

French-language Services Plan

2023–2024

Education and Early
Childhood Development



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French-language Services Plan
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
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Message from the Deputy Minister

Hello,

I am pleased to present the French-language Services Plan for 2023–2024 for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD).

EECD is unique among provincial government departments in that all its communications and publications are issued in both English and French at the same time. Nova Scotia’s Acadian and Francophone communities are an important part of our education system to whom French-language services are provided.

As a department, all branches are committed to ensuring that the wellbeing and achievement of students are supported in both English and French. We value the importance of educating and learning in French and we recognize the opportunities that having a second language can provide. The French Programs and Services Branch (FPSB) is responsible for providing educational programs and services that promote and support the Acadian and francophone communities in Nova Scotia as well as French second-language education.

This plan is informed by the objectives of the *Government of Nova Scotia Strategic Plan for French-Language Services for 2018–2023* and our commitment to an inclusive education model. Key reports such as the *Inclusive Education Policy* and the *French Education Framework* create a more inclusive and equitable education system that supports students’ well-being and academic success while strengthening collaboration among all branches within the department, the various stakeholders, and Acadian and francophone partners.

— Elwin LeRoux, February 2023

What we're doing to contribute to the growth of the Acadian and francophone community

We recognize the importance of French-language services, and we endeavour to fulfil our responsibilities under the *French-language Services Act* and Regulations. We believe Nova Scotians should have access to quality government services in French, and this plan demonstrates our commitment to ensuring our programs, policies and services address the priorities expressed by the Acadian and francophone community. To achieve this goal, we collaborate with other designated public institutions across government—including the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie—through the French-language Services Coordinating Committee and the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Hospitality. We greatly value these partnerships, which ensure a continued understanding of the unique needs of our province's Acadian and francophone community.

We encourage Nova Scotians to request services from government in French. We also encourage Acadians and francophones to have their voices heard through participation on agencies, boards and commissions, which are regularly advertised by the Executive Council Office. As we continue to maintain and improve our French-language services, we welcome feedback on our progress, and we invite you to share with us your comments or questions by contacting our French-language services coordinator. If you wish to make a formal complaint regarding French-language services, please contact the Office of the Ombudsman.

French-language services coordinator: Olivier Flibotte (olivier.flibotte@novascotia.ca, 902-471-9833)

Services we offer in French

Programs

Curriculum Development

The French Programs and Services Branch at EECD has a division that is comprised of a team of French Second Language consultants and other specialists. They work in collaboration with other branches of the department in order to support the activities related to French second-language and first-language programs including the evaluation of French second-language competency based on international language standards (CEFR). We also work in close collaboration with the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial to support curriculum development for French first language programs.

Official Languages Programs

Destination Clic is a summer program for francophone students who are in grades 8, 9 or 10, who attend French as a first-language school. This experience provides an opportunity to foster and enhance French-speaking skills while partaking in cultural activities, and meeting other francophones from across Canada.

Explore is an intensive, government-funded immersion program held during the spring or summer that provides the opportunity to learn or improve French-speaking skills through cultural experiences and activities. The sessions are taught in one of over 40 post-secondary institutions across Canada.

Odyssey is a nine-month paid program for students who have completed at least one full year of postsecondary studies. They develop new skills while inspiring youth to practice their French-speaking skills.

Under the direction of the classroom teacher, they will work in the classroom setting using games and activities to encourage students to learn and improve their French-speaking skills.

Nova Scotia Part-Time Language Assistant Program is a part-time, paid work program that provides an opportunity to develop new skills in a classroom setting while inspiring students in French immersion or in a French first-language school to practice their French-speaking skills through cultural and linguistic activities.

Bursaries

The purpose of the **French Language Bursary Program for Nova Scotia Teachers** is to encourage teachers who hold a Nova Scotia teacher's certificate to pursue courses at Université Sainte-Anne to improve French-language competencies or to pursue courses at the master's level in French at a Canadian post-secondary institution.

The **French Language Bursary Program for Nova Scotia Students** is designed to encourage students to study full-time at Université Sainte-Anne or at another francophone institution in Canada where French is the language of instruction.

Support for Community Enrichment Initiatives

Arising from the *Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction*, EECD administers funding to several community organizations such as:

- Conseil Communautaire du Grand-Havre
- Équipe d'alphabétisation de la Nouvelle-Écosse
- Centre communautaire Étoile de l'Acadie
- Centre provincial de ressources pédagogiques
- Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse
- Junior Achievement
- Automotive Sector Council
- Techsploration

Translation Services

The department has a team dedicated to handle translation requests. This team handles the translation of all EECD documents that are available to the public and provides support with general French-language enquiries.

We aim to have available, in both official languages, all materials related to French programs in the education system (French First-language as well as French Second-language).

This includes:

- Communication to and from the education system (including regional executive directors/superintendent, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders) such as
 - Emails
 - Correspondence
 - Fact Sheets
 - Q&A documents
- Curriculum documents
- Learning resources
- Assessment and evaluation documents
- Ministerial reports

How we communicate with the public in French

Based on the department's internal French-Language Services Policy, we respect the following guidelines when handling communications 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.
- English and French versions of all EECD documents are released simultaneously.
- All EECD documents originating in English that will be provided to the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) and the French second-language population are provided in French. The same applies to public documents such as official statements by the minister, as well as regular correspondence to regional centres for education and to the CSAP from the offices of the minister and the deputy minister.

What we did to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2022–23

Objective 1: Strengthen internal operational structures including policy, legislative and administration frameworks.

- Reviewed and supported new curriculum in French second-language and liaised with French first-language (CSAP) as well as Education and Innovation Programs and Services on curriculum development.
- Implemented of a department-wide promotional strategy for translation services including the creation of a video and support material.

Objective 2: Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programs to the public.

- Translated on average 64 000 words per month which supported several initiatives such as:
 - a new online portal for the Office of Teacher Certification.
 - new program websites (Distributed Learning and Nova Scotia Independent Online Learning) as bilingual sites.
 - the *Managing Diabetes in Schools Policy* and supporting documents.
- Provided funding to other branches' external community partners to support them in making content available in French for skilled trades and a variety of other initiatives.
- Offered training opportunities to support the professional growth of the translation team.
- Built partnerships to support public facing bilingual positions offered by the department. French speaking assessors now support Early Childhood Educator classification services.
- Construction of a new French first-language school in Wedgeport will include a federally funded community center; a cultural hub to support the viability of the local community.
- Renovation of a French first-language school in Pomquet will also include the addition of a community center in that area through federal funding.

Objective 3: Maintain an ongoing dialogue and consultation with the Acadian and francophone community.

- Created partnerships to support the common areas of the French first-language and French second-language in the program curriculum with a focus on language and cultural competencies for teachers and students.

- Consulted regularly with the CSAP, Université Sainte-Anne and the Regional Centres for Education to ensure their priorities and proposed initiatives are included in the Action Plan for the Official Languages in Education Program.
- Engaged in broad public consultation on enhancing local voice in education policy and decision making. This included administering a survey, ThoughtExchange, and Focus Groups in both English and French.

How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2023–24

Objective 1: Strengthen internal operational structures including policy, legislative and administrative frameworks.

- Continue to review and support the new curriculum and recommended strategies in French second-language and liaise with French first-language (CSAP) and Education and Innovation Programs and Services on curriculum development.
- Determine whether the French-language services policy should be reviewed.
- Support the creation of guidelines by International Programs to increase the accessibility of the high school diploma in French with international stakeholders.

Objective 2: Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programmes to the public

- Materials related to French programs in the education system (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial as well as French Second-language) are provided in English and French.
- Provide funding to make content available that will benefit the French-language learners, and teachers in the education system.
- French language training opportunities made available to support the professional growth.
- Continue to evaluate and make recommendations that enhance systems that support the coordination of translation-related service delivery.
- Provide guidance to branches to ensure technological systems include French-language integration when offering new programs and services to the public.
- Build partnerships to support bilingual positions that offer public facing services by the department.

Objective 3: Maintain ongoing dialogue and consultation with the Acadian and francophone and francophile communities.

- Creation and maintenance of partnerships to support the common areas of the French first-language and French second-language curriculum that focuses on language and cultural competencies for all teachers and students.
- Ongoing consultations with the CSAP, Université Sainte-Anne, Regional Centres for Education and community partners in education to ensure their priorities and proposed initiatives are included in Nova Scotia's Action Plan for the Official Languages in Education Program.
- Continue to work with the Acadian and francophone communities on recruitment and retention and the delivery of Early Learning and Child Care services that are culturally responsive and contribute to the preservation and growth of French Child Care Centers.