

# Online Submission Form

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This is an exciting time in education in Ontario. We have spent the last decade working with our education partners to create an education system that is recognized as one of the greatest around the world. Our task now is not to settle for great, but instead to continue striving for excellence.

One of the most significant challenges and opportunities before us is how to best prepare our students for a rapidly changing, technology-driven, globalized world. To do so, we need to broaden our view of student achievement to include even greater emphasis on higher-order skills – such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity and entrepreneurship. These are skills that are necessary for developing global citizens who bring the competencies and qualities that employers of tomorrow are looking for, and that our children will need to thrive.

Working with a diverse group of thinkers, we can build an updated vision for the future of education in Ontario that will guide us in our journey.

Thank you for taking the time to be a part of this consultation, and for your interest in education in Ontario. Your thoughtful consideration and answers to these questions will help to create a new vision for the future of education in Ontario.

**Deadline for all submissions is November 30, 2013.**

About yourself:

*I am submitting on behalf of an institution / organization / company etc.*

Name of organization (required)

*Canadian Parents for French-Ontario*

Description of organization (optional)

*Canadian Parents for French is the national network of volunteers which values French as an integral part of Canada and which is dedicated to the promotion and creation of French-second-language learning opportunities for young Canadians. Our members across Ontario organize local activities to support learning French and our Ontario branch is the parent voice in French Second Language Education. We use research-based evidence to encourage best practices in language teaching, learning and programming. We are funded by Canadian Heritage and we receive project grants from the Ministry of Education.*

What are the skills, knowledge and characteristics students need to succeed after they have completed school, and how do we better support all learners in their development? (1000 word-limit)

*Students need the opportunity to become bilingual in both official languages, English and French.*

*Here's what learning French in an effective, high quality program does:*

*It improves cognition, executive function, critical thinking skills, conflict resolution skills and resilience; increases employment opportunities; gives Alzheimer related health benefits; allows for full participation in Canadian public and cultural life; and it helps our students keep pace with competing students, like those in Finland, Singapore and beyond where being proficient in two languages is the norm.*

*We can support all learners in their development by providing, promoting and supporting French immersion, extended French, intensive Core French and Core French to grade 12 graduation in every part of Ontario. We have a vast collection of research based best practices developed Dr. Sharon Lapkin, Dr. Fred Genesee and Dr. Katy Arnett, to name but a few, but they have not been mobilized and fully realized by our district school boards. In the last ten years, brain research by Dr. Ellen Bialystock and many others is showing that learning an additional language enhances executive function, now considered a key factor in student success.*

*Furthermore, we can create a continuum in language learning into post-secondary and build in an incentive for continuing in French to grade 12 by requiring a language credit for all undergraduates.*

*We can support learners and their parents in making informed choices about French programs by using the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) to set transparent goals for grade 12 proficiency outcomes. The CEFR is the tool selected by the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada that describes the development of language proficiency and breaks down the areas of competence: listening, reading, writing, spoken interaction and spoken production.*

What does student well-being mean to you, and what is the role of the school in supporting it? (1000 word-limit)

*(No response)*

From your perspective, what further opportunities exist to close gaps and increase equity to support all children and students in reaching their full potential? (1000 word-limit)

*To close gaps and increase equity, we must provide special education support in French Second Language (FSL) programs that is on par with English programs, including tools for doing diagnostic assessments with French immersion and extended students. We must also stop exempting English language learners from French classes. English language learners have an advantage in learning French that has been explored by Dr. Callie Mady and they also need access to the benefits that are extended to Anglophone students. The recent Ministry publication 'Framework for FSL in Ontario' states the benefits of learning French as a second language should be given to all students. Now, it is time to ensure that this happens in our local schools.*

*Professional development needs to be provided to teachers of French as a second language teachers, principals, support team members (educational psychologists, special education specialist teachers) and English teachers to share information on the benefits of additional language learning and how to implement supports for student success in learning French.*

How does the education system need to evolve as a result of changes to child care and the implementation of full-day kindergarten? (1000 word-limit)

*Ontario needs to convene new working groups with stakeholders to address the remaining and on-going challenges before they become calcified. Congregated programs like French immersion have not yet had their particular needs assessed. The extended day and bussing are not working in concert to support families and a pool of ECEs with French proficiency is not in place at the approximately 30 boards who offer immersion in kindergarten.*

What more can we all do to keep students engaged, foster their curiosity and creativity, and help them develop a love of life-long learning? (1000 word-limit)

*We need to strengthen and build our use of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This is a bench marking tool for language learning that describes language proficiency with the underlying philosophy that learning a language is on a life-long continuum. There is a corresponding language portfolio which gives learners ownership of their learning and a sense of pride in accomplishments along the life-long continuum. We need to bring these tools to the attention of students and parents, not just teachers, and start using them across Ontario. French is a Canadian language and an international language and we need to have our language learners join with others around the globe who are using these tools.*

## How can we use technology more effectively in teaching and learning? (1000 word-limit)

*The tools available to us to enhance French language learning are not universally accessible and used across the province. The primary example is that the Ministry pays for school boards to access resources such as Learning 360 but does not support nor provide access to the provincially funded Télé Français Ontario (TFO) for English language school boards. Every student in an English language board studies French for at least 6 years and they should have full access to current video content and teacher guides, made in Ontario in French.*

*Professional development and provincial licensing is needed in the area of supporting French language learners with technology in order to ensure equity and the success of all students. Current versions of language labs are not available to French teachers across the province and could greatly enhance opportunities for speaking and comprehension.*

## In summary, what are the various opportunities for partnership that can enhance the student experience, and how can they benefit parents, educators and our partners too? (1000 word-limit)

*Ontario has the opportunity to partner with exchange organizations to provide secondary schools credits for these experiences which greatly enhance proficiency and learner confidence by providing authentic language learning. Community partnerships with the Ministry need to be in place to support our French language learners. The English language boards and English language sections in the Ministry have never fully engaged with our Franco-Ontarian population and educators in the French language system. In doing so would be able to improve opportunities for French language learners in employment oriented programming like high skills specialist majors in areas like tourism and early childhood education. We could also partner with a lot less red tape with community based organizations to increase access to summer school secondary credits, particularly in the arts in French.*

## Additional Comments

*(No response)*

Thank you for taking the time to help us build the next phase of Ontario's Education Strategy.