



Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association
Canadian Parents for French
Association Canadienne des Professionels de l'Immersion
Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers
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June 25, 2019

SENT VIA EMAIL TO:
stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org

OPEN LETTER TO:
The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
2220 King Rd #1, King City, ON L7B 1L3

Dear Honourable Stephen Lecce,

RE: French as a Second Language Programming and Student Pathways in Ontario

As Presidents of the Ontario Modern Languages Teacher's Association, Canadian Parents for French, the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers and the Association Canadienne des Professionels de l'Immersion, we write to you to express our collective and strong concern regarding the effects of the recent class size changes on French as a Second Language (FSL) programming in Ontario.

As you may know, FSL program participation in Ontario continues to grow. In the 2016-17 academic year, 985,970 students were enrolled in Core, Extended, or Immersion French programs in publicly funded, English-language school boards in Ontario out of the total student JK-12 English population of 2.0 million. In that same year, 299,831 students were enrolled in French Immersion, Extended French or Core French from Grades 10 to 12, which is greater than the minimum requirements set by the Ontario Ministry of Education for graduation.

The recent changes announced by the Government relating to an increase in class size is having a significant impact on the ability of school boards to offer FSL programming beyond grade 9 for secondary students in Ontario. More specifically, some school boards are being forced to close FSL pathways beyond grade 9. This means that although students continue to choose FSL programming beyond grade 9, there is no longer a pathway option for them to do so. In an era of increasing globalization, it is critical to protect FSL programming as an economic and cultural asset both within Canada and beyond. We must recognize that having language skills in more than one language provides students with opportunities to improve their overall communication, thinking and problem-solving skills during a critical time in their development.



Since the implementation of the revised FSL curricula, the Ministry has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the effectiveness of FSL education. The FSL Framework, k-12 presents a call to action to strengthen FSL programming, promote the benefits of FSL, heighten appreciation of and support for FSL educators, and increase public confidence in FSL education. In recent years, focused funding has been provided for FSL professional development opportunities as a means to support the development of student confidence, proficiency and achievement in FSL. This has not only resulted in a continued growth in grade 12 student participation in the Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF), an internationally recognized exam, but also in a demand for increased participation in FSL programming beyond grade 9.

As associations who represent students, educators and parents, we understand that French language studies are fundamental to the achievement of language skills. We ask that the Minister recognize the need to protect FSL pathways for students by taking specific action to support school boards in maximizing student participation and proficiency in French while continuing to protect the viability of FSL programming from elementary through to secondary throughout the province.

We appreciate the opportunity to advocate with you on this vitally important issue. We would be pleased to meet with you in the near future to further discuss the imperative need to protect pathways from elementary to secondary and beyond.

Sincerely,

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Cc : Denise Massie, President, Canadian Parents for French (Ontario)
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