



French Funding Guide for B.C. School Districts

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Introduction

The purpose of the French Funding Guide is to provide an overview of the federal Official Languages in Education Programs (OLEP) funding for French Immersion, Core French, and Intensive French programs in B.C. It includes a description of the funding allocations, restrictions, sample activities, and annual reporting requirements. This guide contains important information to ensure accountability between school districts and the Ministry of Education and Child Care (ministry), while ensuring additional funding to support and strengthen French language programs.

Since the 1980s, B.C. has received federal funding to support OLEP delivery through a series of multi-year agreements with the federal government, the Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction (Protocol). This funding has been critical in enhancing the availability and quality of French language education across the province's school systems.

Within the K-12 sector, the funding supports a variety of programs aimed at increasing access to French second language instruction, including Core French programs, French Immersion (FI), and support for educational materials and teacher training.

The current Protocol spans 2024-25 to 2028-29 and sees a consistent funding contribution to the Province of B.C. The new multi-year Protocol includes funding targeted at enhancing French second language programs, addressing the ongoing challenges related to the recruitment and retention of qualified French teachers, and expanding opportunities for French-language education at the post-secondary level. The new Protocol's stable base funding and targeted investments will strengthen French education across all levels, ensuring that B.C. students have access to high quality educational opportunities in French.

Official Languages in Education Programs Funding Cycle



Step 1: Establishing the Protocol

Federal, provincial, and territorial governments collaborate to negotiate the **Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction**. The Protocol outlines the framework for cooperation between governments and contains the allocation of funding for minority-language education and second-language instruction across all provinces and territories. The Protocol is generally renegotiated every 4-5 years to align with evolving provincial priorities and needs.



Step 2: Negotiating Bilateral Agreements

Once the Protocol is established, the federal government engages in separate negotiations with each province and territory to create bilateral agreements. The Canada-B.C. Agreement on French Minority Language Education and French Second Official Language Instruction (Bilateral Agreement) aims to:

- build upon the objectives outlined in the Protocol
- identify strategies and initiatives tailored to the specific needs of B.C.
- develop a comprehensive Action Plan that details how federal funding will be allocated within the province

The preparation and negotiation of these agreements can take up to 2 years.



Step 3: Federal Funding Allocation

The federal government provides funding to each province and territory based on their student enrolment numbers and in accordance with their respective Action Plans. The ministry determines funding priorities in consultation with the French education sector and allocates Protocol monies to school districts and other French education partners. School district funding allocations include stable year-to-year base funding, to support program planning, and additional monies to support growth and emergent needs in K-12 French programming.



Step 4: Reporting on the Use of Funds

Throughout the duration of the Bilateral Agreement, B.C. school districts submit progress reports to the ministry. The ministry compiles these reports into a consolidated document, which is submitted to the federal government. At the conclusion of the Bilateral Agreement period, a final report is prepared to summarize the outcomes of the funded initiatives.

School District Funding

Under the Bilateral Agreement, the ministry provides additional funding to independent schools and school districts that offer French language programs, including Francophone, French Immersion, Core French, and Intensive French.

School districts' OLEP budget allocations are calculated based on student enrolment numbers from Form 1701, along with various other factors, including:

- the grade levels of students enrolled in FI programs
- number of schools
- rural versus urban nature of the school district
- amount of annual federal funding available

Funding allocations to school districts are based on student enrolment data from the school year preceding the signing of the new Bilateral Agreement, and will remain the same for the duration of the Bilateral Agreement, providing consistency and predictability for programming and support to French second language learning.

Additional Funding

Under the 2024-29 Bilateral Agreement, school districts will receive annual base funding amounts that remain consistent from school year to school year, based on student enrolment data from 2023-24. The Bilateral Agreement includes additional funding, which will be used to support important French education initiatives across the sector. This additional funding will be distributed to school districts on an annual basis. The additional funding is to be used in support of French second language programs, providing school districts with additional program support that extends beyond the stable year-to-year base funding.

$$\text{Base OLEP Funding} + \text{Additional OLEP Funding} = \text{Total School District OLEP}$$

All base and additional OLEP funding should be spent on an annual basis as a part of school districts' French programming activities.

An electronic funds transfer representing 100% of a school district's funding allocation will be distributed to school districts by November of each school year, pending satisfactory completion of all required reporting documents.

Unspent Funding

Unspent OLEP funding (base and additional) may not be carried forward into subsequent academic years.

Under the 2019-23 Protocol, school districts were permitted to carry forward OLEP funding between school calendar years. Commencing in 2023-24, and moving forward, school districts will not be permitted to carry forward OLEP funding. This includes both base OLEP funding and additional OLEP funding.

School districts with unspent OLEP monies at the end of the academic year will be subject to deductions from their subsequent year's funding allocation.

$$\text{Total funding} - \text{unspent fund from previous year} = \text{subsequent year's new total funding}$$

Exceptions to this practice **may** be granted under extenuating circumstances, and with advance communication between the school district and French Education at the ministry.

OLEP Federal Funding for Incremental Costs

Protocol funding for school districts is designed to cover incremental costs associated with operating French language programs.

The following example is intended to illustrate how incremental funding works:

A guided reading program in an English classroom costs \$100, whereas the equivalent guided reading program in French costs \$150. Both the English and French classrooms should receive \$100 of resource funding from the same school district budget, while the incremental difference of \$50 for the French resource may be paid through the school's OLEP funding.

French resources, professional learning, cultural experiences, etc. are often more costly than English equivalencies. OLEP funding support ensures that districts have the resources needed to enhance their French language offerings without relying solely on provincial budgets.

French Immersion and Core French Reporting Categories

School districts' OLEP funding was previously allocated and distributed through seven grant categories to school districts; districts were permitted to move funding between grant categories as needed. Starting in 2024-25, the ministry will no longer allocate OLEP funding into grant categories. Instead, school districts will receive their full OLEP allocation and be required to report on OLEP funded activities in **five categories**, outlined below. School districts will have the autonomy to focus their activities and associated spending within the categories that represent the greatest priorities to their local contexts. Districts will classify their activities under the new reporting categories in the **French Programs End of Year Reporting Form FP01** by July 31 of each year.

Revision Notification: Transition from Seven Grant Categories to Five Reporting Categories

| Old Grant Categories | New Reporting Categories |
|-----------------------|---|
| Learning Assistance | Student Learning and Academic Achievement |
| E-Learning Technology | Cultural Activities |
| Learning Resources | Teacher Retention and Professional Learning |
| Teacher Pro-D | Staffing and Recruitment |
| Core French | Program Growth and Student Retention |
| French Immersion | |
| Cultural | |

Sample Activities

| | |
|--|--|
| Student Learning and Academic Achievement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, acquire, and support the implementation of French language resources (e.g., books, themed kits, licenses to online platforms, audio-visual material, hardware, software, etc.) Purchase French language resources to support student learning in areas of numeracy and literacy. Purchase literature circle sets, library resources, and other print materials. Supporting teacher participation in DELF administration or marking sessions. Teacher release time for the co-creation of learning resources. |
| Cultural Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide online, in-school and out-of-school activities involving French-speaking communities and organizations. Planning for school-wide cultural activities. Work with Canadian Parents for French's Culture en Classe program to book cultural presentations. Arrange for collaboration between schools and school authorities around cultural activities. Subsidize student travel, TTOC expenses for teacher chaperones, and/or fees on school-organized cultural field trips within B.C. and Canada. Hire a French Teaching Assistant from France and use OLEP funding to support additional associated expenses like salary top up, acquiring cultural resources for presentations, etc. Top up Odyssey Language Assistant's salary or cover other expenses with associated cultural or learning activities. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Teacher Retention and Professional Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide meaningful, research-based professional learning support to teachers, administrators and support staff through online modules, job-embedded professional learning and coaching, professional learning activities, sessions, conferences, etc. • Purchase teacher resources that are specific to FI. • Provide release time for teachers and administrators to participate in professional development activities. • Bring an educational presenter to a school or district to offer local professional learning opportunities. • Offer a mentorship program for teachers new to teaching French and cover expenses relating to associated teacher release time. • Support mentorship between FI and Core French teachers. Provide Core French teachers with opportunities to learn about existing program resources. • Maintain or expand formal partnerships to support French language programs. Encourage collaboration between school districts and educational organizations. |
| Staffing and Recruitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of qualified French teachers and other educational personnel. • Pay staffing expenses associated with hiring a French teacher coordinator. • Pay staffing expenses associated with hiring a French administrator coordinator. |
| Program Growth and Student Retention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion and marketing of early and late FI programs. • Promotion of the benefits of English-French bilingualism. • Add courses/classes to secondary programming. • Open or expand Early & Late-entry FI programs. • Teacher release time to support FI student transitions between grades and/or schools. • Hosting FI information or orientation events for parents. • Supporting student clubs, leadership opportunities, and other key events to develop students' sense of belonging in the French learning environment. |

Educational Staffing

The organization of successful French second language programming and retention of French students and teachers in B.C. school districts requires oversight, coordination, and pedagogical guidance. Support in this area often requires dedicated positions of special responsibility that fall outside of the roles of classroom teaching and/or school administration. As such, school districts with FI programs are permitted to use a portion of their OLEP funding to cover staffing expenses.

To use OLEP funds toward coordination staffing, districts must ensure that the following criteria are met:

- districts may use up to 40% of the OLEP funding toward staffing
- districts may staff up to a maximum 1.4 FTE with OLEP funding

Examples:

School District X is a large urban district, receiving over \$1,000,000 of annual federal OLEP funding. 40% of School District X's budget would equal \$400,000. This surpasses the salary and benefit expenses associated with 1.4 FTEs. School District X is therefore capped at paying 1.4 FTE of coordination staffing time from its OLEP funding.

School District Y is in rural B.C. and has a small FI student population. The district receives \$80,000 of annual federal OLEP funding. School District Y's budget is not large enough to pay for 1.4 FTE of coordination staffing time. This small FI district is therefore entitled to use up to 40% of its annual federal OLEP funding (up to \$32,000) to cover coordination staffing time. This amount of funding would cover a part-time coordinator salary in School District Y.

Districts will report on staffing activities in the **End of Year Reporting Form FP01** submission to the ministry. School districts that use OLEP funding to support staffing expenses outside of the above parameters may be required to repay portions of their federal funding grant.

Reporting

Reporting Timelines

November:

The ministry transfers 100% of annual OLEP funding to school districts based on student enrolment in French programs as reflected on **Form 1701 Student Data Collection** from the academic year preceding the start of the current Bilateral Agreement.

July:

School districts submit the **French Programs End of Year Reporting Form FP01** to the ministry. **FP01** is completed in relation to financial and programming activities in the preceding school year.

School districts with Intensive French programs submit **Intensive French End of Year Reporting Form FP04** to the ministry. **FP04** is completed in relation to financial and programming activities in the preceding school year.

French Programs End of Year Reporting Form (FP01)

French Programs End of Year Reporting Form (FP01) must be submitted no later than July 31, at the end of each school year. This reporting form summarizes the school district's actual spending programming activities from the current school year. The most updated version of this form will be made available for download no later than June 1 of every year on the French Education Program website.

Unspent funds reported on FP01 will be deducted from the subsequent year's allocation, unless an exception has been granted.

Intensive French End of Year Reporting Form (FP04)

Funding is available to school districts offering **Intensive French** (grades 6-7) or **Enhanced French** (grades 8-12) programs.

Participating school districts must submit the **Intensive French End of Year Reporting Form FP04** for Intensive and Enhanced French enrolment data by **July 31** every year. **FP04** requires enrolment numbers from **September 30 to July 31**. The most updated version of this form is posted by June 1 of every year on the **French Education Program website**.

The current funding rates are \$250 per student in Intensive or Enhanced Core French, and \$2,500 per school offering the program.

School District Audits

As part of ongoing efforts to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of French federal funding, school districts' French education programs may be subject to random audits conducted by the ministry. Random audits are in addition to the required annual completion of **French Programs End of Year Reporting Form FP01**.

Independent School Grant

Funding is available to independent schools that offer French second language programming. Independent school contributions are calculated based on student enrolment in second official language instruction as reported on the **Data Collection Form 1701** on September 30.

Funding is transferred as a block to the Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA). The association is responsible for the distribution of funds to independent schools offering Core French courses or French Immersion (FI) programs.

Independent School grant calculations:

- full Time Equivalent (FTE) /Headcount Enrolment in Group 01 & 02 schools, Report I1005 SLDC
- percentage of time for instruction based on Form 1701 for Core French and FI

French Teaching Assistant Program

General Program Information

The ministry offers funding to school districts to pay the salary costs of up to two assistants per year from the **French Teaching Assistant Program** (FTAP).

School districts are responsible for all administrative tasks associated with the FTAP. This includes communication with program representatives, application process, management of salary payments, assistance with travel expenses, etc. The ministry will reimburse salary expenses for teaching assistants through electronic funds transfer to school districts. Monies provided to school districts for FTAP salaries are separate from OLEP contributions, and do not count toward districts' staffing allocations.

School districts are permitted to use funding from their federal OLEP grant to cover additional costs associated with employing a French teaching assistant. These costs may include: travel expenses, learning materials to accompany teaching assistants' classroom activities, stipends to offset living expenses, etc. Federal monies spent on FTAP do not count toward a school district's allowable quota of staffing money.

The FTAP provides educational institutions with an innovative approach to French language learning by recruiting native French-speaking teaching assistants from France. FTAP supports the integration of francophone culture into the classroom while enhancing FI and Core French students' learning experiences.

School districts wishing to take part in FTAP should refer to the France Education International **website** for further information. Questions about FTAP should be directed to **tapif@institutfrancais.ca**.

French Teaching Assistant Program Hiring Process

School Districts wishing to proceed with hiring under the FTAP should be aware of the following administrative steps to qualify for FTAP salary funding from the ministry:

1. by February 28 of the school year preceding the arrival of the French teaching assistant(s), contact **tapif@institutfrancais.ca** and follow necessary steps with France Education International to take part in FTAP
2. by March 31 of the school year preceding the arrival of the French teaching assistant(s), contact **EDUC.French.Education@gov.bc.ca** to inform the ministry of your district's intention to take part in the FTAP (email must indicate a dedicated district contact, whether salary coverage will be required for 1 or 2 teaching assistants)
3. await ministry confirmation of FTAP salary funding
4. by October 30 of school year preceding the arrival of the French teaching assistant(s) – the ministry transfers initial 50% of FTAP salary funding
5. by June 30 of the school year in which the French teaching assistant(s) is/are working in the school district – the ministry transfers the final 50% of FTAP salary funding (pending teaching assistant(s)' completion of employment for the school year)

French Education Bursary Program

The French Education Bursary Program supports B.C. students and educators pursuing postsecondary studies or professional development in French. The bursary offers financial assistance to eligible applicants who meet specific conditions related to their academic programs or teaching careers.

Eligible educators, including certified teachers and Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) pursuing French language training, attending eligible conferences, or taking university-level courses taught in French may apply to the bursary program. Bursaries cover up to \$1,500 per year for training, up to \$300 per year for conferences, and 50% of tuition costs for university courses, with a lifetime maximum of \$5,000. Find more information about the French Education Bursary Program at <https://www.bcedextranet.gov.bc.ca/bursary/welcome.htm>.

Official Languages Programs

The Official Languages Programs (Explore, Odyssey, and Destination Clic) offers participants an immersive experience in their second official language. Funded by the government of Canada, the Official Languages Programs in B.C. are managed by the ministry and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC).

Explore

Explore is an intensive summer immersion program held in exciting locations across the country. The sessions are taught at accredited institutions, and students live on campus or with local host families. Sessions are offered for students ages 13-15 and 16+. Imagine students learning or improving their French-speaking skills while making new friends and experiencing a different local culture and way of life in another part of Canada. That's Explore.

Odyssey

Odyssey is a nine-month program that engages language assistants in French as a second language and French as a first language classrooms across the province. Language assistants encourage students to learn and communicate in French through activities that focus on language learning and culture.

School districts are permitted to use funding from their OLEP grant to cover additional costs associated with employing an Odyssey language assistant. These costs may include: travel expenses, learning materials to accompany a language assistant's classroom activities, stipends to offset living expenses, etc. Federal monies spent on an Odyssey language assistant do not count toward a school district's allowable quota of staffing money.

The Odyssey program accepts candidacies from all regions of Canada, and local hiring is possible. All interested candidates must apply online at www.englishfrench.ca.

Destination-Clic

Destination Clic is an experiential summer program for francophone (French as a first language) students living outside Quebec. The program is aimed at nurturing their sense of belonging and identity with the francophone community and enhancing their French-speaking skills. Find more information about the Official Languages Programs at www.englishfrench.ca.

Province-Wide Access to Key Learning Resources

Access to key learning resources (see table below) is provided to all B.C. school districts with FI programs. The ministry has collaborated with key French education stakeholders to identify and purchase the following high impact learning resources for the FI sector:

| Resource | Grade Level | Provider | Contact for questions |
|-------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Idéllo | K-12 FI | FocusEd Education Resources | info@focusedresources.ca |
| Livelt Earth | K-7 FI | FocusEd Education Resources | info@focusedresources.ca |
| Je Lis ! Je Lis ! | K-7 FI | RK Publishing | District Coordinator or Helping Teacher |
| ACPI A+ | K-12 Paid membership | Association canadienne des professionnels de l'immersion | District Coordinator or Helping Teacher |

Province-wide availability of these resources supports districts as they seek to target their federal budgets to other areas of need. Please contact the resource provider noted above for more information.

Support for Cultural Programming in School Districts

Canadian Parents for French BC & Yukon (CPF) will now be providing support to B.C. school districts through its program entitled Culture en classe. CPF's dedicated cultural staff CPF are available to book cultural presentations for interested school districts. This cultural service is available at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels. CPF will provide some funding assistance to make French cultural presentations possible in B.C. school districts. For more information, please contact: info@cpf.bc.ca

French Advisory Committees

School districts are strongly encouraged to form a French Advisory Committee (FAC) with representatives from various stakeholder groups. This includes: trustees, district executive, administrators, teachers, and parents. The formation of FACs is encouraged to discuss priorities in French second language programming in school districts.

School boards with established FACs may apply for the annual French Advisory Grant for \$1500. The ministry recognizes that committee operations sometimes represent additional costs to school boards. Monies received under this grant may be used to offset costs associated with running FAC meetings. Districts may also use the FAC grant to support other aspects of French educational programming within their schools, and in alignment with the parameters set out in this guide.

To qualify for the FAC Grant, school districts must be able to demonstrate that their committee:

- is committed exclusively to discussing matters related to French education
- is comprised of varied membership (BCTF, BCPVPA, Trustees, parent groups)
- meets at least two times per school year, achieving quorum at each meeting
- keeps minutes at each committee meeting

School districts that establish FACs, meeting the above criteria, will receive the \$1,500 FAC grant with their October OLEP contribution. Districts are not required to contact the ministry indicating their intention to form a FAC; districts' FAC status will be communicated to the ministry via the **French Programs End of Year Reporting Form FP01**. FAC grant monies will be automatically transferred in the fall of the proceeding school year. The FAC grant must be spent in a way that benefits a school district's French programming.

French Immersion Regional Network

The ministry collaborates directly with school districts through the French Immersion Regional Network. Network members provide the ministry with important insights into French education priorities in schools, while the ministry shares policy and funding developments with network members. Collaboration with members from a diversity of communities across B.C. supports the flow of important programming and policy development information to all corners of the province.

District staff are encouraged to reach out to their regional representative for more information, or should they have questions about best practices in French programming, professional learning, or general questions about FI or Core French.

Please email EDUC.French.Education@gov.bc.ca for your regional network member's contact information.

French Education Contact Information

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