

French-Language Services Plan

2016–2017

Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development
Nova Scotia



Message from the Deputy Minister

I am pleased to present the 2016–2017 French-language Services Plan for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). This yearly plan is required by the *French-language Services Act* (2004) and the associated [regulations](#).

Within EECD, the French Programs and Services Branch (FPSB) is responsible for the coordination of all French first language and French second language services, as well as departmental translations required by the Act and regulations. Like other departments' plans, ours is informed by the objectives of the Nova Scotia Strategic Plan for French-language Services for 2013–2018. In addition, our department's plan is aligned with the minister's Action Plan for Education, and also with the operational plan for the French Programs and Services Branch.

Sandra McKenzie, Deputy Minister
Education and Early Childhood Development

Introduction

The structure of this French-language services plan is determined by Sections 5, 6 and 7 of the [French-language Services Regulations](#). Reporting on goals and activities is determined by the [Nova Scotia Strategic Plan](#) for French-language Services for 2013–2018.

The Strategic Plan identifies three specific objectives:

Objective 1 – *Leadership and policy direction*: Champion and support the planning, administration, and policy development frameworks for the implementation of the [French-language Services Act](#) and Regulations.

Objective 2 – *Availability and accessibility of French-language services*: Increase the prevalence and awareness of French-language services through active offer, communications, printed and electronic material, and by increasing the capacity of the public service to offer services in French.

Objective 3 – *Community engagement and outreach*: Encourage the participation of the Acadian and francophone community in the development of government policies with a view to improving the delivery of services in French.

Finally, while all designated public institutions are required to produce annual French-language services plans based on the above, such plans are expected to reflect individual departments' approaches and initiatives. This is the second year that the French-language services plan of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is aligned with [Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education](#).

In the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), the responsibility for creating an annual French-language Services Plan belongs to the French Programs and Services Branch (FPSB). This new Branch was created in 2015 by the coming together of French second language (formerly part of the Public Schools Branch) with the former Acadian and French-language Services Branch.

The department has a full-time French-language Services Coordinator (FLSC) who is located in the FPSB. In addition to creating the plan, the FLSC coordinates all translations for the department, provides summaries for Acadian Affairs' annual progress reports on French-language services, and assists other branches and divisions in their dealings with French-speaking stakeholders.

An internal policy, developed by the FLSC for French-language services in 2009 and revised in 2011, is the principal document guiding the department with respect to communications and publications in French.

Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2015–2016

This year, there was a particular emphasis on supporting the initiatives and changes outlined in [Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education](#). While timely, accurate translation of all publications is ongoing, the need to coordinate this function carefully took on new importance with the amalgamation of French first language and French second language into a single Branch, and with the development of realigned curricula for a number of grades.

Managing the flow of translation work, and keeping track of translations done over time, is a major job of the FLSC. This year's challenges included the loss of one in-house translator, the transfer to CNS of responsibility for contracting with freelance translators, and the need to educate other branch employees about the new procedures for translation.

The Action Plan gave considerable attention to French second language initiatives, including more conversational teaching methods in Core French programs, and increasing the number of intensive Core French programs at the grade 6 level. These, along with existing programs such as the branch's support for GénieArts, the Odyssey language monitors, and French for the Future coincide with the second and third pillars of the Action Plan, namely, an innovative curriculum and inclusive school environments. The FLSC had a role in managing the enlarged flow of translation, and in maintaining continuity with what had been done before (especially in such areas as terminology).

French-language courses for provincial employees—administered by Acadian Affairs and taught by Université Sainte-Anne—are included in one of the key activities of the branch's operational plan, namely, “to encourage students, parents, teachers and EECD employees to participate in a variety of French-language and cultural learning activities.” In this context, the FLSC distributes information on available courses, advises on registration and testing, and refers staff to useful websites that help with pronunciation. This year, the FLSC also organized an informal lunchtime French conversation session inside the department.

Another key activity of the branch's operational plan is to “evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of various existing FSL projects and initiatives.” While this key activity refers to the school system, this was mirrored by the FLSC's participation in the French training subcommittee of the FLSCC, which dealt with provision of French training for provincial employees. The subcommittee is currently discussing ways to improve the registration process, expand the number of sites where French courses are offered, and clarify policies on who could and should take such courses. The results of these discussions will be seen later in 2016–2017.

The first pillar of the Minister’s Action Plan calls for effective partnerships with community organizations, businesses and other government departments. The creation of a position for French Program Partnerships within the FLSB supported this initiative.

Another key activity of the branch’s operational plan was to develop a promotional initiative to underline the importance and relevance of learning a second language. This was also congruent with the second objective of the Strategic Plan for French-language Services for 2013–2018, namely, to increase the prevalence and awareness of French-language services. As one example, French Program Partnerships organized various projects with the school boards, aimed at Grade 9 students in Core French, to encourage them to continue French in high school. Highlighted activities included concerts and workshops given by Acadian hip-hop artist Arthur Comeau at Breton Education Centre in January 2016 and at Northeast Kings Education Centre in February 2016 (<http://www.kingscountynews.ca/Living/2016-02-18/article-4440119/NKEC-students-to-experience-Acadian-culture-through-workshops%2C-concert/1>).

This year saw an expansion of the use of social media in ways that also support the second objective of the Nova Scotia Strategic Plan for French-language Services for 2013–2018. In this context, the hashtag #flslanguevivante was created, and has been used by several school boards in tweets about events promoting French language and Acadian culture, such as the event at NKEC. Similarly, a number of tweets in French heralded the Semaine de l’éducation acadienne et francophone (March 2016), the Hour of Code (December 2015), Education Day at the Big Data Conference (October 2015), and the opening of a new Early Years Centre at l’École Beau-Port (September 2015). Several of them used the #meilleureannée hashtag, the equivalent of the English #bestyearever.



Karen Casey, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, announces the opening of four new early years centres, including one at l'École Beau-Port, September 15, 2015.

While translation of department messages is not a new service, the expansion of our social media presence in French is an encouraging development. These are also examples of how French-language services relate to the third pillar of the minister's Action Plan, namely, inclusive learning environments. The role of the FLSC in this was to liaise with Communications Nova Scotia and to write French-language tweets, thereby expanding the reach of the department's message.

There were several instances of consultation involving French-language stakeholders in 2015–2016. One of the key actions in Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education is the creation of a Framework of Teaching Standards. In order to ensure input from across the province in the development of the Teaching Standards, the Department held regional consultation sessions in each school board, including the CSAP, in February. The CSAP session was facilitated in

French. The e-mail invitations, the PowerPoint presentation, the agenda, and the FAQ's were translated into French.

In the spring of 2015, the department sought feedback from parents and families about the strengths and challenges related to childcare. An online survey was available, and focus groups were formed for early childhood educators, care providers, directors and operators across the province. As part of this consultation, the executive director of the Early Years Branch met with CSAP representatives. The FLSC provided note-taking and reporting for that meeting, which took place in French.

Through the department's diversity committee, the FLSC provided timely information about activities around the province for the Acadian national holiday on August 15.

This past year, the Early Years Branch made available a number of services and documents in French.

Translation of the Licensee's Manual for Regulated Child Care Settings offers the child care facilities and family home day care agencies in the francophone community the most up-to-date information on the Day Care Regulations and best practices in child care. Translation of the e-learning Orientation for Staff Working in Licensed Child Care Facilities has made the orientation more readily available to the Acadian and francophone early childhood sector. EYB continues to offer the delivery of training sessions in French for those untrained staff working in child care. This past year, one session was offered which was attended by several participants.

Another important activity of the Early Years Branch is the implementation of the recommendations of the Early Intervention Program Review. For the past few years, EYB has made available Early Intervention Services for families in the Argyle region. Families whose children attend child care with Par-en-bas and who will be attending school have benefited from the services of Early Intervention.

In November 2015, the Early Years Branch sponsored a celebration of National Child Day within the DEECD. In recognition of both the national and the international nature of this event, the letter from the minister inviting all staff was in both English and French, and the list of resources about the rights of the child was posted on the staff portal in both English and French.

In March 2016, the FLSC wrote a message in French for EECD employees encouraging participation in the workforce census "Count Yourself In." This assisted the diversity committee with its promotional efforts.

Objectives to improve French-language services in 2016–2017 and measures planned to reach those objectives

Work on a new website for the Branch, integrating French first language and French second language, is underway. It will be a dynamic site that will incorporate a Twitter feed. The new website is designed to inform and support our partners in education (students, parents, teachers, administrators, etc.). Although the site will note the differentiation of French first language and French second language, there will be programs or services for which such distinctions will no longer apply. The site is a reflection of collaborative work in the service of learning among Acadians, Francophones and Francophiles in Nova Scotia.

In past years, the FLSC has had the responsibility to ensure that the annual French-language services plan is posted on the department's website, and has used the Change Management system to update or correct items on the site of the former Acadian and French-language services Branch. With the integration of French first language and French second language into a single site, some of these same responsibilities will continue. In addition, the FLSC will participate in the generation of social media messages on the site, in collaboration with CNS.

In order to ensure implementation of policies and procedures, opportunities for FSL language and cultural experiences, and initiatives arising from the action plan, a full complement of French Programs and Services personnel is required. These positions are being posted in both French and English, and will be filled in a timely manner.

The first to be filled will be a position to facilitate, and recruit for, the national programs financed by Department of Canadian Heritage and the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada. These programs include Explore, Odyssey and Destination Clic. A percentage of the coordinator's time has always been dedicated to supporting the work of the facilitator of national programs, especially in such areas as interviewing and training. This is expected to continue in 2016–2017.

In addition, the FLSC will work with other new employees, such as an editor, to facilitate their integration into the Branch and to support them in reaching their objectives as outlined in the Branch operational plan. This will further support the work of translation.

Now that translation services are supporting the work of both French first language and French second language, there is a growing need for consistency of terminology between the two systems. The FLSC is expected to participate in work with the translator, and with consultants from the Branch and from CSAP to help develop this consistent terminology which can serve Core French, French immersion and French first language.

The revisions to curriculum will continue. As supporting documents are developed, they will be translated. Appropriate French-language resources concerning Treaty Education, Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian and Gaelic cultures will be identified and, where necessary, purchased or translated. In addition to coordinating translation assignments, the FLSC will be involved in liaising with owners of intellectual property and with the department's publications division, with respect to quality control and copyright.

The FLSC will continue to serve on the French Language Training subcommittee, which will continue to discuss recommendations in this area. The FLSC continues to be an active member of the FLSCC.

Responses to French Requests (Written and Oral)

The department has a policy in place with respect to written and oral responses in French. This [French-language Services Policy](#), first created in 2009, was revised and clarified in 2011. The policy stipulates that all correspondence (paper or electronic) received in French must be replied to in French. Requests to communicate orally in French from the public are, to the extent possible, handled by bilingual staff.

Any information material intended for the public must be translated if it meets any of the following conditions: 1) the information material is of particular relevance to the Acadian and Francophone community; 2) the information material pertains to French-language service delivery by the Department; 3) failure to provide the information in French may compromise the health, safety or security of members of the public. In case of any doubt, the preferred approach is to translate the document.

For the purpose of determining the order in which documents are to be translated, priority is given to materials that meet any of the above-mentioned conditions. In such cases, the English and French versions of the document are released simultaneously.

Translation of written correspondence is arranged through DEECD's French-language Services Coordinator.

All documents originating in English that will be used by the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), whether in the classroom or at the administrative level, are also provided in French. The same applies to public documents such as official statements by the minister's office, as well as regular letters to board superintendents and board chairs from the offices of the Minister and the Deputy Minister.

French-language Services Inventory

The FPSB has always had the responsibility to ensure the timeliness and quality of translation of all departmental publications, whether curricular or corporate, that are relevant to the Acadian and francophone community, or which are used in French immersion.

As noted in the introduction, the department has a full-time French-language Services Coordinator who is situated in the French Programs and Services Branch. The FLSC coordinates all translations for the department, including written correspondence, and assists other branches and divisions in their dealings with French-speaking stakeholders.

Communications Nova Scotia produces news releases about activities or initiatives of the department, and decisions about issuing them in French follow the guidelines of CNS and the FLS Regulations. Any exceptions must be approved by the Deputy Minister in consultation with the Executive Director of the FPSB.

Typically, most of the translations done for the department are handled by an in-house translator, with extra requests being sent to the translation team at Communications Nova Scotia. New procurement procedures require that the department must go through CNS in order to contract freelance translation services. The challenge—to maintain a timely, high-quality translation service while respecting the new procurement regulations—was met in 2015-2016, through increased consultation and advance notice within the department.

The survey “How’s Work Going 2015” included questions about French-language capacity. Of those who answered the survey in DEECD, 44% claimed basic capacity in oral communication, 14% intermediate and 14% advanced. In reading capacity, 42% of employees had basic capacity, 19% had intermediate and 14% had advanced. Forty-two percent of employees who responded had basic writing capacity in French, while 8% and 13% had intermediate or advanced, respectively. Over the previous 12 months, 35% of employees who answered the question said they had been asked to provide services in French while working for the Government of Nova Scotia (the second-highest number among all departments).

When new positions within the FPSB are advertised, the advertisements appear on CareerBeacon in both English and French, and a French-language ad is placed in *Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse*.

Priorities of the Acadian and Francophone Community

Nova Scotia is proud to have a provincial school board dedicated to the education and culture of French first-language students. The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) aims to offer a quality education to students while also helping them develop pride in and commitment to the French language, their culture, and their community. Students' ability to communicate fluently in both official languages also enhances their employability and contributes to the cultural diversity of the province.

We continue to encourage the Acadian and francophone community to provide us with feedback on our services and to indicate areas or programs where we could initiate new French-language services. Consultants and senior officials from the CSAP are in regular contact with the executive director and employees of the FPSB, on topics ranging from specific educational terminology to support for the integration of refugee children, and from TIENET to Skilled Trades.

As in past years, the FLSC attended the AGM of the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, another occasion to maintain good working relations with the Acadian and francophone community. The FLSC also arranged for Juliana Barnard, of the CSAP, to address the French-language Services Coordinating Committee on the topic of the 2016 Semaine de l'éducation acadienne et francophone (March 2016). In her presentation to the coordinators, Juliana thanked the coordinators for their work in expanding French-language services in the community, saying "students can see that French goes beyond the classroom."

In 2015-2016, the FLSC continued to contribute to meetings of the *Table de concertation*, organized by Halifax Regional Municipality. This was in response to a continuing request for provincial representation at the table. It was also consistent with Objectives 2 and 3 of the Nova Scotia Strategic Plan for French-language Services for 2013–2018. Objective 2 mentions collaboration with municipalities to develop, deliver, increase or promote services offered in French, and Objective 3 mentions engagement of the community through relationship building and consultation.

Contribution to the Preservation and Growth of the Acadian and Francophone Community

Enrollment in CSAP schools went from 5,109 in the 2013-2014 school year to 5,280 in the 2014–2015 school year, an increase of 3.3%.

Vigilance with respect to information material produced by other divisions or other government departments for use by Acadian and francophone students, teachers and administrative staff continues to benefit our key constituency by ensuring consistency and equity in educational resources in both languages, from user guides for PowerSchool to newsletters about SAP changes produced by Internal Affairs.

A certain percentage of the work of the FLSC is dedicated to supporting such federal-provincial programs as Explore, Odyssey and Destination Clic. As in past years, the coordinator assisted with interviews and other activities relating to the selection and training of monitors. These programs benefit the Acadian and francophone community in a number of ways, including support for Université Sainte-Anne (students in the French immersion program), support for the CSAP (placement of language monitors, many of them young Acadian students, in the classroom) and support for youth in the community in general (through Destination Clic, which enables francophone youth a deeper experience of their French language and culture through placement in other francophone communities).

The Early Years Branch has contributed to the preservation and growth of the Acadian and francophone community for a number of years, originally as part of the Department of Community Services. It has done so by making important information, forms and protocols available in French to Acadian and francophone child care facilities and agencies. These resources help keep the child care facilities and agencies informed about changes to the regulatory environment in which they operate. The information on the new requirements for child care staff classification, including the relevant forms and a guide to the classification system, is now being integrated into the website of EECD in French.

Developing and making training materials available in French was another facet of the work of that branch. Among the materials it made available previously is the Orientation for Staff Working in Licensed Child Care Facilities. The orientation is a series of informational modules and activities for child care staff who work directly with children and who do not meet the regulated training requirements. The FPSB is currently working with the Early Years Branch to ensure that the needs of the Acadian and francophone community are met as this training moves to an e-learning platform. The FPSB is handled the translation of the first round of e-learning modules.

In a predominantly English province like Nova Scotia, many *ayant-droit* parents who choose to enroll their child in a French first-language school need support in terms of their own ability to use French. Moreover, with the incorporation of Early Childhood Development, our department has taken on a new responsibility to parents of preschool children. *Je parle français avec mon enfant* aims to provide some basic French training to parents whose mother tongue is not French or to those who need to perfect their French in order to support their children's academic progress once they enter school. In so doing, this project supports the education area of focus for the provincial government, which includes working across departments to enable young Nova Scotians to have the best possible start in life.

This year, the program reached a total of 152 adults (49 men and 103 women), in the areas of West Chezzetcook, Clare, Dartmouth, Halifax, Pomquet, Truro, Argyle, Chéticamp, South Shore and Greenwood. The areas with the largest number of participants were South Shore (30), Dartmouth (28) and Halifax (28).

The FPSB, with funding from the Official Languages in Education Program, supports the building of school-based community centres, in partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage and the CSAP. In this way, the department has, over the years, helped Acadian and francophone community organizations realize objectives expressed in the community's previous development plans.

For more information about this plan, please contact:

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