

# FSL for School Administrators FROM AWARENESS to ACTION

*From Awareness to Action* is a professional learning publication to support school administrators in the strengthening of French as a Second Language.

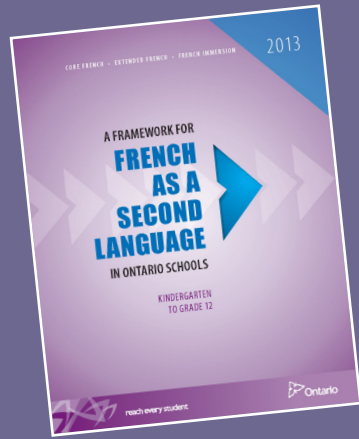


## ISSUE 1

## A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12

### IN THIS ISSUE

The focus of this issue is to give a broad overview of the recently released document, *A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (“the Framework”), through the lens of the school administrator.



### What led to the development of a framework for FSL?

FSL stakeholders representing school boards, universities, parents, and FSL organizations came together for the first time in 2008 to identify elements of a vision for FSL. This created a momentum to develop a framework that would be a call to action to strengthen FSL.

The Framework represents a shared vision for FSL which articulates goals and guiding principles. It aligns FSL initiatives with other ministry initiatives and prompts reflective practice in FSL by all stakeholders. Ultimately, the Framework provides a mechanism to sustain the current momentum over the next 10 years.

### What are the key components of the Framework?

#### The vision for FSL:

Students in English-language school boards have the confidence and ability to use French effectively in their daily lives.

Three concrete goals support the vision:

- Goal #1:** Increase student confidence, proficiency, and achievement in FSL
- Goal #2:** Increase the percentage of students studying FSL until graduation
- Goal #3:** Increase student, educator, parent, and community engagement in FSL

The first goal reminds us of three essential elements of second-language acquisition. Learning an additional language is a lifelong journey, as reflected in the second goal. Bearing this in mind, it is important to recognize that in order to remember a language, a certain level of proficiency is required. The third goal recognizes that the engagement of all stakeholders is vital to the success of FSL programs.

**“Students who use their bilingual skills have been shown to develop both cognitive flexibility and divergent thinking.”**

Cummins (2001), “The Influence of Bilingualism on Cognitive Growth: A Synthesis of Research Findings and Explanatory Hypotheses.” In Colin Baker and Nancy H. Hornberger, eds., *An Introductory Reader to the Writings of Jim Cummins*.

**“School leaders are pivotal to the development of excellent teaching, excellent schools and ultimately, enhanced student achievement and well-being.”**

Ontario Ministry of Education (2013), *The K–12 School Effectiveness Framework (2013)*, p. 5

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Woven throughout the document, the Framework identifies six guiding principles which provide a strong foundation for thinking strategically about FSL in Ontario. **The visual overview on p. 12 of the Framework** is a useful tool for administrators to refer to when helping parents, teachers, and students to understand these enduring and overarching statements.

The Framework presents suggested actions under six strategic focus areas to support the attainment of the provincial goals for FSL. This is not a checklist of actions to complete, but is intended to guide thinking and spark discussion on how to strengthen FSL for the benefit of students.

## WHAT'S MY ROLE?

### What does this document mean to me as a principal/vice-principal?

School leaders are pivotal in implementing change. Their commitment to the three goals of the Framework will transform FSL teaching and learning. This document supports principals in working with stakeholders to achieve these goals.

For example, focus area 3, “Strengthening Programming to Improve Achievement in FSL,” suggests the following transformative actions:

- One suggested action is to explore the use of flexible timetabling and scheduling to provide students with a wider range of options and to avoid conflicts with mandatory courses, as well as to remind students that they may count up to three FSL credits towards their 18 compulsory credits. Having an ongoing, open dialogue with guidance departments with regard to French might avoid substitutions that may occur without consideration of the many benefits of second-language learning.
- Another action to encourage and promote French-language proficiency is the access to authentic tasks, especially with an emphasis on oral communication.

Additionally, the Framework contains a wealth of information that can assist principals and vice-principals when working with parents, such as the **Question and Answer section** and the **Review of Current Research section**, including findings specifically related to English Language Learners and to FSL students with special education needs.

Overall, this document assists school administrators in supporting educators and their students in order to realize the vision for FSL.

**“In a competitive job market and a globalized world, everyone’s looking for qualities to help them stand out from the pack. While it’s no small feat to learn another language, it can reap huge rewards down the road.”**

V. Herry-Saint-Onge (2012), “Bilingual Benefits: Is it worth the trouble of learning French anymore?” *Huffington Post Canada*



### One article to read, one quote to consider, one link to click...

1. Véronique Herry-Saint-Onge (2012), “**Bilingual Benefits: Is it worth the trouble of learning French anymore?**” *Huffington Post Canada*. An article that includes a video which could be shared with parents, especially those whose children are considering changing programs.  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/07/04/bilingual-benefits\\_n\\_1628679.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/07/04/bilingual-benefits_n_1628679.html)
2. “**Companies want to hire more bilingual workers and we can’t find them**” It Pays to Be Bilingual in Canada, *The Hamilton Spectator*, January 12, 2004
3. **Framework** document.  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/frameworkFLS.pdf>