

The background of the cover is a grayscale photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, two students are seen from behind, looking towards the front of the room. A large, white, dashed-line silhouette of a person stands in the center of the image, partially obscuring the classroom scene. The text is overlaid on a dark blue rectangular area on the right side of the image.

ACCESSING OPPORTUNITY

A study on challenges in French-as-a-second-language
education teacher supply and demand in Canada.

February 2019

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages contracted this study to Canadian Parents for French. The research team consisted of lead researchers and authors Mimi Masson and Elizabeth Jean Larson, as well as Paule Desgroseilliers, Wendy Carr and Sharon Lapkin.

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INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

One of the main responsibilities of the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada (the Commissioner) is to promote linguistic duality in Canadian society. To help meet this responsibility, the Commissioner raises Canadians' awareness of the benefits of linguistic duality and carries out research, studies and public awareness activities to help inform all Canadians of the status and importance of Canada's official languages.

As a leader in official languages, the Commissioner takes great interest in the question of access to opportunities for Canadians to learn and to master their second official language. He recognizes that this is key to the continuing success of the *Official Languages Act*, the advancement of the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society, and the fostering of a bilingual public service that can work, and serve Canadians, in both languages.

The challenge of ensuring access to French-as-a-second-language (FSL) education is particularly pressing. While the 2016 census showed an overall increase in the national bilingualism rate, from 17.5% in 2011 to 17.9% in 2016, the rate remains much higher among Canadians whose mother tongue is French (46.2%), and much lower among Canadians whose mother tongue is English (9.2%) or another language (11.7%) (Statistics Canada 2017).

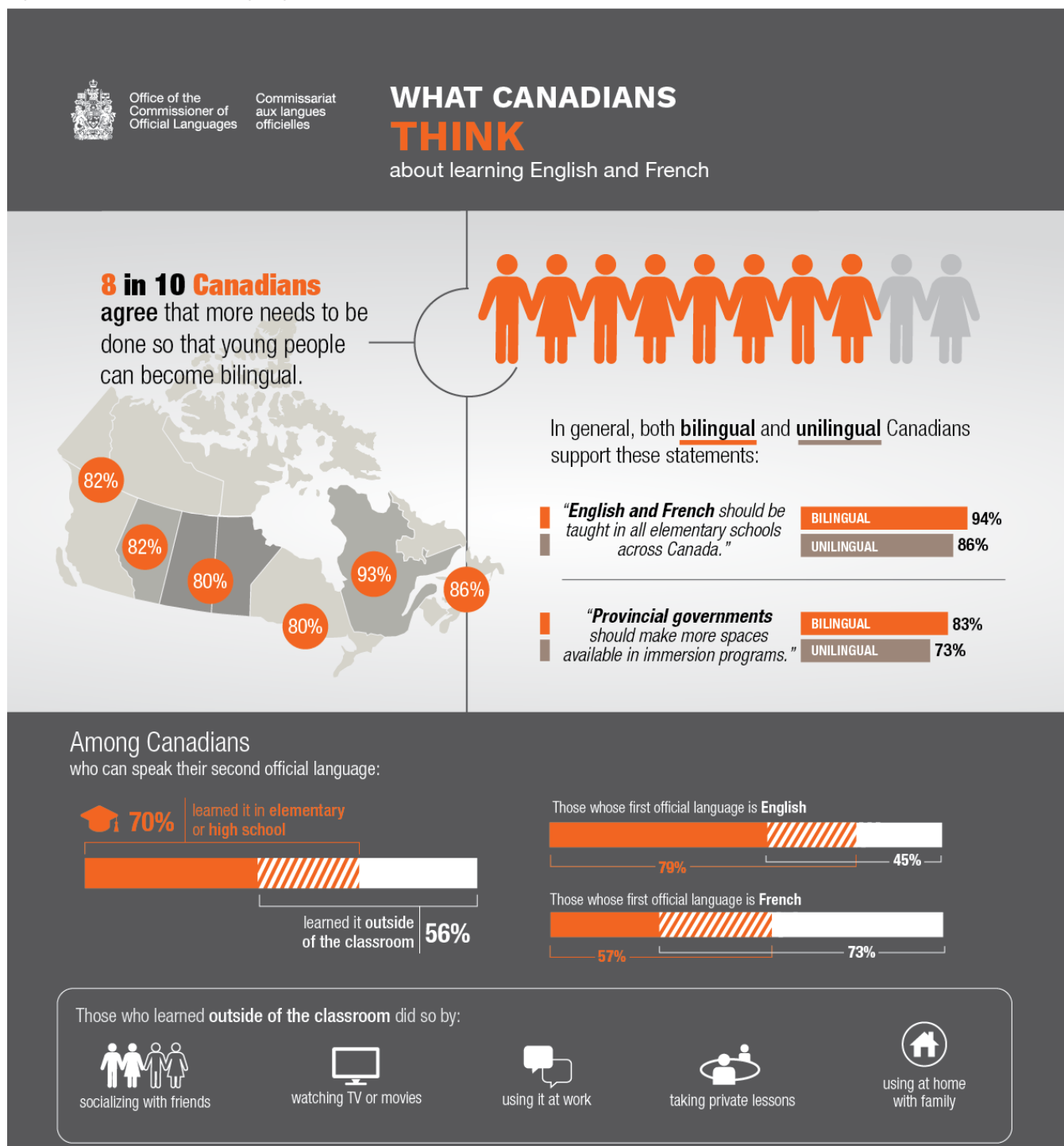
According to recent projections, the bilingualism rate among non-Francophones is not expected to increase for the foreseeable future (Houle and Corbeil 2017). One means of addressing this challenge, at least in part, is by ensuring support for FSL education—a priority area identified in the Government of Canada's *Action Plan for Official Languages – 2018-2023: Investing in Our Future*.

Canadians recognize the need to foster bilingualism, especially among youth. A 2016 survey conducted by Nielsen for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (the Office of the Commissioner) showed that roughly 8 in 10 Canadians agree that:

- both languages should be taught to some extent in all elementary schools across Canada;
- more needs to be done so that young people can become bilingual; and
- provincial governments should make more spaces available in immersion programs.

Learning one's second official language in a school setting is particularly important for Canadians whose first official language is English: in the same 2016 survey, 79% of Anglophone respondents who could speak French stated that they learned the language in elementary or high school. Respondents also identified lack of access to language courses as the most common barrier to learning a second official language. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1 – Attitudes on learning English and French



Currently, FSL education is taught through a variety of programs, including:

- Core French (consisting of basic French taught as a subject among others in a regular English program in two to five lessons a week for usually 30 to 40 minutes);
- Intensive Core French (wherein French is taught intensively for most of the day during five months of Grades 5 or 6—subjects taught in English are “compressed” into the second half of the year);
- Extended or Expanded Core French (wherein students take two or three core subjects taught in French, in addition to a French class, during a single school year); and
- French Immersion (wherein French is the language of instruction for 50% to 90% of all core subjects, depending on the grade and the year of entry into the program).

As of 2015–2016 (the latest year in which the data is available), 35.9% of students in English schools were enrolled in a Core French, Intensive Core French or Extended Core French program, and 11.3% were enrolled in French Immersion. French Immersion and Intensive Core French have been gaining considerable attention and demand in recent years (Statistics Canada 2017). In 2015–2016, some 430,000 students were enrolled in French Immersion programs in Canada, compared to 360,000 in 2011–2012—an increase of nearly 20% in just four years at a time when the total student body has remained the same (Canadian Parents for French 2017). Over this period, French Immersion has grown in proportionate terms in the English schools of every province and territory (with the exception of Quebec, which faces its own set of unique challenges, as will be discussed below). Reconciling the growing enrolment in elective programs like French Immersion with the relative stagnation of bilingualism among non-Francophones will be an important challenge in the years to come.

Over the years, many administrators, teachers and support staff have been dedicated to supporting FSL education. However, the literature points out that challenges in FSL teacher supply and demand persist. Moreover, without addressing the challenges in FSL teacher supply and demand, it is unlikely that access to FSL education will improve and, consequently, unlikely that the overall English/French bilingualism rates among non-Francophones will increase in the foreseeable future.

Study objectives

The Commissioner recognizes that he has a role to play in helping to shed light on this challenge, and to contribute to the momentum that has begun to build in conversations among FSL stakeholders around strategies for addressing the challenge. Considering its mandate, and in light of the current context, the Office of the Commissioner commissioned Canadian Parents for French to assemble and manage a team of FSL education researchers and experts to conduct the present study.

The study objectives are to document and explore:

- the extent and nature of the FSL teacher supply and demand challenge and other factors that may be related to the challenges in accessing FSL education;
- current and possible measures that the Government of Canada along with different ministries of education, faculties of education and school boards could consider to help address the gap;
- factors inhibiting FSL education graduates from Canadian post-secondary institutions from taking up FSL teaching positions where there is a demand for their specialty, as well as considerations or initiatives that could encourage or motivate them to consider teaching in FSL programs where there is a need.

The present study provides a series of recommendations and suggestions for the federal minister responsible for official languages, who has a responsibility to work with provincial and territorial governments to provide opportunities for Canadians to learn both official languages. By doing so, the minister would demonstrate pan-Canadian leadership on this critical issue—an issue that crosses provincial and territorial boundaries and that is in need of a national and coordinated approach.

In addition, it is hoped that the study findings and conclusions will help stakeholders as they develop their strategies and project funding proposals and contribute to a sound implementation of this important part of the Government of Canada's 2018-2023 Action Plan for Official Languages, so that we can all work together to improve access to bilingual education for English-speaking youth across Canada.

Study methodology

Research for the study was conducted from December 2017 through March 2018, and consisted of a literature review of over 50 different sources, 28 telephone interviews with representatives from provincial and territorial ministries of education, university faculties of education and school boards from across the country, 2 group interviews (1 in-person and 1 over the phone) with a total of 39 FSL teacher candidates, and an on-line survey of 101 teacher candidates. The literature review and interviews with ministries, faculties, and school boards provided insight on the

matter of FSL teacher supply and demand and on recruitment and retention strategies, while the focus group interviews and survey of FSL teacher candidates provided an opportunity for respondents to voice their needs when searching for a teaching position.

The scope, limitations and related findings of each of these methods will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent sections of the report. This will be followed by general observations and recommendations that governments and FSL education stakeholders may wish to consider as they develop strategies moving forward.

LITERATURE REVIEW FINDINGS

The literature review gathered and analyzed the findings and observations from over 50 different governmental and academic studies, reports and publications from the last 15 years and recent media reports from different provinces and territories. The review found a broad consensus that there is an overall increase in demand from parents for elective FSL programs (especially French Immersion), a need to revitalize support for Core French programs, and a general and persistent shortage of qualified FSL teachers in Canada (Canadian Parents for French 2017; British Columbia Ministry of Education 2016; Modjeski 2016; n.a. 2017b.).

The literature also identifies challenges in filling spaces in teacher education programs in some provinces (e.g., Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Ontario and Manitoba), problems with teacher mobility to more rural and isolated areas (e.g., in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon and Prince Edward Island), systemic challenges in retention of FSL teachers owing to a perceived lack of status of the FSL profession in schools (Carr 2007; Kissau 2005; Lapkin, Macfarlane and Vandergrift 2006), lack of professional development opportunities and a lack of classroom space dedicated to Core French teachers (Macfarlane and Hart 2002; Mollica, Philips and Smith 2005; Pruss 2017). It bears pointing out that, while the most comprehensive statistics collected by Canadian Parents for French show that enrolment in French Immersion has increased in proportionate terms, it has decreased in Core French in proportionate terms. Whereas enrolment in immersion is reflective of demand, however, this is less the case in Core French.

Research on FSL teacher supply has intensified in recent years as awareness of the challenges has grown. In fall 2018, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages published its report, *French as a Second Language Learning Programs in Western Canada*, based on discussions with stakeholders from different FSL programs, and with recommendations focused on federal-provincial/territorial agreements on second-language learning. In spring 2018, the Canadian Association of Immersion Professionals released a national study investigating the recruitment and retention initiatives needed to support French Immersion teachers specifically. Recommendations included a national campaign to bolster the image of teaching French Immersion as a profession, an active recruitment campaign of French Immersion teachers and a national on-line platform to post French Immersion jobs across Canada in one on-line location. Also in 2018, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association released its longitudinal study, *Understanding Perspectives Regarding the French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue*. In 2017, the Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages published its report, *Horizon 2018: Toward Stronger*

Support of French-Language Learning in British Columbia, and in 2015, it released *Aiming Higher: Increasing Bilingualism of our Canadian Youth*. According to the Senate's research, immersion programs are the victims of their own success—limited places in French Immersion programs have meant long waiting lists and lotteries, for example in British Columbia.

All of these studies suggest that a key underlying challenge is the need for qualified FSL teachers. The challenge lies in identifying and implementing potential solutions. The literature review also found that different provinces and territories face specific problems of their own, and different regions have had different levels of success in formulating and implementing solutions.

Atlantic Canada

All four Atlantic provinces appear to have been facing challenges in recent years. After Quebec, New Brunswick has the highest level of FSL enrolment in its English-language schools (85.8%) (Canadian Parents for French 2017). According to recent media reports (Pruss 2017), however, some school boards in New Brunswick are facing an FSL teacher shortage and have responded by filling positions temporarily with supply teachers, and by actively recruiting FSL teachers from their teacher graduate programs and also from other provinces. In Nova Scotia, a provincial report (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2012) anticipated difficulties recruiting teachers in rural and remote areas. The report also suggested that French-language and English-language boards were sometimes competing for the same candidates. In Newfoundland and Labrador, a government report (Department of Human Resources Labour and Employment 2011) suggested that employers would experience recruitment pressures due to job openings from retirements, high skill requirements and strong competition from other jurisdictions. They recommended that employers use proactive recruitment strategies and anticipate increased remuneration. In Prince Edward Island, FSL programs appear to have been benefiting from pilot projects that have already been initiated to support teachers in the field. A report by Canadian Parents for French – Prince Edward Island chapter (MacPhee, Provencher and Lecky 2017), however, voiced concerns that there may be a shortage of FSL teachers in the province. The Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation also expressed concern, specifically over proposed reductions in teaching positions despite the government (Public School Branch) having issued a statement acknowledging the need for special staffing considerations for newly implemented French Immersion programs in certain districts (Wright 2017).

Quebec

Quebec faces its own unique set of circumstances. The province's English-speaking minority community is highly bilingual (69% of Quebecers whose mother tongue is English are bilingual) (Statistics Canada 2017). As the study of French is a required curricular discipline, enrolment in FSL programs in Quebec's English schools is the highest in the country (100%), as is enrolment in French Immersion (32%). However, Quebec is the only province that witnessed an overall decline in the French Immersion enrolment rate during the period from 2011 to 2016 (dropping from 36.2% to 32%) (Canadian Parents for French 2017). Ensuring access for youth to FSL skills learning opportunities is particularly important for the vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec. Media reports and survey data suggest that English-speaking parents are anxious for their children to graduate with a strong proficiency in French in order to improve their career opportunities and to encourage graduates to remain in the province. As a result, and out of a concern that FSL programs in the English schools are not meeting the demand, some parents opt to send their children into the French school system (n.a. 2013; n.a. 2016). This may be a contributing factor to the declining enrolment in some of Quebec's English-language schools (MacLeod and Hasan 2017)—institutions that are important to community vitality. A related issue is that children whose parents opt to send them to French-language schools may themselves lose the constitutional right to one day send their own children to English-language minority schools.

FSL teachers remain in high demand in both the English and French school boards which at times compete for the same pool of teachers. This is because some French school boards must provide FSL classes to enable immigrant and refugee children to reach the necessary level of French-language proficiency. French and English school boards also provide French-language training to immigrant and refugee adults to facilitate their integration into Quebec society and the work force. There is additional competition for FSL teachers from other educational institutions, such as universities, CEGEPs, and community organizations that offer FSL classes to meet the increasing demand (Cloutier 2018). In spite of the fact that enrolments in Quebec's faculties of education remain stable, the apparent overall shortage of teachers is being compounded by a high 25% drop-out rate among new teachers. In its 2018–2019 budget, the Quebec government allocated \$15 million per year over five years as an incentive for student teachers to complete their final practicum (Quebec Ministry of Education 2018).

Ontario

Ontario has by far the largest enrolment in FSL education, including in French Immersion. Enrolment in the latter increased from 164,635 students to 212,714 students from 2011 to 2016 (Canadian Parents for French 2017). As a result, FSL teachers have been in high demand. At the same time, there has been a longstanding surplus of English-only teachers (Ontario College of Teachers 2017). The Waterloo Region District School Board responded to the challenge by appealing directly to the Minister of Education to address the FSL teacher supply and demand problem (Alphonso 2017). In 2017, the Halton Catholic District School Board made headlines when it announced that it was considering cancelling its French Immersion program amid a “staffing crisis” due to the difficulty of recruiting and retaining FSL teachers (Gordon 2017). The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development responded to the concerns expressed by boards across Ontario by issuing a commitment to meet the growing demand for FSL (Canadian Parents for French 2017). The Ontario Public School Board Association also engaged in its longitudinal study on FSL teacher recruitment and retention.

Western Canada and the North

FSL teacher supply and demand is an issue in certain areas across Western Canada and the North, where the relatively small pool of French speakers and the high cost of living in some communities and the remoteness of others can create unique challenges.

The *Manitoba Teacher* magazine reported that French Immersion teacher supply and demand has become a particular problem in the province. There are too few FSL teachers graduating from faculties of education: in 2014, only 60% of the spaces available in the program were being filled (Theriault 2014; n.a. 2017c), while French Immersion enrolment has seen a constant increase over the years in Manitoba and Core French enrolment has remained strong (Canadian Parents for French 2017). In Saskatchewan, an advisory committee of Francophone affairs conveyed the need to address the shortage of qualified FSL teachers (Government of Saskatchewan 2010). A report from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education also acknowledged labour shortages in education more generally (Government of Saskatchewan 2013). In Alberta, a report forecasting occupational demand and supply for 2015–2025 suggested that French

teachers “can be difficult to find” (Huffman 2015; Government of Alberta 2016). In urban areas in particular, FSL teachers have been in higher demand than teachers of other subjects (Alberta Government 2013). According to media reports, some school boards are addressing the FSL teacher supply and demand challenge by hiring out-of-province (Cummings 2015; Huffman 2015).

In British Columbia, a recent ruling from the provincial Supreme Court reducing class size limits has created new pressures (British Columbia Ministry of Education 2017). The availability of teachers is already impacted by mobility issues and the high cost of housing, as teachers try to move around the province to fill vacancies. The Ministry of Education struck a task force recommending professional development and employment strategies to retain teachers. The government anticipates ongoing shortages in light of retirement trends and increasing but uneven student population growth. A 2016 report in British Columbia also included recommendations to increase promotional strategies and partnerships with teacher education institutions in France (British Columbia Ministry of Education 2016). Other research suggests that more funding for teachers’ professional development, an information campaign geared at students who can speak French and student loan forgiveness would help to address the problem (Kline-Martin 2018). British Columbia recently announced one-time funding to two faculties of education (University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University) to increase French Immersion teacher candidate spaces for 2018–2020 (Government of British Columbia 2018).

In the North, the remoteness of some communities and the prominence of Indigenous languages create a unique context. According to media reports, the Northwest Territories and Yukon school boards have difficulty finding and retaining FSL teachers due in large part to the remote location of schools and communities (n.a. 2017a). The shortage of teachers in Yukon was previously identified as an issue by Canadian Parents for French (Pan 2014). In Nunavut, Inuktitut (referring to the Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun languages) can be a language of instruction. Students choose if they would like to study English or French as an additional language and the number of classes in these languages increases incrementally from kindergarten onward. In 2015–2016, 147 students were enrolled in Core French (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, n.d.). Additionally, between 15 and 25 students are enrolled in the one Intensive Core French class offered in Grade 7 at Aqsarniit Middle School in Iqaluit each year.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Scope and limitations

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with personnel from:

- six provincial ministries of education (three in Atlantic Canada, one in Quebec, one in Western Canada and one in the North);
- fourteen English-language school boards (two in Atlantic Canada, four in Quebec, three in Ontario, four in Western Canada and one in the North), including in urban, rural and remote settings; and
- eight university faculties of education (one in Atlantic Canada, three in Quebec, one in Ontario and three in Western Canada).

The interviews were semi-structured, lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and were conducted in the participants' official language of choice. (See Appendix 1 for the interview protocols.) Potential participants were chosen based on convenience sampling procedures and identified with the assistance of personnel from Canadian Parents for French and from the Office of the Commissioner's regional offices. The views expressed in the interviews therefore cannot be projected to all FSL stakeholders. They do, however, provide valuable insight into the experiences of individuals who are directly engaged in FSL education at an operational level.

Ministries of education

Challenges identified

All personnel interviewed from ministries of education expressed concern about FSL teacher supply and demand. They suggested that, in general, positions are being filled, but sometimes with candidates who do not have adequate linguistic and/or cultural competency. Another problem is that native speakers from outside Canada who are interested in teaching French and individuals with certification from institutions outside Canada are sometimes having difficulty transitioning into the Canadian education system. Ministry personnel interviewed also indicated that different school boards have different needs. In rural and remote/northern areas, for example, it remains more difficult to find teachers willing to relocate.

All ministry personnel interviewed agreed that support with resources and planning was adequate or very good but felt that more support should be given to professional learning initiatives (i.e., developing pedagogical, linguistic or cultural competencies). Personnel from two ministries expressed a need for more interprovincial collaboration to better develop and promote resources.

Initiatives identified

Different ministries have launched or are considering different initiatives:

Recruitment into the profession

- One ministry made a one-time offer to fund over thirty seats for new teacher candidates in faculties of education.
- Several ministries have been working with the government of France and have been sending personnel overseas to recruit potential teachers.
- One ministry suggested creating a high school course for French Immersion students who might want to become FSL teachers.
- Some ministries attend national and international job fairs to recruit potential teachers.
- Some ministries use social media and pamphlets to inform potential teachers about joining the profession.
- Personnel from one ministry expressed interest in learning more from the Erasmus program in Europe, which allows university students from the European Union to more easily complete semesters abroad and receive accreditation in other European Union countries.

Financial support

- One province suggested creating bursaries for students who take post-secondary courses in French and teacher education courses in French.
- One ministry launched a \$20,000 grant to help teachers who need additional language training.

Support for professional learning

- Several ministries suggested creating partnerships between school boards and faculties to offer bursaries for professional development opportunities for teachers already teaching French.
- One northern territory has created a tightly-knit support network for FSL teachers. Funding for professional development is not allocated to school boards per teacher. Rather, funding exists at the ministerial level for which teachers who want professional development can apply.
- One ministry was interested in developing a model of professional learning such as *Teachers teaching teachers*, a British Columbia Teachers' Federation program through which classroom teachers co-design and facilitate professional development sessions and are provided release time to work as facilitators in British Columbia school districts.

Cultural support

- The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada has been leading a project to address student motivation in learning French and valuing the language and culture, *Strengthening Engagement in French as a Second Language*. The ministries of education that participated in the development of the resource were from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Ontario.

Administrative support

- One ministry is developing a tool kit to assist school administrative personnel who work with French Immersion teachers but do not speak French. The Canadian Association for Second Language Teachers and the Canadian Association of Immersion Professionals have also created various on-line resources.

Support with resources

- The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada has created an initiative to develop resources for FSL programs, with a dedicated page on its website.

Additional remarks

Ministry interview respondents highlighted the importance of maintaining an adequate standard of French proficiency—for creating both quality teachers and quality programming for students. Some also felt that it was important to consider offering teachers who speak French as a second language more support in their own linguistic and cultural development. They suggested that both linguistic and cultural competencies should be taught and developed together since linguistic competency alone is not enough to excel as a teacher of French.

School boards

Challenges in language skills affecting FSL teacher supply and demand

The school board personnel interviewed unanimously reported experiencing a shortage of teachers with adequate linguistic and cultural competencies, knowledge of second-language teaching and knowledge of the Common European Framework of Reference (a framework which provides standardized competency levels for language learners). There is currently no standard minimum language requirement for FSL teachers across Canada and teachers' self-identification of competency can be unreliable. Some school boards have recently begun implementing a standard minimum requirement of "B2" on the *Diplôme d'études en langue française* or "C1" on the *Diplôme approfondi de langue française*. These levels are based on the Common European Framework of Reference competency levels. Other school boards use an in-house proficiency test.

A key reported problem was the lack of qualified people applying for jobs. For example, one school board reported that the linguistic competencies teachers demonstrate when interviewing for a position are not always adequate for the level required for teaching conversational French. Several school boards admitted to keeping language requirements low for fear of not being able to fill positions. Some felt that, in light of the lack of candidates, it was necessary to settle for teachers with only a slightly higher level of French than their students. Some school boards that we interviewed also reported that administrative staff, such as principals and vice-principals, do not always have the required skills to interview FSL teachers specifically.

Some school board personnel interviewed also reported a shortage of qualified supply teachers and challenges with replacing teachers on leave. In some cases, Core French teachers are even filling in as de facto supply teachers for other subject areas, being pulled out of their own classes to cover other classes, the end result being that the Core French classes are being cancelled.

School boards also expressed frustration at the lack of "pool hiring" (hiring a number of candidates in advance, before filling positions), which would allow them to secure qualified candidates earlier on (i.e., in April rather than later in August or September) for the upcoming school year. Some also asserted that salaries are not competitive enough and that they do not adequately reflect the cost of living. An added challenge in Catholic educational districts is the need for candidates to produce a baptismal certificate and a letter from their parish, which not all FSL teacher candidates can provide.

In Quebec, school boards reported that there can be a political stigma attached to teaching in the English school boards. English school boards do not require FSL teachers to be fluent in English to work in their schools, but the boards worry that potential candidates are not always aware of it. Boards conveyed concern regarding the anxiety expressed by some teachers whose first language is French about having to speak English at work, and that this might be dissuading them from applying to English school boards. In some cases, English school boards have had to hire native French speakers who are not necessarily fully certified in second-language education because of a shortage of FSL teachers and the misperception that the ability to speak French is all that is required to teach French. In truth, all FSL teachers need proper education and qualifications in second-language pedagogy, regardless of their first language.

Difficult working conditions and a lack of resources

Some school board interviewees suggested that FSL teachers feel overworked and that they do not have enough support for paid leave or professional development leave. This is consistent with the findings of the literature review; anecdotal evidence in previous research suggests that FSL teachers perceived a lack of commitment to French instruction from school administrators since FSL classes were often given less consideration in terms of scheduling, resource support, staffing, professional development and status in the educational curriculum (Carr 2007; Kissau 2005; Lapkin, Macfarlane and Vandergrift 2006). School boards also reported that the feeling among FSL teachers of being overworked and undercompensated has led to fewer teachers expressing a willingness to mentor newer teachers. This resistance to mentoring makes it very difficult to find placements for teacher candidates.

Members of one school board worried about new French teachers being put into challenging roles that previous teachers have left. They explained that these new teachers often have difficult starts and are often alone. Additionally, these teachers are looked at by their peers as “just” the French teachers, and there is a misperception that they are paid for planning time and that they are not qualified to be “real” teachers. Another interviewee pointed out that French teachers need more professional development for working with students with special needs.

Some interviewees reported that classrooms that are used for Core French classes are being closed in some instances to cover heat and custodial fees, which further contributes to French teachers feeling frustrated and devalued. According to some school boards that were interviewed, teachers have also reported that they do not have appropriate resources to support their students’ needs. In French Immersion, teachers feel there are not adequate resources for units, different subject matters that need to be taught in French (i.e., social sciences, math), and for using technology in French. Teachers might create their own resources but there are no official channels for sharing them. Some teachers resort to paying out of pocket for resources at “Teachers Pay Teachers”, described on its website as an “online marketplace where teachers buy and sell original education materials.”

In this context, school boards that we interviewed expressed concern about the problem of losing FSL teachers who decide to leave to teach in the English stream instead. A lack of confidence on the part of teachers in their French-language skills can be a contributing factor. Interviewees reported that some Core French teachers lacking confidence in their linguistic abilities hesitate to go to professional development sessions held in French or even hesitate to attend language development opportunities.

Challenges inherent in the diversity of FSL programming and the education system

School boards are looking for fully bilingual teachers who can be more versatile for the school board, but they also need teachers who are adequately trained to teach second-language speakers. The existence of many different French programs (i.e., Core French, Intensive Core French, Extended Core French and French Immersion) means that schools have many different FSL staffing needs. Some school boards reported a difficulty in maintaining consistency across their programs in terms of the skills requirements for teachers and the availability of resources.

Some personnel interviewed explained that teachers with high French proficiency are usually funnelled toward immersion programs and high schools, leaving Core French and elementary French at a disadvantage, and in the opinion of at least one interviewee, at risk of failing. Other boards observed that some teacher candidates will leave their province to work abroad or in other provinces, especially if the salary is more competitive or if there is financial support for paying off their student debt.

Inadequate administrative support

Even with great motivation, members of administrative and support staff (e.g., guidance counsellors, consultants) are not always adequately trained to understand the requirements of FSL teaching and programming. Administrators need to be attuned to the culture of a French Immersion school which demands different kinds of networking with the community, the level and type of collaboration among teachers, the diversity of differentiated instructional strategies and the appropriate scope and sequencing for programming.

There are not enough consultants to support FSL teachers and programs in school boards, which leads to insufficient student support services. School boards currently cannot afford educational assistants in French Immersion classes where students might need help with language development or reading recovery or behavioural issues. School boards also need early childhood educators who speak French for elementary school teacher support in French.

Challenges in coordinating with universities in support of FSL education

School boards reported that there is a lack of communication, coordination and capacity building between school boards and the university faculties of education upon which they rely for the education of new FSL teacher candidates. One school board, for instance, reported having to double the number of teacher candidates in one classroom. This increases competition for board placements among universities, and there is currently no coordination across universities. Members of some school boards also pointed out that staff changes at the universities sometimes meant that they had to rebuild their contacts and networks due to a lack of follow-up from the faculties of education.

Recruitment strategies

School boards reported using different strategies to identify, recruit and hire FSL teachers ranging from none to:

- using the “Apply To Education” website (Ontario) or the “Make a Future” website (British Columbia);
- following up with teacher candidates while they are still in their qualifying programs;
- presenting at faculties of education in FSL specialization classes (one school board has adopted the approach of talking to FSL teacher candidates in the final year of the teacher education program in the faculty of education and taking names of potential candidates on the spot to speed up the selection process);
- having human resources staff recruit at fall fairs at faculties of education (one school board suggested that more generalized job fairs are not worth the effort);
- travelling to New Brunswick and Quebec to recruit (this strategy appears to have become less popular owing to the significant costs involved);
- relying on word of mouth;
- using social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.;
- offering teacher candidates the possibility to work as substitute teachers in the months prior to graduation;
- providing conditional employment offers to students conducting their practicum in the school board so they will come to work there after graduation;
- posting permanent French Immersion contracts: full-time and continuous, with benefits, thus allowing the school board to hire experienced teachers from other districts; and
- offering a \$1,500 moving allowance for teachers from out of province as well as temporary rental accommodation.

Two highly proactive school boards stated that they were satisfied and that their strategies were effective. Personnel from one of those boards stated that as part of their successful recruitment strategies, they work closely in partnership with the faculties of education in their area and collaborate with the school boards in

their region. They also keep an open posting on their government website so that FSL teachers can apply at any time to return and work in the area. Personnel from the other successful school board explained that they make their job postings available earlier in the year (around March–April) and that as a result they were able to fill 100 positions. Both of these school boards also stated that they attend career fairs nationally and/or internationally.

Besides these two school boards, all other school boards that we interviewed agreed that their strategies were inadequate and that more needs to be done. A few reported that they were beginning to undertake new initiatives, such as developing a rural recruitment fund, advertising and attending job fairs, allocating increased funding to assist with moving expenses or professional development and using the “Make a Future” initiative, described on its website as a “recruitment initiative created by the British Columbia Public School Employers’ Association as a joint venture among British Columbia’s 60 public boards of education, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, and the Ministry of Education.”

Faculties of education

Recruitment and retention challenges for FSL teacher education programs

FSL education is offered as a specialization in university teacher education programs across the country, with a limited number of spaces in each university’s program. Of those faculties that we interviewed, three reported not having enough candidates specializing in FSL education, two reported that they are filling their quotas but felt they could do more if enrolment caps were increased and more FSL specialization classes were offered, and one reported having more applicants than spaces available.

Each of the faculties interviewed reported graduating between 12 and 40 teachers with FSL specialization each year. Interestingly, all of the faculties stated that the number of teacher candidates graduating from each of their programs does not meet the demand for FSL teachers from school boards in their area. Thus, while elementary and high school FSL education is strong and demand for qualified FSL teachers is concurrently

strong, demand for spaces in university programs for becoming an FSL teacher does not always appear to be strong. With more enrolment than ever before in advanced FSL education programs like French Immersion, it would seem that there should be more high school graduates considering entering FSL teacher education programs, but this does not appear to be the case.

Almost all faculty members agreed that the strategies currently in use for recruiting students into their FSL teacher education programs could be improved or that they need more resources to implement them more successfully. One faculty member reported that their faculty did not have any recruitment strategy at all. Others reported using a variety of methods: attending career fairs, hosting open houses for their programs, promotional webinars and social media, word of mouth among students and alumni, and sending representatives to recruit students from the faculty of arts or French departments at their university. In some cases, the faculties sent representatives to recruit students in college or in high school, especially in French Immersion programs. Others that recruit at high schools promoted teacher education in general, and not specifically FSL education. One faculty expressed the view that recruiting candidates at the pre-undergraduate level would be premature.

None of the faculties interviewed had official statistical and demographic information about what their FSL teacher education graduates went on to do. All of them felt that the measures in place to inform teacher candidates of employment opportunities in their area were effective (including job fairs hosted at the university, direct recruitment from school boards, information shared via career advisors, e-mail bulletins, social media or faculty websites, and websites like “Apply to Education” and “Make a Future”). All of the faculties interviewed also reported that, anecdotally at least, the rate of employment is either 100% or very high, with some candidates being offered positions even before they graduate, although not all of these candidates enter FSL positions—a question that requires further study.

TEACHER CANDIDATE SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FINDINGS

Scope and limitations

The teacher candidate survey was completed by 101 respondents who were self-selected from among those reached by education faculties, thus using snowball sampling. As a result, some groups of individuals were more strongly represented than others (in terms of region, gender, linguistic background, etc.). Moreover, as this was a non-probability survey, the results are not statistically projectable to the target population, nor can estimates of sampling error be calculated. However, the qualitative and quantitative data collected and the findings presented provide insight into FSL teacher candidate needs and circumstances from a variety of members of this relatively small but vital stakeholder group, and help to explore in greater detail some of the findings from the literature review.

The survey was conducted on-line in the respondents' official language of choice and was open for two weeks at the end of March 2018. It was designed to take 20 minutes and consisted of closed-ended questions followed by open-ended questions. The survey was pre-tested and both the English and French versions were reviewed by the Office of the Commissioner. (See Appendix 2.)

Two focus groups were also conducted with FSL teacher candidates: one in Ontario and one in Western Canada, with a total of 39 participants. Preliminary data from the focus groups was used to help develop the survey questionnaire. The qualitative data from interviews and the survey (discussed in greater detail below) were uploaded to NVivo11 Pro software for analysis using open and content coding. The data were organized by respondent and later by theme to extract major trends. The quantitative data from the survey were then extracted and tabulated for frequency counts using SPSS 25 software.

Characteristics of survey respondents

Of those who responded to the on-line survey, 48 identified as being from Western Canada, 40 from Ontario, 9 from Quebec, and 4 from Atlantic Canada. In terms of country of origin, 89 identified Canada and 12 indicated other countries, specifically France, Australia, Cameroon, China, Egypt, Haiti, India, Mauritius, Poland, Russia and Tunisia. Of those participants who provided their age and gender, 85 were female, 9 were male, and 2 identified as non-binary individuals, ranging from 20 to 68 years of age, with the most common ($n=25$) age being 23. Sixty respondents indicated that English was their first language. Another 19 indicated French as their first language, and 17 others both French and English. Several respondents also spoke other languages.

The most common high school programs from which the respondents graduated were: French Immersion ($n=30$), French as a First Language ($n=27$) and Core French ($n=27$). Other respondents had graduated with Extended Core French ($n=8$), and Intensive Core French ($n=1$). Three respondents said that they graduated from English programs.

There was a wide variation among respondents regarding the time spent so far in their teacher education programs, with the least amount of time being under 1 month ($n=3$), and the greatest amount of time being equal to the time required for completion of the program ($n=12$). Twelve respondents had been in their program for 2 to 3 months, 16 for 5.5 to 6.5 months, and 21 for 7 months. Another 8 respondents had been in their program for 8 to 12 months, 20 had been in their program for 13 to 24 months, and 6 had been in their program for 31 to 60 months.

Among the survey respondents, 50 said they had already begun looking for an FSL teaching position. Of those who had been looking, 18 had been offered a position, and all but 1 had accepted it. (Interestingly, the response to this survey question would seem to contrast with the perception among some university faculties that teaching candidates are finding FSL teaching employment with relative ease.) Those who were offered and accepted teaching positions indicated that it provided them an opportunity to enter the field. Often, the positions were in close proximity to where they currently reside or included a competitive salary that would facilitate moving to a new location (e.g., to a northern region).

Presentation and analysis of findings

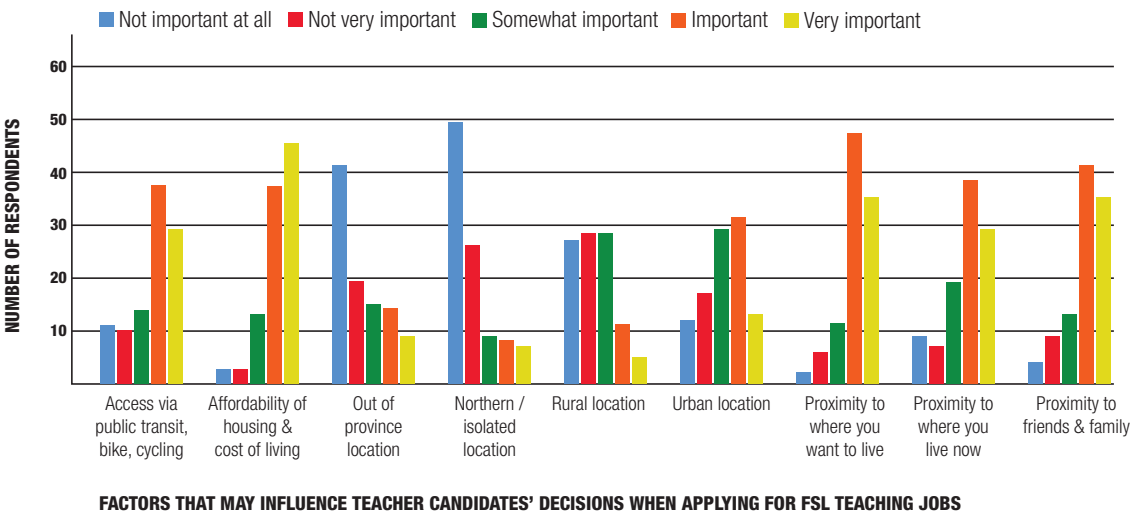
Factors influencing teacher candidates' decisions when applying for FSL teaching jobs

In the survey, participants were asked to rate on a scale of 1 ("Not important at all") to 5 ("Very important") the importance of each listed factor when deciding to apply for and choose a teaching position. Figure 2 illustrates the level of importance given to factors relating to location, affordability and accessibility (including geography, proximity, cost of living, and transport accessibility). Figure 3 captures the level of importance of factors relating to work conditions (including benefits, dedicated and supportive staff and resources). Figure 4 demonstrates the level of importance of programming factors (such as alternative, immersion, Core French).

As illustrated in Figures 2, 3 and 4, respondents indicated most of the factors were important or very important in their decision to apply for and choose a teaching position, suggesting that teacher candidates' decisions about where they opt to work are influenced by a variety of considerations more so than by any single factor. Factors related to working conditions appeared to have been among those that scored particularly high, as did factors related to personal and family considerations. Respondents were asked in a follow-up question to indicate which of the above factors was the most important to them: 27% responded that the most important factor was working with a dedicated support staff (n=28), 16% felt resources available to students were the most important (n=16), 13% felt proximity to family and friends was the most important (n=13), and 10% felt affordability of housing and cost of living were the most important (n=10).

Figure 2

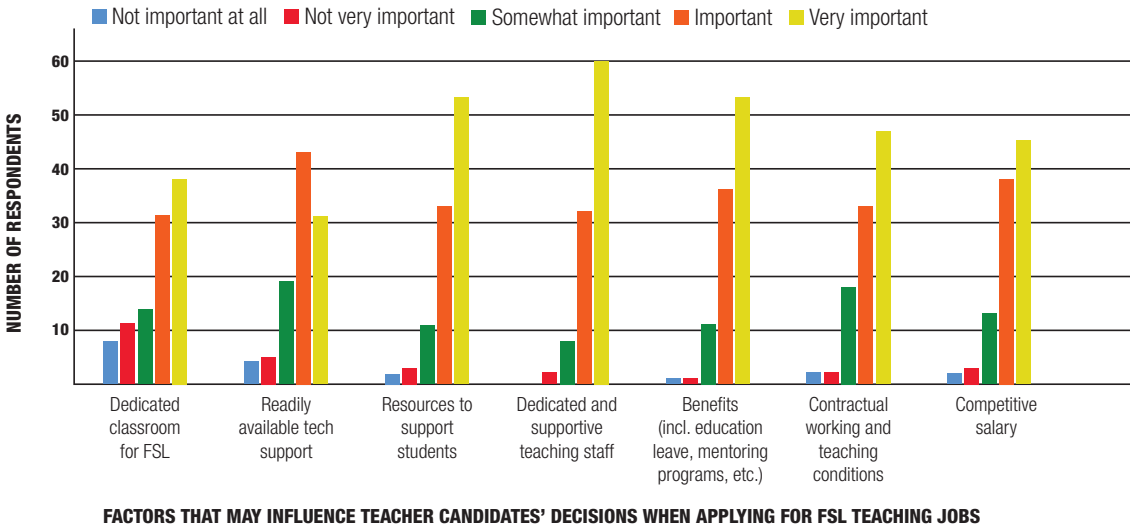
IMPORTANCE OF LOCATION, AFFORDABILITY AND COST OF LIVING, AND ACCESS TO A VARIETY OF TRANSIT OPTIONS



FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE TEACHER CANDIDATES' DECISIONS WHEN APPLYING FOR FSL TEACHING JOBS

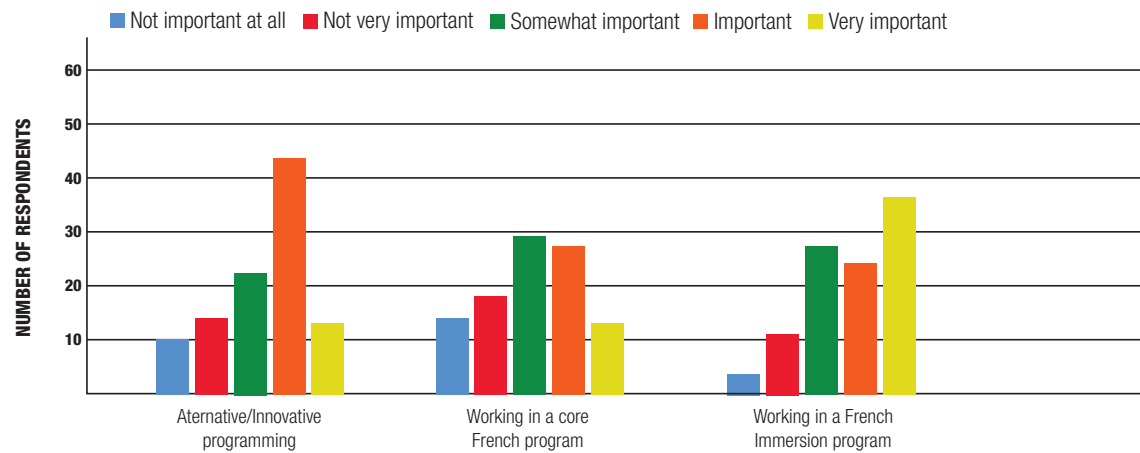
Figure 3

IMPORTANCE OF BENEFITS, DEDICATED AND SUPPORTIVE STAFF, AND RESOURCES



FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE TEACHER CANDIDATES' DECISIONS WHEN APPLYING FOR FSL TEACHING JOBS

Figure 4

IMPORTANCE OF PROGRAMMING**FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE TEACHER CANDIDATES' DECISIONS WHEN APPLYING FOR FSL TEACHING JOBS**

The results suggest that some individuals may be more concerned with what individual schools have to offer, rather than where the schools are located. However, the contrast in the results relating to the rural, northern/isolated and out-of-province location factors versus urban location suggest a preference for the latter. Moreover, in their open responses, many participants stated that they prefer not to move out of province or to rural or northern/isolated communities.

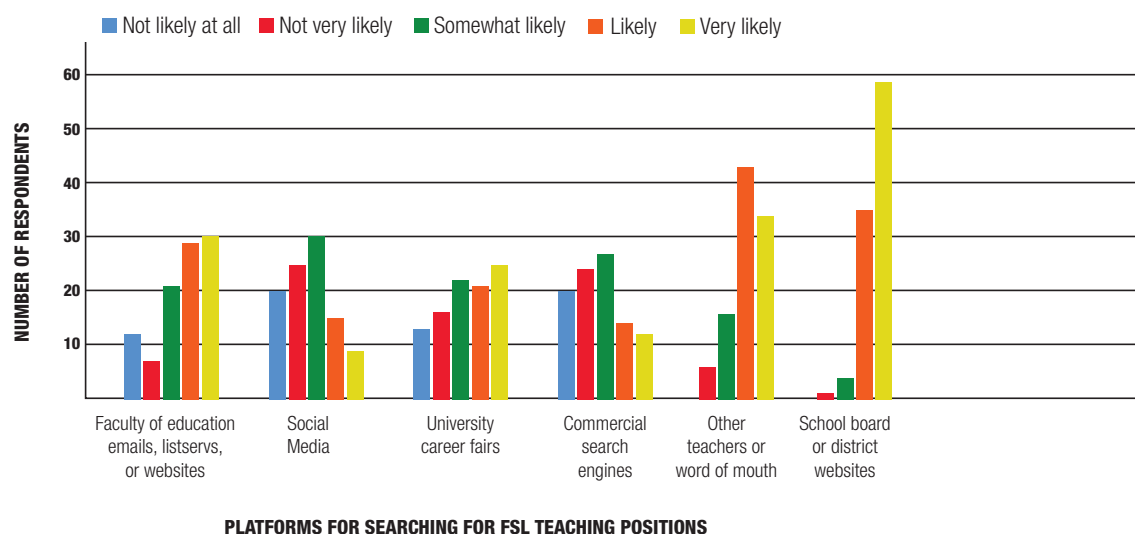
When asked in another follow-up question if they would be willing to move out of province for a teaching position, 53% of respondents reported “yes” (n=53) and 47% reported “no” (n=47). When those who did not want to relocate were asked why, many respondents indicated wanting to stay close to their families or their current communities (n=40). For those willing to relocate, increased salary incentives and financial assistance with the cost of moving were the primary incentives (n=46).

Respondents were also asked whether or not they would be willing to relocate to a rural area for a teaching position: 64% said “yes” (n=64) and 36% said “no” (n=37). Concerns for those who did not want to relocate to a rural area included being away from family / not wanting to move their families (n=16), having access to amenities in an urban setting (n=14), and not being able to find work for their spouse (n=4). Those willing to move expressed a desire for financial help relocating and/or for absorbing the cost of living (n=17).

Respondents gave similar reasons in relation to considering a move to a northern/isolated area for a teaching job, but the response rates differed quite significantly. When asked if they would be willing to relocate to a northern/isolated area, 28% of respondents said “yes” (n=28) and 72% said “no” (n=73). Those who were willing to relocate noted that school boards would need to offer them help with relocation costs (n=9), higher salaries and good benefits (n=8) and housing or help finding housing (n=8). Two participants also indicated they would like to have support meeting and connecting with local people.

When asked what English school boards in Quebec and across Canada could do to attract more candidates, 21% of respondents requested better salaries and working conditions as their top priority (n=21). Next, 19% of respondents suggested promoting Francophone culture and intercultural awareness to their students, in their schools and in Canada in general as a priority. Financial support was the most important factor for 9% of respondents who asked for support with the cost of moving (n=9), and 8% felt help with bursaries and financial support to pay off or continue their studies was the most important (n=8). Another important incentive for 8% of respondents was improved resources available at the school (n=8).

Figure 5

LIKELIHOOD OF USING PLATFORMS WHEN LOOKING FOR A TEACHING JOB***Survey respondents' views of various platforms used for searching for FSL teaching positions***

Participants of the survey were also asked to rate (on a scale of 1 to 5) how likely they were to look for a position on a particular platform (1 being "Not likely at all" and 5 being "Very likely").

School board or district websites constituted the platform which the largest number of respondents were "very likely" to consult (n=59). Other teachers or word of mouth made up the next strategy "very likely" to be used when searching for employment in FSL teaching (n=34). On-line faculty of education platforms also scored relatively well (n=30).

When asked in a follow-up question which of the platforms was the most useful, 51% of respondents cited school board district websites (n=52), while 20% cited other teachers and word of mouth (n=20). In an open-ended follow-up question, respondents were invited to indicate other preferred platforms. Dedicated job search websites, such as "Apply to Education" and "Make a Future," were added by 18% of respondents (n=18).

Interestingly, commercial search engines and social media were not overly popular platform options for the survey respondents. In a follow-up question asking participants which of the platforms was the least useful, social media was cited by 44% of respondents (n=44), who often described it as being untrustworthy due to its unofficial status. The next least preferred tool, cited by 29% of respondents (n=29), was commercial search engines, because it was felt they would have the least relevant postings (for FSL positions in the public school system).

Respondents' views of challenges in searching and applying for FSL teaching positions

Respondents were also asked if they experienced any challenges in searching for an FSL teaching position. The two most common responses appear contradictory. On the one hand, 12% stated that there do not seem to be job postings available (n=12), whereas, on the other hand, 7% stated that they had no difficulty finding job postings (n=7). This would suggest that not all teacher candidates have a clear understanding as to how and where to look for job postings, or that they are looking for job postings only in a specific area where fewer positions might be available. When asked if they experienced any challenges in applying for an FSL teaching position, a small number stated that the long and complex application procedure was a challenge (n=4), and a few expressed difficulties in finding postings or stated that there were no jobs in their area (n=4).

Respondents' suggestions for improving FSL teaching position searches and application processes

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked for suggestions to improve the job search and application process for FSL teaching positions. The most common suggestion, put forward by 13% of respondents, was to create a free on-line platform wherein school boards across Canada could offer job postings for FSL positions (n=13)—teachers could thus create a single profile and apply to several boards using the same profile. Such websites exist on a provincial level, in Ontario and British Columbia for instance, but there is no platform for all of Canada.

Moreover, provincial platforms that do exist require applicants to pay to apply for each job posting and applicants must recreate their application profile when applying to each job posting. Two survey respondents cited the additional financial requirement to apply for jobs as a strong disincentive. Respondents also asked for greater transparency about the application process (n=10), for instance providing more information on the school advertising the job posting and on the job itself.

Additional reflections on FSL teacher enrolment, education and employment

Respondents were also asked in an open-ended question how they think French proficiency impacts job opportunities for FSL teacher candidates. Overall, respondents indicated that proficiency is and should be important (n=66), but as there is no standard across school boards for proficiency levels, and due to the pressing need to find FSL teachers, some respondents felt that teachers are sometimes being hired even with very low proficiency in French (n=19). Some also reported feeling that teachers with less experience in French are being “relegated” to teaching Core French or elementary level classes, while more proficient teachers go on to teach French Immersion or high school level classes (n=5). This is consistent with observations made by school board interview participants.

When asked in another open-ended question what motivates potential teacher candidates to enrol in a teacher education program with an FSL specialization, respondents overwhelmingly stated that people are either enrolling in order to quickly access full-time employment opportunities (n=71) or because they are passionate about French language and culture (n=17). Two respondents believed that some teacher candidates might be motivated by the perception that FSL teacher education programs are less demanding than other programs.

When asked in another open-ended question why they think other potential teacher candidates are not enrolling in a teacher education program with an FSL specialization, respondents indicated that a lack of French-language proficiency (n=39) combined with linguistic insecurity (n=11) may be contributing factors. A simple lack of interest in language teaching was another common response (n=18). Some respondents also noted that the perception of poor working conditions for FSL teachers may be a deterrent (n=5), as well as inadequate programming at universities (i.e., too few courses for FSL specialization) (n=4) or the fact that the career of FSL teachers is perhaps not well advertised and therefore not well known (n=4).

When asked in another open-ended question why some teacher candidates who do speak French might not consider teaching FSL, 28% of survey respondents suggested that the poor working conditions of FSL teachers are a deterrent (n=28). For 21%, linguistic insecurity was another common explanation (n=21). For some of the respondents who answered the survey in French, the need to know English was a primary concern (n=7). Some respondents also suggested that people may not be aware of FSL specialization as a career option to work in French (n=3).

When asked to make additional comments, respondents once again expressed concern over the poor working conditions of FSL teachers (n=7). Some cited a lack of resources in French (n=6), and an overall lack of support (n=5). One respondent expressed concern about incurring heavy debt for teacher education programs without being sure to find employment after their studies. Two respondents mentioned that they have not been able to find jobs and that they felt misled about there being a shortage of FSL teachers (either because there are no positions in their area or because they believe that the positions being offered are not adequate).

CONCLUSIONS

The Commissioner of Official Languages engaged in this study on FSL teacher supply and demand to help shed light on this multi-faceted problem, to contribute to the conversation among FSL stakeholders around potential strategies for addressing the challenge and to develop a series of pertinent and timely recommendations and suggestions for the federal minister responsible for official languages.

The Commissioner is pleased to see that momentum has already begun to build, with the publication of complementary studies and with the federal government's announcement in its 2018–2023 Action Plan for Official Languages for \$31.3M over four years to support strategies to recruit more FSL teachers, beginning in 2019–2020, and \$12.6M over four years to provide bursaries to English-speaking post-secondary students to take French-language programs, also beginning in 2019–2020. In May 2018, Canadian Parents for French held a stakeholder panel and roundtable discussion, “The Current State of FSL Teacher Supply in Canada,” in which the research results, including preliminary results from our own study, were shared with over 45 participants representing parents, teachers, representatives of ministries of education, faculties of education, school boards and language teacher and school board associations. In late June, the Department of Canadian Heritage convened a meeting with representatives of provincial and territorial ministries of education, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada secretariat, and four community organizations involved in FSL education (the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, the Canadian Association of Immersion Professionals, Canadian Parents for French and the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne) to discuss recruitment and retention strategies for FSL and immersion teachers.

In addition to providing specific recommendations for the federal minister responsible for official languages, it is hoped that the present study will help stakeholders as they develop their strategies and project funding proposals, and contribute to a sound implementation of this important part of the 2018–2023 Action Plan for Official Languages, so that we can all work together to improve access to a bilingual education for English-speaking youth across Canada.

The conclusions and recommendations of this study are based on an analysis of the combined findings of the literature review, stakeholder interviews and teacher candidate survey and discussion groups. They reflect some of the suggestions made by ministry representatives, school boards, faculty members and teacher candidates to improve FSL teacher identification, recruitment and hiring to address FSL teacher supply, demand and retention in Canada.

Some of these challenges are already familiar to us, as they have been raised by stakeholders and researchers before, and a number of FSL advocates are already working hard to help address them. But the challenges in FSL education are as perennial as the challenges inherent in federalism itself, and more needs to be done, including at the national level. The persistence of these challenges makes it all the more important that we continue to draw attention to them and work toward finding innovative solutions that will help to improve access to the opportunities inherent in linguistic duality for all Canadians.

Collaboration and leadership in FSL education

There is a clear need for greater collaboration, both horizontally (across provinces and territories) and vertically (between ministries of education, faculties of education and school boards) in order to ensure stronger recruitment and retention of FSL education teacher candidates. All stakeholders interviewed for this study felt that there is a need for more collaboration among ministries, school boards and university faculties of education as well as for a long-term coordinated strategy.

Standardizing FSL teacher qualifications across Canada

In line with the need for closer collaboration between the various players, there is also a strong need to align qualification standards and professional equivalencies across all provinces and territories. Several stakeholders spoke to the problems that arise from a lack of standardization across Canada, including concerns about the language competencies of teachers and the negative impact on the ability of school boards to recruit potential teachers from different parts of the country and abroad.

Professional development and better working conditions

In order to retain FSL teachers and help teaching candidates maintain and advance their linguistic, cultural and pedagogical qualifications, they require access to professional development opportunities, including continued second-language skills development, mentorship and networking opportunities, and seminars and workshops. They also require support for improved working conditions. Not only is this crucial for FSL teacher retention, but it is equally important for encouraging new individuals to consider joining the profession. As the research suggests, potential new FSL teachers are well aware of the challenges that some of their colleagues in the profession face.

Promoting the value of a career in FSL education

The research also suggests that FSL teacher recruitment and retention would benefit from greater promotion and validation of the profession among those who are already in FSL education, among those who might have already left and among those who might not otherwise consider pursuing a career in FSL education. French first- and second-language students entering university are not always aware of the opportunities that lie ahead or the rewards that can come with teaching others a second language. Those who are aware of FSL teaching possibilities may not be fully aware of the requirements or may not consider teaching FSL owing to negative perceptions, for example, relating to Core French, or, in Quebec, among teaching candidates who have not considered teaching in English schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having considered the findings and analysis of the study, and within the parameters of his mandate to promote French and English within Canadian society and in particular to encourage federal institutions to help further that promotion, the Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the federal minister responsible for official languages assume a clear national leadership role in addressing the challenges in FSL teacher supply and demand. The Minister should also continue to work with the provinces and territories and community stakeholders to identify the best strategies and measures to attract more candidates into FSL education programs and retain FSL teachers.

More specifically, the minister should:

- establish a national FSL consultation table with provincial and territorial partners and with FSL stakeholder associations, and develop and lead a long-term national strategy for FSL teacher recruitment and retention. The strategy should take into account the particular needs of different FSL programs and of English-speaking communities, including in Quebec, with the goal of implementing sustainable solutions with tangible impacts that can be duplicated across the country;
- work with provincial and territorial partners and professional teacher associations to encourage greater standardization of teachers' required FSL language competency and other relevant qualifications and to implement measures to support teachers in their efforts to improve their language proficiency and their linguistic and cultural confidence;
- work closely with provincial and territorial partners to lead the development and promotion of a free, federally funded, on-line job search platform wherein school boards from across Canada can advertise job postings for FSL positions, and through which teachers can apply to several different postings using the same profile; and
- ensure a timely and effective dispensation of funds in the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023: Investing in Our Future* for FSL teacher recruitment and retention, taking into consideration the specific challenges in FSL teacher recruitment and retention in different FSL programs, including in Quebec.

The Commissioner also invites the minister to:

- ask provincial ministries and faculties of education to consider working and communicating more closely with local school boards and professional teacher associations to address challenges and create more FSL teacher candidate university placements and more second-language, cultural and professional skills development opportunities for current teachers;
- explore the possibility of granting bursaries under the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023: Investing in Our Future* for teacher candidates seeking to improve their French-language skills and study in other parts of the country, for example at faculties of education whose FSL teacher education programs are not being filled at capacity;
- engage in a promotional campaign to raise awareness among FSL high school students of the opportunities and requirements involved in pursuing a career in FSL education—the campaign should promote and affirm the value of all FSL education programs, from Core French to French Immersion;
- work with the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to explore ways to facilitate the process for French-speaking immigrants coming to Canada with a degree in education from their country of origin and to help them successfully integrate into Canadian FSL teaching positions and classrooms.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

An Active Offer for participation in either Official Language should precede each conversation, for example:

"I am calling as part of a contract awarded by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages to Canadian Parents for French. Would you like me to continue in English?"

J'appelle dans le cadre d'un contrat alloué à Canadian Parents for French par le Commissariat aux langues officielles. Voulez-vous que je poursuive en français?"

Thank you for taking the time to do this interview. We are gathering information on French second language (FSL) teacher supply and demand. We would like to better understand the situation and help focus our support for departments of education, school boards, university faculties of education, and teaching candidates. Your participation is voluntary and answers will remain anonymous.

Ministry of Education Protocol

Please think about the school boards in your province/territory and answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge:

1. Do school boards in your province/territory have enough FSL teachers to meet the demand for FSL primary and/or secondary education? Please explain, and specify whether your answer applies to French Immersion, to Core French, or to both.
2. Which school boards in your province/territory face the greatest challenges with FSL teacher supply and demand? Please list school boards and the particular challenges they face, and specify whether these challenges pertain to French Immersion, to Core French, or to both.
3. Which school boards in your province/territory face the least challenges with FSL teacher supply and demand? Please list the school boards and why they face fewer challenges, and specify whether the lack of challenges pertain to French Immersion, to Core French, or to both.
4. Do school boards in your province/territory have enough spaces for French Immersion classes? For Core French or other FSL classes? Please explain.
5. Do you think school boards have enough funding for French Immersion classes? For Core French or other FSL classes? Please explain.
6. To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
School boards have enough quality materials for FSL classes. Please explain.
7. Are you aware of any initiatives that have been launched to address these challenges, including in partnership with other provinces/territories? If so, please describe.
8. Do you think current initiatives for recruiting FSL teachers are effective? Please explain.
9. What ideas do you have for improving teacher supply and/or addressing demand in your school boards?
10. Please include any additional comments you have concerning FSL teacher supply and demand in your province/territory and, where possible, provide references to any supporting material that you may be aware of.

School Board Protocol (with FSL coordinators and/or HR personnel)

Please think about your school board and answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge:

1. What are the current issues around FSL programming in your school board? Please explain, and specify whether your answer applies to French Immersion, to Core French, or to both.
2. What is the current level of demand for FSL programs in your school board? Please explain, and specify whether your answer applies to French Immersion, to Core French, or to both.
3. Do you think the supply for FSL teachers matches the demand in your school board? Please explain, and specify whether your answer applies to French Immersion, to Core French, or to both.
4. Is your school board planning to expand its FSL program? Please explain the reasons why your school board is either expanding, reducing, or simply maintaining its FSL program, and specify whether your answer applies to French Immersion, to Core French, or to both.
5. How are FSL teachers currently identified, recruited and hired, including teachers from within and from outside your province/territory? Please detail the strategies being used.
6. Do you think the strategies currently being used to identify, recruit and hire FSL teachers from within and from outside your province/territory are effective? Please explain.
7. Please explain any challenges related to these strategies of FSL teacher identification, recruitment, and hiring.
8. What do you think can be done to improve the current situation? Please provide specific details.
9. Are there any plans to launch new initiatives to identify, recruit and/or hire FSL teachers from within and/or from outside your province/territory? Please explain.
10. Please include any additional comments you have concerning FSL teacher supply and demand in your board and, where possible, provide references to any supporting material that you may be aware of.

Faculty of Education Protocol

Please think about your Faculty of Education and answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge:

1. Does the number of FSL teacher education applicants match the available program seats? Please explain.
2. On average, how many FSL teachers graduate from your institution every year? Is this number increasing or decreasing? Please explain.
3. Does the number of FSL teacher graduates from your Faculty meet the demand for FSL primary and/or secondary education in your area? Please explain, and specify whether your answer applies to French Immersion, to Core French, or to both.
4. Please describe the rate of employment of FSL teacher graduates in your area.
5. Do FSL teacher graduates in your area have any problems finding employment in FSL education in your province/territory or elsewhere in Canada? Please explain.
6. Do you think the measures to inform teacher candidates of employment opportunities that exist in FSL education in your area or elsewhere in Canada are effective? Please explain.
7. Do you have any suggestions as to how these measures could be improved?
8. What strategies does your Faculty or institution use to recruit applicants to its FSL Teacher Education program?
9. Do you see the need to improve these strategies? If so, do you have any suggestions?
10. Please include any additional comments you have concerning FSL teacher supply and demand in your province/territory and, where possible, provide references to any supporting material that you may be aware of.

Please think about your experience at your Faculty of Education and answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. What are the 3 most important things you look for in an FSL teaching position? Please explain.
2. What are the 3 least important things you look for in an FSL teaching position? Please explain.
3. Where do you find information on FSL teaching positions (e.g., ministry or school board websites, blogs, Facebook, word of mouth)?
4. Have you encountered barriers to finding employment in FSL education in your province/territory or elsewhere in Canada?
If so, what, type(s) of barriers have you encountered (e.g. professional, personal, administrative, other)? Please explain.
5. Have you retained a teaching position? If so:
 - a) Is it full-time, part-time, teacher-on-call, other?
 - b) Where is it located?
 - c) What motivated you to accept this position? Please explain.
6. If you have sought employment but have not retained a teaching position, please describe the specific reasons you feel you've been unable to find employment.
7. If you are not seeking employment at this time, please explain why.
8. Would you consider relocating to an area in need of FSL teachers, including in another province/territory?
Please explain why or why not.
9. Are there any challenges for teachers who need to relocate for a job? Please explain.
10. What would a new school board need to offer if you were to move for employment?
11. What can school boards do to better assist candidates with job relocation?
12. Please include any additional comments you have concerning FSL teacher employment.

APPENDIX 2: TEACHER CANDIDATE SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We are gathering information on French Second Language (FSL) teacher supply and demand on behalf of Canadian Parents for French as part of a contract awarded by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Your responses to the survey will help us to better understand the challenges in teacher supply and demand, and help focus our support for teaching candidates like yourself. Your participation is voluntary and answers will remain anonymous. The survey should take no more than 20 minutes.

A- Please identify your province/territory of origin or, if you are not originally from Canada, your country of origin: (open-ended)

B- Please identify your current university and teacher education program: (open-ended)

C- How many months of the teacher education program have you completed? (open-ended)

D- From which high school program did you graduate?

- Français langue première
- French Immersion
- Core French
- Extended French
- Intensive French
- Other:

E- In what grades did you study French? (multiple choice selections with K–12 + CEGEP 1, 2, 3)

F- What is your first official language spoken?

- English
- French
- Both

G- What language(s) do you speak, in addition to French and English? (open-ended)

H- What is your gender? F/M/Non-binary

I- What is your age? (drop-down year of birth)

J- Please select the situations that apply to you: (can select more than 1)

- I entered a teacher education program immediately after/during university.
- I entered a teacher education program after obtaining a DCS (Diploma of College Studies/QC).
- I am changing careers.
- I have entered university at a later age.
- I am a teacher from another province/country seeking certification.
- Other:

Please reflect on your experience during your studies in education and during your practicums to answer the following questions:

1. Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 meaning not important and 5 meaning very important) how important the following factors are to you when making a decision about applying for and choosing a teaching position:

	Not important at all	Not very important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
A. Proximity to friends and family	1	2	3	4	5
B. Proximity to where you live now	1	2	3	4	5
C. Proximity to where you would like to live	1	2	3	4	5
D. Urban location	1	2	3	4	5
E. Rural location	1	2	3	4	5
F. Northern/isolated location	1	2	3	4	5
G. Out-of-province location	1	2	3	4	5
H. Affordability of housing and cost of living	1	2	3	4	5
I. Access via public transit, walking or cycling	1	2	3	4	5
J. Competitive salary	1	2	3	4	5
K. Contractual working and teaching conditions	1	2	3	4	5
L. Benefits (incl. education leave, mentoring programs, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
M. Dedicated and supportive teaching staff	1	2	3	4	5
N. Working in a French Immersion program	1	2	3	4	5
O. Working in a Core French program	1	2	3	4	5
P. Alternative/innovative programming	1	2	3	4	5
Q. Resources to support students	1	2	3	4	5
R. Readily available tech support	1	2	3	4	5
S. Dedicated classroom for FSL	1	2	3	4	5
Others: Please specify					
T. Other _____	1	2	3	4	5
U. Other _____	1	2	3	4	5

2. Out of the above items, which one is the most important to you? Please explain. (open-ended)
3. Out of the above items, which one is the least important to you? Please explain. (open-ended)
4. On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 meaning not likely at all and 5 meaning very likely), how likely are you to look for a position on the following platforms?

	Not likely at all	Not very likely	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
A. School board/district websites					
B. Other teachers / word-of-mouth	1	2	3	4	5
C. Commercial search engines (e.g., indeed.ca, monster.ca, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
D. University career fairs	1	2	3	4	5
E. Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
F. Faculty of Education e-mail listservs or websites	1	2	3	4	5
Others: Please specify					
G. Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5
H. Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

5. Which of the platforms listed above is the most useful? Please explain. (open-ended)
6. Which of the platforms listed above is the least useful? Please explain. (open-ended)
7. If you live in Quebec, would you be willing to teach FSL in an English-language school board? Y/N
 - a. If no, please explain why.
8. What can English-language school boards, in Quebec and across Canada, do to attract more candidates? (open-ended)
9. Would you be willing to move out of province for a teaching job? Y/N
 - a. If no, please explain why.
 - b. If yes, what would a school board need to offer you to move there?
10. Would you be willing to relocate to a rural area for a teaching job? Y/N
 - a. If no, please explain why.
 - b. If yes, what would a school board need to offer you to move there? (open-ended)
11. Would you be willing to relocate to a northern/isolated area for a teaching job? Y/N
 - a. If no, please explain why.
 - b. If yes, what would a school board need to offer you to move there? (open-ended)
12. Have you been looking for an FSL teaching position? Y/N
 - a. If yes, have you been offered an FSL teaching position? Y/N
 - b. If so, have you accepted the teaching position? Y/N
 - c. If yes, were there any conditions (e.g., completing teacher education program or receiving provincial certification or other) attached to the offer? (open-ended)
13. If you have accepted an FSL teaching position, what motivated you to accept it? Please provide as much detail as possible. (open-ended)
14. If you have been offered an FSL teaching position but did not accept it, please describe your specific reasons for not accepting the position. (open-ended)

15. Have you experienced any challenges in searching for an FSL teaching position? Y/N
Please explain. (open-ended)
16. Have you experienced any challenges in applying for an FSL teaching position? Y/N
Please explain. (open-ended)
17. Do you have any suggestions to improve the job search and application process for FSL teaching positions? (open-ended)
18. If you have not yet started searching for a position, please explain why. (open-ended)
19. How do you think French proficiency impacts job opportunities for FSL teacher candidates? (open-ended)
20. Why do you think some potential teacher candidates are enrolling in a teacher program with an FSL concentration? (open-ended)
21. Why do you think other potential teacher candidates are not enrolling in a teacher program with an FSL concentration? (open-ended)
22. Why do you think some teacher candidates who speak French might not consider teaching FSL? Please add any recommendations you think could encourage them to consider FSL teaching. (open-ended)
23. Please include any additional comments you have on the issue of FSL teacher hiring, demand, and retention. (open-ended)