



French Second-Language OLEP Action Plan Consultations

What We Heard

Summary of Consultations

Alberta Education hosted a webinar on October 18, 2023, specific to French Immersion (FI) and French as a second language (FSL) funding recipients, to discuss its next Official Languages in Education Programs (OLEP) action plan, scheduled to be in effect from 2024/25 to 2027/28. This webinar was a follow-up from the first consultation webinar hosted on February 27, 2023.

During this webinar, 26 representatives from 23 school authorities across Alberta gathered to discuss draft initiatives for the new **Canada-Alberta Agreement on Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction** (bilateral agreement). These drafts incorporated feedback from the prior stakeholder consultation in February. Following the webinar, six school authorities completed an online survey through the OLEP Alberta Engagement Hub, answering specific questions related to draft initiatives.

Hub Project Funding Model

During these consultations, Alberta Education shared a draft funding model that would provide the opportunity for school authorities which offer K-12 FI programming and FSL courses to access additional OLEP funding and collaborate on wide-reaching projects that extend beyond regular operations. The representatives from school authorities shared their feedback and expressed how this funding model would best meet their individual and collective needs.

- Participants agreed their collaborations would benefit from a transparent and straightforward application process, including a rubric to outline eligibility criteria, feedback on project applications, and clear timelines. Attendees also expressed a need for guidance in completing the project application.
- As school authority representatives expressed a desire for support in collaborative networking, the Engagement Hub was presented as the ideal forum for school authorities to connect with one another to initiate project partnerships.
- Stakeholders agreed flexibility is paramount to their success and shared that the opportunity to apply for hub project funding every two years would better suit their needs rather than the proposed four-year cycle.
- Participants stated while collaborative projects would bring widespread enrichment to FI programs and FSL courses, it is crucial individual school authorities be able to address their local needs according to their diverse contexts with student FTE funding.

Teacher Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) Data

Alberta Education has been looking at the collection of FI and FSL teacher FTE data to gain an understanding of the number of French-language teachers in the province and to better target and measure the success of teacher recruitment and retention projects. During this webinar, stakeholders shared their views on the potential impacts of this data collection.

- Participants agreed it would be straightforward to obtain FI teacher FTE for their school authorities. Concerns were raised about the challenges and potential inaccuracies in collecting FSL teacher FTE data due to diverse scheduling that can differ from school to school and classroom to classroom depending on the grade level.
- Participants worried that tying teacher FTE data to funding might limit the flexibility of using funds and potentially reduce the overall impact of OLEP funding on school authority needs.

- Stakeholders agreed that recruitment and supporting French-language teacher competency is a priority to ensure quality learning opportunities for students.

Feedback on Draft Initiatives

Proposed draft initiatives for the next OLEP action plan were presented for feedback.

- School authority representatives expressed appreciation for the open nature of initiatives that allow for flexibility in their individual programming needs, and felt the proposed initiatives target real challenges faced by school authorities.
- The need for flexibility in funding allocation and concerns about the impact of initiatives on funding distribution were highlighted.
- Participants indicated they valued equitable distribution of funds between metropolitan, urban and rural environments, as well as the fair distribution of funds between both FI and FSL programming needs.

Conclusion

The feedback indicates a mix of positive reception and concerns across the discussed topics. Transparency, collaboration, flexibility and equitability emerged as crucial themes. The need for clear communication, flexibility in allocation of funding, and thoughtful consideration of the implications for different school authorities was emphasized as essential for successful implementation of the next OLEP action plan.

Next Steps

- The **Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction**, which serves as a base agreement between federal, provincial and territorial governments, is currently under negotiations for the 2024/25 to 2027/28 term. Upon ratification of the protocol, the subsequent bilateral agreement and corresponding action plan will be established and implemented between Alberta and the federal government.
- Alberta Education will share the hub project application package by the end of January 2024 for projects beginning as early as July 1, 2024.
- School authorities can bring their questions about the hub project application process to a drop-in Q&A webinar that will be held in February 2024.
- Alberta Education will maintain existing funding envelopes for FI and FSL school authorities, where allocations are divided into student FTE funding and hub project funding.
- FI and FSL teacher FTE data will not be required, and an optional field for school authorities to provide this information will be included in future OLEP report templates.
- The OLEP Alberta Engagement Hub was made available to all French second-language school authorities after the first engagement webinar and remains open for participants to initiate project partnerships, collaborate, ask questions, share ideas, and participate in the consultation process.
 - To register for an account, go to your.alberta.ca.
 - An access code will be sent to your email to confirm registration.
 - Once confirmed, you will be routed to the main your.alberta.ca engagement page. You can then return to your.alberta.ca/olep-alberta to access the hub.
 - If you are not able to access the hub, please email EDC.Officiallang@gov.ab.ca.