



November 1, 2017

MEDIA RELEASE

CPF Ontario Welcomes Education Minister's Commitment to Meet Growing Demand for FSL Teachers

Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) today applauded the commitment made by the province's Education Minister, the Honourable Mitzie Hunter, to support learning in French in Ontario by ensuring an adequate and growing supply of French as a Second Language (FSL) teachers in English school boards as well as French teachers in French school boards.

In her presentation to an audience of parents, educators and administrators at Canadian Parents for French (Ontario)'s FSL Symposium in Mississauga on Saturday, October 28, Ms. Hunter announced a new collaborative approach to recruitment, supply, and retention of French teachers which will involve the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, as well as provincial agencies involved in Francophone immigration. Actions will include promotion and refinements to FSL teaching career paths and support for FSL teachers as well as broad outreach that will look not just to human resources within Canada but also internationally as well.

In response to a delegate's question, the Minister cautioned school boards stating: "Let's inform them of what was announced here today so they are aware of the steps being taken by the Ministry to address the short-term crisis in French-language teacher supply ...so that they don't make a decision that they don't have to make because there is some relief that will be forthcoming".

President of Canadian Parents for French (Ontario), Mary Cruden, said at the CPF symposium: "CPF is committed to supporting the Ministry and to working with all education stakeholders to ensure access to quality FSL programs, including the French immersion program for all students in Ontario".

French immersion has experienced a 5.7 percent average annual growth rate for eleven consecutive years in Ontario. Parents understand the cognitive, social, cultural, and employment benefits of becoming proficient in French. In addition, 49 percent of families in the Greater Toronto Area speak neither English nor French at home. "Newcomers are enrolling in FSL programs as an opportunity to embrace official language bilingualism unique to the Canadian identity" added Ms. Cruden.

Key Actions that were shared by the Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education, in her remarks to the delegates of the CPF Symposium on French Second Language Education held in Mississauga on October 28, 2017 (recorded live with permission from the Office of the Minister of Education):

"I am pleased to share with you the immediate steps we will be taking in the coming days and months to boost recruitment of new French teachers:

- The Ministry is developing a provincial communications strategy highlighting the job opportunities for aspiring French teachers in Ontario.

- To support this plan we will also work with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to develop information campaigns that inform internationally educated teachers about the opportunities for teaching in Ontario.
- Our government will create bridging programs to help newcomers adjust and prepare for teaching in Ontario, and mentorship opportunities to help them excel once in our Ontario schools.
- The Ministry will work with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) to streamline evaluation of credentials for internationally educated francophone teachers.
- We are also working collaboratively with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Deans of Education in our universities to expedite the development and delivery of flexible teacher education models that will increase access to the profession for mature students and students who do not live in close proximity to a Faculty of Education.
- In addition, we will work with the Deans of the Faculties of Education on how to better align candidates with demand, so we can be more focused on priority areas such as French.
- For our existing teachers, we will be piloting a program that will provide direct financial support if they take Advanced Qualifications and/or Advanced Basic Qualifications courses in priority areas, such as French.
- To help us keep ahead of these challenges, we will also create a new supply and demand forecasting model over the coming months, to be more responsive to emerging teacher supply issues in the future.
- Finally, to better improve collaboration within the education system, we will be establishing a new French as a Second Language Teacher Supply Working Group. The working group is being created to foster greater collaboration within the system and to inform the next steps. I am thrilled to share with you that the Canadian Parents for French as a Second Language will have a seat at that table.
- To summarize, I want you know that we heard you, stress that this is a top priority for me and for Minister Matthews at Advanced Education, and assure you that we continue to work hard to reach the goals articulated in the French-as-a-Second-Language Framework.”

The Minister’s full speech and the ensuing question and answer session from the audience is featured on CPF Ontario’s website at on.cpf.ca.

Canadian Parents for French is a nationwide, research-informed, volunteer organization that champions the opportunity to learn and use French for all those who call Canada home.

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