

# Executive summary

## STRATEGIC REVIEW AND SURVEY REPORT

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

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### About

This strategic review, carried out with the collaboration 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. It also proposes concrete solutions for expanding the pipeline of new French immersion teachers in each province and territory. The strategic review was conducted by Marie-France Gaumont on behalf of ACPI, with financial support from the Official Languages Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

### Our goals

At a time when the entire country is grappling with a shortage of qualified French Immersion (FI) teachers, the main objective of this survey is to identify the issues related to the recruitment of students to university education programs with a view to increasing the number of new FSL teachers. 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 FSL 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.

### Obstacles and solutions

The survey offers revealing insights into the barriers faced by faculties of education in their efforts to recruit and retain students, while identifying their current and future contribution to easing the shortage. From these six findings, 20 factors were identified as barriers to student recruitment in education programs leading to a career in French immersion teaching. The complexity and multi-faceted nature of university education programs leading to a career in teaching FLS and French immersion is clearly demonstrated by all of these barriers. In this strategic review, ACPI proposes solutions to increase access to teaching career programs in faculties of education in Canada.

### What's next?

ACPI encourages universities, the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, and other education stakeholders to carefully consider the recommendations presented in this strategic review. Each of us has a significant role to play in addressing the issues identified, and it is important to use a collaborative approach to implement solutions that can reduce the impact of the shortage of qualified FSL teachers across the country. By working together, we can overcome current challenges and ensure a bright future for FSL instruction in Canada.

## FINDING #1



Education faculties are struggling to meet the demand for qualified teachers for French immersion programs.

### 1. Increasing number of temporary teaching permits

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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

### 2. Too few new education graduates

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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...).

### 3. Highly competitive recruitment

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

### 4. Universities' level of commitment

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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



There is no Canada-wide trend in enrolment rates in education and French as a second language teacher training programs.

### 5. Three enrolment trends

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

### 6. Limited spaces... or not

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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).

### 7. Loss of interest in the teaching profession and other constraints

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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



### Education faculties suffer from a lack of financial and human resources.

#### 8. Wrong targets

##### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

#### 9. Overextended recruitment team

##### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

#### 10. Limited financial resources

##### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

#### 11. Limited recruitment resources

##### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

## FINDING #4



### Program administrative requirements are barriers to enrolment and can lead to dropout.

#### 12. Programs vary widely

##### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

#### 13. Conflicting information and navigation challenges

##### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

#### 14. Duplication of FSL teaching programs

##### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

## FINDING #5



There are few mitigating measures in place.

### 15. Very long studies

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

### 16. Language insecurity

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

### 17. Assessment of French language proficiency

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

## FINDING #6



Prospective teachers are dropping out before graduation or transitioning out of the profession.

### 18. Program drop-outs

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

### 19. Intention to become or remain a teacher

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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...).

### 20. Teacher mobility

#### SOLUTIONS

- 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.

[To consult the full Strategic review and survey report on issues related to recruitment in university education programs and possible solutions to increase the pool of new FSL teachers, click her.](#)

