



NEWS RELEASE

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Strategic Education Agreement

The Government of Canada will put forward the priorities of French-language school boards, their Francophone and Acadian communities and parents during negotiations with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, for federal funding transfers related to minority-language education

Ottawa, September 14, 2017 — After 13 months of sustained efforts, a [Strategic Education Agreement](#) was signed this past July 20 between the Ministry of Canadian Heritage, the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF), the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada and the Commission nationale des parents francophones.

The strategic agreement gives communities a say in the renewal of the Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction. This Protocol sets the rules for federal funding transfers for French first-language education in minority-language schools from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The following priorities were identified in the agreement:

- a. **Consultations:** school boards are to be consulted by the provinces and territories when developing and updating their respective actions plans;
- b. **Consultations:** school boards are also to be consulted when Departments of Education wish to use federal funding for “regular operations in minority-language education”;
- c. **Consultations:** the Government of Canada commits to having discussions with provincial and territorial minority-language school boards in the context of the negotiations of bilateral agreements with each province and territory;
- d. **Accountability:** accountability mechanisms must be improved;
- e. **Recognition** of the role of school boards in all linguistic and cultural aspects of elementary and secondary education;
- f. **Additional costs of French-language education:** the purpose of federal funding is to enable Departments of Education and minority-language school boards to go beyond “regular operations in minority-language education”;
- g. **Creation of a separate protocol:** the drafting of a protocol specific to minority-language education (French-language school boards located outside the province of Quebec).

This strategic agreement is part of the Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction that the Ministry of Canadian Heritage renews every five years with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. This Protocol governs the terms of federal funding transfers for minority-language education.

“The signature of this strategic agreement should allow for the modernization of the operation of federal-provincial agreements surrounding the transfer of federal funds for French first-language education in order to better respect the rights of Francophones”, said Melinda Chartrand, President of the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones.

The strategic agreement signed by the three national organizations and the Minister of Canadian Heritage outlines the priorities of French-language school boards, their communities, and parents as regards federal funding transfers for minority-language education.

The President of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, Jean Johnson, also praised the agreement, adding: “The Government of Canada is committed to working with representatives of our communities while advocating a consultation and transparency-based approach. Furthermore, the federal government has pledged to continue meeting national organizations on a regular basis to discuss their priorities and concerns regarding education.”

For her part, the President of the Commission nationale des parents francophones, Véronique Legault, feels the agreement will benefit both parents and the students attending French-language schools in Canada, owing to the “recognition by the Canadian government, as part of this agreement, of the role of school boards in minority settings in all linguistic and cultural aspects of elementary and secondary education. This is an essential condition if we wish to provide maximum opportunities for our children to flourish in French while building their Francophone identity.”

The new five-year plan on official languages comes into effect in 2018.

The Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF) represents the 28 French school boards in minority settings in Canada. These school boards deliver French-language education to 160,000 students attending some 630 schools.

The Federation of Francophone and Acadian communities of Canada is a national umbrella organization made up of representative Francophone associations in 9 provinces and 3 territories, as well as 8 national organizations. Its role is to defend and promote the rights and interests of Francophones outside Quebec.

The Commission nationale des parents francophones is a non-profit organization whose mission is to bring together, represent and support provincial and territorial organizations while strengthening their ability to support parents in their family environment and community. The CNPF works closely with several national partners involved in education, early childhood and the representation of Canada’s Francophone and Acadian communities.

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