

Partners for French Education Report

June 2018



Partners for
French Education

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, French-language education in Manitoba has grown steadily. In this regard, it is interesting to note that more than 95,000 students, 52% of Manitoba's student population, take French classes; whether it's within the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM), immersion schools or learning French as a second language. Such a large number of students requires support and therefore, nearly 1,900 teachers are working in French, not including auxiliary staff, university students, all other participants in education, and of course, parents. To add to this continuum, there are more than 1,200 children who are preschoolers. It is undeniable that this is a vibrant community which continues to grow and requires access to quality education in French.

It is evident, in light of this data, the loss of the Assistant Deputy Minister position of responsible for French-language education is not only symbolic, in fact, it is quite the contrary. It affects programming negatively. From this perspective, the Partners for French Language Education believe it is logical that the administrative structure of the Department of Education reflects the needs of Manitoba's francophone community. Not only has this community clearly spoken out (see community report), but the key players in the education community have also made it abundantly clear.

The partnership for French Language Education understands very well the current financial situation in Manitoba, according to the provincial government. We also understand that Mister Pallister government's desire to reduce spending; however, we believe that there is a win-win opportunity here for the provincial government and the francophone community to establish an administrative structure that meets the needs of everyone.

BUREAU DE L'ÉDUCATION FRANÇAISE (BEF)

The Partnership for French Language Education reiterate the importance of ensuring that the administrative structure of the BEF remains intact, as it had existed for years, and the government ensures that all positions are filled. By so doing this would reinstate the programming and support for school divisions, teachers and student learners that has been provided for years.

It is imperative that the Department of Education guarantee that the BEF will remain an independent, autonomous decision-making entity with a voice within the Department. This objective can certainly be supported by the continued formalization of a Deputy Minister of bilingual education, or less ideally a francophone Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for the management of the BEF, and of course everything related to French education.

ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER POSITION

The Partners for French Language Education, in the spirit of collaboration with focus and purposeful solutions, alongside the Department of Education, endeavor to meet the needs of Manitoba's francophone community by considering that:

- ✓ *the number of students (in growth) is significant and justifies the return of the position of an Assistant Deputy Minister in Education;*
- ✓ *Manitoba's francophone community has come out in great numbers in favor of the return of the Assistant Deputy Minister position;*
- ✓ *the needs in French education are growing;*
- ✓ *the number of teachers and participants directly involved in student education is growing;*
- ✓ *the province wishes to establish a continuum in education from "cradle to the career" that will require structure within the Department of Education;*

The Partnership for French Language education submits the following three proposals:

Proposal #

A bilingual Deputy Minister of Education and Training. This proposal does not entail any financial cost to the province.

Proposal #2

Create a new administrative structure that brings together the continuum of French-language education. This administrative structure would be the responsibility of the Department of Education and would be managed by a Francophone Assistant Deputy Minister. Note that this position would be designated as a "bilingual" position notwithstanding the political parties in power, this in the spirit of the law on the development of the francophone community.

The partnership for French Language Education believe that this structure would be innovative and would bring together all the partners in education affected. This initiative could begin as a pilot project. Such a project, in our estimation, would allow consistency of the services offered, and the Department of Education and training would be seen as a leader in Canada. This initiative would be viewed as project to be duplicated throughout Canada.

In order to align the services, this administrative structure would be led by the Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for French-language Education and would bring together the following partners*:

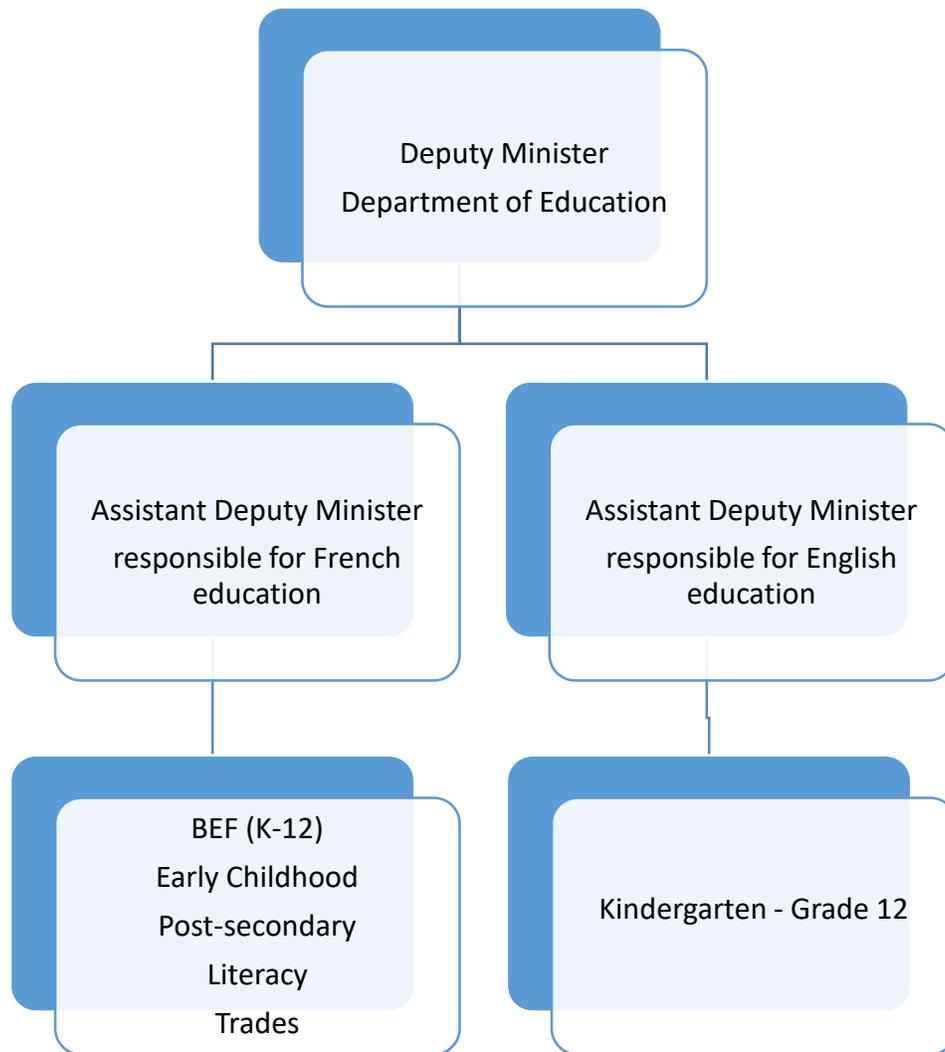
- President, Éducatrices et éducateurs francophones du Manitoba (ÉFM),
- Director, Fédération des parents du Manitoba (FPM),
- Director, Université de Saint-Boniface (USB),
- Superintendent, Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM),
- Director, Pluri-elles (Manitoba) Inc.,
- Director, Conseil jeunesse provincial (CJP)
- And others as required

This advisory working group would be responsible for the province's French education plan and would meet three times yearly.

This super structure would represent, in our opinion, a real continuum in education. This advisory working group would be responsible for the province's French education plan and would meet a minimum of three times annually

This continuum would represent a true continuum in education and would draws its strength from partners working together for the same objectives. Two options for investment: the government reiterates its support for French-language education and reinstates the Assistant Deputy Minister position as it existed prior to October 2017; or, in order to minimize costs, the Francophone Assistant Deputy Minister position could be the result of a transfer from an existing Director position at BEF to the Assistant Deputy Minister position.

* Note that in case of additional topics, other partners could join this group.



Proposal #3

Return to the status quo prior to October 2017, a Francophone Assistant Deputy Minister position. It should be noted that the Partners for French Language Education want this position to be designated “bilingual”. In this case, the financial impact would be the same as in Proposal #2.

