

## POSITION #4 – Leadership Accountability

Education leaders, school jurisdictions and provincial/territorial and federal governments are accountable for student achievement in French as a second language programs. Parents and community stakeholders are actively engaged with educational leaders in their decision making. Reporting is meaningful, timely and available publicly.

### Issue

*Lack of French as a second language education policies and strategic planning to support student achievement in French*

- Across the country, ministries of education lack policies to entrench French as a second language and French immersion programs in provincial education systems to:
  - Ensure equitable access by English Language Learners and students with diverse learning needs.
  - Ensure that French as a second language programs reflect evidence-based pedagogy and program design.
  - Ensure sufficient, sustainable funding and staffing.
  - Report on expenditures and results in FSL programs.
  - Plan for growth in FSL programs.
- In the absence of ministry of education policies, funding, and strategic planning, some school jurisdictions cap enrolment and institute waiting lists and lotteries while others reduce the number of entry points and/or raise the grade of entry, curtail the number of subjects taught in French and reduce the amount of time spent studying in the target language. None of these actions supports student achievement in FSL.

### Call to Action

*Establish French as a second language education policies and strategic planning at the Ministry and school district level to support student achievement in French by increasing participation and proficiency outcomes*

Develop, implement and monitor compliance with evidence-based policies and strategic planning to ensure students have access to effective, appropriately staffed and resourced FSL programs by having:

- Policies and strategic planning requiring school jurisdictions to offer multiple entry points to a variety of French immersion and core French programs at the elementary and secondary levels.
- Policies mandating the inclusion of and appropriate educational support services for Allophone students and students with diverse learning needs.
- Policies to discourage French as a second language program and transportation fees.
- Policies and strategic planning to ensure that FSL programs are staffed by teachers with appropriate second-language pedagogical skills and language proficiency.

## Issue

### *Lack of adequate, on-going French as a second language program funding and transparency and accountability for expenditures*

- Across the country, school jurisdictions are failing to meet the increasing demand for French immersion programs —parents line up at schools overnight, sign on to waiting lists, and participate in lotteries to secure one of the limited spaces for their children. Rationale given is often lack of funds.
- Government of Canada funding for provincial/territorial second language education via the Official Languages in Education Programs lacks effective accountability requirements. While it is possible to track federal funds from ministries of education to school jurisdictions, current financial reporting requirements lack rigour and consistency and it is not possible to determine use of funds at the school level.

## Call to Action

### *Provide adequate, on-going French as a second language program funding and transparent reporting on expenditures*

- Provide adequate funding for FSL programs and enrichment language opportunities, including sufficient and appropriate French-language teaching resources and opportunities for students and teachers to maintain and enhance French-language skills beyond the school setting.
- Provide adequate funding for promotion of FSL learning and the benefits of official-language bilingualism.
- Ensure that funds designated for French as a second language programs are used specifically for those programs and that the flow of funds is transparent.
- Establish common financial and performance reporting requirements for Official Languages in Education Program funds for school jurisdictions, provincial/territorial and federal ministries and make all documents accessible to the public on the Canadian Heritage website.

## Issue

### *Supply of qualified French as a second language and immersion teachers is not growing with increased demand for programs*

Increased interest in French immersion programs, which provide the optimal outcome for students and support the growth in official language bilingualism in Canada, requires corresponding growth in teacher supply. School jurisdictions are responding with cutbacks to programs and there is also the risk that school jurisdictions will again, of necessity, fill FSL core and immersion teacher vacancies with candidates who lack appropriate pedagogical and language-proficiency skills. Ensuring an adequate supply of teachers is a shared responsibility of school jurisdictions, Ministries of Education (responsible for K-12 education and universities), professional teacher associations, Departments of Labour and Immigration as well as Universities, and as such, efforts to date addressing this issue have been difficult to track, goals are unclear and results unknown.

## Call to Action

### *Ensure an adequate supply of qualified French as a second language teachers*

- Appoint a lead within each Ministry of Education to coordinate and facilitate work of those who share the responsibility including universities, Labour and Immigration departments, professional teacher associations and school jurisdictions.
- Establish pan-Canadian mechanisms and data collection/sharing, to ensure a sufficient supply of teachers.
- Encourage universities to promote the teaching profession via recruitment campaigns.
- Encourage universities to maintain an online bilingual inventory of second-language teacher education programs
- Establish national standards for French as a second language teacher skills and proficiency.
- Provide a professional development program focused on improvements to core French programs and authentic communication approaches.
- Provide many options for professional activities for French as a second language teachers to keep up with current pedagogical practices and cultural resources.
- Encourage French as a second language educators to co-operate and share skills and resources among themselves, particularly through the use of new technologies.
- Fund a public education campaign to encourage secondary French as a second language students to pursue post-secondary studies in French by offering mentoring and other supports during the transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

## Issue

### *Altering French as a second language program design and delivery for administrative reasons*

School jurisdictions and ministries of education have been known to implement changes to FSL program design and delivery in response to administrative challenges, such as, difficulty recruiting qualified FSL teachers; changing student population and funding shortfalls. Administrative considerations have seen alterations to French immersion program entry points and time on task, as well as limitations to those subjects taught in French with minimal regard for pedagogical research on optimal program design, student achievement and inclusion. Ad hoc alterations interfere with the very program elements upon which second and first-language proficiency expectations are based.

## Call to Action

### *Maintain and improve French as a second language program integrity*

- Ensure that policies, program design and student proficiency expectations are informed by French as a second language research.
- Develop a mechanism to disseminate research findings in an accessible format to parents, educators, administrators, and government representatives.
- Establish an interprovincial/territorial table to facilitate French as a second language research networking and to share expertise. Regularly review student French-proficiency achievement in French as a second language programs and current research findings and adjust policies and curricula accordingly.
- Monitor compliance with French as a second language policies and guidelines which provide written goals for student French proficiency for all programs and which specify sufficient hours of French as a second language instruction to achieve those goals.
- Develop and monitor compliance with policies specifying use of the CEFR or CEFR linked French-language proficiency tools to assess student achievement and provide student/parent feedback.

## Issue

### *Inadequate meaningful and timely parental consultation about French as a second language program policies and practices.*

Parents who choose French immersion for their children continue to play an active part throughout their children's schooling - determined to secure the many advantages of a bilingual education. Failure to address parental concerns or to consult them when developing policies may jeopardize their commitment to their child completing a French as a second language program. New parents rightfully expect that after 50 years of French immersion, it is universally available and of high quality.

## Call to Action

### *Include parents in French as a second language program decision making process*

- Make information concerning provincial and territorial FSL policies and guidelines readily available to parents.
- Ensure parents are actively involved in decision making at the school, school jurisdiction, ministry and government levels through the creation of permanent advisory committees that meet regularly with decision makers.