

# Promoting French as a Second Language



## Introduction

The importance of FSL in our classrooms, our schools and our communities can be clearly seen in the three goals set out by the Ministry of Education in [\*A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools\*](#) (p. 9), hereafter referred to as A Framework for FSL, K-12:

**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.**

In Ontario, Core French is mandatory for all students in Grades 4 to 8. In this module, however, we will focus on student participation in the two FSL programs school boards have the option of providing; French Immersion and Extended French. Because participation in these programs is optional, the effective promotion of them to both parents and students is particularly important. However, the various tools and strategies presented in this module can be applied to any of the three ministry-recognized FSL programs at any grade level to raise awareness of the benefits of studying in both of Canada's official languages.

The first time parents or guardians have the option of enrolling their children in FSL programs other than Core French comes with the opportunity for enrolment in a French Immersion or Extended French program. This is a big decision which can often be rather daunting. The more information that we can provide

to parents highlighting the benefits of a French Immersion or an Extended French program, the more confident parents will feel that they have made the right decision for their child. Making parents aware of these programs, and the benefits they offer, can be approached in many different ways. Regardless of the board-specific entry point into the program, the value of learning a second or what may even be a third or fourth language has to be communicated loud and clear. More information about the value of learning a second language may be found in the module entitled [\*The Importance of French as a Second Language.\*](#)

It is essential to highlight the significant personal, social, and academic benefits that FSL programs provide so that young people not only see the value of second language learning, but also see FSL programs as providing a competitive advantage in the 21st century marketplace. This information is very important to relay to high school students and their parents as they make decisions regarding course selection for Grades 10 to 12. Since participation in FSL is considered optional once one high school credit has been earned, there is a particularly important need to promote FSL in the years leading up to, and including, Grade 9. Indeed, actively and systematically promoting the advantages of learning French from Grade 4 onwards can have a hugely positive effect on maintaining student enrolment in FSL programs throughout their school careers.

**AMÉLIORE TES COMPÉTENCES – DEVIENS BILINGUE POUR LA VIE!**  
Les programmes de français langue seconde sont conçus en modules et les compétences s'accumulent jusqu'à 12<sup>e</sup> année.  
À mesure que le français devient plus facile, le bilinguisme profite.

**ACCROIS TES CHANCES DE PROGRAMME DE TRAVAIL EN ANGLAIS**  
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**ENRICHIS TES APTEITUDES EN ANGLAIS**  
Étudier du français améliore la grammaire et les compétences en lecture qui s'appliquent aussi à l'anglais!

**12 BONNES RAISONS DE POURSUIVRE L'ÉTUDE DU FRANÇAIS JUSQU'EN 12<sup>e</sup> ANNÉE**

Canada | Ontario | www.cpfont.on.ca | CPF Canadian Parents for French Ontario

**INCREASE YOUR PROFICIENCY – BECOME BILINGUAL FOR LIFE!**  
French second language programs are designed as building blocks with the highest proficiency outcome expected in Grade 12.  
As French becomes second nature you will perceive yourself as bilingual!

**ENHANCE YOUR CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND WORK PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES**  
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**SHARPEN YOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS**  
The study of French advances grammar and writing skills which are transferable to the English language!

**12 GREAT REASONS TO STAY IN FRENCH TO GRADE 12**

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## What are the Benefits of Learning French as a Second Language?

The many benefits of learning a second language remain one of the biggest selling points to influence students and parents when making the choice to continue in FSL. It is the responsibility of administrators and educators to communicate the value of all FSL programs, Core, Immersion and Extended, any of which can help students develop their proficiency in French. These benefits are presented in various ways in a number of different documents. These include:

- [\*The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core, Grades 4-8; Extended, Grades 4-8; Immersion, Grades 1-8, \(revised\) 2013\*](#) (pgs. 6, 7);

- [\*The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core French, Extended French and French Immersion, Grades 9-12, \(revised\) 2014\*](#) (pgs. 6, 7);
- [\*A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, K-12\*](#) (pgs. 3, 4, 24, 25);
- [\*The Importance of French as a Second Language\*](#)
- The website of the [\*Ontario branch of Canadian Parents for French\*](#) has a multitude of resources to support FSL students and their families. These include answers to frequently asked questions such as “Why Learn French?” and “What are the benefits of learning an additional language?” which can be found at <http://on.cpf.ca/resources/faq>;
- Free bilingual pamphlets and posters entitled “I’m Learning French Because” are also available from Canadian Parents for French at <http://cpf.ca/en/resources/resource-order-form>;
- [\*French for the Future\*](#) has also created “Why Learn FRENCH” posters that are available free of charge in both English and French at <http://www.french-future.org/fr/fr/educateurs-et-parents/affiches>.

**WHY LEARN FRENCH?** Le français pour l'avenir / French for the Future. Two languages... twice the opportunity!

200 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE WORLD UNDERSTAND, SPEAK, READ OR WRITE FRENCH • FRENCH IS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF 29 COUNTRIES • FRENCH IS THE MOST WIDELY TAUGHT SECOND LANGUAGE AFTER ENGLISH • FRENCH IS SPOKEN IN OVER 43 COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD • FRENCH IS THE 9TH MOST WIDELY SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN THE WORLD • SPEAKING A NEW LANGUAGE HELPS YOU TO GET TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND ANOTHER CULTURE • FRENCH IS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION • FRENCH IS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE RED CROSS • FRENCH RESTAURANT MENUS WILL BE EASIER TO DECODE • FRENCH IS ONE OF THE TWO OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES • FRENCH IS ONE OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, NATO AND UNESCO • TO BE ABLE TO SAY MORE THAN “OÙ SONT LES TOILETTES SVP ?” • IN CANADA, FRENCH IS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IN NEW BRUNSWICK, QUEBEC, THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, THE YUKON AND NUNAVUT • FRENCH IS A MAJOR LANGUAGE OF HIGH TECH AND BUSINESS IN THE WORLD • FRENCH OPENS DOORS TO CAREERS IN TEACHING, BUSINESS, DIPLOMACY, RESEARCH, TRANSLATION, INTERPRETATION, TRAVEL, AND MORE • FRENCH IS SPOKEN IN 2 OF THE G8 COUNTRIES • IF YOU BUMP INTO JOHNNY DEPP OR SIDNEY CROSBY, YOU COULD HAVE A CONVERSATION IN FRENCH • THERE ARE WELL OVER 33 MILLION FRENCH-SPEAKERS IN THE AMERICAS • OVER 100 MILLION STUDENTS IN THE WORLD ARE LEARNING FRENCH • LEARNING ANOTHER LANGUAGE CAN HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND YOUR OWN • FRENCH IS THE LINGUA FRANCA OF ART, CUISINE, DANCE, AND FASHION • SPEAKING FRENCH ENHANCES YOUR TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES • THE NUMBER OF FRENCH-SPEAKERS HAS TRIPLED IN THE LAST 50 YEARS • FRENCH IS THE ONLY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH TAUGHT IN EVERY SINGLE COUNTRY IN THE WORLD • THERE ARE OVER 700 FRENCH-LANGUAGE UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD • FRENCH GIVES ACCESS TO A HUGE NUMBER OF MOVIES, BOOKS, AND WEBSITES IN THEIR ORIGINAL LANGUAGE • KNOWING ANOTHER LANGUAGE LOOKS IMPRESSIVE ON A RESUME • FRENCH-SPEAKING AFRICA REPRESENTS AN AREA LARGER THAN THE USA • MANY SCHOLARSHIPS ARE OFFERED TO BILINGUAL STUDENTS • FRENCH IS THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE • SALARIES ARE HIGHER FOR BILINGUAL WORKERS THAN THEY ARE FOR UNILINGUAL WORKERS

[www.french-future.org](http://www.french-future.org)

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### Finding information on the benefits of FSL:

Any Internet search engine will provide links to a plethora of websites offering further materials outlining the benefits of FSL. The challenge to the teacher is to select the most appropriate materials for the target audience and present them as effectively as possible. In effect, we have to become sales people for the French language and present its benefits in as enthusiastic, knowledgeable and persuasive a way as possible. Searching YouTube for “Why Learn French?” can also provide some useful video clips.

### Strategies for Promoting the Core French, French Immersion or Extended French Programs in Elementary Schools

As we know, many parents or guardians struggle in making the decision to enroll their child in a French Immersion or Extended French program. However, for various reasons, more and more families are choosing these programs for their children to study both of Canada’s official languages. The growth of these programs in Ontario, particularly in recent years, has been remarkable as more and more families are becoming aware of the benefits they offer. For this trend to continue, it is essential that these programs be promoted in our communities so that all families are aware of the benefits of FSL and can make informed decisions for their children. At the same time, the strategies used to promote the advantages of learning French are equally applicable to the Core French program and, therefore, are appropriate for all students of FSL.

Furthermore, it may well be necessary to change the perceptions of French in the eyes of the parents and guardians who, at this stage, will be the principal decision-makers. Adults who do not look upon FSL favourably and, consequently, do not value it as an option for their children, will need to be persuaded that FSL is not only relevant and beneficial to the 21st century learner, but that it is also taught very differently nowadays compared to 20 years ago. To this end, there are a number of strategies that could be used to promote all French programs in elementary schools. These include:

**Arguably our most powerful strategy is the creation of a positive classroom atmosphere which prioritizes and celebrates the success and achievement of each student and gives them the opportunity and confidence to communicate and interact in French.**

A Guide to Reflective Practice for Core French Teachers: Positive Learning Environment is available for download at <http://www.curriculum.org/fsl/projects/a-guide-to-reflective-practice-for-core-french-teachers>

- promoting French Immersion to parents and guardians of children currently in kindergarten, (posters in all feeder schools, pamphlets or letters home to all JK/SK students, advertisements in local newspapers, promotional materials in public libraries, information evenings, school open houses and classroom visits);
- ensuring that both French Immersion and Extended French are seen as inclusive programs which recognize that ALL students can benefit from learning a second language. As stated in *The Revised 2013-2014 FSL Curricula, elementary* (p. 31) and *secondary* (p. 35) state “to be effective, instruction must be based on the belief that all students can be successful and that learning French is important and valuable for all students.” Too often in the past, these programs have been perceived as rather elitist and not always welcoming to students who have yet to show above average ability in previous grades or who are also learning English as a Second Language (ESL). In fact, more and more research is pointing towards the benefits of FSL for all students regardless of ability, (*The State of French-Second-Language Education in Canada 2012: Academically Challenged Students and FSL Programs* and *A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools* (p. 10), “FSL programs are for all students”). Furthermore, English Language Learners (ELLs) are often very successful in learning French as an additional language because they are able to apply the strategies they’ve been using for learning ESL. If this message can be successfully conveyed, our potential clientele could be significantly

increased. More information about FSL programs for all students may be found in the Inclusivity and Students with [Inclusivity and Students with Special Education Needs](#) module;

- raising the profile of FSL within the school and the community through a French section on board/school/class websites and in newsletters, a French bulletin board in a high visibility area, French or bilingual PA announcements, student created French podcasts;
- celebrating French language and culture within the school and the community through extra-curricular activities such as French clubs, cafés, plays, movie nights, concerts, talent shows, festivals, visits to local French restaurants, and other suitable activities;
- making use of testimonials from older Core French, French Immersion or Extended French students, either as part of a live presentation or a promotional video;
- [The FSL Homework Toolbox](#) also offers support to students of FSL and their families, particularly those in French Immersion programs.

- using technology such as social media to communicate the value of FSL programs and promote key events and dates;
- making use of community partners such as local French restaurants, clubs, or organizations;
- making sure that families are aware of the history of French Immersion and Extended French in Ontario, their effectiveness over the years and the continued support of the local school board for these programs in the future;
- working with colleagues in high school guidance departments to promote the benefits of FSL during the Grade 8-9 transition meetings;
- making it clear to families that the support and information they will require once enrolled will be readily available on an ongoing basis. The Ontario branch of Canadian Parents for French has created a number of “Tip Sheets” to support parents. These can be downloaded free of charge from [Canadian Parents for French](#);
- promoting extra-curricular opportunities such as French summer camps and student exchange programs;

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**SUPPORT**

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**  
Teachers know that most parents don't understand French. The French immersion program was designed for children of English-speaking parents. If you don't speak French, you can still make your child's French-language experience positive.

Be supportive and enthusiastic. Research shows that students whose parents have positive attitudes toward French do better in immersion programs.

Keep in mind that skills learned in English are transferred to French. Read to your children in English, encourage them to write in English, and introduce word games like crossword puzzles, word searches, and Scrabble.

Help your child to use French outside of the classroom: watch French TV, borrow or buy French books and videos, and choose activities in French like plays, interest courses, and sport activities.

**HOW WE CAN HELP**  
CPF was established in 1977 by a group of parents whose primary goal was to promote and create French-second-language learning opportunities for young Canadians. Currently more than 25,000 are members of about 185 community-level Chapters, supported by 11 provincial/territorial Branches and a National office. **CPF...**

Sponsors summer camps, special programs, contests and activities for French-second-language students designed to support their French education.



**CPF Canadian Parents for French**

Provides information on where to find support materials for use in the home, including French books, educational games, computer software and Internet sites.

Offers *Coin des jeunes* (Children's Corner)—an online treasure chest of information, games and activities for children and teens.

Provides information and resources for parents and students at all stages: preschool, elementary, high school and university/college.

For more resources/information see [www.cpf.ca](http://www.cpf.ca)

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Turnbull M., Hart D., Lapkin S. (2000). French Immersion Students' Performance on Grade 3 Provincial Tests: Potential Impacts of Program Design. *Canadian Modern Language Review* 58(1), 9-26; Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press.

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**CPF Canadian Parents for French**

I want my *CHILD* to be ...  
a creative **THINKER**  
an excellent **COMMUNICATOR**  
ready to **SUCCEED**  
in tomorrow's world

Give your child the advantages that come with being bilingual. Enrol your child in **FRENCH IMMERSION.**




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## Strategies for Promoting FSL in Secondary Schools

When studying FSL ceases to be mandatory once a secondary credit has been acquired, many students make the decision to opt out of French completely. This could be due to a number of factors such as a perceived lack of success on the part of the student, pressure from home to focus on other subject areas, or perhaps a result of limited options in the course selection process. There is also the belief that French may be of limited or no use in the real world. Whatever the reasons, it is a trend that we need to do everything in our power to reverse. Once again, given that the many benefits of learning a second language are of more immediate value to students at the high school level, the question again becomes how can we promote FSL to increase retention levels in Core French, Extended French and French Immersion programs through to the end of grade 12? In addition to some of the ideas previously mentioned in the elementary school context, there are a number of ways teachers could help make FSL a much more appealing option for high school students looking to add to their marketable skills in the 21st century workplace. These include:

- ensuring that the French and Guidance departments have collaborated to create an informed and engaging presentation for grade 8 students, along with appropriate support materials, to promote FSL courses and pathways in grade 9 and beyond;
- focusing on action-oriented tasks that allow students to communicate and engage in using French in everyday authentic contexts and situations;
- creating a positive classroom atmosphere in which French is seen as relevant to the daily lives of the students and is therefore valued, while student success and achievement are constantly prioritized and celebrated, (see the second module in the [Guide to Reflective Practice for Core French Teachers](#) series on Positive Learning Environment);
- convincing students that developing proficiency in French can be extremely advantageous both in Canada and around the world. [French for the Future](#) is a not-for-profit organization that promotes French to high school students across Canada. One of their many excellent initiatives is “Session Franconnexion”, a mini- conference for students from grades 7 to 12 which can be held at the school or district levels. These events aim to “help students connect the French

learned in the classroom with the real-life benefits of being bilingual” by inviting French-speakers in the community to share how speaking French has opened doors for them professionally. [French for the Future](#) provides further information and a free planning guide on its website at <http://www.french-future.org/en/que-fait-on/sessions-franconnexion>;

- [French for the Future](#) also has video clips and a variety of posters including “FRENCH - A Career Booster” and “Why Learn FRENCH?” which are available in both English and in French.

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- encouraging students to stay in French through the use of promotional materials such as the pamphlet and posters entitled “I’m Staying in French Because”. These are available free of charge from [Canadian Parents for French \(CPF\)](http://cpf.ca/en/resources/resource-order-form) at <http://cpf.ca/en/resources/resource-order-form>;



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- asking FSL students from grades 11 and 12 to give their perspectives on why they chose French to students from grades 8 and 9 who are preparing to make their course selections;
- informing students about what opportunities they will have to continue with their French after high school. [The Canadian Youth for French website](#) features an online “Discover Zone” which presents students looking for post-secondary experiences in French with a many of the options currently available to them. Knowing what is available beyond grade 12 can be a motivating factor for students to stay in French throughout high school. “*Imaginez toutes les portes qui pourraient s’ouvrir...*”;
- identifying a number of organizations which offer opportunities to spend an extended time in a Francophone environment while in high school, either on an exchange program or as part of a work experience initiative. Further

information can be found at [Exchanges Canada](#), [Canadian Educational Exchange Foundation](#), [International Student Exchange](#), [YMCA Summer Work Student Exchange](#), [Society for Educational Visits](#) and Exchanges in Canada and [Explore](#);

- using technology to expand the classroom into the real world. As well as using social media, more and more video conferencing opportunities are opening up enabling us to establish partnerships around the Francophone world, (e.g., [Skype in the Classroom](#));
- promoting events such as the [annual University of Ottawa video contest](#) and the [Concours et festival d’art oratoire](#) which is run jointly by CPF and the Ontario Modern Languages Association (OMLTA). These contests provide excellent opportunities to showcase the talents of French students while, at the same time, inspiring others to use their French in meaningful, creative and exciting ways;
- making French more relevant and appealing to students by integrating cultural aspects of the Francophone world into the FSL classroom. This also provides an authentic, meaningful context for language, and could include such high-interest topics as music, dance, movies, fashion, sports, art, cooking, and travel;
- searching You Tube for video clips of “Celebrities Speaking French”;
- making use of community partners such as francophone clubs, organizations and business people;
- promoting FSL in High School in collaboration with the Guidance Department, (co-planning student/parent information sessions, developing students’ Individual Pathways Plans (IPPs) in accordance with the [Creating Pathways for Success](#) document, providing French Co-op opportunities, and so on).

# What do you need to graduate from high school?

## 18 compulsory credits

Students must earn the following compulsory credits to obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma:

4	credits in English (1 credit per grade)*
3	credits in mathematics (1 credit in Grade 11 or 12)
2	credits in science
1	credit in Canadian history
1	credit in Canadian geography
1	credit in the arts
1	credit in health and physical education
1	credit in French as a second language
0.5	credit in career studies
0.5	credit in civics

In addition, students must complete:

✓	12 optional credits†
✓	40 hours of community involvement activities
✓	the provincial literacy requirement

Plus one credit from each of the following groups:

<b>Group 1:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English or French as a second language**</li> <li>a Native language</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a classical or international language</li> <li>social sciences and the humanities</li> <li>Canadian and world studies</li> <li>guidance and career education</li> <li>cooperative education***</li> </ul>
<b>Group 2:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>health and physical education</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the arts</li> <li>business studies</li> <li>French as a second language**</li> <li>cooperative education***</li> </ul>
<b>Group 3:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>science (Grade 11 or 12)</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>technological education</li> <li>French as a second language**</li> <li>computer studies</li> <li>cooperative education***</li> </ul>

\* A maximum of 3 credits in English as a second language (ESL) or English literacy development (ELD) may be counted towards the 4 compulsory credits in English, but the fourth must be a credit earned for a Grade 12 compulsory English course.

\*\* In groups 1, 2 and 3, a maximum of 2 credits in French as a second language can count as compulsory credits, one from group 1 and one from either group 2 or group 3.

\*\*\* A maximum of 2 credits in cooperative education can count as compulsory credits.

† The 12 optional credits may include up to 4 credits earned through approved dual credit courses.

## Resources

### **Canadian Parents for French**

<http://on.cpf.ca>

### **Canadian Parents for French Advocacy Documents - Students with Special Needs**

<http://on.cpf.ca/research-advocacy/advocacy/advocacy-documents>

### **Curriculum Services Canada (2012), A Guide to Reflective Practice for Core French Teachers, Module 2 - Positive Learning Environment**

<http://www.curriculum.org/fsl/projects/a-guide-to-reflective-practice-for-core-french-teachers>

### **Dicks, Joseph and Kristmanson, Paula Lee (2008). French Immersion: When and Why?**

<http://cpf.ca/en/research-advocacy/research/the-state-of-fsl-education-in-canada>

### **French for the Future**

<http://www.french-future.org>

### **Obadia, A., & Thériault, C. Attrition in French immersion programs: Possible solutions. The Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes, 53 (3), (1997): 506-529**

### **Ontario Ministry of Education (2013). A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12**

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/FLS.html>

### **Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools, Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12**

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/cps/index.html>

### **Ontario Ministry of Education, The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core, Grades 4–8; Extended, Grades 4–8; Immersion, Grades 1–8, (revised) 2013**

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/fsl.html>

### **Ontario Ministry of Education, The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core French, Extended French and French Immersion, Grades 9-12, (revised) 2014**

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[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS\\_FrenchImmersion.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_FrenchImmersion.pdf)

### **Parnell, Rick, Marketing French Immersion in Alberta: A Conceptual Framework**

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/6367767/appe1.pdf>