

## **Ontario's French-language education system launches major campaign to boost Francophone community's long-term vitality**

*Goal is to raise awareness of Ontario's publicly funded French-language education among Francophones and new comers to the province who want their children to be fully bilingual. Please note that French-language Education is publicly funded.*

**OTTAWA, ON – May 4, 2009** – Just in time for Education Week, Ontario's French-language education (FLE) system launches a groundbreaking, provincial campaign today to promote the province's French-language schools as well as its French and bilingual colleges and universities. Co-ordinated by the Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques (CFORP), the campaign targets French-language right-holders and new comers to the province who want their children to be fully bilingual.

French-language schools differ from immersion programs, in that they deliver services as well as the Ontario Ministry of Education's curriculum in a French cultural setting. FLE fulfills Franco-Ontarians' constitutional rights to be educated in French by providing access to an educational network including 200 daycare services, 330 elementary schools, 90 high schools and 12 post-secondary establishments across the province. The vitality of Francophone communities in Ontario, as elsewhere in Canada, depends on the vitality of the FLE system. The campaign is funded by Heritage Canada through the Canada-Ontario agreement.

"Ontario is home to the second largest Francophone population in the country, and yet many Ontarians are unaware that a complete French-language publicly funded school system exists, offering programs and services from early childhood right through to adulthood," said Gilles Leroux, General Director, CFORP. "Being bilingual is an undeniable competitive advantage to have in today's global economy, and FLE students graduate from the system bilingual for life. This opens up a world of possibilities for them in Ontario, Canada and beyond."

There are more than 90,000 students currently attending FL elementary and secondary schools in the province's 12 French-language school boards. Also, more than 21 000 students attend FL and bilingual postsecondary institutions. All French-language school boards offer free – full time junior and senior kindergarten programs – to children starting at age 4. Province-wide tests by Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office have found that Grade 6 students attending French-language schools consistently outperform the province's other students in mathematics, writing and reading. Graduates of French-language post-secondary establishments consistently garner high graduate and employer satisfaction rates, as well as a high graduate employment rate.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Many factors contribute to the rapid changes the Francophone communities in Ontario are currently experiencing. As part of its mandate to promote Francophone culture outside the classroom, FLE is collaborating with several partners in various communities to expand the range of services available to individuals and collective needs of its students. This includes offering services to parents who choose to enrol their children in a French-language school.

The campaign features an English and French brochure that raises awareness among Francophones of their constitutional right to be educated in French, and includes information on the FLE system and the role it plays in preserving French heritage in Ontario. It will be distributed to and CFORP's and school boards partners. CFORP's initiative also features print ads as well as two radio ads, each in English and French that air starting today, until May 31. The campaign's online component targets family and news websites with four banner ads. For more information, please visit [www.fleontario.ca](http://www.fleontario.ca)

**About Centre Franco-Ontarien de Ressources Pédagogiques (CFORP)**

Founded in 1974, the Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques is a non-profit organization serving the French-language education community. CFORP produces and distributes pedagogical resources to Franco-Ontarian schools and to all of French-speaking Canada.

CFORP carries out various projects and programs, enters into partnerships and offers products and services to support schools, school boards and various organizations in their efforts to improve education quality.

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