

French-language Services Plan

2017-2018

Department of
Education and Early
Childhood Development



**FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES PLAN
2017–2018**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
NOVA SCOTIA**

Message from the Deputy Minister

I am pleased to present the 2017–2018 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 French first language and French second language services, as well as other 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 *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education*, as well as 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. For this reason, the plans of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) also reflect departmental initiatives, especially [Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education](#).

Responses to Stakeholder Requests

An internal policy ([French-language Services Policy](#)), developed in 2009 and revised in 2011, is the principal document guiding the department with respect to communications and publications in French.

- 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 (paper or electronic, including the website) intended for the public must be translated and arranged through EECD's French-language services coordinator (FLSC).
- The English and French versions of the document are released simultaneously. FPSB staff should be included in the developmental stage of any project and translation requirements should be reflected in all workplans. This allows sufficient time for documents to be translated and verified before the intended date of distribution.
- All documents originating in English that will be used by the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) and its stakeholders 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.
- Requests for translation from within EECD should be made by the person responsible for the original English document. Normally, translation would only be done on a finalized version of the original document in Microsoft Word format.

French-language Services Inventory

EECD is a unique department, in the sense that there is an entire branch dedicated to French programs and services, rather than treating French services as an add-on. It is also unique in that almost all its publications and communications are issued in both English and French at the same time, since our French first language students, teachers, administrators and staff, as well as parents and guardians of those students, are part of a “public” to whom French-language services are directed. Nova Scotia also has a significant francophile population who choose to enroll their children in French immersion programs. It is critical to ensure a service that meets the needs of this population.

FPSB was restructured this year to create a French Program Partnerships division, with a Director, and including the French-language services coordinator, the translator, the editor and the national programs/bursary officer.

The French Programs and Services Branch (FPSB) has the responsibility to ensure the timeliness and quality of translation, using Nouvelle Orthographe, of all departmental publications, whether curricular, corporate, or community, or which are used for French first language and French second language education.

While most of the translations done for EECD are handled by the in-house translator, extra requests are occasionally sent to the translation team at Communications Nova Scotia. In this way, the challenge of maintaining a timely, high-quality translation service continues to be minimally met. This is an area that requires more attention in order to support teachers in all of the French programs offered in Nova Scotia.

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

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 French-language services regulations. Any exceptions must be approved by the deputy minister in consultation with the executive director of the FPSB.

As in previous years, 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, with the development of realigned curricula for the entire school system and supporting classroom materials.

This year, the Early Years Branch (EYB) arranged for translation of the revisions to the orientation modules, of the Year 1 Early Years Centre provincial evaluation report and of various memos, and correspondence from EYB to the early childhood sector. On an ongoing

basis, EYB makes available in French its Orientation for Staff Working in Licensed Child Care Facilities. That branch also provides French Early Intervention Development Services to families in Clare and Argyle regions. Its website includes information in French.

This year's successes include:

- Professional development in support of the action plan was available in French for teachers of Grades 4 to 6 (May 2016) and Primary to 3 (Fall 2016).
- The online survey and discussion paper that were part of the process of developing a provincial student attendance policy were made available in French.
- A new Framework of Teaching Standards was distributed in French to both French first language and French second language teachers.

A look at French-language services inventory would not be complete without some understanding of the French-language capacity of EECD employees. The most recent version of the survey *How's Work Going (2015)* included questions about French-language capacity. Of those who answered the survey in EECD, 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. Of those who answered the question, 35% of employees said they had been asked to provide services in French while working for the Government of Nova Scotia over the previous 12 months (the second-highest percentage among all provincial departments).

For more information about the inventory of French-language publications, including this plan, please contact:

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Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2016–2017

The 2016-2017 French-language services plan noted that, “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 would be required.**”

- The position to facilitate, and recruit for, the national programs was filled early in the year. These programs include Explore, Odyssey and Destination Clic. Further information on these programs may be found below, under “Contribution to the Preservation and Growth of the Acadian and Francophone Community”, on page 11.
- We were also fortunate to fill the position of French editor. The new editor also has translation training. So, in addition to editing translated documents, she can fill in for our regular translator during times of heavy workload or vacation. This has greatly improved our capacity to offer services in French.
- The first pillar of Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for Education calls for effective partnerships with community organizations, businesses and other government departments. A Director of French Program Partnerships has been appointed on an interim basis.
- In addition to coordinating translations, the FLSC continued to participate in meetings of the French-language services coordinating committee (FLSCC) and compiled information for the annual French-language services plan from all parts of the department.

French-language courses for provincial employees—administered by the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie 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 the winter of 2016-2017, six EECD employees took French courses, and nine employees attended English-language sessions of “Acadie at a Glance,” a workshop offered by the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie. As well, FPSB employees provided timely information about activities around the province for the Acadian national holiday on August 15. This year, a list of “15 for the 15th” was created, sent to all employees of EECD, and offered to the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie for province-wide dissemination.

This year, all divisions and branches within EECD are organizing open houses to demonstrate their respective activities and responsibilities to their colleagues. The FPSB’s “portes ouvertes” was held on March 8, 2017. The event showcased translation services, the national programs like Explore and Destination Clic, the Québec-Nova Scotia exchange, the history of the Acadians, and the role of a French-language services coordinator in the provincial government. It also highlighted such programs as French immersion, core French and the DELF (Diplôme d’étude en langue française). EECD employees who visited the various booths were encouraged to take away books in French and strips showing how to create French accents on the keyboard. A draw was held for gift certificates to various French restaurants, patisseries and chocolatiers.

This proved to be an effective tool for us to have a larger number of EECD employees participating in a cultural learning activity.

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 primarily to the school system, staff were also involved with evaluating the provision of French training for provincial employees, through a subcommittee of the FLSCC. After considerable discussion about 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 subcommittee developed a policy on French training. That policy was expected to go to a deputy ministers’ committee on French-language services later in February 2017.

This year saw the **expansion of our social media presence** in ways that also support the second objective of the *Nova Scotia Strategic Plan for French-language Services for 2013–2018*. FPSB employees were asked by CNS to create a number of French tweets for various events promoted by @nseducation, such as Education Day 2016: Our Ocean Playground, on November 23, and International Children’s Day on November 20.

In 2016-2017, work began on a new **website** for FPSB integrating French first language and French second language, as reported in that year’s plan. In the summer of 2016, the timeline for this was revised when new guidelines for all government websites were introduced. Currently, two FPSB employees are working to ensure continuing access to certain existing information in French, such as the French-language services plan, applications to the Odyssey and Explore program, and the glossary of French terms used in EECD.

Objectives to improve French-language services in 2017–2018 and measures planned to reach those objectives

Staff in FPSB will continue to work on initiatives that improve service and resources for our stakeholders. These include:

- an improved partnership with regional publishers such as Bouton d'Or Acadie, to identify, list and purchase resources that reflect the Acadian culture for both French and English classrooms;
- the establishment of a relationship with the Acadian liaison agent for Halifax Regional Municipality in promotion of Odyssey, Explore and Destination Clic programs at HRM venues;
- working with African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq Divisions to identify and infuse classroom resources in French that reflect Culturally Responsive Teaching (pedagogy), as well as supporting culturally relevant support networks for French first language and French second language learners;
- working with high school co-op students (specifically, the number of francophone or francophile co-op students that will be mentored by FPSB staff will be increased to two);
- liaising with owners of intellectual property and with the department's publications and design section with respect to quality control and copyright;
- serving on committees, including the FLSCC, the French Language Training subcommittee of the FLSCC and the promotional committee for the Semaine de la promotion de l'éducation acadienne et francophone en Nouvelle-Écosse.

In 2016-2017, FPSB began work on a French-language strategy. The process will involve extensive consultation with our stakeholder groups and continue in 2017-2018.

As noted above, in 2016-2017, discussions began about the creation of a new website for FPSB, integrating French first language and French second language. At this time, Communications Nova Scotia is leading the implementation of the government's new web strategy, moving away from the old department-by-department model in favour of the government's one-brand approach. To support the changeover in EECD in 2017-2018, it is expected that a number of FPSB employees will be involved in web training sessions organized by CNS for content creators. This is part of the effort of ensuring French content on government websites, and will also ensure simultaneous publication of all content offered in both French and English.

Curriculum will continue to be reviewed and refined. 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. We also need to set up a process to identify classroom resources used by French Immersion teachers that still require translation.

The Early Years Branch is looking at documents that will need to be translated in 2017-18. These will include early childhood education training standards, amendments to the Day Care Act and Day Care Regulations, revisions to the *Licensee Manual for Regulated Child Care Settings*, and revisions to *Reporting and Investigating Allegations of Abuse and Neglect in*

Regulated Child Care Settings, among other documents. *Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework* is now available in English and French for the April 2017 pilot project.

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. We are equally committed to supporting our seven anglophone school boards with their offer of French immersion programs and core French courses to develop students' French second-language skills. Students' ability to communicate fluently in both official languages also enhances their employability and contributes to the cultural diversity of the province.

Due to our commitment to our Acadian, francophone and francophile communities, a large proportion of the “French-language services” reported in these plans year after year involve support for students, teachers, administrators and staff responsible for these programs, as well as parents and guardians of these students.

We encourage the Acadian, francophone and francophile communities to provide us with feedback on our services and to indicate areas or programs where we could initiate new French-language services, or improve existing ones. Consultants and senior officials from school boards are in regular contact with the executive director and employees of the FPSB, on topics ranging from consistent educational terminology to the integration of refugee children, and from TIENET to Skilled Trades.

Three specific examples of consultations involving French-language stakeholders in 2016-2017 are particularly worth noting.

- To support student success and achievement, EECD undertook the development of a provincial student attendance policy to set clear, consistent expectations regarding student attendance in our public schools. The related discussion paper and online survey were made available in French.
- The development of a Framework of Teaching Standards necessitated regional consultation sessions in each school board, including in French in the CSAP.
- Université Sainte-Anne was included in discussions with universities regarding B.Ed. programs and teaching standards.

As in past years, employees of the FPSB attended the AGM of the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse and meetings of the promotional committee for the Semaine de la promotion de l'éducation acadienne et francophone, other occasions to maintain good working relations with the Acadian and francophone community and promote education and identity.

Contribution to the Preservation and Growth of the Acadian, Francophone and Francophile Communities

Enrollment in CSAP schools went from 5,280 in the 2014–2015 school year to 5,466 in the 2015-2016 school year. Enrollment in French immersion programs is being maintained, despite a decline in school populations across the province. It should be noted that interest from students and their parents in Intensive French at the grade 5/6 level is increasing and is now available in every English school board.

The National Programs/Bursary Officer is situated in the FPSB, and benefits from the active support of other FPSB staff in the promotion of federal-provincial programs as Explore, Odyssey and Destination Clic. These programs benefit Acadians, francophones and francophiles 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 to have a deeper experience of their French language and culture through stays in other francophone communities).

Increasing the visibility of these programs increases the visibility of French, which further strengthens the Acadian and francophone community. In 2016-2017, the profile of these programs was raised through targeted communication to parents of eligible applicants throughout the Nova Scotia government, through increased visibility in local French media, and the presence of promotional agents in kiosks at the Francophone Book Fair, Scotia Square and a projection of the film *Droit comme un F* held in October 2016 at l'École secondaire du Sommet. The projection was organized by l'Alliance française and the CSAP, and attended by representatives of the CSAP, Université Sainte-Anne, and the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Other presentations and kiosks—at a newcomers' barbeque, at English conversation courses given at the Alderney Gate branch of the public library, and at Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia's Winter By the Sea—were aimed at encouraging eligible newcomers to participate in Explore.

FPSB staff strengthened community ties through involvement in the Halifax Languages Consortium (HLC). The HLC promotes the teaching and learning of languages in Nova Scotia, by identifying concrete actions and accountable working groups. The national programs/bursary officer helped plan the Summit on the Value of Languages in Nova Scotia (November 2016).

The Early Years Branch of EECD has contributed to the preservation and growth of the Acadian and francophone community for many years, originally as part of the Department of Community Services and, since 2013, as part of EECD. One important activity of EYB is the implementation of Early Intervention Services, which are provided in French to families in Clare, Argyle and the Strait region. As of December 2016, 62 Acadian and francophone families were receiving services in the province, an increase of 36 families since December 2015.

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 the Early Years Branch, the department took on new responsibilities 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 success in 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.

In 2016-2017, the program reached a total of 235 adults (compared with 152 adults in 2015-2016—an increase of 55 %). The program operated in West Chezzetcook, Clare, Dartmouth (two groups), Halifax (two groups), Ile-Madame, Argyle, Truro, Greenwood, Chéticamp, South Shore (two groups) and Lower Sackville. The areas with the largest number of participants were South Shore (33, up from 30 last year), Dartmouth (46, compared to 28 last year) and Halifax (39, compared with 28 last year). The rapid expansion of this program required an increase in funding from the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie halfway through the fiscal year.

Vigilance with respect to programs, services and materials provided by FPSB as well other divisions or other government departments, for use in Acadian, francophone and francophile education, is a role undertaken by all employees of FPSB. This benefits our key constituency by ensuring consistency and equity in educational resources in both English and French.