school to evaluate.
- Get an outside neuropsychological evaluation, if possible. They are expensive 1k-5k, and most often are not covered by insurance. You can petition the school system to help cover the cost and the neuropsychologist should be able to help you fill out the forms.
- Join a group and get informed as a parent Decoding Dyslexia is a MA-based Dyslexia Group and Dyslexia Support for Parents of Dyslexic Children, both are on Facebook. International Dyslexia Association is also good.
- Know that you are your child's advocate. We have a wonderfully collaborative relationship with Cam's IEP team which has served him in getting his needs met. The school can be both on your side and at times, in opposition. Empathize with each member of the team and their limits, and know your rights (the law).
- Be realistic about your child's needs and where to find support. Support groups help with this. Lean on people who have already gone through this
- Intervene as soon as possible. We use Nicole Debassio from The Purple Cow Reads (<http://www.thepurplecowreads.com>) and she has helped Cam make HUGE gains. Use a program like Wilson or Orton-Gillingham.
- Get informed. There is a lot of information out there. Sort through what fits your child.
- Make homework time as tolerable as possible – snacks, breaks (work 15 mins, 3 min break), dare I say fun. In our house, it is when Cam gets the most 1:1 attention. We both do our "work" together. He actually does 15 minutes of homework followed by 3-5 minutes of biofeedback (which greatly helps keep him focused). It is something I am trained in as a clinical psychologist but is very useable at home. If you are interested in learning more, check out Boston Behavioral Medicine in Brookline. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/biofeedback/about/pac-20384664>
- Utilize tools. Accommodations are your friend.
- Reward the work ethic and study habits (not the spelling grade).
- And, don't panic. This will all be okay with proper intervention. There is no right answer. Stay in French, or not. But build a strong collaborative network around you and your child and communicate. ■

MEET

Chantal Ross

Recipient of the 2021 *Prix IDÉLLO*



Earlier this spring, **IDÉLLO** and Canadian Parents for French were pleased to announce madame Chantal Ross as the **2021 Prix IDÉLLO** winner in the French as a Second Language Teacher in an English School category! Madame Ross teaches French as a Second Language to students in grades 6 through 8 at Notre Dame Catholic School in Orillia, Ontario, which is part of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District. All of the activities madame Ross develops for her students focus on the Francophone community in Ontario. Her goals are to bring the language to life and encourage students to use their skills beyond the walls of the classroom.

Since 2021, CPF has sponsored the FSL Teacher in an English School category which recognizes dedicated teachers committed to their students, working in French immersion, core French, and extended French programs. Madame Ross was granted the award due to her authentic approach to teaching, her passion for the French language as well as the respect and patience she has for her students.

Students look forward to coming to her class because they know they will be practising the language in authentic situations, like celebrating Franco-Ontarian Day or walking to McDonald's to order in French. In the classroom, every activity is set in a Francophone context and engages the students, whether it's reading a text or watching videos. She also demonstrates how to incorporate French in everyday

situations by speaking French in everything she does at school, including greeting students in the hallway, making intercom announcements, and greeting bus drivers with *bonjour*. This inspires students to do the same.

Madame Ross and the other 2021 winners were celebrated at the virtual **Prix IDÉLLO Gala** on March 31, 2022. The **Prix IDÉLLO** award recognizes teachers' outstanding work, their passion for their profession, and innovation in educational activities. **IDÉLLO** and TFO share CPF's mission to further bilingualism by promoting and creating opportunities for students to learn and use French.

CPF is once again sponsoring the French as a Second Language Teacher in an English-Language School in Canada category in 2022, nominations took place in April. Winners receive \$1,000 worth of classroom supplies, a \$150 gift card, a video profile and much more.

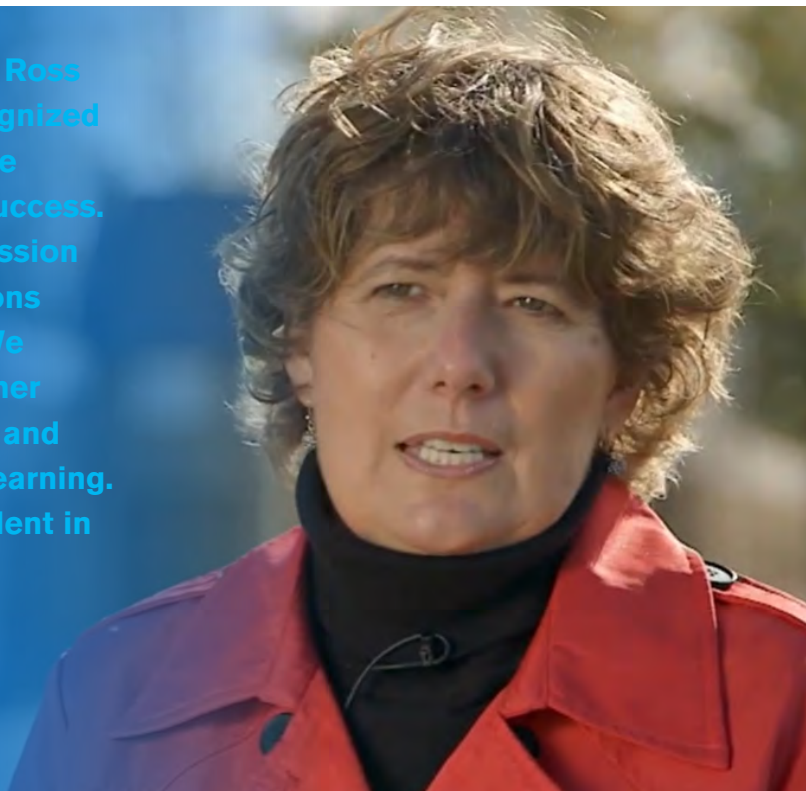
To learn more about Chantal Ross and the **Prix IDÉLLO** visit the CPF National Facebook page to watch her official video.

About IDÉLLO

IDÉLLO has a wide variety of innovative resources you can use to help your children expand their French Second Language skills. **Explore their website** for fun activities to do at home. ■

“Congratulations to Madame Chantal Ross and to the other teachers being recognized this year. FSL teachers play a key role in setting up bilingual students for success. CPF is proud to support IDÉLLO’s mission to acknowledge teachers’ contributions to the French language in Canada. We appreciate Chantal’s hard work and her dedication to sharing both language and culture to instill a love of language learning. Core French teachers give every student in Canada an opportunity to learn and use French.”

— Derrek Bentley
National President
Canadian Parents for French



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Meet the Parents... *Where They Are:*

Culturally Responsive Approaches to Family Engagement

BY MICHAEL SALVATORI ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, NIAGARA UNIVERSITY ONTARIO

Although it may not be clear what Mr. Dahl means by a *sparky* parent, there is value in examining another kind of spark: the one that ignites parent or family engagement with the school.

Family engagement has a significant impact on positive student outcomes including academic achievement, student engagement and well-being. Educators and families have a good track record of collaboration and mutual support that have included in-school activities, home support and school-home communication. That is to say, the track record has been good with respect to the parents and families who traditionally engage with the school to enhance the learning and growth of their children. But what of the often-untapped potential of families who do not engage in the


opportunities offered by the school and whose participation may be impeded by barriers such as language, cultural beliefs, perceived power imbalances and their own experiences with school?

One of the answers to this complex question lies in the examination of what is

happening in many contemporary school contexts where culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP) is transforming classrooms and schools through inclusive practices that recognize that student learning is closely connected to language, family structure and social and cultural

“When you grow up and have children of your own, do please remember something important: A stodgy parent is not fun at all! What a child wants—and **DESERVES**—is a parent who is **SPARKY!**”

— ROALD DAHL



identity (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2022). It follows that parent engagement strategies which aim to engage and include all parents, especially those who do not respond to traditional parent engagement opportunities must also be culturally responsive and relevant.

Not only have culturally responsive and relevant approaches to parent engagement proven successful in diminishing barriers for marginalized families (Leo, Wilcox & Lawson, 2017) but they have also served to challenge the dominant norms that frame the traditional engagement scripts and invitations that have excluded many families due of their lack of relevance to the culture, identity, and experiences of these families (Ishimaru & Takahashi, 2017). The question then becomes what can be done in practical terms to embed CRRP approaches in family engagement. There are two initial steps that can set schools and families on the right path for meaningful and active collaboration: establishing a shared and collaboratively developed understanding between school and home about what constitutes engagement and using the power of specific invitations to spark interest.

There are often varying definitions of what constitutes family engagement, with educators and parents often operating based on different and often unarticulated assumptions (Gross et al., 2019). The lack of a shared understanding is one of the obstacles to engagement. In addition, presenting parents with a pre-established list of activities based on the school's definition of engagement from which they may choose disenfranchises not only those who hold different perspectives on engagement but also those who do not see a space for their contributions.

One effective strategy to address this disparity in definitions and barrier to participation is to begin the dialogue about engagement by inviting families to shape the context for and nature of parent engagement. There are several ways to open this conversation which could include using a class newsletter

or website, direct and personalized email to parents or an informal conversation at the school. We begin to “flip the script” of conventional family engagement when we invite parents to share their stories which might include their personal experience in school, how they see the role of the family in their children's education, what barriers might prevent them from engaging and what would encourage engagement and create an environment of comfort and welcome,

To render this strategy more culturally relevant, it is useful to consider engaging parents in their home language by using a translation service to send a personal letter or by empowering a parent with the same language background to begin the dialogue. Featuring profiles of families from similar backgrounds that challenge what might be seen as the traditional family may also reduce barriers and assumptions about what engagement might look like.

Following the collection of family input on what constitutes engagement based on their interests, capacities and identification of potential barriers, specific and individual invitations to families may be developed that reflect this input. One of the most effective strategies for increasing family engagement is the use of specific invitations from teachers (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Crafting specific invitations that not only acknowledge family interests but also address the identified barriers can enhance opportunity.

If, for example, language has been identified as a barrier for families, there is an opportunity to capitalize on plurilingual approaches to education which are especially valuable in French Second Language (FSL) contexts. Given that a high number of Allophone families choose French second language and in particular French Immersion for their children (Canadian Parents for French, 2011), there is a great opportunity to engage parents from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds

to participate in and share their language and cultural learning experiences.

Engagement of these parents may include some of the following opportunities or activities that reinforce the language learning and development of intercultural competence of learners:

- Invite parents to contribute cultural artifacts and come to school to speak to them or to read to students in their home language,
- Invite parents to share their language learning journey, what supported them in their learning and how they overcame obstacles,
- Participate in a curriculum activity at school exploring the diversity of family structures and where there is a connection to their own social identity.

Families can not only participate in the traditional activities that support the school community and student learning but can also integrate their lived experiences, aspirations and challenges into the life of the school.

While these suggested strategies may not meet all parents where they are, they represent an opening and a beginning. When they complement the many excellent opportunities that schools currently offer, they start a conversation, broaden perspectives and spark new possibilities. ■

REFERENCES AVAILABLE ON THE
CPF NATIONAL [WEBSITE](#)

Celebrating 41 Years of French Immersion in the Yukon!

This year, French immersion is celebrating 41 years in the Yukon, this French as a second language program was first offered in the territory in 1981 in Whitehorse. Today, the program continues to offer opportunities for students to learn French and contribute to the Yukon's Francophone community.

To mark the occasion, the Honourable Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education recorded a video in which she congratulated students and graduates and recognized the key role French immersion programs have played in providing endless opportunities for students in the territory.

In that same video, Nicole Morgan, Deputy Minister of Education, added that "they are lucky to live in a place where the French language and culture are increasingly present and alive as more students across the territory are choosing to learn French." She also reminded Yukoners of the government's commitment to provide quality French language programs.

Félicitations on the first 41 years! At CPF we are very proud of this achievement, we will continue to create opportunities for youth to use French in the territory as well as working with the territorial government to ensure all students have the opportunity to learn French. The CPF British Columbia and Yukon Branch is hard at work in the territory and there is also an active Yukon Chapter. It is through the CPF Yukon Chapter that we were able to gather these testimonials from former FI students, *merci et bonne continuation!*

" My French education also provided increased opportunities for summer jobs throughout my K-12 school years and into university, where I was able to pursue more advanced French programming. I subsequently used my French in not one but two careers - first as a journalist and editor of several bilingual magazines, and currently as an elementary teacher. Being bilingual was instrumental to so many roles and positions throughout both careers." — **Bernadette**

" Learning French further opened my world by exposing the idea that language impacted thought patterns fundamentally. As a student I was familiar with thinking in English and translating my thoughts as I spoke. Without that I would have been much slower to realize that others were doing the same in-reverse, and in some cases that reflected fundamentally different world views or differences that were poetic or funny for both of us. "

— **Geoff**



To watch the official video of the 41st anniversary of FI in the Yukon, visit: <https://youtu.be/csy9oahQnd0>



To learn more about CPF in the Yukon visit <https://bc-yk.cpf.ca/en/> and the CPF Yukon Chapter Facebook Page.

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Promotional poster to mark the milestone.

Source: Government of Yukon

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Building Linguistic Security

Be Brave, Speak French!



What we all can do: Even the smallest comment or reaction can make one feel judged.

- > **As one fluent in French or simply further on your path to bilingualism:** *How can you be more aware of language insecurity in others and support them?*
- > **As a learner on the path:** *What can you do to overcome the fear-factor and develop your risk-taking strategies for using French?*



For French Learners: Be brave, speak French as often as you can.

- > Feel free to start a conversation with *“Aujourd’hui j’ai le courage de parler en français”* (eventually you won’t feel a need to).
- > Wear a CPF button that says: *“Je parle français”, “J’apprends le français”* or *“J’appuie le français”*.



For Parents: Praise your child’s efforts in French and celebrate their progress. Value what linguistic variety brings to our society.

- > Explain to your child and other parents that there are many varieties of French. These are desirable in sharing the richness of the language.
- > Recognize that your child’s teacher may have a different accent than other teachers and that is perfectly okay. They will use different expressions which reflect where they learned the language.
- > Be careful when commenting about how another person speaks French.



For Teachers: Foster a risk-taking attitude throughout your career.

- > Encourage colleagues to speak French with you in and outside the school. Find a mentor that will correct your French in a positive and encouraging manner.
- > Support your colleagues’ efforts so they can develop their French skills. Be a gracious role model.
- > Participate in summer immersion experiences, language “boot camps” or school exchanges, including virtual ones as great ways to build your confidence in a safe, non-threatening setting. Use the language portfolio as a motivational tool.

AT HOME:

Make French part of your daily home life for all members of the family. The more you hear French, the easier it will be to join in.



Watch television and movies in French (with or without subtitles). Listen to French radio and check out the latest in French music. Follow the news in two languages.



Turn your text messaging system on your phone to French. Seek out French audio books and apps for your child.



Make connections with French-speaking neighbours. Together, seek out activities organized by the Francophone community in your area.

IN THE COMMUNITY:

Take the risk, speak French as you attend opportunities and cultural events.



Take in a French festival. Join a French choir. Play recreational hockey in French. Take a French cooking class and enjoy the French conversation, culture and food!



Sign your child up for French activities at the library, spring break or summer camps.



Seek out meeting spaces that bring French language learners and French speakers together.



Ask your regional Francophone centre to put up a sign that says: *“Ici, nous accueillons les apprenants du français”*.

The method that decodes the language.

• read. • write. • speak • understand



*"Nous n'avons aucun doute que
votre méthode réussit là où
elle est mise en œuvre."*

*- Direction des politiques et programmes
d'éducation en langue française
Ministère de l'éducation, ON*

• lire. • écrire. • parler • comprendre

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