

POSITION #2 – Effective Programs

All students have access to a wide variety of effective, evidence based French as a second language programs from Grade one to Post-secondary.

Issue

Limited French as a second language program entry points

- Jurisdictions offering only one core French program and a single French immersion entry point at a limited number of schools fail to meet the varying needs and preferences of parents and students and create challenges to student mobility within Canada.
- Early French immersion is the optimal program for developing French proficiency for the widest range of students—as in the English program, the elementary French immersion curriculum focuses on developing language and literacy skills while subject content is limited.
- Later entry points, while demonstrating good proficiency results, are suitable for more self-motivated, high achieving students as they must progress quickly to develop sufficient second language proficiency to understand subject content.
- In jurisdictions where only later entry French immersion programming is offered, a large proportion of less academically-inclined students are not served.
- Students in small, rural and remote school jurisdictions with low enrolments have fewer opportunities to study in French, their second official language than those with larger enrolments and in urban areas.

Call to Action

Offer a wide variety of French as a second language programs

- Make Early French immersion the priority when choosing programs to offer.
- Offer later entry points to all those who missed early entry points to have opportunities in FSL.
- If a student population is too small to sustain English/core French and immersion programs offer one of the programs which incorporates more intensity and exposure to the French language such as intensive core or extended French for all students.

Issue

Need for support, resources and recognition for French immersion students and teachers

- In many jurisdictions, French Immersion programs are denied the same support and resources as English programs, despite the fact that French as a second language programming receives supplementary funding via bilateral federal and provincial/territorial agreements under the Official Languages in Education Protocol.
- Many school jurisdictions across the country will not provide special education services to French immersion students. Students may be refused entry to immersion; may be transferred to the English program; or may be left to struggle without appropriate educational support.
- French immersion teachers struggle to find appropriate French as a second language resources and must revise existing Francophone materials to meet the needs of French learners.

- Across the country, many jurisdictions do not provide formal recognition of French immersion graduates achievements. Many fail even to include a record on the student's transcript.

Call to Action

Improve French immersion student achievement with effective support and resources and recognition

- Provide appropriate academic supports to Allophone students and those with diverse learning needs, pre- and in-service professional development opportunities for teachers to develop inclusive education practices.
- Provide a rich variety of effective French-language teaching and learning resources appropriate for French as a second language students, that are equivalent to English program resources.
- Provide more selection in class, on-line and experiential credits in French for secondary immersion students.
- Provide students with official recognition of French as a second language achievement and demonstrate the value of completing secondary French as a second language programs by providing certificates and transcripts which specify successful completion of core and immersion programs.
- Ministries of education and school jurisdictions should encourage French immersion student enrolment, retention and achievement by providing transcripts and certificates which specify the successful completion of bilingual studies.

Issue

Core/basic French program retention to secondary graduation

- Low retention rates continue to plague high school core French programs.
- Students indicate that, while they enjoyed elementary core French studies, they become discouraged and drop French when their expectations of learning to communicate in French are not met.
- Research shows enhanced student retention in more intensive programs like Intensive Core French and Extended French, where students are afforded opportunities to use their second language skills for authentic communication.

Call to Action

Modernize core/basic French programs

- Focus core French and post-Intensive French programs on conversational skills to develop, maintain and enhance proficiency gains.
- Expand the number and selection of more intensive French programs and strategies like Intensive French and Extended French to enhance proficiency levels and to better prepare students from small and remote communities to pursue immersion studies in high school.
- Ministries of education and school jurisdictions may consider providing more in-service professional development opportunities specifically designed for FSL teachers to enhance recruitment and retention of students.

Issue

Limited opportunities to use French outside the classroom

- Research has demonstrated that opportunities for French as a second language students to use their French-language skills outside of the classroom enhance confidence and proficiency.
- While formal language exchange programs are effective in enhancing student confidence and proficiency, access is very limited and fewer than 1% of students participate in these exchanges. Exchanges are cost prohibitive for many families.
- Access to experiential learning in French for credit is extremely limited.
- Parents who do not speak French are not aware of local events and outings where French is used.

Call to Action

Expand extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities to enhance proficiency and cultural knowledge

- Build awareness, working relationships and partnerships with francophone communities and general education stakeholders to organize visits and exchanges between anglophone and francophone schools and school jurisdictions as an integral part of the language curriculum.
- Communicate pertinent and timely information about extra-curricular activities and offer a variety of accessible co- and extra-curricular activities to support cultural and social integration, focusing on connection and cultural awareness, so that all students have opportunities to use and develop their French-language skills beyond the classroom.
- Increase the number of, and access to, a variety of opportunities to use French outside the classroom via live exchanges or virtual exchanges to encourage interactions between anglophone and francophone communities.
- Partner with local francophone schools for resources and events outside classrooms.
- Create credits for experiential learning in French.

Issue

Limited post-secondary opportunities for immersion graduates to maintain and enhance French proficiency

French immersion graduates can ‘misplace’ their French-language proficiency unless steps are taken to maintain the language. Proficiency can be quickly retrieved by exposure to and use of the language.

Call to Action

Offer more post-secondary opportunities for immersion graduates to:

- Upgrade or maintain French-language proficiency, including access at universities to the *Diplôme approfondi de langue française* (DALF) training and exams.
- Pursue some or all of their post-secondary studies in French.
- Support post-secondary immersive experiences, such as Explore, to study or to work in a French environment in Canada or abroad.