



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy in French Immersion and French Second-Language Programs across Canada

Executive Summaries - Year 1

FSL Teacher Recruitment Guide for English-Language School Boards

Developing a French-Language Proficiency Assessment Toolkit
and Resource Guide

Supporting Principals to Address Challenges in
Retention and Professional Support of
French as a Second Language Teachers



Introduction

Satisfying the demand for French as a Second Language (FSL) teachers for core/basic and immersion programs has been a persistent labour market challenge in Canadian schools for many years. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) led one related initiative sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Throughout the three phases of this initiative entitled, *Meeting Labour Market Needs for French as a Second Language Instruction in Ontario, 2017-2021*, there were a number of high-potential strategies that emerged which required further exploration. These strategies are complex, interrelated and multi-faceted and continue to require the collaborative commitment from many education partners.

In early 2020, OPSBA was approved to lead three subsequent initiatives as part of the *FSL Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy in French Immersion and French Second Language Programs*, an initiative funded in part by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Province of Ontario. These initiatives support the public education sector and are envisioned to be three years in length and pan-Canadian in scope.

The following represents a brief outline of the initiatives:

- 1. FSL Teacher Recruitment Guide for English-Language School Boards**

This initiative's key objective is to develop a guide for English-language school boards that supports the effective recruitment and hiring of FSL teachers. Research will be conducted to determine higher-yield strategies and explore alternatives that would ultimately increase the overall supply of FSL teachers.

- 2. French-Language Proficiency Assessment Toolkit and Resource Guide**

This initiative explores existing research on the assessment of second-language proficiency in teaching contexts. This information will inform the development of a toolkit of evidence-informed assessment practices that could be used in various education contexts to review current French-language proficiency assessment processes as FSL teachers prepare to enter the job market.

- 3. Supporting Principals to Address Challenges in Retention and Professional Support of French as a Second Language Teachers**

This initiative recognizes the important role of school administrators in facilitating FSL teacher retention and professional support. The overall objective is to conduct research in order to facilitate school administrator engagement, share innovative practices and ultimately build a compendium of strategies that positively affect FSL teacher retention.

During the first year, each initiative focused on exploratory research to better understand the pan-Canadian context. In order to deliver a comprehensive set of strategies, practices and resources, OPSBA established an Initiative Coordinating Team (ICT) consisting of all three project team members which include researchers and educational leaders with expertise in the field of FSL. The ICT met regularly to share perceptions, problem-solve as required, and align/streamline efforts where possible. The ICT also acted in the capacity of a research review committee which led to valuable feedback for implementation efficacy, and to provide guidance with issues of research practice, and ultimately to inform the recommendations and next steps for each initiative.

Given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on all levels of the education sector, research efforts of each initiative encountered notable challenges with respect to communication and data gathering across the country. Nonetheless, the persistence and generosity of many members of the public and higher education communities have led to the collection and analysis of meaningful, authentic data for each initiative.

Initiative Coordinating Team Members and Collaborators

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FSL Teacher Recruitment Guide for English-Language School Boards

Year 1



Executive Summary

Initiative Rationale

Based upon data cited in the French as a Second Language Enrolment Statistics: 2014-2015 to 2018-2019 (<https://cpf.ca/en/files/FSL-Enrolment-Stats-2018-2019.pdf>) (Canadian Parents for French Report, n.d.) there has been a decrease in overall French as a Second Language (FSL) enrolment in Canada showing a 2.3% decline from 2014-15 to 2018-19 (1,796,318 pupils in 2014-15 vs. 1,753,234 in 2018-19). However, during that same period there has been a consistent increase in enrolment in French Immersion (FI) programs of 8.3% (409,294 in 2014-15 vs. 443,390 in 2018-19). The impact of this change in the French Immersion enrolment pattern continues to drive a higher demand for FSL teachers as the number of teachers required per 100 students for FI is significantly higher than that required for Core French (more than 3x more as reported by OPSBA, 2018). One way to address the demand for FSL teachers is to identify and implement high-yield recruitment and hiring strategies that are grounded in empirical evidence within the K-12 system. Therefore, this research initiative aims to identify higher-potential recruitment and hiring strategies through multiple data sources in order to inform the development of a draft guide that school districts¹ can use to recruit and hire FSL teachers.

One objective for this initiative was to develop a guide for English-language school boards that supports the effective recruitment and hiring of FSL teachers. The *FSL Teacher Draft Recruitment Guide for English-Language School Boards* (Draft Guide) is a resource for English-languages school boards in Canada. This guide is intended to provide human resources (HR) personnel with specific strategies that have been used in school boards across Canada within differing contexts. This initiative will continue for a period of two years and the strategies contained in this Draft Guide will be further evaluated as the initiative continues.

A second objective for this initiative was to conduct research to inform higher-potential recruitment strategies and test these strategies using collaborative partnerships and pilot projects.

Review of Past Studies and Reports

The literature review was conducted in two stages and reported accordingly. The first section explores effective recruitment and hiring practices in education generally, in education when demand is high, and in education in remote locations. The second section outlines potential strategies for recruitment specific to FSL contexts. The review of past studies and reports provided a broad foundation for the design of this report's primary research. Many of the past studies confirmed the challenges associated with FSL teacher recruitment. A key recurring pattern included the specific challenges associated with recruitment in remote and rural areas. The challenges with recruitment

¹ Across Canada, local school jurisdictions are referred to as districts, or divisions, or boards, as determined by provincial/territorial governments

of FSL teachers has been identified as an issue across Canada and beyond for many years (Karsenti, T., Collin, S., Villeneuve, S., Dumouchel, G., & Roy, N., 2008; Mason & Poyatos Matas, 2016; Masson, Larson, Desgroseilliers, Carr, & Lapkin, 2019; Swanson & Mason, 2018; Veilleux & Bournot-Trites, 2005). Some potential solutions to the recruitment issues have been proposed yet many require empirical support, for example, website enhancement, community outreach, fostering post-secondary partnerships, mentoring and support, hiring incentives and creating intentional and continuous recruitment strategies.

Research Overview and Key Findings

The research plan was guided by the two following questions:

1. What are the strategies school districts use to recruit and hire for FSL teachers across Canada's English-language school systems?
2. How might school districts' websites be used to optimize their efforts to recruit and hire FSL teachers? What website enhancements may improve school boards' recruitment efforts?

This study adopted explanatory sequential mixed methods approach initially collecting primarily quantitative data followed by qualitative data collection (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). A literature review and website review were used to inform the two subsequent phases (survey and interviews) of this study. Therefore, a total of four data sources (listed below) were used to inform the *FSL Teacher Draft Recruitment Guide for English-Language School Boards*:

- Review of past studies and reports
- Review of school board websites across Canada
- Surveys
- Semi-structured interviews

Data from HR Professionals

A total of 32 human resources professionals and 646 FSL teachers from across Canada completed the survey. From the participants who completed the survey, four HR professionals and six teachers participated in interviews. The findings have been organized according to stakeholder groups.

More than half of HR participants agreed that there are unique strategies used to recruit FSL teachers in their school board. Some of the HR participants also agreed that there have been discussions about amending FSL teacher recruitment practices. A total of three themes emerged from the qualitative data (survey narrative responses and interviews) shared by HR professionals. The themes included 1) Challenges, 2) Strategies, and 3) Recommendations. Most HR participants reported that they struggled with recruiting and hiring FSL teachers. The most commonly reported challenges for

recruitment and hiring included struggling with lack of FSL teacher applicants, candidates with insufficient pedagogical knowledge, accepting other jobs, hiring late in the school year, and the high demand for FSL across Canada. Despite the evident challenges, many HR professionals were able to describe specific recruitment strategies that were working to varying extents, e.g., attending recruitment fairs was a common strategy mentioned by many of the participants. Hiring strategies included proactive, timely hiring, pool hiring², and conducting the language assessments online for convenience. However, not all participants were able to share strategies: eight of 32 survey respondents reported that they considered none of their current practices to be higher-yield. Generally, the recommendations revolved around being proactive for both recruitment and hiring. More specifically, it was recommended that districts promote FSL teaching during career counselling programs, HR professionals reiterated the need to use multiple strategies to help recruit and hire FSL teachers.

Data from FSL Teachers

FSL teacher respondents represented eight of the 13 provinces/territories. Interestingly, only 36% of survey respondents indicated that they were actively recruited³ for FSL positions. Many of the participants reported that the application process was straightforward, however more than 20% of respondents indicated that they found the application process challenging (this proportion increases to 36% when the Ontario data are excluded). A total of 87% of survey respondents shared that they were offered jobs in their most preferred district (76% without Ontario). For the qualitative data, three themes emerged: 1) Application Process, 2) Challenges, and 3) Recommendations. For the application process, many participants shared that the process was relatively easy to navigate. Factors that helped to facilitate the application process included having clear application requirements, identifying a specific point of contact for questions, and using an online application platform to help streamline the process. Most participants were able to share challenges that they had experienced during the application and hiring processes. Some of these challenges were greater when applying across provinces. Other challenges included lack of clarity in the job posting, difficulty with the French-language assessment, and lack of flexibility around interview scheduling (including time and platform). The FSL teachers provided many recommendations including: streamlining the application process, requiring fewer documents, and faster certification from certificate-granting body. Teachers also recommended that boards be as proactive as possible with recruitment through encouraging high school students to enter the teaching profession and partnering with local post-secondary institutions. Participants also emphasized the importance of ongoing marketing and communication around current FSL job opportunities.

² Some school districts use this practice to hire FSL teachers provisionally and then place them in specific jobs once certification is complete.

³ Recruitment in this report refers to the process of school districts actively seeking employees through multiple means.

A review of a sample of 145 school board websites (see Appendix G) across Canada provided a view into the information publicly available related to the recruitment and hiring of FSL teachers. Overall, districts use a variety of online platforms to manage the recruitment process, some districts' recruitment processes are supported through a larger provincial/territorial teacher recruitment strategy; in most cases, website users can find recruitment and hiring information quickly (usually no more than 5 mouse-clicks take the user to the relevant information).

The Territories school districts salaries at the entry level appeared in the \$80,000 range and the teacher salary maximums would be in the \$130,000 range. These ranges vary markedly from other parts of Canada where the range is generally in the \$40,000 for entry level and maximum salaries are closer to \$100,000.

Key Recruitment Strategies

Based upon the literature review, survey, and interview data, consultations with human resource/recruiting professionals inside and outside education, the following categories of recruitment strategies emerged:

1. **Job Posting, Website and Social Media-** Effective use of digital media (social media, websites, print materials) to promote and attract prospective FSL teachers to school boards.
2. **Post-Secondary Partnerships-** Effective partnerships with post-secondary preservice programs to conduct on-site interviews, pool hiring in anticipation of future requirements, formal/informal partnerships regarding instruction/training and programming and enhanced co-operative education placements to develop clearer pathways to employment for FSL teachers to school boards.
3. **Financial Incentives-** Effective use of targeted incentives such as monetary, student loan subsidies, accommodation, relocation allowances and in-kind supports that would appeal to new FSL teachers.
4. **Recruitment Data Tracking-** Effective use of Human Resource Information Systems and teacher certification organizations (e.g., Ontario College of Teachers) data to track and monitor recruitment/hiring activities.
5. **Creating an FSL-Friendly Culture-** Effective use of strategies that promote the attraction and retention of FSL teachers. These strategies include: enhancing interview processes, offering professional development in French, sponsoring supplementary FSL certification programs, and increasing technology support for FSL teachers.
6. **Community Outreach-** Active marketing within the broader community targeted at French-speaking individuals who may have teaching credentials.

Collaborative Partnerships and Pilot Projects Summary

Calls for proposals were distributed throughout Canada using contacts obtained through the research and interview process. Despite the challenges associated with COVID-19, proposals were received from twenty-one boards. The proposals represented all six of the recruitment strategy categories outlined above. Approval decisions were based on alignment with identified higher-potential recruitment strategies, board demographics, and potential scalability. In total, ten projects received approval. These projects include:

- Promotion of FSL Employment Opportunities in Rural Ontario School Boards
- Building Relationships with Future FSL Teachers and Supporting their Professional Development
- Qualification Collaboration in Grand Erie
- Exploring Virtual Interview on Demand Software
- FSL Teacher Recruitment- Website and Social Media Enhancement
- Out of Province “Home-Stay” Program
- Recrutement, ce n’est que le début!
- FSL Teacher Recruitment – Promotional Campaign
- FSL Recruitment in Professional/Specialized Publications
- Fostering Post-Secondary Partnerships

Developing a French-Language Proficiency Assessment Toolkit and Resource Guide

Year 1

A survey of the assessment practices of faculties of education and school districts when preparing and hiring FSL teachers



Executive Summary

Prior research conducted by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) into the French as a Second Language (FSL) teacher shortage issue concluded that a better understanding of how the French-language proficiency of prospective FSL teachers is assessed has the potential to improve teaching and learning in Canadian FSL classrooms, inform FSL teachers' professional learning needs, ensure that hiring processes are fair, and clarify for upcoming FSL teachers the language proficiency expectations needed to support learning French as a second language. To support this initiative, funding was provided by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to conduct a pan-Canadian study of the French-language proficiency assessment practices that are in place for prospective FSL teachers.

The key components of this initiative are:

- A review of relevant research, prior projects, and French language assessments;
- An empirical study examining the French-language proficiency practices used by school districts during hiring and faculties of education during admissions or teacher education;
- The creation of collaborations and pilot projects to implement our findings into practice.

The review of research identified the importance of language teachers being proficient in the target language alongside known, effective practices in language assessment for teachers. These practices include targeting language skills likely to be used by teachers, using a variety of assessments, making assessment components authentic to teaching, and establishing clear language proficiency expectations.

The review of research was followed by a three-phase empirical study that collected data from school districts and faculties of education. For both districts and faculties, data were collected from websites, survey responses, and interviews. The website, survey, and interview findings were consistent, enhancing our confidence in the robustness of these findings. These findings are summarized below.

- All faculties of education and almost all school districts assess applicants' French-language proficiency.

- Both school districts and faculties of education prefer to use internally developed assessments, although faculties of education were more likely to use standardized French proficiency tests such as the Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF).
- Speaking and writing skills were priorities. Speaking was given the highest priority, especially by school districts.
- The content, format, and expected achievement standards for internally developed assessments were generally not communicated to applicants.
- For school districts, the most common assessment format was to ask some questions in French during the employment interview. For faculties of education, counting course credits was the most commonly used assessment.
- Faculties of education use French-language proficiency assessments for formative as well as summative purposes. This practice is less common with school districts.
- Few school districts and approximately half of the faculties of education could articulate the rationale and history of their assessment.
- Examinations for patterns of response (e.g., by district or faculty size) yielded no discernable patterns. Provincial differences existed where policies exist relating to French-language proficiency assessment for teachers or teacher candidates.
- Language proficiency assessors were most often school administrators in school districts and French curriculum instructors in faculties of education.
- Evaluation of applicants' performance tended to be impression-based in school districts. Faculties of education were more likely to use rubrics or other scoring guides when evaluating applicants.

Upon completion of data collection for the empirical study, a call for proposals was sent out to school districts and faculties of education inviting them to apply for pilot project funding. Pilot projects needed to be collaborative and relate to French-language proficiency assessments for teachers or teacher candidates. We received 13 proposals and funded 11 of them. Some groups' projects were similar, so they were asked to collaborate resulting in nine separate pilot projects in total. These projects target diverse issues in French-language proficiency assessment for FSL teachers including:

- Setting common French-language proficiency standards across school districts,
- Using assessment information for formative purposes and teacher development,
- Aligning proficiency standards and assessments between school districts and faculties of education,
- Supporting school administrators in their assessment of French-language proficiency of FSL teachers,

- Establishing a common language proficiency assessment framework across school districts and faculties of education.

Pilot projects were selected based upon their coherence with the aims of this initiative and applicants' willingness to collaborate with other educational stakeholders. Pilot project teams will provide regular updates that will be used to inform the development of the assessment toolkit. The results of our research review and empirical study, combined with experiences and findings from the pilot projects will inform the future development of an assessment toolkit. This toolkit is designed to provide sample assessment tools, language proficiency frameworks for teachers, and performance standards that school districts and faculties of education may use to develop and refine their own tools. The intent of the toolkit is not only to improve French-language proficiency assessment practices, but also to facilitate clearer communication of proficiency expectations to prospective FSL teachers.

Supporting Principals to Address Challenges in Retention and Professional Support of French as a Second Language Teachers

Year 1



Executive Summary

Background

In Phase II of the Ontario FSL Labour Market Partnership Project (OLMPP) entitled, *Moving Forward with Understanding Perspectives Regarding the French as a Second Language Labour Market Issue, 2019*, one of the next steps under the heading of Retention and Professional Support of FSL teachers in Ontario, included a recommendation to “Expand support for organizations/school boards to provide professional learning for principals/vice principals regarding leadership specific to FSL programs”. This recommendation highlights a promising practice linked to the need to focus on the leadership role of the school administrator in the ongoing effort to positively impact the retention and professional support of FSL teachers. Providing continuity of quality FSL programs in schools is at the core of this recommendation.

This initiative is entitled, *Supporting Principals to Address Challenges in Retention and Professional Support of French as a Second Language Teachers*. It is led by the Ontario Public School Board’s Association (OPSBA) for all publicly funded English language school boards, in partnership with the Ontario Principals’ Council (OPC) and the Catholic Principals’ Council | Ontario (CPCO) and is envisioned as a 3-year, pan-Canadian initiative.

Components of the Initiative

The initiative entitled *Supporting Principals to Address Challenges in Retention and Professional Support of French as a Second Language Teachers*, is comprised of two concurrent components.

Component One

The first component in Year 1 involved pan-Canadian research and professional dialogue with school administrators to explore and document the leadership challenges and opportunities related to FSL instruction in schools and to begin to gather practices and strategies that have the potential to positively affect FSL teacher retention and professional support.

The following two key research questions guided the work for this component:

1. During professional dialogue with school leaders on this topic, what unique leadership challenges and opportunities emerge that affect FSL instruction in schools?
2. During professional dialogues with school leaders what are effective FSL teacher retention and professional support strategies that can be shared and replicated provincially and nationally?

This component was informed by three sources of data including:

1. Past studies and reports related to the role of school leadership in addressing the longstanding challenges related to FSL instruction.
2. A pan-Canadian electronic survey of principals with FSL programs in their schools.
3. Virtual focus groups with principals who volunteered as a result of their participation in the survey.

Component Two

The second component of this initiative represents the extension of a pilot project executed in Phases II and III of the French as a Second Language - Ontario FSL Labour Market Partnership Project (FSL-OLMPP). This successful pilot involved the staged development and implementation of a facilitated online learning module to support school administrators who lead French Immersion programs in their schools entitled, *Leading a French Immersion School*. The Ontario Principals' Council and Catholic Principals' Council | Ontario led this pilot.

As a result of the success of this Ontario Labour Market Partnership pilot project, and in recognition of the importance of principal leadership, the learning module approach was identified as a high-potential strategy. In this current initiative the learning module strategy has moved into the implementation stage and additional modules have been developed to support Core/Basic (CB) FSL programs in addition to the original French Immersion (FI) module. These FSL modules have been added to other existing professional learning opportunities for school leaders which are available through principal associations in publicly funded English-language school boards in Ontario.

For this component of the project the following key research questions guided the work:

1. How can OPC/CPCO better support principals to address challenges in retaining and developing FSL teachers?
2. What is the impact of the professional learning modules on principals' capacity to retain and support French as a Second Language teachers?

The second question relating to impact requires time to elapse following a school administrator's participation in a module. As such, impact will be measured over the course of the three-year initiative. This will allow school administrators the necessary time to reflect on, and most importantly, to apply the learning, practices and strategies.

This component was informed by the following data sources:

1. Module evaluations completed by participants.

2. A pre-and post-reflection instrument, “*Reflections for School Administrators Leading FSL Programs in Schools*”. Prompts in five key areas were provided for principals to reflect upon aspects of personal practice as it pertains to supporting FSL programs in their school. The inventory covered five themes:
 - school culture
 - inclusionary practices
 - instructional leadership in FSL
 - retaining FSL teachers
 - resources
3. Review of discussion in online posting boards used in the FSL learning modules.

The Ontario Principals’ Council (OPC) and the Catholic Principals’ Council | Ontario (CPCO) worked together to refine the original French Immersion module using current applicable research and the feedback from principal participants in the original pilot. A new Core French module and a part 2 French Immersion module were developed and delivered. The Core French and part 1 French Immersion module were delivered in the fall of 2020 and the Part 2 French Immersion module was delivered in January 2021.

Overview of Findings

COMPONENT ONE

The pan-Canadian survey provided useful exploratory data regarding leadership challenges and opportunities that affect FSL instruction in schools, as well as some preliminary data to inform the investigation of FSL teacher support strategies and practices, which may be linked with FSL teacher retention. Out of 545 participants, 80% were from Ontario and 63% were principals of elementary schools. Key findings are listed below:

- The majority of principals (approx. 62%) do not report receiving sufficient professional learning on the provincial FSL curriculum, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and Ministry of Education FSL priorities.
- Across all participating regions principals consistently identified finding sufficient numbers of FSL teachers, accessing sufficient opportunities for professional learning and networking, and accessing current and sufficient resources as the top 3 challenges to supporting FSL instruction in schools.
- A majority of principals (62%) reported that their schools were resourced with current FSL materials, however only 38% responded that the FSL materials were reflective of the diversity of students in their school.

- Principals across all regions identified school budgets dedicated for FSL resources and activities, and encouraging FSL teachers to engage in school-wide leadership opportunities as additional supports that most enhanced a principal's ability to support FSL programs.
- A significant number of principals (72%) reported that having access to an FSL consultant or coach was very helpful. Principals ranked release time for FSL professional learning and advice for purchasing appropriate teaching resources as the top two supports received from a consultant/coach.
- Principals reported that knowledge of effective FSL teaching resources, FSL assessment and evaluation and the use of technology in second language learning would most enhance their ability to support FSL programs

Focus Group Findings

Principals who volunteered for the focus groups appreciated the opportunity to share their insights and experiences, noting that more opportunities to connect with one another would be beneficial in supporting their FSL teachers. The four most prevalent themes identified in the focus groups are summarized below:

1. **Need for Opportunities for Collaboration** - The most prominent theme that emerged from the focus groups was the need for opportunities for principals to come together to collaborate and discuss FSL-specific-issues. Principals across regions expressed a desire to increase their knowledge about FSL programming, effective practices used by colleagues, and to share experiences to build and maintain strong FSL programming.
2. **Importance of Modelling** - Principals across all regions highlighted the importance of modelling to support FSL teachers and FSL instruction. They shared how their own actions could create positive school climate conditions where French language learning is valued throughout the school, rather than only within the French classroom.
3. **Access to Resources and Professional Learning** - Principals across all focus groups emphasized the importance of accessing quality resources to support FSL teachers and FSL instruction. Additionally, principals across all regions expressed an interest in professional learning for themselves, and also emphasized the need for more professional learning for FSL teachers.
4. **Importance of Relationships** - Throughout all topics covered in the focus groups, one of the most compelling needs that principals spoke about pertained to actively developing productive working relationships in order to support FSL teachers. They spoke of expanding mentoring opportunities and highlighted that relationships are foundational to striving for, running, and maintaining quality FSL programs in their schools.

Summary of Challenges, Opportunities and Strategies

An integral part of this initiative's research was to begin to document the challenges/opportunities in supporting FSL instruction in schools as well as the strategies and practices to support principals in supporting FSL teachers and programs. These were then categorized under either recruitment and hiring or professional support and retention. There was no intention to directly assess the efficacy of the strategies and practices at this time, but to create a list for further study and implementation through the use of pilot projects. Please note that recruitment and hiring was not a direct focus of this initiative, but the input was gathered. These lists are not intended to be in priority order.

Challenges

The following list represents challenges reported by principals either through the survey or focus group discussions.

Recruitment and Hiring

- finding sufficient numbers of FSL teachers
- retention of FSL teachers
- impact of partial contract/timetable allocations for FSL teacher
- proficiency level of FSL teachers
- core/basic teachers are often alone or in small numbers at schools where FI is not offered

Professional Support and Retention

Resources

Principals reported insufficient access to:

- current and appropriate grade level resources
- FSL materials that are reflective of the diversity of the students
- community-based supports and/or resources in order to support FSL teachers and programs

Professional Learning

Principals reported insufficient access to:

- professional learning on the FSL curriculum, CEFR, and FSL Ministry priorities
- district-wide FSL consultants and coaches to support principals and FSL teachers
- networking and collaborative opportunities for principals with FSL programs in their schools
- funding to provide supply teacher coverage and FSL supply teachers
- FSL teacher mentors

Opportunities and Strategies

The following are opportunities, strategies/practices that principals reported through the survey and focus group discussions.

Recruitment and Hiring

- building relationships with FSL teachers who do practicum placements at the school
- establish reciprocal partnerships with a faculty of education to provide enhanced opportunities for recruitment and ongoing collaboration

Professional Learning and Retention

Conveying Value for French as a Second Language to Teachers, Students and the Community

- Annually dedicate a portion of school funds to FSL resources and activities
- Display the French language throughout the school not just the FSL classroom (e.g., use and display the French language during the school day/year to build French into the culture of the school)
- Promote Core/Basic programs in schools, not just French Immersion programs
- Invite guests from French communities and hold cultural events
- Support teacher-led initiatives for field trips for a French cultural activity

Building Capacity

Principal-focused

- Network with other principals to seek ideas on how to navigate FSL teacher retention challenges
- Greater access to FSL consultant/coach support for principals and teachers
- Create and access professional association/organization supports for principals with FSL programs in their schools

Teacher-focused

- Encourage FSL teachers to engage in school-wide leadership opportunities
- More coordinated professional learning opportunities to help FSL teachers collaborate and grow their own professional skills
- Create informal networks of teachers to address the difficulties of locating quality FSL resources – these networks share ideas and resources they have gathered in their practice
- Check in regularly with recently hired FSL teachers to determine where they need additional supports
- Build formal and informal mentorship opportunities for new FSL teachers
- Create opportunities to maintain and improve FSL language proficiency

COMPONENT TWO

The following professional learning modules for principals were implemented in year 1:

1. *Supporting Principals to Address Challenges in FSL Teacher Retention and Developing the FSL Program - Core French Module* (offered November 9 - December 7, 2020)
2. *A revised Supporting Principals to Address Challenges in FSL teacher Retention and Developing the FSL Program- FI Module Part 1* (offered November 23 - December 31, 2020)
3. *Supporting Principals to Address Challenges in FSL Teacher Retention and Developing the FSL Program - FI Module Part 2* (offered January 12 - February 9, 2021)

School administrators who participated in the OPC/CPCO online learning modules in Year 1 reported the following:

- The content of the modules provided support and strategies to help them approach challenges they face in both developing and retaining FSL teachers.
- They valued the ability to connect with other school administrators across the province who share the same challenges.
- The learning activities that focused on developing plans to work with FSL teachers were well received and seen as something that could be part of actions moving forward.

Feedback for the modules was positive, with 100% of reporting participants rating the overall experience as a three or four out of a possible four. Participant comments revealed the following themes:

- Connection with other administrators and sharing of resources remained the most valuable portion of the modules.
- The learning activities that focused on developing plans to work with FSL teachers were well received.
- The addition of a second “Meet and Greet” synchronous session was a positive inclusion. Participants appreciated being able to ask any technical questions they had about the platform during this time, as well as being able to find out more about the entire module up front.

Pilot Projects

Based on the research findings from the pan-Canadian survey and focus groups, pilot projects were established to allow for the exploration of strategies and practices that surfaced during this study. A call for proposals was sent out to school districts across Canada inviting them to apply for pilot project funding. Twelve proposals were received.

The following six pilot projects focused on building principal capacity through networking and collaboration, were approved for funding:

1. French Immersion Principals: Student Support and Inclusive Practices
 - Supporting principals through networking including work with FI teachers to develop common practices and processes and to provide professional learning support.
2. Leading and Learning: Supporting Principals in the Development of Effective FSL Programs
 - Using the OPC/CPCO online learning modules, administrators will engage in learning in order to build capacity in the support and retention of FSL teachers.
3. Eastern Ontario Staff Development Network - Principal/Vice-Principal Network to Enhance Support for FSL Educators: Français a Cœur - Centre d'Excellence
 - Addressing the need for school administrators to deepen their understanding of the conditions that support a positive FSL culture in their schools through professional learning and networking opportunities.
4. Restons à l'affût! Tuning into FSL
 - Professional learning, aligned with provincial FSL priorities, for principals to build capacity to support FSL teachers and programs.
5. Supporting FSL Principals through Collaborative Networks
 - Collaboration across three school districts to build capacity through professional learning on FSL initiatives through a speaker series and networking on supports to increase FSL teacher retention.
6. Strengthening FSL Programs
 - Providing principals with opportunities to collaborate with colleagues within Canada to pose questions and share ideas to ensure that principals have tools and resources for assisting FSL teachers in professional development.

Approval decisions were based on alignment with stated criteria, a focus on networks, collaboration and potential scalability.

NEXT STEPS

The research in this initiative began to identify the challenges and opportunities encountered by principals in supporting quality, sustainable FSL programs in their schools, as well as a range of strategies and practices used by principals in supporting FSL teachers.

The importance of continuing the dialogue with school administrators is recognized as a key next step in both the development of the compendium of strategies and practices,

and in gathering further feedback from school leaders who are working on the retention and professional support of FSL teachers. In addition, maintaining the offering of FSL learning modules for school administrators and exploring the development of new modules will ensure that support is targeted to meet identified needs. Information and feedback collected from the pilot projects can further enhance the modules and sharing of effective practice.

Next Steps for Year 2 include:

- establishing communities of practice for school administrators to network and dialogue about supporting quality FSL programs within school boards, provinces and inter-provincially
- continued dialogue with principals across Canada to gather additional input to create a draft compendium of strategies and practices to support principals in their efforts to retain and provide professional support for FSL teachers
- staged roll out of the draft compendium across Canada in the latter half of Year 2 to collect feedback along with any additional strategies and practices
- continued offering of the FSL online learning modules in Ontario using a pilot project approach and adapt as required for other provinces
- development and implementation of a targeted professional FSL learning module for secondary school leaders
- development of school-board specific professional learning opportunities to support principals with FSL programs in their schools
- development of a webinar series, including principal roundtables, to enhance professional learning opportunities for school administrators
- development of an orientation program for newly appointed administrators to single track French Immersion and dual track schools with Core/Basic and French Immersion programs
- assess and expand the Year 1 pilot projects



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Note to readers:

This Executive Summaries report provides an overview of three separate reports.

Please refer to the full reports, available at www.opsba.org