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Supporting Growth and Achieving Excellence in French Second Language Education in Ontario: Next Steps

Mississauga -- On Monday, February 6, 2017, The Globe & Mail ran a front page article on the supply and recruitment of French Second Language (FSL) teachers. In Ontario, French Immersion has been growing at an average rate 5.7 percent annually for the last 10 years, with strong support from parents, our Ministry of Education, and most local school boards.

"French Immersion is the most efficient and effective way for kids to learn French as a Second Language. Parents know it, volumes of research show it, and the Canadian public supports expanding it. We call on our provincial government, school boards, universities, and teacher organizations to come together to ensure a continued supply of qualified and proficient French teachers to support 'Achieving Excellence' in our schools" said Mary Cruden, CPF Ontario President.

Now is the time to check that the pipeline is filling with enough qualified French teachers to support continued growth in immersion. The Ontario College of Teachers reports that, after years of surplus, we are nearing the point where every graduating FSL teacher will have full-time employment. However, we do not have province-wide data on current and projected needs or on the effectiveness of recruitment and retention efforts.

Ontario is working through the challenges of moving from the one-year Bachelor of Education program to the two-year program, as well as Regulation 274 which changed hiring practices. Recently, the Ministry clarified that if school boards fulfill their obligations under Regulation 274 and they still have unfilled teaching positions, they can hire directly to fill them. This will make recruiting within Ontario and in French-speaking parts of Canada and the world much more effective.

CPF Ontario calls on decision makers and stakeholders to gather and share the data specific to the demand, supply, recruitment, and retention of French teachers and to take action to support our children in effective, high-quality, fully-staffed FSL programs across Ontario.

We thank The Globe and Mail for alerting young Francophiles and Francophones to the many great opportunities awaiting them at Ontario schools as FSL teachers.

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