



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 Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), 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 received Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) approval to proceed with phase one of the initiative entitled *Meeting Labour Market Needs for French as a Second Language Instruction in Ontario* beginning in May 2017. Based on demonstrable progress in the first year, OPSBA, on behalf of all the educational partners, applied to MTCU to continue with this initiative and in November 2018 was approved to continue phase two of the project entitled "*Moving Forward with Understanding Perspectives Regarding French as a Second Language Labour Market Issue.*"

The committee structures and membership for the project are as follows:

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, education workers' unions, faculties of education, Ontario colleges, the Ontario College of Teachers, the College of Early Childhood Educators 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 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 composed of individuals with research experience including school board chief research officers and a university professor.

Phase One: Understanding Perspectives regarding the French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue

OPSBA was approved for phase one of the initiative, which ran from May 15, 2017 to May 14, 2018, and facilitated the "*Understanding Perspectives regarding the French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue.*" The project focused primarily on research linked to FSL teachers that included:

- A review of background studies previously conducted by key stakeholders;
- A qualitative and quantitative study including surveys, interviews, and focus groups of recent French as a Second Language teacher hires and soon-to-graduate FSL 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 reported 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 on supply pipeline and job vacancy rate).

In May 2018, the FSL-Labour Market Partnership Committee released its report entitled, [Understanding Perspectives Regarding the French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue](#). The report identified the challenges in hiring, recruiting and retaining FSL teachers in English public school boards across the province. The report also offered a number of recommendations in two areas – Recruitment and Professional Support.

Phase Two: Moving Forward with Understanding Perspectives Regarding French as a Second Language Labour Market Issue

OPSBA has received approval for phase two of the initiative, which will run from November 12, 2018, to November 11, 2019, entitled “*Moving Forward with Understanding Perspectives Regarding the French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue.*” This phase will focus on action planning and facilitating the implementation of the phase one recommendations. Pilot projects will be identified to implement evidence-informed practices and strategies based on the action plans. Research addressing the recruitment, hiring, and retention of sufficient numbers of French-speaking education workers (e.g. Early Childhood Educators and Educational Assistants) and the development of related recommendations are also components of this phase. The research will include:

- A review of background studies previously conducted by key stakeholder groups and independent researchers;
- A qualitative and quantitative study (surveys/interviews/focus group) on recruitment, hiring and retention of education workers;
- Analysis of education workers’ (ECEs, Educational Assistants) experiences working in FSL school contexts.

At the end of this phase, all member organizations and professional associations will develop recommendations to expand and deepen the implementation of effective recruitment, retention and development strategies across the province regarding French-speaking education workers. A report entitled *Moving Forward with Understanding Perspectives Regarding French as a Second Language Labour Market Issue* will be released at the completion of phase two.

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