

# Meeting Labour Market Needs for French as a Second Language Instruction in Ontario



In March 2016, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skill Development (MAESD), to establish a three-year Ontario Labour Market Partnership project to study labour market needs for French as a second language (FSL) instruction in the province. This proposal was in response to concerns OPSBA member boards raised about the growing gap between the number of students enrolling in French language programs and the recruitment and retention of sufficient numbers of qualified FSL teachers and support staff. This issue has become an increasing challenge for school boards.

OPSBA has received Ministry of Advanced Education and Skill Development approval to proceed with a one-year project entitled *Meeting Labour Market Needs for French as a Second Language Instruction in Ontario*. Based on demonstrable progress in the first year, OPSBA will apply to MAESD for annual approval for additional project years, up to a total of three years.

MAESD has approved the following committee structures and membership for the project:

## French as a Second Language Labour Market Partnership Committee (FSL-LMPC)

This committee is responsible for providing input into the project/research plans and for reviewing research findings with a view to generate recommendations. The committee is made up representatives from Ontario English public and Catholic school boards' provincial leadership associations, teacher federations, faculties of education, the Ontario College of Teachers and the Ministry of Education.

## French as a Second Language Labour Market Partnership Steering Committee (FSL-LMPSC)

This is a subset of the larger partnership committee to facilitate ongoing consultation and feedback between meetings as required.

## Research Technical Team

This committee is responsible for reviewing and providing feedback to the Research Lead regarding the research design and methodologies to ensure the rigour, validity and reliability of the research process. This committee will also help to vet the data analysis to inform the discussion leading to strategies and recommendations by the Partnership Committee. The research team is comprised of individuals with research experience including school board chief research officers and a university professor.

## **Year One: Understanding Perspectives regarding the French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue Initiative**

OPSBA has been approved for year one of the project, which will run from May 15, 2017, to May 14, 2018, and will facilitate the "*Understanding Perspectives regarding the French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue*" initiative. The first year of the project will focus primarily on research linked to FSL teachers and will include:

- A review/validation of background studies previously conducted by key stakeholders
- A qualitative study (surveys/interviews/focus groups) of recent French as a Second Language teacher hires or soon-to-graduate French as a Second Language teachers in various boards and

faculties of education across the province to explore factors influencing their decisions to work in various boards in Ontario

- Identification and description of policies and procedures currently used to address FSL teacher supply
- Analysis of the impact of existing strategies and current recruitment practices
- Analysis of intersection of research findings (factors influencing decision-making, effects of current policy/procedures, and recruitment practices effects on supply pipeline and job vacancy rate)

At the end of Year One the Research Technical Team will produce an interim report “Understanding Perspectives regarding the French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue.” This report will address board recruitment practices, provide a gap analysis comparing factors affecting teacher decision-making and an analysis of existing policies and procedures and begin to formulate recommendations and strategies to improve the FSL Teacher Labour Market issue in Ontario’s English public and Catholic school boards.

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