

SPECIFICITY, VITALITY AND ADDED VALUE *of French-language schools*

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES



Bâtir
notre
avenir
au présent

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FOREWORD

As part of the implementation of its strategic plan 2015-2020 titled “*Se définir pour agir*”, the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF) undertook, with its members and partners, a reflection on the concepts that define French-language schools in minority settings. This document represents the culmination of said reflection and proposes a statement of principles on the concepts of SPECIFICITY, VITALITY AND ADDED VALUE of French-language schools.

The principles outlined in this document must be considered as ideals toward which strive individuals who wish to contribute to the blossoming of French-language schools and, consequently, to the sustainability of Francophone and Acadian communities (FACs). These principles therefore serve as reference points to guide the actions taken by French-language schools in minority settings in the exercise of their mandate.

In this document:

1. the term “*French-language school*” means the institution that brings together:
 - the students and their parents;
 - the teaching and administrative staff;
 - the school trustees;
 - the community partners.
2. the term “*communities*” means the **Francophone and Acadian communities**, and encompasses the group of individuals of various origins who share a sense of belonging or an affiliation to the French-language and the diverse Francophone culture, and who live in a Canadian province or territory where Francophones constitute a minority. FACs revolve around three pillars:
 1. social organization which includes the individual, his/her family and immediate environment comprised of his/her living, study, work and leisure environments;
 2. civic organization made up of the network of institutions and organizations through which the primary sources of community leadership come to life in the public sphere;
 3. political organization comprised of the citizens who, through the various levels of government, support FACs by confirming the legitimate status of the French-language and the Francophone culture in all sectors.
3. the term “*culture*” refers to UNESCO’s definition of the word in its 2001 universal declaration on cultural diversity: “[...]culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs”.

Specificity

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

French-language schools exercise their mandate:

**by protecting, promoting
et transmitting the French-
language**

To that end, they:

- integrate the cultural and identity dimensions of the French-language into teaching and learning;
- insist on the use of the French-language in school and extracurricular activities;
- recognize and value the French-language's status as an official language of Canada;
- foster French-language learning as an essential skill in a context of globalization.

The concept of **specificity** refers to the unique characteristics of French-language schools. It is protected and guaranteed by section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.



THE FRENCH-LANGUAGE



THE CULTURE

by creating a rich and diverse cultural environment

To that end, they:

- keep culture alive through their teaching of all school subjects;
- celebrate and bring to life individual cultures and the ever-evolving collective culture;
- favour the French-language as an expression of the culture;
- promote the expression of culture and identity through a range of means of expression such as the various art forms, sports, traditions, etc.;
- create spaces dedicated to Francophonie for exercising one's leadership and creativity;
- foster the flourishing of the culture within families and the community.

by educating committed Francophone citizens

To that end, they:

- foster a sense of belonging to the regional, provincial/territorial, national and international Francophonie;
- integrate the concepts of Francophone citizenship¹ into the teaching of school subjects;
- recognize and affirm the rights and responsibilities related to Francophone citizenship in a context of linguistic duality;
- inspire the desire to engage, individually and collectively, in the social, cultural and economic development of the community;
- highlight the contribution of Francophones to the development of Canadian society.

¹ *Francophone citizenship: an individual or a group of individuals being recognized as members of a political community that have in common the French-language and that nurture a collective project in which they wish to take an active part.*



COMMITMENT

Vitality

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

French-language schools exercise their mandate:

by having effective management practices

To that end, they:

- take into account the needs and aspirations of the communities they serve;
- recognize the rights of Francophones, acquired and upheld over the years;
- encourage and facilitate their partners' commitment and cooperation;
- in compliance with the province or territory's legal framework, aim for school-based management practices with respect to programming, admissions, hiring, finance and infrastructures;
- develop and support strategic leadership in education.



MANAGEMENT



ACCESSIBILITY

The concept of **vitality** highlights the dynamism of French-language schools. It is closely linked to that of the communities they serve and is dependent on the mutual commitment between the school and the community.

by expanding the offer and stimulating the demand for access

To that end, they:

- implement creative and proactive ways to emphasise the right to French-language education;
- advocate for schools and services in all regions where there are Francophones;
- foster recruitment and loyalty in order to increase the number of students;
- are inclusive and foster access by immigrant families.

by facilitating the continuum of French-language education from early childhood through to postsecondary studies

To that end, they:

- recognize that early childhood is a critical stage for identity awakening and language acquisition;
- place parents centre stage and recognize their essential role in their young child's development;
- cooperate with their partners in identifying the needs, implementing, offering and promoting quality programs and services in early childhood development;
- provide themselves with quality criteria with regard to French-language early childhood programs and services;
- encourage the pursuit of postsecondary studies in French where possible;
- cooperate with postsecondary institutions in the promotion of postsecondary studies in French and in facilitating the access and transition to them.



THE CONTINUUM OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Added value

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

French-language schools exercise their mandate:

by engaging positively in identity building

To that end, they:

- explore the wealth and diversity of Canadian Francophone identities through academic programming and an active extracurricular offering;
- instill pride in identifying oneself as a Francophone throughout one's life as well as the desire to commit to taking part in the development of the community;
- present Canadian and around the world Francophonie from the viewpoint of history and modernity.



IDENTITY BUILDING

Added value (continued)

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

French-language schools exercise their mandate:

by creating conditions that are conducive to the development of language skills

To that end, they:

- prioritize the French-language as a teaching and learning tool and as a vehicle of culture and identity;
- offer quality English education as the second official language through an additive bilingualism² approach;
- encourage the learning of other languages in a spirit of openness with respect to cultural diversity.

² Additive bilingualism can be defined as a situation where a second language is learned without having adverse effects on the development and maintenance of the minority language. (Landry and Allard, 1990)



LANGUAGE SKILLS

The concept of **added value** recognizes the advantages of French-language schools for individuals and the entire community.



EMPLOYABILITY

by fostering employability

To that end, they:

- maintain a high graduation rate;
- establish partnerships with the community and the work world;
- facilitate the access and transition to post secondary studies in French or the labour market;
- present Francophonie as an important driver of economic development;
- value the contribution of Francophonie in the various careers and disciplines.

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