

Association canadienne des
professionnels de l'immersion



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ISSUES RELATED TO RECRUITMENT IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO INCREASE THE POOL OF NEW FSL TEACHERS:

STRATEGIC REVIEW AND SURVEY REPORT

This strategic review, commissioned by the **Canadian Association of Immersion Professionals (ACPI)**, is based on the results of a Canada-wide survey to provide an overview of the issues related to student recruitment in university education programs, with a view to identifying possible solutions to increase the number of new FSL (French as a second language) teachers in the context of shortage.



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Executive Summary

This strategic review provides an overview of the situation regarding enrolment in university education programs leading to a career in French as a second language teaching in Canada. It is based on a survey conducted in 2023 by Marie-France Gaumont for the Canadian Association of Immersion Professionals (ACPI), with financial support from the Official Languages Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The ultimate objective of this survey is to identify the issues related to student recruitment in university education programs with a view to increasing the pipeline of new FSL (French as a second language) teachers in the context of shortage. More specifically, this strategic review seeks to put a human face to the challenges associated with the availability of seats, applications for admission, and enrolment and graduation rates for bachelor's degrees or qualifying programs in teaching French as a second language in the context of a teacher shortage.

This revealing survey lists the difficulties faced by education faculties in their efforts to recruit and retain students, and identifies their current and future contribution to alleviating the shortage. Six key findings emerged from our analysis.

1. Education faculties are struggling to meet the demand for qualified teachers for French immersion programs.
2. There is no Canada-wide trend in enrolment rates in education and French as a second language teacher training programs.
3. Education faculties suffer from a lack of financial and human resources.
4. Program administrative requirements are barriers to enrolment and can lead to dropout.
5. There are few mitigating measures in place.
6. Prospective teachers are dropping out before graduating or transitioning out of the profession.

This strategic review, carried out with the kind participation of some thirty universities and numerous provincial and territorial ministries and departments of education, looks at the attractiveness of university teacher training and the challenges of student recruitment, and proposes concrete solutions for expanding the pipeline of French immersion teachers in each province and territory.

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About the author

Marie-France Gaumont is constantly seeking new perspectives and challenges to fuel her passion for learning. With a Master of Arts in Education, a Bachelor of Education, and a Bachelor of Communications, Marie-France has been working in the Canadian education field for over twenty years. She is the author of several studies, surveys, strategic plans, and consulting reports. As a consultant, she has carried out nearly 700 different assignments for regional, provincial, and national clients, including the National Table for French as a Second Language, the Consortium national de formation en santé, Alloprof, the Canadian Association of Immersion Professionals (ACPI), the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones, and the Pôle en enseignement supérieur de l'Outaouais. Marie-France is also a Part-Time professor at the University of Ottawa. Her academic teaching interests include organizational change, communication in school management, and group communication.

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SURVEY RESULTS AND STRATEGIC REVIEW

This strategic review, prepared by Marie-France Gaumont on behalf of the **Canadian Association of Immersion Professionals (ACPI)**, with financial support from the Official Languages Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage, is based on the results of a Canada-wide survey to provide an **overview of the issues related to student recruitment in university education programs, with a view to increasing the pipeline of new French as a second language (FSL) teachers in the context of shortage.**

Foreword

Building on the results of its Canada-wide consultation report (ACPI, 2018), the findings of the study published in November 2021 quantifying the FI teacher shortage, and the activity report of its French Immersion (FI) Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, the Canadian Association of Immersion Professionals has identified increasing the number of graduates from faculties of education as one of the key solutions to alleviating the current teacher shortage in Canada. This prompted the desire to obtain a clear, factual picture of the situation, as well as a clear understanding of the context, issues, challenges, and specific characteristics of each of the universities offering qualifying programs in French as a second language (FSL) instruction.

The teacher shortage can be defined as the inadequate supply of trained and qualified teachers to meet the growing demand for French as a second language and French immersion instruction.

ACPI's 2022 and 2023 Canada-wide *Grande Virée/Great Tour* event, a tour of 50 high schools and 22 universities in every province of the country, as well as its *Observatoire* internship initiative and *jobimmersion.ca* activities, brought the association into direct contact with several faculties of education. This on-the-ground presence has led to a number of important observations.

First, some teacher training programs limit the number of students admitted, despite the obvious shortage of teachers. Other programs fall far short of the number of subsidized seats available, which makes them vulnerable in the eyes of education faculty administrators. In addition, many of the programs that qualify students to teach French as a second language and French immersion are fragmented or shared between departments (e.g., languages, arts, and education), or duplicated within the same university (e.g., a bachelor's degree in elementary education is offered both at the parent university and in a faculty created to bring together programs offered in French) or, alternatively, fall partly within a department, partly within a national institute, and partly within a sub-program. This sharing and fragmentation complicates

students' academic pathway, makes it difficult to share information across jurisdictions, and adds challenges to admission, enrolment, and the student experience.

What's more, some faculties of education offering courses in teaching French as a second language seem to have a lack of recruitment resources available to them, especially those that require students to earn a first bachelor's degree before they can enter an education program. Still others seem to have relied primarily on recruiting international students with no established links to immigration services, resulting in new teachers who are forced to return to their country of origin after graduating.

To verify the validity of these observations and provide an accurate picture of the situation, it was necessary to gather extensive data from universities offering FSL teaching programs, given the key role played by faculties of education in preparing the next generation of teachers. The purpose of this strategic review is therefore to share the results of our data collection, to contribute to the discussion by comparing supply and demand and, ultimately, to implement concrete measures to encourage enrolment in education programs leading to a teaching qualification.

Specifically, this strategic review has three main objectives.

1. Gain a better understanding of the current situation and contribution of universities to teacher training for FSL and FI programs.
2. Take stock of the barriers faced by universities in their efforts to increase the number of candidates admitted to a qualifying program for teaching French as a second language in order to meet current and future demand for qualified teachers.
3. Make strategic recommendations for consideration by universities, government ministries and departments, and schools, with a view to boosting applications, enrolment, and the number of graduates from qualifying FSL and FI teaching programs in order to reduce the gap between the growing demand for trained and qualified FSL and FI teachers and the inadequate supply of such teachers.

Methodology

Primary data collection

To achieve our objectives, we began with the intensive collection of relevant primary data, mainly from websites. We then carried out an exhaustive analysis of the ACPI study report (2021) aimed at quantifying the teacher shortage in order to extract data specific to the shortage identified in each province and territory.

Next, we wanted to know the number of teachers currently working in FSL and FI programs. Given that this data is not readily available, we generated an estimate by extrapolating the number of students enrolled in French immersion programs across the country in 2020-2021, based on data from Statistics Canada and Canadian Parents for French (2022). Our calculation gave us 18,936 teachers in 2,106 schools offering a French immersion program in Canada. The formula is the same as that used in the Canada-wide consultation report, i.e., the total number of students divided by an average of 25 students per class.

We then proceeded to list the prerequisites for teaching in each province and territory to get a clear idea of the requirements and better compare them with the admission requirements for a qualifying teaching program.

Lastly, we compiled a list of universities training French as a second language and French immersion teachers from the Universities Canada database, and compared it with Smith, Masson et al. (2022) for the purposes of our analysis. This list of 40 universities was used as the database for our survey.

Literature review

It was important to conduct a search of scientific and journalistic articles, research reports, dissertations and reference works in order to analyze the recent literature on supply and demand in teacher training. Some forty documents were selected for this purpose and helped us gain a deeper understanding and take stock of the situation. Several references to our readings support our statements in this strategic review. A complete bibliography of our sources is included at the end of this document.

Requests for information

All provincial and territorial education ministries and departments were contacted to request data to help us:

- Quantify the shortage of qualified teachers in their province or territory.
- Determine the number of FSL and FI teachers in their province or territory.
- Estimate the number of temporary teaching licences/permits/certificates issued in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Data was also requested from the 40 universities on our short list regarding:

- The maximum enrolment capacity of a program (bachelor's degree and specialization) in regular and FSL teaching.
- The number of students enrolled in a regular and FSL teaching program (bachelor's degree and specialization).
- The number of degrees granted in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.
- Faculty of education recruitment practices or plans.

Sample survey

We elected to administer an online survey using the Survey Monkey platform, given that several requests for information failed to meet our needs (some were incomplete, or the data could not be found).

The survey was sent to 40 universities (see list in Annex B), represented by FSL program coordinators, heads or directors, regular professors responsible for the FSL component, and recruitment directors, and meeting at least one of the following criteria:

- Offer a Bachelor of Education in French
- Offer a Bachelor of Education with courses or specialization in teaching French as a second language.
- Offer a specific program in French immersion instruction.

Our survey consisted of 24 questions available in English and French (see Annex A of this document).

These questions allowed us to:

1. identify the profile of the responding university.
2. quantify the number of students enrolled in Bachelor of Education and FSL teaching programs.
3. analyze admission requirements, including language proficiency tests.
4. identify recruitment barriers and successful strategies.
5. assess graduation rates and reasons for dropping out.
6. examine sources of funding received and to be received to enhance / expand programs.
7. identify their commitment to alleviating the shortage in their province.

A total of 28 respondents answered our questions. The average time taken to complete the survey was 12 minutes. It is worth noting that 61% of the 28 questionnaires submitted by our respondents were complete, with answers to all 24 questions.

Of the 40 universities approached, 28 responded to the survey (70% response rate). In terms of the survey representativeness, it is interesting to note that we obtained:

- 4 responses from British Columbia out of 4 universities approached
- 2 responses from Alberta out of 2 universities approached
- 2 responses from Saskatchewan out of 3 universities approached
- 1 response from Manitoba out of 4 universities approached
- 10 responses from Ontario out of 14 universities approached
- 2 responses from Quebec out of 4 universities approached
- 1 response from Nova Scotia out of 2 universities approached
- 4 responses from New Brunswick out of 4 universities approached
- 1 response from Prince Edward Island out of 1 university approached
- 1 response from Newfoundland and Labrador out of 1 university approached

We used all of this data to conduct a rigorous analysis by drawing parallels. For the purpose of this strategic review, the results of this analysis are presented as findings and factors associated with our collection of relevant data.

Survey limitations

For the sake of intellectual integrity, certain limitations in the data collection and analysis for this strategic review are worth noting.

1. Difficulty in obtaining reliable, comparable data when requesting information

In the absence of a system that requires mandatory data collection, we had to be creative and persistent in our search for specific information about the state of the FI teacher shortage, the availability of subsidized seats, and enrolment rates in qualifying education programs.

Only five of the twelve education ministries or departments contacted were able to provide us with data. Two of them told us that they had to pull out all the stops to get us this information. The other seven indicated that the data had not been compiled, was unavailable, or could not be provided without a formal access to information request.

Even with data from five provinces and territories, we still ended up with information that was difficult to compare. For example, Manitoba calculates the shortage of French first language and French immersion teachers, excluding French as a second language, while Ontario combines all French as a second language programs, including French immersion and excluding French as a first language.

University data was also very difficult to obtain. As discussed later in this review, program responsibility is sometimes shared between several departments or authorities, and our contacts therefore provided us with partial data. This meant we had to approach the same institution an average of five times before obtaining answers that were sometimes positive but often negative. All in all, only twelve universities provided us with specific data.

2. Relative representativeness of survey responses

In addition to the often arduous task of collecting data for this strategic review, some universities were uncomfortable disclosing certain data to us. We adapted our survey to ensure respondent anonymity, linking responses to a province rather than to a specific institution.

As a result, the number of responses per province may not correspond to the number of universities approached, given that they are not identified. It is possible that several people at the same university completed our survey.

None of the questions allowed us to determine the exact position held by respondents (FSL program coordinator, head or director, regular professor responsible for the FSL component, or recruitment director). Views may therefore differ depending on the position held by the respondent at the time of completing our survey.

In addition, some surveys were incomplete, leaving some questions unanswered. This, of course, has an impact on the value of the interpretation of certain questions.

Lastly, it would have been interesting to conduct a parallel survey of the student community at the same universities in order to compare perceptions which, in this case, represent only those of the university staff who answered our questions.

3. Questions open to interpretation

Given that our survey was submitted to 40 Canadian universities, all of which are autonomous and operate according to their own rules and administrative procedures, some of our questions may not have been appropriate to their particular context.

While a number of conditional questions were prepared to accommodate possible differences in the delivery or administration of education programs, some specific characteristics may have influenced the understanding of our questions.

Introduction

The teacher shortage has become a global issue. In Canada, as elsewhere, the demand for teachers continues to grow and is ever more pressing. The attractiveness of the profession appears to be waning. The education community is concerned, as are parents.

As time passes, the phenomenon created by the teacher shortage becomes more pronounced. As far back as 1995, the lack of supply teachers for immersion and of teachers specifically trained to teach in immersion was cause for considerable concern (Obadia & Martin, 1995, p. 1). Today,

this lack has become a widespread shortage and, based on Statistics Canada's demographic projections (2022b), the situation will persist until at least 2031.

The consequences of this shortage are far-reaching. Many schools are affected. Those offering French immersion programs probably feel the effects a little more. Principals of these schools have to fill positions with teachers who not only have a university degree in education, but are also qualified in teaching French as a second language or have the required French language skills. Doing so in an often predominantly English-speaking environment can be a daunting task.

In November 2021, ACPI published the results of a survey estimating the extent of this shortage. It was the first of its kind, given that the teacher shortage remains difficult to measure accurately due to a lack of data. The results of this survey put the shortage of French immersion teachers at approximately 1,400 across the country for the 2020-2021 school year. While this figure is approximate, given that the data collected was not complete, it is still a good starting point for further reflection.

That is exactly what ACPI did, choosing to investigate whether the country's faculties of education were granting enough degrees annually to meet the specific demands of each province and territory. This strategic review is therefore the combined result of existing data collection and a survey of some 40 universities across the country.

It consists of six main findings and 20 key factors from our analysis of the current situation. Each of these findings is detailed below as part of an evidence-based argument. This is followed by specific recommendations with possible solutions, some of which are administrative, some related to the student experience, and others based on successful best practices at some Canadian universities.

Ultimately, this strategic review should be useful to the Canadian education community (school boards, government ministries and departments, universities and funders – Department of Canadian Heritage) in their efforts to increase the pool of graduates to meet the steadily growing demand for French immersion teachers.

The purpose of this strategic review is to take stock of the current situation by analyzing the barriers and challenges limiting the recruitment pools/supply of university graduates in FSL teaching, as well as to identify potential solutions to meet the demand for French immersion teachers, previously outlined in the study quantifying the shortage published by ACPI in 2021.

Finding #1

➔ **Faculties of education in Canada are struggling to meet the demand for qualified French immersion teachers.**

All teachers in Canada must hold a Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed) in order to practise their profession, in accordance with the rules established by each province and territory. **Education faculties should therefore be the main vehicles for creating a pool of new teachers** ready to be hired by school boards, divisions, districts, and service centres across the country.

However, it is no secret that **faculties of education are not producing enough education graduates every year to meet the demand from all schools across the country, particularly those offering French immersion programs, which currently number close to 19,000 teachers.**

As noted by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages in its 2019 study, "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." (OCOL, 2019, p. 2). Our respondents echoed this sentiment. Under such circumstances, band-aid solutions are implemented, sometimes with intrinsic consequences that can affect the quality of teaching as well as students' learning outcomes.

Increasing number of temporary teaching permits

One example of such band-aid solutions arising from the shortage is the **proliferation of temporary teaching permits or certificates, letters of permission or approval, or provisional teaching licences** (the nomenclature varies by province or territory).

In Ontario, it is estimated that the number of temporary letters of permission issued to candidates without the required teaching qualifications has soared by 400% in six years (Chakkouche, 2023). In Quebec, the number of unqualified teachers employed by school service centres doubled from 15,900 in 2014 to 30,400 in 2019. According to the Auditor General of Quebec, who tabled her report on May 25, 2023, 25% of the province's teachers are not legally qualified (Lecavalier, *La Presse*, 2023).

While it is difficult to put a figure on the teacher shortage, it can be at least partially determined by counting teachers with a temporary permit or provisional licence in teaching positions that could not otherwise be filled. Unqualified classroom teachers in FSL and French immersion are the hidden face of the widespread shortage of trained teachers.

For example, while the University of Prince Edward Island awarded 22 degrees in education in 2022, that number appears to be insufficient, given that 15 teachers have also been recruited from other provinces or from the immigrant population to teach in one of the French as a second language programs offered in the province's schools. Despite these 37 new hires, the PEI Department of Education reports that eight vacancies are filled by people with temporary teaching permits. That means that eight teachers are still needed to meet current requirements.

In Manitoba, 44% of new teachers hired for the 2020-2021 school year have a temporary teaching permit (USB-PGF, 2022, p. 19). Meanwhile, the Yukon was unable to fill two FSL teaching positions in 2022-2023. If these two vacancies are added to the 14 teachers with temporary teaching permits, and the five teachers who have left the profession for retirement or another job, the result is a shortfall of 21 teachers. Given that there is no university in the Yukon, with the exception of a few academic alliances with universities such as the University of Regina that offer distance education courses, teacher vacancies cannot simply be filled by drawing on local graduates but almost exclusively via external recruitment.

The Northwest Territories (NWT) is in a similar position. Starting in September 2023, an alliance with Vancouver Island University will make a virtual education program available to NWT residents. For the time being, their recruitment efforts are focused outside the region.

Too few new education graduates

Recruiting from faculties of education has its limits, given the low number of education graduates to meet the growing demand.

For example, Manitoba's Department of Education estimates a shortfall of 149 FTE teachers per year to meet the demand for French immersion and French first language programs. Of these 149 teacher vacancies, 113 are in FI programs.

In 2022, Université de Saint-Boniface issued just over 50 Bachelor of Education degrees specializing in teaching French as a first or second language. This suggests that the Manitoba school divisions concerned have had to look elsewhere (in another province or country) for a

hundred or so teachers. Clearly, the number of education graduates would have to be tripled to meet the province's annual need for qualified teachers of French as a first and second language.

In Ontario, there was a 23% decline in the number of FSL teacher graduates in spring 2021, compared to the average number of graduates over the previous three years (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2021, p. 20). With the introduction of the two-year bachelor's degree in Ontario universities, there was already an almost 50% drop in the number of degrees awarded annually. According to recent data, an average of roughly 500 newly qualified teachers of French as a first or second language graduate from the province's faculties of education each year. (Working Group, 2021, p. 38)

The Ontario Ministry of Education is also projecting an annual shortfall of 370 new qualified teachers to meet the direct needs of its French immersion programs, and this need will continue until at least 2025. In addition, it appears that Ontario's French-language schools need at least 520 teachers per year. Added to the 370 teacher shortfall for FI programs, a total of 890 new teachers would need to graduate to meet the minimum annual demand for the province's FI and French first language programs. Given this situation, the 500 graduates per year are clearly not enough to meet demand.

Highly competitive recruitment

In such an environment, **employers have to compete fiercely** to recruit recent graduates of qualifying teaching programs.

School boards, divisions, commissions, districts, and service centres for French as a second language programs, including French immersion, are competing with French and English first language programs. School authorities are ramping up efforts to attract students during the practicum period, with the justified aim of building a relationship that could turn into a job.

According to data from the Ontario College of Teachers on the career path of new graduates from the two French-language faculties of education, 18% of all graduates opted to go to English-language school boards to work in French as a second language and French immersion programs (Working Group, 2021, p. 53). This means that 82% are heading for another program (French or English as a first language), another province, the private system, or simply another job.

Interestingly, some of our survey respondents (from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) indicated that some FSL graduates are flattered when approached by a French school board. Since French

is not their first language, they interpret their employment with a French-language school board as recognition of their second-language proficiency.

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages also points out that English school boards "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" (2019, p. 9).

Considering the wide range of options available to graduates and the highly competitive recruitment market, it is simply not possible to determine the number of university positions filled by Bachelor of Education students who will actually become French immersion teachers. Job vacancies are plentiful, even before graduation, and this has a major impact on the career path of prospective teachers.

Universities' level of commitment

When asked about their level of commitment to alleviating the shortage of qualified teachers in their province, 82% of responding universities felt they were playing an active role. As examples of their contribution, the universities mention:

- The creation of a certificate specifically for internationally educated teachers.
- Increased collaboration with local school boards, notably in the development of a 12-month full-time program (36 credits) for internationally educated teachers new to Canada.
- Retention initiatives for future French teachers, such as a three-week immersion program (*Institut de français*) in Quebec.
- Online courses and cultural events as part of the Bachelor of Education program.
- A range of services, including language support, for students interested in FSL teaching, even before they enroll in the Faculty of Education.
- Scholarships for students interested in specializing in FSL teaching.
- Intensive, customized FSL teaching methodology courses.
- A multi-component program to help candidates who are already teaching in schools (with a temporary teaching permit) obtain their degree.

Not surprisingly, 94% of respondents said that they would like to see universities contribute to addressing the teacher shortage by increasing the number of students enrolled in their education programs. However, there are several factors at play when it comes to raising enrolment. Our second finding deals precisely with enrolment trends at the target universities, given the influence of certain factors on enrolment growth, decline, fluctuation, or stability.

Finding #2

➔ **In recent years, the Canada-wide enrolment data for B.Ed and FSL Teaching programs does not appear to follow any clear trend.**

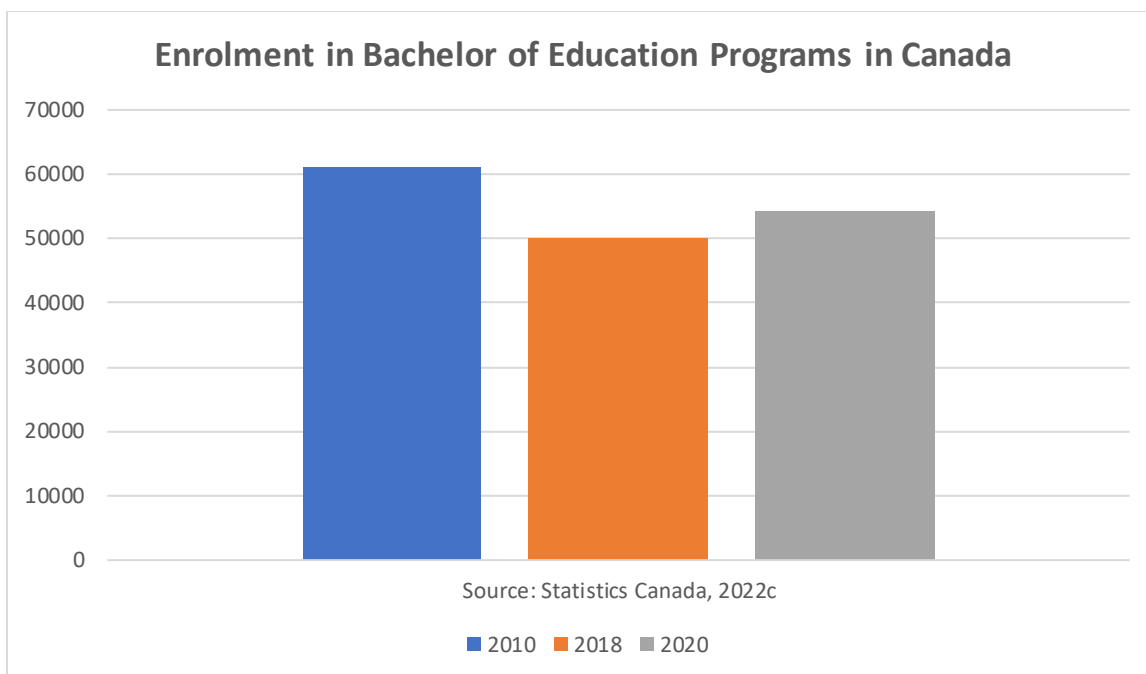
The data analyzed for this strategic review reveals an interesting phenomenon that warrants further investigation: **the lack of a Canada-wide trend in student enrolment in education.**

There seems to be no common trend driving the variations in education enrolment at the universities consulted for our research. Even more remarkable is the fact that no real trend emerges among universities in the same province or even the same city.

Three enrolment trends

Enrolment trends in education programs in recent years have been volatile, and **seem to follow the three patterns of growth, decline, and fluctuation equally from one year to the next.**

Across the country, there has been an 18% decline in enrolment in Bachelor of Education programs, from 61,000 students in 2010 to 50,000 in 2018. In 2020-2021, the number of students enrolled in Bachelor of Education programs in Canada rose slightly to 54,402, an increase of 8.8% (Statistics Canada, 2022c) (see diagram below).



In our survey, one in three university respondents (33%) reported growth in their education program enrolment. One university in Manitoba has seen steady growth in applications since 2019. In Ontario, 60% of participating universities have seen an increase in enrolment over the past three years.

In contrast, **nearly one-third of the universities surveyed (29%) reported declining enrolment in their Bachelor of Education programs.** This downward trend appears to be in line with a phenomenon observed across North America, where more than one in three universities (34%) has experienced a decline in enrolment over the past year. (Eldersveld, 2022, p. 7)

For example, one Saskatchewan university saw its enrolment drop by 22.5% from 2020 to 2023 (from 151 enrolments in 2020 to 117 in 2023). Similarly, a university in eastern Canada reported that enrolment in its specialized French immersion teaching program had been declining for several years. At the time of writing, only 19 students were enrolled in this option out of a possible 80 subsidized seats.

To explain the decline in enrolment, some New Brunswick respondents believe that political debates questioning the validity of French immersion programs in 2021 and 2022 have created instability and sown doubt in prospective candidates, who have opted instead for first-language teaching or another profession.

The third trend shows **fluctuating enrolments in recent years**. One year the trend is downward, the next year upward. This instability was also highlighted by the other third of our respondents, including those from Nova Scotia, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan. Representatives from British Columbia noted that while applications have been fairly stable over the past few years, some applicants drop out during the enrolment process, which impacts their student numbers.

These three aspects of the enrolment trend (growth, decline, and fluctuation) resonate with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages study (2019): "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." (OCOL, 2019, p. 12)

Limited spaces...or not

To gain a better understanding of enrolment trends, we asked universities about their capacity to accept students in the Bachelor of Education and FSL specialization programs. **With a few exceptions, program capacity does not appear to be a factor limiting enrolment.**

Of the universities that completed our survey, 36% indicated that the number of students enrolled corresponds to the number of subsidized spaces available in the Bachelor of Education program.

In 27% of the documented cases, the number of students enrolled is lower than the number of subsidized seats in the Bachelor of Education program. This is particularly true of universities in Quebec, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. For example, one Saskatchewan university can accommodate 140 enrolments each year, but only has 117 in 2023. Similarly, a university in Alberta reported that it was not reaching its maximum capacity, and that enrolment had declined from 184 students in 2020 to 116 in 2022. It also appears that the number of students enrolled in their FSL teaching option is lower than the number of subsidized seats.

Meanwhile, **18% of universities have no enrolment caps in their Bachelor of Education or specialized FSL programs.** In some cases, enrolment caps are set by the ministry or department of Education, as is the case in Ontario, which, in response to the fact that the reduced enrolment in its English-language schools from 2003 to 2015 created a surplus of teaching staff, halved the funded spaces in all faculties of education across the province regardless of program language (Working Group, 2021, p. 38). This is also the case for some New Brunswick universities, which determine seat availability based on several factors, including the number of FSL practicum experiences available.

It should be noted that **only 14% of the universities surveyed reported having more students than the number of funded spaces**. For example, while Université de Saint-Boniface has 70 subsidized seats under its agreement with the Manitoba government, it enrolled 85 new students to its education program in the fall of 2022.

Loss of interest in the teaching profession and other constraints

The main reason cited by 43% of university respondents to explain the decline or major fluctuation in enrolment over the past three years is the **loss of interest in the teaching profession**.

This decline in interest dovetails with the phenomenon observed internationally with a mere 5% of 15-year-old students in 60 different countries saying they would choose teaching as a profession (OECD, 2018). The teaching profession's loss of appeal is also part of a national trend, with a study published by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers reporting that **the low profile of the French teaching profession is a deterrent to prospective candidates** for French and French as a second language teacher training programs. (Arnott et al., 2023)

In line with this finding, it seems that a mere 1.1% of young Canadians surveyed by the OECD in 2018 had a desire to become teachers as adults, compared with 4.7% in 2006. (Sirois, 2022) Compared to other countries consulted by the OECD, "[translation]...**Canada is one of the countries with the lowest interest in the teaching profession among young people.**" (Sirois, 2022).

While declining attractiveness is an important factor, it is not the only one that explains the drop or great fluctuation in enrolment in recent years. According to 29% of our respondents, **candidates' uncertainty about passing the entrance exam to assess their language skills also seems to be a determining factor**, especially in the case of programs specializing in teaching French as a second language.

The decline in the number of applicants who meet the admission requirements is also cited by 29% of participating universities as a reason for the decrease. One indicator of this decline is the gap between the high number of applications versus enrolment numbers. This is the case at 45% of the universities that completed our survey, where the number of applications received for admission to the Bachelor of Education program far exceeds the number of students who actually enrolled.

To illustrate this phenomenon, in 2021, one university in Alberta received 300 applications and admitted 120 students, while in 2022, 116 students were admitted out of a total of 185 applicants. This gap warrants further analysis to understand the exact reasons for these refusals. Given that these students have clearly shown an interest in the teaching profession by taking the time to apply, they represent a pool of candidates that could be recovered, if they have chosen another program, or better prepared, if they did not meet all the admission requirements.

At the Quebec and Saskatchewan universities that completed our survey, the number of applications is fairly consistent with the number of students enrolled.

This second finding raises several questions. What happens to candidates who are not accepted into the program? What explains these results, which do not seem to follow a strong national or even provincial trend? Why are some universities able to increase their enrolment while that of a neighbouring university is declining? A preliminary hypothesis emerges from our analysis: Do some universities have the financial and human resources to actively recruit students, while others do not? This question leads us to our next finding.

Finding #3

➔ **The lack of financial and human resources in faculties of education is a major barrier to the development of teacher certification programs and student recruitment.**

Of the universities surveyed, 56% said that **additional funding was essential to the success of their program, while 44% said that the performance of the recruitment team** was a determining factor in the growth of their student population.

Limited recruitment resources

However, **the resources available to education faculties to fill vacancies or enhance their FSL teacher training or Bachelor of Education programs are arguably very limited.** The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages made the same finding, citing ineffective recruitment strategies and the need for more resources within faculties of education to increase their impact (OCOL, 2019, p. 11).

When asked about this, some universities reported that their programs, which are often offered in French, are located in English-language universities. This is a major hurdle when it comes to getting the resources they need to develop and increase their enrolment rates. **Feeling isolated,**

unrecognized, and unheard, some French-language campuses, departments, and courses are struggling to thrive.

Some respondents exemplify this sentiment, adding that their French-language program or campus is not promoted or even considered by their administration. Accordingly, **66% of our respondents rated the resources (human, financial, and other) used by their university to recruit new B.Ed. students as barely adequate or clearly inadequate.** As Smith et al (2022, p. 26) also point out in their recent study, French language teaching is rarely top of mind among some of the university leadership, where the real power lies in terms of making meaningful changes to address the FSL teacher shortage.

Overextended recruitment team

It is interesting to note that 73% of the universities responding to our questions had a recruitment team for their Bachelor of Education programs.

However, and herein lies the problem, **the recruitment team is often small and shared across the entire university.** Recruitment is therefore carried out for all programs at the same time, and only exceptionally for any specific one.

Because similar programs offered in English (B.Ed.) rarely need to recruit given that they reach their enrolment capacity more quickly, **recruitment is often overlooked for their French-speaking counterparts, who are assumed to be in the same situation.** This lack of a recruitment effort generally prompts French program management teams to step in. However, they are few in number and frequently overloaded, which somewhat limits how much they can do. **They clearly cannot be expected to add the tasks of implementing recruitment and marketing plans to their daily routine.**

Advocacy efforts and recruitment activities to attract new candidates are therefore few and far between. **One university in two (50%) told us that they have great difficulty reaching high school students, who are scattered across too many schools for their limited resources.** In such a context, a rapid increase in enrolment numbers is still a long way off.

Wrong targets

A frequent mistake, in addition to the obvious recruiting difficulty, is that of focusing on the wrong target clientele. Students are typically recruited from high school pools starting in grade 10 or 11, and definitely from graduating students in grade 12 (Secondaire V in Quebec). Job fairs, classroom presentations, "student for a day" activities on campus, tours, and open-house

events are just some of the many ways to reach out to and engage youth, who are the priority target for university recruitment departments.

Added to these common practices are those used to **attract the attention of newcomers to Canada, with or without previous training**, who are the second target audience. Recruitment officers specifically for prospective newcomer students, special information sessions, and networking events are a few of the strategies in place to encourage them to apply.

The third group naturally targeted by **university recruitment efforts are applicants living abroad**. Canada's appeal to international students continues to grow, with their numbers increasing by 31% from 2021 to 2022, and by 43% over the previous five years (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2022). Some universities are particularly active in this field, which has the advantage of considerably boosting their financial capacity as well as filling their classrooms. According to a Statistics Canada survey (2022d), each international student enrolled in an undergraduate program paid on average three times more in tuition than their Canadian counterparts (2022d). It is therefore easy to see the importance of recruiting this clientele.

Nowadays, it is rare for recruitment to target students enrolled in a first bachelor's degree program at their own university. And yet, many Bachelor of Education programs are offered following an initial bachelor's degree in another field. What's more, specialized FSL teaching programs are always add-ons after a first degree. It would therefore be quite natural to target this so-called "in-house" clientele of students who are currently enrolled at the university.

Unfortunately, this clientele is rarely actively recruited at universities requiring a first bachelor's degree. **This is a missed opportunity for students who are the most likely to make the leap to an education program.** And yet, these students are already familiar with the university culture and more open to further study. To attract them to the program, strategies could be used to retain students, identify programs that can easily be combined with an education program (e.g., a bachelor's degree in French literature, mathematics, science, recreation and leisure studies...) and promote in-house visibility.

These strategies focused on an in-house clientele are easier to implement and less costly than external recruitment. **Sadly, education faculties offering French immersion teaching programs often have to compensate for a lack of dedicated recruitment resources, and limited marketing team time and effort to attract in-house students.** If they are to grow their student numbers, they need additional financial resources not only to review existing programs, but also to garner more attention.

Limited financial resources

In our survey, 65% of university respondents said they had received additional funding from their government ministry or department for the 2021-2022 academic year to enhance or expand their education programs.

Despite this boost to their budgets, some universities pointed out that these sums were not earmarked directly for students, which they felt was very unfortunate. Others indicated that the funds were used solely by university leadership. Still others felt that these amounts were negligible, while their needs are great.

Only 47% of our respondents expect to receive additional funding in 2023-2024. That said, the new Action Plan for Official Languages, launched on April 26, 2023, could possibly lead to additional funding for universities offering qualifying programs in teaching French as a first and second language.

When asked about what they would like to do with the additional funds, proposed actions included:

- restructuring courses or programs
- offering scholarships
- creating an introductory education course for students enrolled in their first bachelor's degree
- building their brand via social media

While these proposed initiatives appear to be consistent with universities' desire to boost enrolment and strengthen their program, it is still very little, especially in the context of a teacher shortage. Despite these intentions, a number of questions remain. What about the need to review, improve, and formalize student recruitment activities? Is the additional funding recurring? Is it enough to make up for shortfalls? How will the funds be invested, given the urgent need to address the shortage? Will universities across the country be able to join forces to increase their leverage to achieve this?

The disparate operations of the universities offering FSL programs in our sample suggest otherwise. Which brings us to our fourth finding.

Finding #4

➔ **Program administrative requirements and the diverse academic backgrounds of prospective teachers are barriers to enrolment, and sometimes even reasons for dropping out.**

One of the most striking findings of this survey is the **very marked differences in: the range of education programs offered, how they operate, their prerequisites and requirements, entrance and exit testing, enrolment capacity or no enrolment caps, practicum format, course length, name, and content, decision-making structure, and their relationships with other departments.** In the same province, in the same city, and even within the same university, each education program and its FSL teaching derivatives have their own DNA.

This approach obviously allows universities to build their unique brand and extend their reach in the enrolment market. At the same time, it is **very difficult to understand the difference between the various types of programs offered, given their heterogeneous nature and intentions.** We are therefore a long way from a pan-Canadian vision. This makes it all the more confusing and difficult for prospective applicants to navigate the various programs and processes.

Programs vary widely

To support this statement, it is important to understand that **qualifying programs in education and FSL teaching are offered in three different ways** (Smith et al., 2019, p. 3):

1. *Concurrent:* Students enroll in a five- or six-year undergraduate program that allows them to earn both a B.Ed. and a B.A. in FSL instruction. (e.g., York University).
2. *Consecutive:* Graduates of an undergraduate program can add a specialized diploma in education in one year (e.g., St. Francis Xavier University) or two years (e.g., Université Sainte-Anne and University of Ottawa).
3. *Direct entry:* Candidates can enrol directly in the B.Ed. without requiring an undergraduate degree (e.g., Quebec and Campus Saint-Jean at the University of Alberta).

It is interesting to note that even within the same university, it is possible to find more than one faculty of education, and therefore several B.Ed. programs that are not necessarily related to each other. At some universities, B.Ed. programs are offered in two languages (English and French), often on two campuses, one of which may be francophone or satellite, and developed according to an education program that is not linked to the parent institution (as is the case with

the University of Regina and its Cité Francophone, or the University of Calgary and its Werklund School of Education).

Duplication of FSL teaching programs

To complicate matters further, FSL teaching programs are **sometimes offered by several different faculties**. While these naturally include the faculty of education, they can also be offered by the faculties of arts, humanities, or foreign languages.

In some cases, institutes such as the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute (OLBI), affiliated with the University of Ottawa, and the Second Language Research Institute of Canada (L₂RIC), affiliated with the University of New Brunswick, **also offer programs in teaching French as a second language**.

In our preliminary research, based on the list developed by Smith et al. (2022), **we counted 40 universities offering a bachelor's degree program, diploma, or certificate for FSL instruction**. Among our respondents, 82% offer an option or specialized program in teaching French as a second language in addition to the Bachelor of Education degree. However, this raises the question of whether content specific to teaching in a Canadian French immersion program is included in these specialized FSL teaching options.

According to our findings and those of several researchers, **university education programs specifically geared to training teachers for French immersion programs are hard to find** (Cammarata et al., 2018; Learning, 2021; Smith et al., 2022). **Of the 18 universities offering some form of French immersion training, eight have developed a complete FI teaching program**, while six others claim that their graduates will be prepared to teach in French immersion, despite not having immersion-specific content in their course syllabi. (Learning, 2021, p. 33)

What's more, some of the universities in our sample are French-speaking and located in minority communities or in Quebec. While these francophone universities develop teaching programs for French-language schools, **they know little or nothing about French immersion programs**. As a result, these francophone universities do not typically offer their students practicum placements in a French immersion classroom, but rather in a school where French is the first language. Some of the universities surveyed on this subject reported that it is the English-speaking universities that select French immersion class placements for their students. **This is a disadvantage for FI recruitment, given that the placement location has a major impact on the choice of future employer**.

Conflicting information and uneven paths

The many definitions and features of the programs offered mean that each unit has its own way of doing things, its own unique processes, and its own specific requirements. Faced with these diverse and complicated structures, some students find it very difficult to navigate the system and are therefore likely to give up on their application before they even submit it.

It also appears that clear and accurate information on admissions procedures, administrative requirements, and career options is often hard to come by. Our analysis of university website pages and available documentation tends to confirm this. **The information provided to future students is often partial, incomplete, or downright contradictory.** For example, some education program information pages fail to specify program duration or content, entry requirements, or academic pathway options. **Even the people responsible for passing on relevant information to future candidates seem to have incomplete and fragmented information,** which can lead to mistakes that cost students time, money, and energy.

These navigation challenges may well explain why some students get discouraged during the admissions process and throughout their university career. All the more so since, according to Podolsky et al. (2019), one of the five factors that have the greatest influence on a teacher's decision to enter the teaching profession is the structure, quality, and cost of training. (Sirois et al., 2022). **At the very least, universities should review their admissions processes, harmonize their program structure, and improve information organization.** Needless to say, given the current extent of the teacher shortage, no one has the luxury of losing prospective students interested in the profession even before they enrol in teacher training due to a lack of information and having to navigate an administrative maze.

While this is a serious barrier to education faculty enrolment, it is far from being the only one. We will now look at our fifth finding, which explores the other barriers raised during our investigation.

Finding #5

➔ There are many barriers to program enrolment with few mitigation measures in place.

Universities offering bachelor's degrees in education and qualifications in teaching French as a second language tend to have numerous admission requirements.

These requirements are barriers to admission for high school graduates, especially those from French immersion programs, and for recent graduates from undergraduate programs.

Very long studies

Our survey respondents believe that **a major barrier to enrolment in a qualifying FSL teaching program is that it is frequently offered after an initial three- or four-year bachelor's degree.**

As noted by Smith et al., (2022, p. 23), the most common approach to FSL teacher education in Canadian institutions **is to offer a singular “add-on” course** and to include one FSL practicum experience, rather than integrating these aspects into the teacher education curriculum.

Given that most programs leading to a teaching certificate after a first bachelor's degree last two years (the one-year formula has been replaced by this one in the vast majority of cases), **it can take five to six years from the time a student starts university until they obtain a bachelor's degree in education.** In addition, since the majority of FSL programs or specialized teaching options come after completing a bachelor's degree in education, **an additional year or two must be added before completing a total of six to seven years at university.**

Considering that it takes a minimum of seven years of university to become a doctor in Canada, it is easy to understand why some FSL teacher candidates cut their studies short by skipping the specialized option. To date, few intensive, condensed, or accelerated formulas have been developed to shorten the time it takes these students to complete their studies or review their academic pathway.

Assessment of French language proficiency

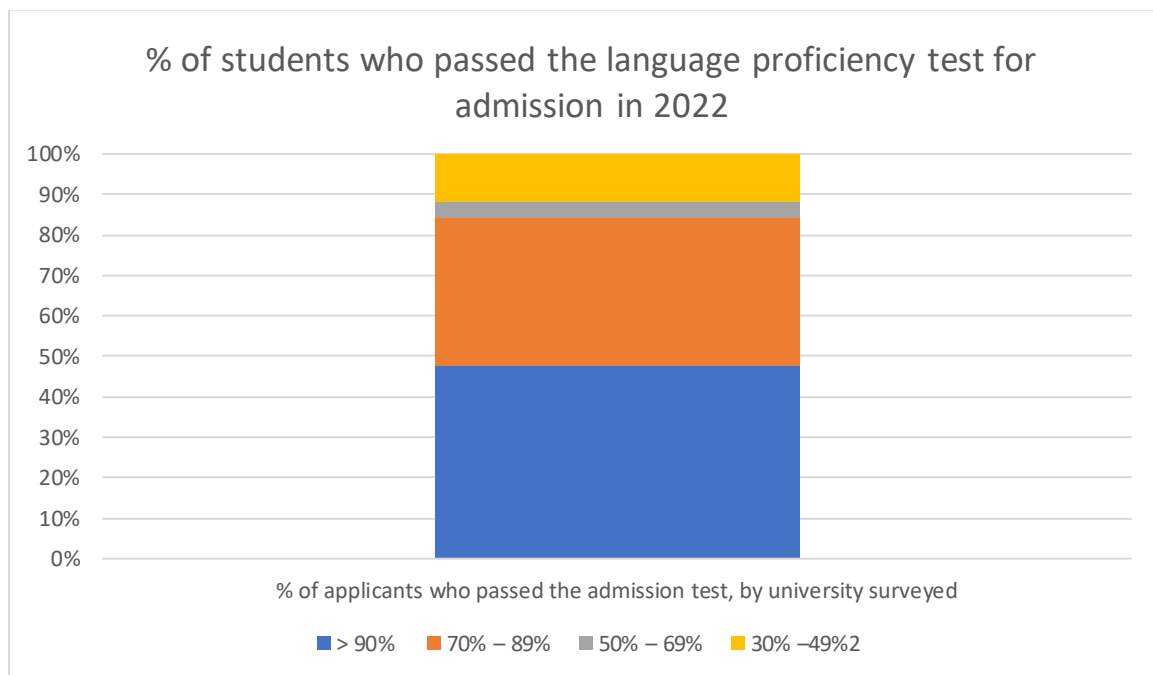
When asked about the **biggest barriers to recruiting new students to education programs, 44% of our respondents cited candidates' concern about their ability to pass the compulsory language tests on admission.**

This is particularly true in Alberta, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. This is a widely used admission requirement. For instance, 78% of the universities surveyed say they administer a compulsory test to measure the French language proficiency of candidates applying for admission to a bachelor's in education at a French-speaking university and in a program specializing in teaching French as a second language. This result is consistent with that obtained

by Smith et al. (2022), who found that 70% of the programs surveyed required applicants to take a language proficiency test.

It should be noted that no compulsory or standardized test is currently being used by universities across the country, or even in every province. What's more, the wide range of tests and exams used to assess candidates' French-language skills means that standards for interpreting proficiency vary, as do the inconsistent pass levels from one university to the next. In our survey, almost half (47%) of respondents indicated they use the DELF B2 to assess French language proficiency during the admission process. The other tests used are the OPI - Oral Proficiency Interview (18%), the Language Proficiency Evaluation (12%), "in-house" assessment (12%), and the TEF (6%).

Of the universities surveyed, 48% stated that over 90% of applicants passed their language proficiency test in 2022. However, **36% of respondents estimated that 70% to 89% of applicants passed this test, 4% put this percentage at 50% to 69%, and 12% indicated it was 30% to 49%.** This low pass rate appears to be the particular case for some universities in British Columbia and for respondents in Alberta (see diagram below).



Faced with this requirement to prove their language skills, some students choose instead to enroll in a Bachelor of Education program offered by an English-speaking university, which will not require them to take a language test as part of the admission process. While this does not

give them a specific degree in FSL teaching, it has the advantage of not undermining their sense of linguistic security and giving them quicker access to a teaching job.

In view of these results, much as these language proficiency requirements support the success of these teachers as they enter the profession, **"...it can also greatly diminish the number of potentially qualified applicants** to these programs." (Smith et al., p. 5). This finding figures prominently in the Ontario Public School Boards' Association's Phase III report, with the working group referring directly to the barrier posed by inadequate language proficiency among initial teacher education applicants, resulting in a loss of interested candidates. (2021, p. 22)

When we asked universities about these admission requirements and the support measures offered, we received a variety of responses. Some respondents mentioned **remedial courses as an admission requirement after failing the language proficiency test**, while others indicated the **possibility of retaking the test or adding a French course in their first academic year**. **Other respondents refuse to allow any remedial measures**, citing their desire to maintain a high standard of French at their university, school boards' confidence in their graduates based on the rigour of their admissions process, and the natural selection of candidates who truly have the "profile" of a teacher of or in French. **Interestingly, some universities told us that they are in the process of completely revising their admissions criteria in order to consider the diverse profiles of applicants and increase their program enrolment rates.**

Language insecurity

The geographic location of universities offering degrees in FSL teaching or a Bachelor of Education in French is noteworthy, in that **they are virtually all located in areas where English is the majority language (with a few exceptions).**

It is therefore not uncommon for a graduate of a French immersion program or an immigrant with French as a second or additional language to apply for admission to one of their faculties of education. **What these people have in common is that they are likely to experience linguistic insecurity.**

Of the universities responding to our survey, 67% identified applicants' concerns about taking courses in their second language as a major barrier to enrolment in their education programs. This barrier seems to be particularly true for respondents in New Brunswick, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan.

The Ontario Public School Board's Association comes to the same conclusion: the linguistic insecurity of initial teacher education applicants and candidates is a real barrier to applying for admission and a reason for dropping out (2021, p. 20). **The fact that there are very few opportunities to use French outside of school when living in a predominantly English-speaking environment creates a great deal of anxiety among candidates, who doubt their ability to pass admission tests as well as courses taught in French when this language is a second or additional language.**

Despite this, the number of non-native French-speaking teachers in French immersion programs across the country is on the rise. **In its Canada-wide consultation report published in 2018, ACPI noted that more than half of French immersion teachers (53%) said that English was their mother tongue.** In the wake of numerous projects to support school boards in their recruitment efforts, it has become clear that this figure has increased in recent years. **There are many indications that for nearly three out of four teachers (around 70%) in French immersion programs, French is not their first language.**

However, many candidates interested in teaching do not apply for admission for fear of not being able to compete with native French speakers in the education programs at some universities. As noted by Arnott et al. (2023), "The reputation of the French teaching profession and the pre-admission assessment discourages potential candidates from applying."

Here again, we do not see many mitigation measures to reduce the gap between applicants who are native speakers and those who are still learning French while at university. However, these students have an excellent understanding of the French immersion context, having completed their high school studies in such a program, and can grasp the advantages and challenges of learning French as a second language.

This bump in the road to a teaching career for applicants whose first language is not French can affect recruitment as well as the attrition of admitted students. As mentioned above, the current shortage requires us to rethink the way we do things so as not to lose out on prospective candidates and especially teaching graduates. Our sixth finding pertains specifically to graduation rates.

Finding #6

➔ Some students enrolled in education programs drop out before graduation, while others never enter the profession.

In 2019, 73% of young Canadians aged 25 to 34 had attained a postsecondary qualification, up from 59% in 2000 (Statistics Canada, 2021). More specifically, the number of Bachelor of Education and teaching graduates in Canada rose by 8.6% from 2016 to 2020 (from 15,402 to 16,737), which represents 1,335 more graduates in five years or growth of 1.7% on average per year (Statistics Canada, 2022e).

This is obviously a **small increase given the extent of current needs, which are cumulative and constantly growing.**

Program drop-outs

Given that one-third of participating universities indicated that their enrolments had grown in recent years, as stated on page 18 of this document, **we would have expected to see a steadily rising graduation rate, as well.** All the more so since 82% of the universities participating in our survey claim that the success rate of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program is over 90%. For example, one New Brunswick university lost six students in the first session of its Bachelor of Education program out of a total of 90 students, a drop-out rate of 7%.

However, in some cases, the graduation rates are worrisome. **This is the case in Quebec, where 50% of respondents indicate that the graduation rate varies between 50% and 69%.** This figure is consistent with the average 40% of students who leave before completing a Bachelor of Education degree offered by a Quebec university (Sirois, 2022).

Lakhali et al. (2023) conducted a survey to gauge students' intentions for continuing their studies in education. **It appears that 48% of the 2,915 students who responded to that survey are thinking or have already thought about dropping out.**

The reasons most often cited for dropping out were (Lakhali et al., 2023, p. 60):

- Have trouble motivating themselves to study
- Have trouble motivating themselves during practicum placements
- Are experiencing psychological health issues
- Have issues with the instructors
- Have trouble balancing personal life with academic demands

The reasons given by respondents from the universities surveyed to explain why students drop out during their studies were related to:

- Students' mental health or personal challenges (52%)
- The workload is too heavy (42%)
- The practical experience of the first practicum affected the motivation of some future teachers (29%).

Intention to become or remain a teacher

In addition to the challenge of dropping out before graduation, there is another important aspect: the real intention to embrace the profession and the desire to make it a career until retirement.

It is interesting to note **that 6% of the nearly 3,000 education students surveyed as part of a study conducted in faculties of education do not expect to become teachers after completing their program or to work in this field for more than five years** (Lakhal et al., 2023, p. 61).

The profile of new generations also suggests that **the desire to change careers several times before retirement is a reality and will continue to grow in the coming years**. According to the Deloitte Global Millennial Survey (2019) conducted in 42 countries, 61% of Generation Y employees plan to leave their current jobs in the next two years. Clearly, today's 23- to 43-year-olds are not afraid to embrace a new career challenge every two to four years (Cordier-Chemarin, 2017). What's more, **they put other aspects of their lives before work**. This generational characteristic is important in the context of shortages, as it leads to attrition and constant turnover.

On the topic of employment satisfaction, a study conducted by researchers French and Collins on behalf of the Canadian Association of Language Teachers revealed that **almost 40% of FSL teachers in Canada have considered leaving the profession** in the past year. (2014, p. 5). Echoing this study, French immersion teachers in Manitoba were asked if they had considered leaving their jobs in the last two years. **Of the 253 teachers surveyed, 54% answered in the affirmative** (USB-PGF, p. 26). The intention to continue teaching until retirement is clearly not a foregone conclusion.

Teacher mobility

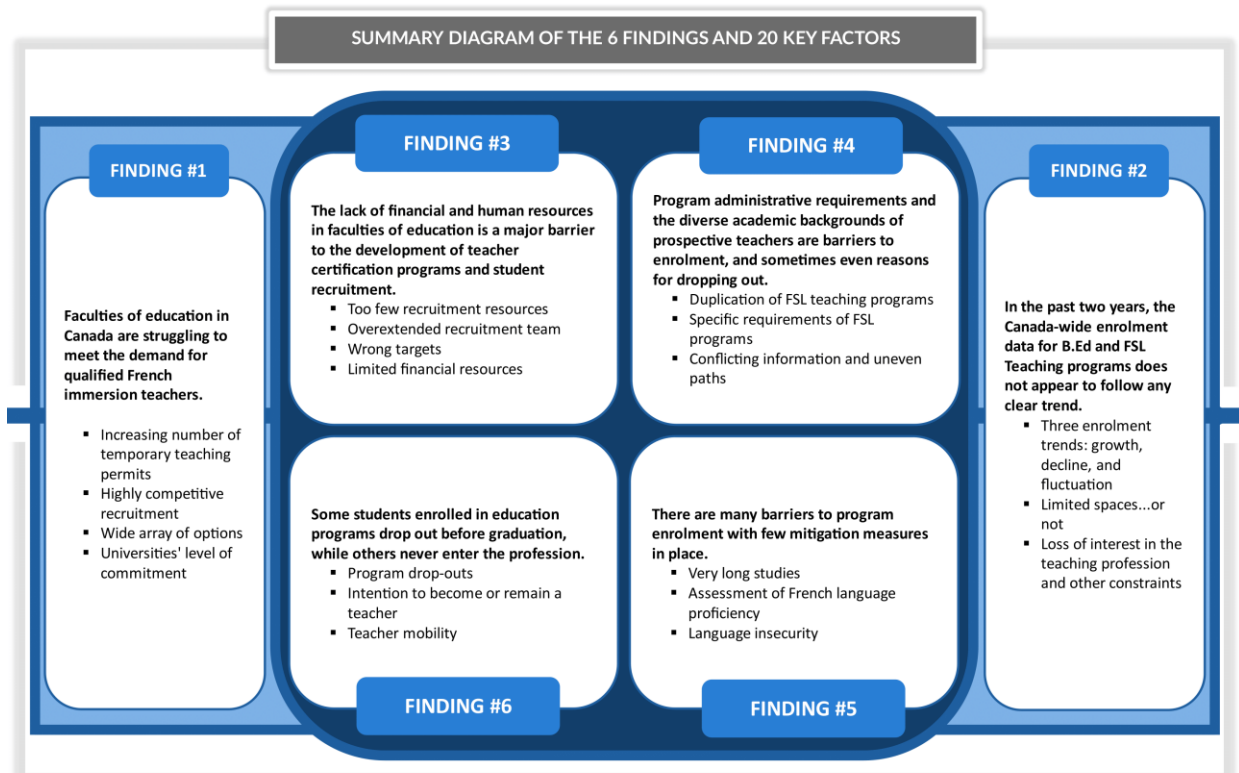
It would be a mistake to assume that students graduating in one province will automatically work there after completing their studies. Given the shortage of teachers everywhere, there is plenty of opportunities to emigrate to other parts of the world (51 million people are learning

French worldwide, according to the Organisation internationale de la francophonie) or to move to another province or territory (2,106 schools offer French immersion programs across the country).

Several provinces and territories have demonstrated considerable creativity in their strategies to attract graduates from all universities, and many of them have been quite successful. Examples include the Northwest Territories, which directly approaches Bachelor of Education graduates from Université Laval in Quebec City, as well as British Columbia, which seems to be a magnet for graduates from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Some school boards also offer housing and relocation assistance or isolation premiums.

The factors of dropping out of school, real intention to enter the profession, combined with the immigration or migration of qualified teachers, considerably affect the pool of qualified teachers who can fill vacancies and ease the shortage.

This concludes our list of six findings and determining factors that act as barriers to the recruitment of students into education programs leading to a career in teaching French as a second language and French immersion. The following diagram provides a quick overview before moving on to our recommendations and possible solutions.



Summary and Possible Solutions

The purpose of this analysis is to help inform and engage stakeholders in government ministries and departments, universities, national organizations and school boards with a view to alleviating the shortage of French immersion teachers by increasing the number of students enrolled in education programs, as one option. By attempting to paint the current picture of supply and demand for programs offered by education faculties, we hoped to identify the reasons limiting access to such programs.

The six major findings and 20 underlying factors outlined above are the main barriers not only to enrolment in a faculty of education, but also to student persistence through to graduation and, ultimately, to teaching in their home province or territory, or at least in Canada. **The complexity and multi-faceted nature of university education programs leading to a career in teaching French as a second language and French immersion is clearly demonstrated by all of these barriers.**

A discussion of some possible solutions to increase access to teaching career programs in faculties of education in Canada seems appropriate at this point. For consistency's sake, we have grouped our recommendations according to the six findings. Some of the recommendations stem from our survey, others from recent studies, and still others from our field experience and many observations.

Recommendations

Finding #1

Faculties of education in Canada are struggling to meet the demand for qualified French immersion teachers.

Faculties of education clearly have an active role to play in implementing effective measures to fill all the available seats in their programs. They are also on the front lines when it comes to attracting high school and international students to training for a career in teaching. The universities surveyed are aware of their role in addressing the teacher shortage. **When asked about this, 94% of respondents said that their most important contribution in the coming year would be to increase the number of students enrolled in their faculty.**

In our view, faculties of education that award degrees in teaching French as a second language should also commit to developing a program or course specifically designed to qualify holders of temporary teaching licences/permits or letters of permission. These holders already have

one foot in the education system when they land a teaching job, and represent a clientele of interest that could find courses adapted to their reality very appealing. School principals also need to find ways to support their temporary teachers.

At the same time, they should strongly encourage teachers to start or continue courses leading to qualification, or even make them compulsory. Why not offer time off work to encourage qualification, or an alternating work-study arrangement? **Flexibility and adaptability are key, both for faculties of education and for schools and school boards hiring unqualified teachers.**

Education faculties are also essential when it comes to increasing the number of graduates from their programs. Their ability to enhance the experience of their students and use a nimble approach to **support their progress in the best possible conditions** are ideal for encouraging retention and persistence. Furthermore, faculties of education **should never lose touch with their graduates** in order to offer them opportunities for career-long learning and to support them in adding qualifications when required, as is the case in FSL teaching. **Given that FSL teacher training is often offered as an add-on to the core education program, faculties of education should develop the reflex of offering their graduates the opportunity to continue their studies.**

Obviously, in many cases, the format of this program will have to be redesigned, given that the primary target groups often hold full-time positions in schools, or for another employer. This is a widespread trend in today's academic institutions. Students have jobs because they have to juggle financial and family responsibilities while completing their education. A recent survey found that 86% of the 2,912 education student respondents engaged in some sort of professional activity alongside their studies (Wentzel et al., 2023, p. 47). Programs need to be revisited to better accommodate this reality.

Education faculties should also play a more active role in guiding the career choices of their students. Some universities seem to have trouble conveying a fair representation of the diversity of teaching careers in Canada. It is vital that they pass on up-to-date, accurate information about the opportunities available to their students. French immersion careers are also sometimes overlooked or dismissed in favour of the first-language system. An inclusive, informed, and well-researched approach could help students make an informed choice based on their interests.

In light of all these observations related to the first finding, the following are a few possible solutions to consider in addition to those mentioned above, with a view to increasing the number of qualified teachers to meet the growing demand for French immersion programs in particular.

Key Factors of Finding #1	Additional Solutions to Consider
Increasing number of temporary teaching permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When reviewing an application for admission, consider candidates' experience and recognize it in lieu of a given number of practicum hours or practical courses (prior learning recognition). • Make an accelerated (virtual) program called "Introduction to the Teaching Profession" mandatory, including basic concepts (classroom management, evaluation, lesson preparation...).
Too few education graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach faculties of education about offering virtual or satellite training by experienced teachers or leaders to prospective teachers in rural and remote areas. • Set up a registry to track the number of graduates annually for all education programs in all major regions of the country, under the guidance of government education ministries and departments.
Highly competitive recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop means to identify and recruit students enrolled in education programs who wish to move into FSL and FI instruction. • Launch a nationwide campaign to promote the careers of FI teachers in every school (2,106 schools across Canada).
Universities' level of commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop action plans specifically to increase enrolment in faculties of education. • Anticipate current and future needs for teachers in all programs offered (FSL, FI) and set targets for the required number of annual graduates.

Finding #2

In recent years, the Canada-wide enrolment data for B.Ed and FSL Teaching programs does not appear to follow any clear trend.

Universities all move at their own pace when it comes to enrolment in their education and FSL specialization programs. **Despite a slight increase nationwide (8.8% in 5 years), enrolments appear to depend on a host of factors both internal and external to faculties of education.**

Internal factors include the fact that some faculties have to deal with waiting lists due to enrolment caps. Others accept more students despite the funding they receive. In both cases, **it is clear that the teacher shortage is forcing us to reassess the relevance of setting seat limits.** Attracting students to education programs is a daunting task, and no one has the luxury of turning away candidates who meet the admission requirements.

With regard to enrolment caps, government ministries and departments of education or postsecondary education must **make funding available and adjust it in line with the urgency of the situation.** Meanwhile, universities could consider **reviewing their program delivery methods** (course format, program length, teaching modes...) as well as their relationships with future employers (school boards, districts, divisions, or service centres) so as to be in a position to increase the number, variety, and opportunities for practicums. **It would be interesting to consider the possibility of provinces and territories making it "mandatory" to host student teachers, or proposing some form of equity in their assignment, so that all schools (FSL and FI, in remote and rural areas) receive their share of such interns.**

Internal factors also need to be taken into account given declining or fluctuating enrolments in recent years, while the demand for teachers is on the rise everywhere. **New investments are urgently needed to review program offerings and student recruitment strategies. Once again, detailed enrolment tracking is required, not only by faculties of education, but also by government ministries and departments of education or postsecondary education.** Corrective action should be taken as soon as any downward trend is detected.

It is also difficult to explain the increase or tightening of admission requirements in many faculties of education when there are few means in place to offer a transitional pathway to students who do not fully meet them. **It would be worthwhile to consider ways to support interested candidates who do not have all the skills required for admission.** These people are already attracted to the teaching profession but are excluded from it, with no opportunity for reconsideration in many cases. It would be highly beneficial to set up remedial training for such candidates.

External factors are primarily linked to the loss of interest in the teaching profession. This is an important factor. The teaching profession is increasingly under threat in this country. A major change of direction is needed if it is to restore its image and inspire a renewed interest in younger students. After all, active teachers are the profession's natural ambassadors in the eyes of students. **"Improve the status and social standing of the teaching profession to attract more candidates, including through reinforcing social dialogue and teacher participation in educational decision-making."** (Vargas-Tamez, 2022)

The whole community plays a key role in this paradigm shift, which is vital to the future of education for Canadian children. All the more so since, as a recent ACUFC report points out, "[translation]...interest (attractiveness) in the profession is a process that develops relatively early on, and is greatly influenced by social influences and experiences." (ACUFC, 2022, p. 22)

In light of all these observations related to the second finding, the following are a few possible solutions to consider in addition to those mentioned above, with a view to increasing the number of qualified teachers to meet the growing demand for French immersion programs in particular.

Key Factors of Finding #2	Additional Solutions to Consider
Three enrolment trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop ways to reduce the number of prospective students who do not complete the enrolment process (reduce the gap between those who receive a positive response to their application and those who actually enrol in the program) - attempt to recover interested students who have not enrolled (reasons and remedies). • Conduct extensive research to determine the reasons for the decline in the universities affected and take remedial action.
Limited spaces...or not	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of seats or do away with enrolment caps in faculties of education that currently have them (Ontario, New Brunswick...), and fund accordingly. • Consider new ways of providing teacher training (learning communities – e.g., online – or by developing evening, weekend, and summer classes).
Loss of interest in the teaching profession and other constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop tools to promote the teaching profession for students in grades 9 to 12 (e.g., teaching career exploration kit, website, aptitude test, discovery games and workshops...). • Build prestige in the teaching profession by various means (professional status, salary, benefits, recognition, social marketing...), drawing on models from other countries.

Finding #3

The lack of financial and human resources in faculties of education is a major barrier to the development of teacher certification programs and student recruitment.

The human and financial capacity of faculties of education is a crucial aspect of program development and healthy student recruitment. However, the majority of our respondents feel that they have very few resources to innovate and carry out their recruitment activities. However, **unless something is done to attract high school students, first-time undergraduates, or newcomers to Canada, the call of the profession will not be heard.**

Universities must also have a carefully thought-out recruitment strategy or plan to meet specific enrolment targets for qualifying FSL teaching programs. These plans should include a variety of activities and means to attract potential candidates, especially those graduating with their first bachelor's degree. **They must also be accompanied by a substantial budget that is included in the priorities of the faculty of education.**

University survey respondents told us that they wanted to increase student enrolment by finding new sources of funding to offer:

- new subsistence allowances for longer internships (65%)
- flexibility for students who have difficult financial or family circumstances (35%).

As mentioned above, there is currently a clear loss of interest in the profession, and it is up to society as a whole to make a concerted effort to raise its profile. However, university authorities also play a role in informing and promoting teaching programs to a wide range of clientele. It is therefore essential to provide them with the best possible support, and **to give them the means to recreate the university experience in line with the changing needs of current and future students.** In so doing, they will make education studies attractive to applicants and help boost enrolment.

In light of all these observations related to the third finding, the following are a few possible solutions to consider in addition to those mentioned above, with a view to increasing the number of qualified teachers to meet the growing demand for French immersion programs in particular.

Key Factors of Finding #3

Additional Solutions to Consider

Limited recruitment resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all faculties of education graduating FSL and FI teachers have a recruitment strategy that includes a variety of means and activities as well as specific targets, including first-time undergraduates. • Increase the recruitment budget for faculties of education accordingly.
Overextended recruitment team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all faculties of education graduating FSL and French immersion teachers have a recruitment team that is informed and sensitive to their particular reality and can answer their questions in French. • Consider training current students in education programs to be part of a special recruitment team.
Wrong targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make students currently enrolled in a first bachelor's degree (if required before entering an education program) a priority target. • Introduce an introductory education course for undergraduates, temporary licence/certificate/permit holders and internationally educated individuals. • Identify programs that have a logical link with subsequent education training (e.g., French literature, mathematics, leisure studies...) and develop activities that directly target them.
Limited financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside an additional budget for producing marketing tools, recruitment drives and events, and social media campaigns, and for more marketing. • Guarantee additional recurring funds for staff involved in educational recruitment and program revision or enhancement.

Finding #4
Program administrative requirements and the diverse academic backgrounds of prospective teachers are barriers to enrolment, and sometimes even reasons for dropping out.

Given the vast array of formulas, programs, components, prerequisites, and pathways offered to prospective teachers in FSL programs, the recommendation is clear: **simplify the programs**

offered to students within each faculty of education, but also across the country. This would undoubtedly facilitate access to university teacher training and would also harmonize the programs offered in the same province. It is encouraging to note that 35% of the universities surveyed said that they intend to innovate their education program pathways, which is a good start.

These innovations should prevent the creation of piecemeal training programs and more access points so as not to further complicate the pathways of future students. This is especially true given that the wide range of options available in some faculties requires an in-depth knowledge of all of them. It is hard to find someone who can answer all of a prospective student's questions. **Without a single point of contact or an employee dedicated to providing comprehensive information, entering a program is a difficult process.** To ensure that no candidate gives up on the idea of submitting an admission application because of the complexity of the process, a variety of means must be employed to make things run more smoothly.

We therefore propose mapping students' pathways from their first point of contact with the university to their first class in the faculty of education. At each of these points of contact, the level of service offered should be assessed and the process detailed with a view to streamlining it and anticipating students' needs.

The fact that education programs often fail to distinguish between students from immersion, newcomers, and those from French as a first language programs appears to hinder the retention and persistence of the first two learner types. It is therefore **important to adjust programs to be more inclusive, but also to consider the teaching preferences of future candidates in order to offer education opportunities for all.**

In light of all these observations related to the fourth finding, the following are a few possible solutions to consider in addition to those mentioned above, with a view to increasing the number of qualified teachers to meet the growing demand for French immersion programs in particular.

Key Factors of Finding #4	Additional Solutions to Consider
<p>Programs vary widely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group all education programs under a single umbrella with the same processes, conditions, and virtually the same admission requirements (wherever possible). • Regularly consult admitted students about the accessibility and ease of processes before, during, and even after their studies.

<p>Duplication of FSL teaching programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In French-speaking universities, expand the range of placement opportunities to include immersion teaching in French and FSL. • Encourage current FSL and FI teachers to host student teachers, for example by setting up support clubs for "future FSL and FI teachers" among members of national associations such as ACPI and CASLT. • Have national organizations of FSL and FI teachers award scholarships for candidates enrolling in specialized FSL and FI teaching programs.
<p>Conflicting information and uneven paths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accurate and accessible information and a single window of information for students, make admission procedures, expectations, and conditions as clear as possible, and publish the appropriate information material. • Help prospective students understand what to expect once they are admitted, in terms of the nature of the courses, the time required per week to meet program requirements, available scholarships, and the processes in place to access them.

Finding #5

There are many barriers to program enrolment with few mitigation measures in place.

Clearly, **further analysis of the barriers specific to each of the faculties of education is required.** In the course of our survey, some barriers appeared more important to our respondents. Promising strategies to boost enrolment were also mentioned, such as changing program composition, restructuring courses, and offering more scholarships.

In keeping with the above, restructuring programs (formats, pathways, course delivery methods...) could be an effective first step in boosting enrolment in education faculties. **In our view, revising the length of university studies required for qualification in FSL and French immersion teaching is a priority.**

Reducing the length of this academic pathway by integrating FSL or FI teaching courses into the regular curriculum, for example, would be a good way to approach this program. Accordingly,

47% of the universities surveyed plan to implement certain strategies in the coming year, including the recognition of candidates' relevant experience in order to shorten the length of practicums.

More also needs to be done to better prepare candidates for French language proficiency assessments. Helping candidates to succeed academically and offering them ongoing support would also mitigate the feeling of having their language skills put to the test, which undermines their confidence, especially those whose mother tongue is not French.

In light of all these observations related to the fifth finding, the following are a few possible solutions to consider in addition to those mentioned above, with a view to increasing the number of qualified teachers to meet the growing demand for French immersion programs in particular.

Key Factors of Finding #5	Additional Solutions to Consider
Very long studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorten the length of training to a maximum of three years, with the possibility of a preparatory year for special programs. • Offer accelerated and intensive formats (weekend, summer, summer camp...). • Integrate optional courses in French immersion or FSL teaching into the Bachelor of Education program.
Assessment of French language proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a common offer of support in preparation for language proficiency assessments (e.g., language coaching) • Provide support, coaching, extra time, and alternative options for candidates who do not pass the language proficiency assessment test.
Language insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add French refresher courses, language coaching, and intensive summer classes to upgrade language skills. • Recognize students' volunteer work in French with a certificate (e.g., University of Ottawa's Linguistic Risk-Taking Passport) awarded to those who have completed a given number of hours.

Finding #6

Some students enrolled in education programs drop out before graduation, while others never enter the profession.

This is an area that requires special attention. Once enrolled, **students should receive all the support they need to earn their degree and facilitate their professional integration.** Students are bound to encounter a number of challenges along the way. However, these challenges can be anticipated and, more importantly, a range of student services can be developed in line with students' needs for support.

Moving in this direction, 59% of participating universities are considering offering remuneration during the practicum period to support students who are struggling with financial obligations. **Remuneration during practicums could go a long way to easing the financial burden of some clientele (including students with young children).** This step could also help increase attendance. (ACUFC, 2022, p. 26)

Another interesting idea for increasing the chances of a long teaching career is **pairing students with experienced teacher-mentors** (note that 41% of our respondents were in favour of this solution). Yet another promising idea is to make mentoring an experience that extends well beyond the period of studies and practicums. Several researchers have argued that **this pairing should continue into the first five years** of teaching to facilitate the professional integration and outcomes of new teachers.

The concept of a mentor or coach is definitely worth exploring, not only to encourage students to continue their studies, but also to help them retain their jobs at the start of their careers.

The Career Launch program developed by ACPI in 2021 is a good example of best practice in this area. Drawing on the words of Williams et al., "Teacher candidates who undergo robust clinical experiences, nurtured by authentic school–university partnerships that give them a clear outlook on the realities of teaching, tend to have a smoother transition into the classroom and remain in the profession longer." (Williams, 2022).

In light of all these observations related to the sixth finding, the following are a few possible solutions to consider in addition to those mentioned above, with a view to increasing the number of qualified teachers to meet the growing demand for French immersion programs in particular.

Key Factors of Finding #6	Additional Solutions to Consider
Program drop-outs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer work-study programs (similar to the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue program). • Pay students during practicums (especially long ones). • Offer mentoring to students by retired teachers, both while they are studying and after they enter the workforce.
Intention to become or remain a teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop partnerships with school boards to build bridges between education and employment (e.g., work-study programs). • Provide graduates with the tools they need to get their careers off to a good start (e.g., Career Launch program). • Review the terms and conditions of employment for teachers across the country to bring them more in line with new generations (flexibility, work-life balance...).
Teacher mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep in touch with graduates to find out about their employment trajectory and offer them professional development or the opportunity to add a qualification. • Considering the new generations' need to travel, inform students about the benefits of moving to another country to practise their profession. Every province and territory has its strengths and opportunities.

This final list of possible solutions rounds out our Summary and Recommendations section. Before moving on to the conclusion, we feel it important to include a schematic diagram of all the possible solutions (see below).

SUMMARY DIAGRAM - FINDINGS, KEY FACTORS, AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

FINDING #1

Faculties of education in Canada are struggling to meet the demand for qualified French immersion teachers.

Too few new education graduates

- Approach faculties of education about offering virtual or satellite training by experienced teachers or leaders to prospective teachers in rural and remote areas.
- Set up a registry to track the number of graduates annually for all education programs in all major regions of the country, under the guidance of government education ministries and departments.

Increasing number of temporary teaching permits

- When reviewing an application for admission, consider candidates' experience and recognize it in lieu of a given number of practicum hours or practical courses (prior learning recognition).
- Make an accelerated (virtual) program called "Introduction to the Teaching Profession" mandatory, including basic concepts (classroom management, evaluation, lesson preparation...).

Highly competitive recruitment

- Develop means to identify and recruit students enrolled in education programs who wish to move into FSL and FI instruction.
- Launch a nationwide campaign to promote the careers of FI teachers in every school.

Universities' level of commitment

- Develop action plans specifically to increase enrolment in faculties of education.
- Anticipate current and future needs for teachers in all programs offered (FSL, FI) and set targets for the required number of annual graduates.

FINDING #2

In recent years, the Canada-wide enrolment data for B.Ed and FSL Teaching programs does not appear to follow any clear trend.

Three enrolment trends

- Develop ways to reduce the number of prospective students who do not complete the enrolment process (reduce the gap between those who receive a positive response to their application and those who actually enrol in the program) - attempt to recover interested students who have not enrolled (reasons and remedies).
- Conduct extensive research to determine the reasons for the decline in the universities affected and take corrective action.

Loss of interest in the teaching profession and other constraints

- Develop tools to promote the teaching profession for students in grades 9 to 12 (e.g., teaching career exploration kit, website, aptitude test, discovery games and workshops...).
- Build prestige in the teaching profession by various means (professional status, salary, benefits, recognition, social marketing...), drawing on models from other countries.

Limited spaces...or not

- Increase the number of seats or do away with enrolment caps in faculties of education that currently have them (Ontario, New Brunswick...), and fund accordingly.
- Consider new ways of providing teacher training (learning communities - e.g., online - or by developing evening, weekend, and summer classes).

FINDING #3

The lack of financial and human resources in faculties of education is a major barrier to the development of teacher certification programs and student recruitment.

Wrong targets

- Make students currently enrolled in a first bachelor's degree (if required before entering an education program) a priority target.
- Introduce an introductory education course for undergraduates, temporary licence/certificate/permit holders and internationally educated individuals.
- Identify programs that have a logical link with subsequent education training (e.g., French literature, mathematics, leisure studies...) and develop activities that directly target them.

Overextended recruitment team

- Ensure that all faculties of education graduating FSL and French immersion teachers have a recruitment team that is informed and sensitive to their particular reality and can answer their questions in French.
- Consider training current students in education programs to be part of a special recruitment team.

Limited recruitment resources

- Ensure that all faculties of education graduating FSL and FI teachers have a recruitment strategy that includes a variety of means and activities as well as specific targets, including first-time undergraduates.
- Increase the recruitment budget for faculties of education accordingly.

Limited financial resources

- Set aside an additional budget for producing communication tools, recruitment drives and events, and social media campaigns, and for more marketing.
- Guarantee additional recurring funds for staff involved in educational recruitment and program revision or enhancement.

FINDING #4

Program administrative requirements and the diverse academic backgrounds of prospective teachers are barriers to enrolment, and sometimes even reasons for dropping out.

Programs vary widely

- Group all education programs under a single umbrella with the same processes, conditions, and virtually the same admission requirements (wherever possible).
- Regularly consult admitted students about the accessibility and ease of processes before, during, and even after their studies.

Duplication of FSL teaching programs

- In French-speaking universities, expand the range of placement opportunities to include immersion teaching in French and FSL.
- Encourage current FSL and FI teachers to host student teachers, for example by setting up support clubs for "future FSL and FI teachers" among members of national associations such as ACPI and CASLT.
- Have national organizations of FSL and FI teachers award scholarships for candidates enrolling in specialized FSL and FI teaching programs.

Conflicting information and uneven paths

- Provide accurate and accessible information and a single window of information for students, make admission procedures, expectations, and conditions as clear as possible, and publish the appropriate information material.
- Help prospective students understand what to expect once they are admitted, in terms of the nature of the courses, the time required per week to meet program requirements, available scholarships, and the processes in place to access them.

FINDING #5

There are many barriers to program enrolment with few mitigation measures in place.

Very long studies

- Shorten the length of training to a maximum of three years, with the possibility of a preparatory year for special programs.
- Offer accelerated and intensive formats (weekend, summer, summer camp...).
- Integrate optional courses in French immersion or FSL teaching into the Bachelor of Education program.

Assessment of French language proficiency

- Develop a common offer of support in preparation for language proficiency assessments (e.g., language coaching)
- Provide support, coaching, extra time, and alternative options for candidates who do not pass the language proficiency assessment test.

Language insecurity

- Add French refresher courses, language coaching, and intensive summer classes to upgrade language skills.
- Recognize students' volunteer work in French with a certificate (e.g., University of Ottawa's Linguistic Risk-Taking Passport) awarded to those who have completed a given number of hours.

FINDING #6

Some students enrolled in education programs drop out before graduation, while others never enter the profession.

Program drop-outs

- Offer work-study programs (similar to the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue program).
- Pay students during practicums (especially long ones).
- Offer mentoring to students by retired teachers, both while they are studying and after they enter the workforce.

Intention to become or remain a teacher

- Develop partnerships with school boards to build bridges between education and employment (e.g., work-study programs).
- Provide graduates with the tools they need to get their careers off to a good start (e.g., Career Launch program).
- Review the terms and conditions of employment for teachers across the country to bring them more in line with new generations (flexibility, work-life balance...).

Teacher mobility

- Keep in touch with graduates to find out about their employment trajectory and offer them professional development or the opportunity to add a qualification.
- Considering the new generations' need to travel, inform students about the benefits of moving to another country to practise their profession. Every province and territory has its strengths and opportunities.

Conclusion

This brings us to the final stage of our strategic review. It is important to remember that the original intention of this strategic review was to assess the current state of student recruitment in university education programs in a context of teacher shortage. **Our basic premise was rooted in the fact that faculties of education are the primary source of Canada's next generation of teachers.** Without them, the qualification of teaching professionals is impossible. Only internationally educated teachers can help fill the gap and, even then, they are often required to upgrade their skills and sometimes have trouble integrating into a Canadian school environment.

After surveying some forty universities offering qualifying programs in FSL and FI teaching, we were able to incorporate their responses into this review, which is also supported by a large body of literature on the subject. Everyone in the education community is talking about the teacher shortage. **The current shortage of qualified teachers to meet the growing demand for French immersion programs in 2,106 schools across Canada is a real threat** on several fronts.

First, **it remains impossible to measure the true extent of the shortage of French immersion teachers in this country, given the considerable difficulty in accessing reliable administrative data compiled on an annual basis.** In addition, the available data often does not include teachers with precarious status (substitute/supply and contract teachers, temporary permission...) or classes that could not be offered due to a lack of teachers. As a result, the data published by some education ministries and departments suggests that **the current shortage could well be three to five times greater than the numbers presented** in the November 2021 ACPI study.

The **current shortage also undermines the quality of French immersion programs**, given that many classroom teachers are not qualified to teach. **Language proficiency training for FI teachers is limited in English-speaking school boards. Employers are also reluctant to use any one test to assess French language skills**, and hiring criteria have been relaxed on a number of occasions.

Against this perilous backdrop, the difficulties faced by universities in filling the available seats in their education programs, when every teacher practising in the country should have a bachelor's degree in teaching, are a cause for serious concern. That is precisely why this strategic review was needed.

We hope it provides a better understanding of the contribution universities make to teacher training, and presents a documented overview of the barriers to increasing their enrolment. The report also suggests solutions and recommendations that could help increase enrolment and, ultimately, alleviate the teacher shortage.

This strategic review could be taken a step further by conducting a similar survey of students enrolled in the education faculties of the 40 universities surveyed here. Comparing the findings of our analysis with students' perceptions would certainly help to enrich this report and prioritize solutions.

This strategic review is ACPI's contribution to the deliberations of universities, government ministries and departments (provincial, territorial and federal) and schools, with the stated aim of significantly increasing the number of graduates from qualifying programs in FSL and French immersion teaching. Given that the responsibility for alleviating the teacher shortage is shared by all these sectors, who are part of a whole ecosystem, we hope that the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this review will provide opportunities for collaboration and concerted action.

The French immersion and FSL teaching community is active and engaged. We therefore anticipate that our handful of recommendations will provide a springboard for effective, targeted, and productive initiatives.

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ANNEX A

Survey (English version)

Section 1 - profile

Q.1 - Please indicate in which province your university's main campus is located.

- British Columbia (BC)
- Alberta (AB)
- Saskatchewan (SK)
- Manitoba
- Ontario (ON)
- Quebec
- Nova Scotia (NS)
- New Brunswick (NB)
- Prince Edward Island
- Newfoundland and Labrador (NL)

Q.2 - In which language would you like to answer our next questions?

- Français
- English

Home

University partners,

The Canadian Association of Immersion Professionals (ACPI) is seeking your valuable input to our survey regarding the supply and demand for university training in French second-language education within the context of French immersion teacher shortage.

This survey is open until March 17, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. EDT. You will need 8-10 minutes to complete the survey. Your answers will be confidential and will only be used to provide input for our study. Keep in mind that your responses will be used to develop a strategic recommendation that will serve as a status report. This will include an analysis of the barriers to university recruitment in education programs and an inventory of the best practices that universities have in place to help train more teachers.

Thank you for your valuable input!

If you have any questions or comments, please write to xx@acpi.ca.

Section 2 - Clientele

Q.3 - In your opinion, how would you describe the gap between the number of spaces in your Bachelor of Education program and the number of students enrolled?

- The number of students registered is greater than the number of spaces available.
- The number of students registered corresponds to the number of spaces available.
- The number of students enrolled is less than the number of spaces available.
- We do not have a limit to the number of spaces available in this program.
- I don't know.

Q.4 - How would you characterize the gap between the number of applications received for the Bachelor of education program in comparison with the number of students who actually enrolled in the fall 2022 term?

- The number of applicants far exceeds the number of students enrolled.
- The number of applicants slightly exceeds the number of students enrolled.
- The number of applicants corresponds fairly well to the number of students enrolled.
- I don't know.

Q.5 - Do you have a specific program designed for teaching French as a second language at your university?

- No
- Yes

Q.6 - How would you characterize the gap between your number of funded spaces in your specific program designed for French as a Second Language and the number of students enrolled?

- The number of students enrolled is greater than the number of available spaces.
- The number of students registered corresponds to the number of spaces available.
- The number of students enrolled is less than the number of spaces available.
- We do not have a limit to the number of spaces in this program.
- I don't know.

Q.7 - Do you have a requirement for an admission test to measure the French language skills of applicants?

- No
- Yes

Q.8 - What test(s) do you use to evaluate the French language proficiency of applicants during the admission process?

- DELF B2

- TECFÉE
- EUF
- TEF
- Language Proficiency Evaluation
- Other (please specify)

Q.9 – How would you describe the evolution of enrollment in education programs at your university over the past two years?

- Over 90% of students applying for admission.
- Between 70% and 89% of students applying for admission.
- Between 50% and 69% of students applying for admission.
- Between 30% and 49% of students applying for admission.
- Less than 29% of students applying for admission.
- I don't know.

Section 3 - Recrutement

Q.10 - How would you describe the evolution of enrollment in education programs at your university over the past two years?

- Enrollment is growing.
- Enrollment is stable or stagnant Enrollment is declining.
- Enrollment is fluctuating from year to year.
- I don't know.

Q.11- In your opinion, what are the reasons for the change (decline, stagnation, and fluctuation) in enrollment in your university's education program? Check all that apply to you.

- Loss of interest in the teaching profession.
- Increased complexity of entry requirements.
- Fewer applicants meet the admission requirements.
- Perception of a difficult program.
- Uncertainty about passing the language exam.
- Dropping out of the program.
- Dropping out of the program.
- Change of program.
- Other (please specify).

Q.12 – What challenges or barriers have you encountered in your efforts to recruit candidates for the Bachelor of Education program, and specifically the FSL Specialist program if offered? Check all that apply to you.

- Difficulty reaching high school students who might be interested.
- Little or no effort is made to recruit students enrolled in a first Bachelor's degree.

- Decline in the number of outreach opportunities with target audiences (e.g., job fairs, classroom presentations, etc.).
- Difficulty in jumping through the hoops of bureaucracy to implement marketing activities.
- Loss of general interest in the teaching profession.
- Candidates' concerns about their ability to pass mandatory language test.
- Candidates' concerns about taking courses in their second language.
- Applicants' concerns about their ability to complete the program and graduate.
- Other (please specify).

Q.13 - What are the winning strategies that have allowed you to fill available spaces or increase the number of students admitted to the programs (Bachelor in Education and FSL Specialization)? Check all that apply to you.

- Additional funding for promotion.
- Performance of the recruitment team.
- Online course offerings.
- A personalized approach to undergraduate students who have some of the skills needed to teach.
- A tour of high school classrooms to meet with students in grades 11 and 12.
- Activities for high school students that take place at the University (e.g., open house, science fair, play, leadership camp, etc.).
- A social media recruitment campaign.
- Current students in the education program are paid to recruit high school students and other students.
- Other (please specify).

Q.14 - What will you implement in the coming year to increase the number of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education degree?

Q.15 - Is your Bachelor of Education program served by a recruitment team?

- No
- Yes

Q.16 - How would you rate the resources (human, financial and other) used by your university to recruit new students to the Bachelor of Education program?

- The resources provided are more than adequate.
- Resources are barely adequate.
- Resources are clearly inadequate.
- I do not know.

Describe the reasons for your choice.

Section 4 – Graduation

Q.17 – In your opinion, how would you estimate the success rate of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program in the last three years?

- More than 90% of students completed their education degree.
- Between 70% and 89% of students completed their education degree.
- Between 50% and 69% of students completed their education degree.
- Between 30% and 49% of students completed their education degree.
- Less than 29% of students completed their education degree.
- I don't know.

Q.18 – How do you explain the dropout of some students while studying education? Check all that apply to your situation.

- School boards have hired students before they graduate.
- Students are struggling financially during the practicum period because they are not being paid.
- The practical experience of the first practicum has affected the motivation of some students.
- Internships may not match students' language skills.
- The workload is too heavy.
- The length of post-secondary education is too long, in some cases a initial degree in a field of specialization and then an after-degree in education or another format.
- Other (please specify).

Q.19 - What promising solutions would you like to explore to increase the graduation rate of students in Education Program? Check all that apply to you.

- Paid internships.
- Part-time program.
- Recognition of relevant experience to shorten the length of internships (e.g., teaching assistant, teaching abroad, etc.).
- Mentoring with experienced teachers during the course of study.
- Matching internships with student interests (FSL, French immersion, rural, etc.) .
- Accelerated summer training program.
- Online, bi-modal or other format.
- Other (please specify).

Section 5 - Shortage

Q.20 - Since 2020, have you received additional funding from your ministry to enhance your Bachelor of Education program (more available seats, more resources, student support, scholarships, etc.)?

- No
- Yes

Add a comment if you wish.

Q.21 - Considering the shortage of french immersion teachers in your province, would you say that your university is playing an active role in easing this shortage?

- No
- Yes

If so, list briefly your university's current initiatives to help reduce the teacher shortage in your province.

Q.22 – Considering the shortage of French Immersion teachers in your province, in what way(s) does your university wish to contribute to the solution in the coming year? Check all that apply to you.

- Increase the number of students enrolled in education programs.
- Implement measures to increase graduation rates.
- Innovate in our academic pathway offerings for the education program (e.g. accelerated courses, part-time, etc.).
- Offer courses that are adapted or specific to the needs of particular clientele (e.g., a refresher course for recent immigrants, a credit course for students enrolled in a first bachelor's degree, etc.).
- Offer flexibility to students with precarious family or financial situations.
- Identify funding sources to provide scholarships to be awarded during long internships.
- Other (please specify).

Q.23 - For the 2023-2024 academic year, will you receive additional funding from your ministry to enhance your Bachelor of Education program (more available seats, more resources, student support, scholarships, etc.)?

- No
- Yes
- I don't know

Add a comment if you wish.

Thank you

Q.24 – The survey is complete. If you have any other comments, please share them below.

Thank you for your precious participation in our survey. For any questions, please write to xx@acpi.ca.

ANNEX B

List of universities surveyed

1. Vancouver University
2. Simon Fraser University
3. Fraser Valley University
4. Victoria University
5. University of Calgary
6. University of Alberta
7. University of Regina
8. Cité francophone de l'Université de Régina
9. University of Saskatchewan
10. Université Saint-Boniface
11. University of Manitoba
12. University of Winnipeg
13. Brandon University
14. University of Ottawa
15. Queen's University
16. Université Ontario Français
17. Brock University
18. Lakehead University
19. Laurentian University
20. Nippissing University
21. University of Toronto
22. Trent University
23. Tindale University
24. University of Waterloo

25. Western University
26. Wilfrid-Laurier University
27. University of Windsor
28. York University
29. Université Laval
30. Université du Québec à Montréal
31. Université de Montréal
32. McGill University
33. Université Sainte-Anne
34. St-Francis-Xavier University
35. Université de Moncton
36. St-Thomas University
37. University of New Brunswick
38. Crandall University
39. University of PEI
40. Memorial University