



## **20,000 Students Participate in CPF Ontario's 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual French Public-Speaking Event while Canada Celebrates 50 Years of French Immersion**

Media Advisory

*For Immediate Release*

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**Mississauga** - Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) will host the provincial finals of its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual French public-speaking event, **Concours et festival d'art oratoire**, on **Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>** at York University's Glendon College in Toronto.

This year marks a milestone, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of French Immersion in Canada. In 1969, the Official Languages Act made English and French the official languages of Canada. Today, in Ontario, there are close to **985,000** students enrolled in either French Immersion, Extended French or Core French in 60 English school boards.

An estimated 20,000 Ontario students from the Core, Extended, French Immersion and Francophone categories participated at the classroom, school, and school board level over the past four months. On May 14<sup>th</sup> students in Grades 4-8 will present their winning speeches in the morning, and the secondary school finalists will compete for top prizes in the afternoon. The finalists in Grades 11 and 12 will go on to represent Ontario at the CPF National Concours d'art oratoire held on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in Ottawa, competing for scholarships to various Canadian universities valued at over \$150,000.

"Our **Concours et festival d'art oratoire** provides Ontario students with the opportunity to develop and use their oral French skills, the key component on their journey to bilingualism in both official languages," said Mary Cruden, President of Canadian Parents for French (Ontario). "The students give their speeches effectively and with passion—in a way that inspires us all and reminds us to celebrate their accomplishments and their commitment to learning and using French," concluded Cruden.

**Opening Ceremony:** 9:00am, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016, York Hall, Glendon College, 2275 Bayview Ave. We invite you to attend as a journalist to report on the event.

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*Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) is the Ontario branch of a nationwide, research-informed, volunteer organization that champions the opportunity to learn and use French for all those who call Canada home*

*Backgrounder:*

This year marks the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the **Concours et festival d'art oratoire**, the largest annual French public-speaking event for students in Grades 4 to 12 studying French Second Language (FSL) programs in Ontario schools.

Enrolment in the French Immersion (FI) program has enjoyed a 5.6 percent average annual growth rate for nine consecutive years. In 2013-2014, the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) reported record high enrolment in French Immersion (187,741 students) and Extended French (32,917 students) with the majority of students learning French in the Core French program (763,970 students).

According to the 2011 Federal Census, of the 13.4 million people living in Ontario 11 percent, or 1,470,260, self-identify as having knowledge of both French & English<sup>1</sup>.

*Sources: 1 Statistics Canada. Population by knowledge of official languages, Ontario, 2011*