

Greetings from the President

When I consider the complexity of work we do and the acumen and skills that are required to set conditions where each learner will thrive, I am reminded in the strongest terms why we operate most effectively in teams or with the support of networks. As leaders of complex public education systems, we need highly effective teams to be successful at our work.

High performing teams share a common purpose. In Central Okanagan Public Schools, we share a common vision, purpose, and overarching goal:

- **Vision:** Together we learn.
- **Purpose:** To educate students in a safe, inclusive, equitable, and inspirational learning environment where each learner develops the attributes and competencies to flourish in a global community.
- **Overarching Goal:** Our learners will develop foundational skills and core curricular competencies so that learners can be empowered to follow their passions and strengths and thrive holistically as resilient and engaged global citizens.

Many districts/divisions have similar visions and purpose statements that are the north star of their collective work. They may be shorter or longer, but they keep students' well-being at the center of their work.

To achieve these laudable goals, leaders understand that high performing teams are built on the strengths of their team members. Effective leaders take an appreciative approach to working with their teams and set conditions where their team members can use their strengths more often.

High performing teams co-construct their purpose considering their shared values. Therefore, collaborative professionalism is so important to foster. High performing teams operate "using the best intelligence because the world moves too fast for plans."¹



Kevin Kaardal
CASSA/ACGCS President

Highly effective leaders provide clarity of purpose and feedback to their team members as they collaborate to meet the complex problems that face us and require adaptive expertise to navigate.

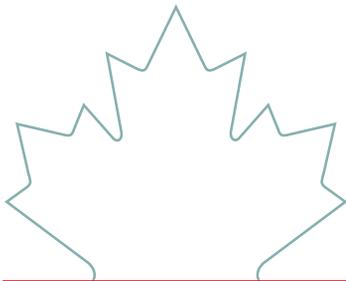
These are just a few thoughts about the nature of highly effective teams and their leaders. As you know, the literature on this topic is prolific. I only reference these statements to suggest the idea that collectively we can be more effective if we share our strengths with each other through collaborative professionalism and sharing of our learned collective wisdom. When faced with very complex serious issues it is good to know you have a team to lean on. A group of people who have your back and will help you make the right choices – even when they are hard to hear.

Organizations like the Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) have great potential to support us as leaders by providing the opportunity to connect with colleagues facing similar complexities and who share a similar purpose to improve the lives of children and youth and help them thrive in a complex world. I encourage you to join us in this work and make the personal connections with leaders from across our country that can help you thrive in your role – as system leaders in public education.

Kevin Kaardal
CASSA/ACGCS President

Reference:

1. Buckingham, Marcus, and Ashley Goodhall. (2019) *Nine Lies About Work*. Harvard Review Press.



Équité et excellence en éducation
CASSA-ACGCS
Equity and Excellence in Education

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**All websites and email addresses are active. Click them to connect immediately with various resources.*

Greetings from the Executive Director



Ken Bain

CASSA/ACGCS Executive Director

In 2020/2021, the Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) Board of Directors has updated and confirmed its *purpose*, *vision*, and “*who we are*.”

- **Purpose:** Strengthening the capacity of senior school system leaders through national dialogue and professional learning.
- **Vision:** Equity and excellence in education for each learner.
- **Who we are:** CASSA is the national network of senior school system leaders.

From 2021/2022, we engaged in strategic planning to update and align our work with the work from the previous year. Participants began by taking stock of CASSA progress in 2021, celebrating numerous activities and achievements, such as those related to participating in the national conversation about education, promoting and providing professional learning opportunities, and promoting communication and collaboration. They also acknowledged challenges related to COVID-19, and in several areas such as achieving national relevance or importance, membership numbers, budget and membership fees, impact, and selection of partners.

The first piece that the board completed was a long-term practical vision:

In three to five years, CASSA is a connected, Canada-wide Education System Network with a strong national voice in education that provides quality professional learning and impactful resource sharing to achieve equity and excellence in education for each learner.

Following that practical vision was the establishment of three strategic directions

The three strategic directions, which are intended to guide CASSA’s improvement efforts over the next two years ending in July 2024, are as follows:

1. Maximizing professional development opportunities for all school system leaders;
2. Strengthening communication and engagement with all members; and
3. Strengthening governance and operations.

Members of the board participate in committees that support each of these directions and work is already underway to achieve the goals that they established. The board also identified that the three strategic planning committees would report on progress at each board meeting by having strategic planning updates as a standing item each time we

meet. I’ll provide further updates as they become available.

National Advisory Council on Publicly Funded Public Education is a very new national council that includes CASSA, the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA), the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF), the First Nations Education Administrators Association, the Canadian Association of Deans of Education, the Canadian Association of Principals, the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF), and the Regroupement national des directions générales de l’éducation (RNDGE). I’ll provide additional details once we confirm our mandate and other organizational pieces as we form this national council.

Ken Bain

CASSA/ACGCS Executive Director

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Putting Data to Work:

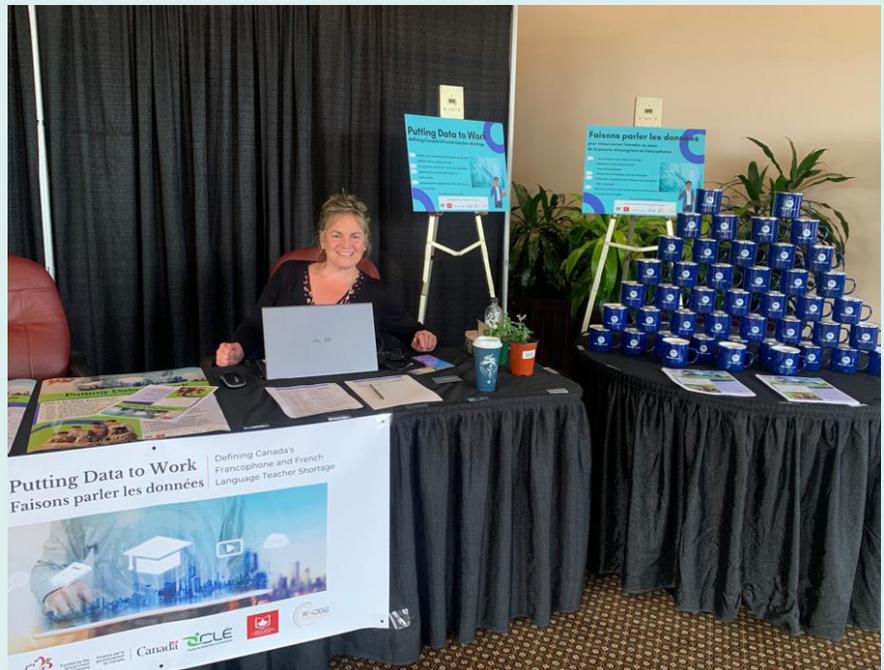
An Update on the French Language Teacher Shortage Data Project



Putting Data to Work
Faisons parler les données

By Tara Wittchen, Contributing Writer

As reported in the September 2021 issue of *Leaders & Learners*, Canadian school systems are facing French language teacher shortages. There are also significant barriers in recruiting, mobilizing, and retaining French Minority Language (FML) teachers and French Second Language (FSL) teachers.



Mary-Ann Zaubar-Hiscock attending the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Conference. Photos courtesy of Mary-Ann Zaubar-Hiscock.

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Project Objectives 2022-2023



Increase Project
Awareness



Engage New
Stakeholders



Develop Technology
Framework



Increase Buy-in from
Local School Systems

The Putting Data to Work/Faisons parler les données project objectives for 2022/2023. Graphics courtesy of Mary-Ann Zauhar-Hiscock.

Until very recently, there have not been any national collaborative efforts to gather data about the situation. That is changing, thanks to the Putting Data to Work/Faisons parler les données project.

Putting Data to Work aims to define the shortage of francophone teachers in minority language situations and French language teachers in French immersion and FSL programs. It is doing this by creating a nationwide, cloud-based technology framework that is secure, scalable, and automated.

“Our mandate is not to recommend any recruitment strategies or best practices to school systems but rather to provide them with information on which to base their decision making, plan their hiring, and predict trends in availability of francophone and French language teachers,” explains Mary-Ann Zauhar-Hiscock, an educational consultant and project manager for Putting Data to Work.

“Provinces and territories have been experiencing this shortage for several years. Our data collection will not only allow us to gain a better understanding of the variables affecting each school jurisdiction locally but will also define how each fit into a much larger picture within their province or territory and across the country.”

The project is funded by Canadian Heritage and is led by the Canadian School Board Association (CSBA) and la Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF), in collaboration with the Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA) and the Regroupement national des directions générales de l'éducation (RNDGÉ). Technology and AI development is provided by the Centre de leadership et d'évaluation (CLÉ) and SCIANCE Inc.

Having current and reliable data will help school systems across Canada as they develop strategies and solutions to these

ongoing issues. Putting Data to Work also helps national francophone and anglophone organizations promote dialogue between the members of an expanded network of stakeholders.

“We used our first year to dialogue with stakeholders, bring issues all were facing to a common table, promote awareness and engagement of the benefits of collecting this data across the country, and, through target groups from across Canada, identifying and validating data that would be pertinent to HR departments in workforce planning,” Mary-Ann says.

From February 2021 to March 2022, major steps accomplished include:

- Gathering research from across the country;
- Bringing partners in education to the table;
- Developing buy-in within national associations;
- Presenting to stakeholder groups;

- Developing ongoing relationships with partners;
- Identifying metrics with target groups in administration and human resources;
- Surveying school systems for feedback on metrics;
- Identifying relevant data;
- Launching five pilot projects in francophone systems in Prince Edward Island, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, and Ontario; and
- Designing a way for small school systems to connect directly to the infrastructure.

While the overall outcome of the project has not changed, Mary-Ann says, it became evident in this first phase that the way in which to build a sustainable, scalable technology framework had to take Putting Data to Work in another direction. The project team applied for an additional two years of support to let them take on the enormous task of creating a versatile tool that could be used to track a variety of educational data.

“Here’s the key part for all school systems: This technology infrastructure, once in place, does not have to only be used for French teacher data collection. The system will allow school systems to start tracking any kind of data. The potential of this tool is huge – if you take part, you’re left with a way to track any data needed in your own school system and connect to a national database. A school jurisdiction will be able to compare their own data to those of like jurisdictions by accessing dashboards and reports regarding the situation within their province or territory, or across the country.”

The finished product is going to be a rather sophisticated piece of technology and evolving artificial intelligence, she adds. “We partnered in technology with CLÉ, as they had a similar project in Ontario and established contacts in education, and with SCIANCE Inc., well-recognized in Canada for their work in the field of artificial intelligence.”

As a result, in its second phase, the project’s focus has been on developing a technology infrastructure that can collect data from each school system, aggregate these data, and transfer them to a cloud-based, secure national framework. This phase involves many steps, including developing resources to provide various levels of support to the school systems’ IT departments who will be working with the project.



A Call to Action!



We're putting data to work to fulfill FSL/FML teaching requirements across Canada.

Canada's French Teacher Data Project

Support learning by developing a sustainable and accessible pan-Canadian data infrastructure to collect, store and share accurate data that can be used to address the teacher shortage in French Minority Language settings and in French Second Language programs across Canada #PuttingDataToWork

[HTTPS://WWW.CDNSBA.ORG/FRENCH-LANGUAGE-TEACHERS](https://www.cdnsba.org/french-language-teachers)

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Appel à l'action!



Faisons parler les données pour répondre aux besoins des systèmes scolaires au Canada.

Projet pancanadien de collecte de données Pénurie d'enseignants francophones

Appui de l'apprentissage par l'élaboration d'une infrastructure pancanadienne de données évolutives et durables pour améliorer le recrutement et le maintien en poste d'enseignants et d'enseignantes dans les écoles de langue française en situation minoritaire ainsi qu'en programmes de français langue seconde #FaisonsParlerLesDonnées

[HTTPS://FNCSSF.CA/NOTRE-RESEAU/PENURIE-DENSEIGNANTS/](https://fncsf.ca/notre-reseau/penurie-denseignants/)

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“Given that resources differ from system to system and region to region, we are developing a technology that will remain automated but will nonetheless allow small boards without data management systems to be able to connect to the national database,” Mary-Ann says.

Work has already begun on pilot projects within five francophone systems.

“These participating school systems agreed to work with us to set up and test local dashboards and the automated upload of data regarding their schools,

recent job postings, and anonymous information about individual teachers – the anonymity of these individuals will be respected. These data will be transferred to a local integrator or, in the case of a very small school jurisdiction, uploaded directly to the cloud-based system.”

This fall, testing will begin on the flow of information from regional integrators to the cloud-based data infrastructure.

“ETL means extract, transfer, and load,” she explains. “Data will go through an integrator to then be aggregated and

A call to action: French Teacher Shortage in Canada



We're putting data to work to fulfill FSL/FML teaching requirements across Canada.



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- **School System Profile** (by year and by school): number of students, type of school, and school postal code (first three characters);
- **Available Positions** (by posting): type of position (term, probationary, FTE), subject area and specialty, date of posting, and school postal code; and
- **Staffing Profile** (by teacher and grade level): qualified or non-qualified, FTE and admin time, years of service, retirements (actual and anticipated), resignations, and school postal code.

Anglophone systems will be invited to be part of the project's next pilot. This will be another opportunity to make sure technical problems are worked out and that the information can be easily transferred to a local integrator and loaded to the cloud-based infrastructure. Once the technology is fully tested and ready to accommodate data from across the country, the project will launch the collection of data from all school systems across Canada.

The same amount of work is required no matter how many school systems are supported by the infrastructure, Mary-Ann says, but it's a lot easier to correct anything that goes wrong with five participating systems versus hundreds.

"This stage of developing the technology is crucial. This is where we establish the flow of communication and the flow of information, and this is where we take our time doing it because we want to eliminate any potential glitches in the system."

The project team has kept CASSA informed about how the project is moving forward, particularly with developing the technology framework. "CASSA board members are a vital part of our project in providing us with the opportunity to reach out to provincial and territorial organizations as well as to local jurisdictions," says Mary-Ann. "They are an integral link in the flow of communication to 300 anglophone school systems across Canada."

It's essential that all project partnerships be strong and collaborative, she says. "We are all striving to understand and define this shortage. The value in our collaboration is that each is aware of the issues and can better understand the variables affecting the situation."

Un appel à l'action : Pénurie d'enseignants francophones au Canada



Faisons parler les données pour répondre aux besoins des systèmes scolaires au Canada.



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loaded into the national database. The reason for that is this national database would require so much programming to have input from 328 school systems. If we integrate it provincially or regionally first and then load it, we're only going to have maybe 12 or 10 integrators, so we're dealing with data coming in from 10 sources as opposed to 328 sources."

All data will be anonymous, Mary-Ann confirms, and access to dashboards will provide overall pictures and statistics, not personal information or information that can be linked to any individual.

In its first year, the technology infrastructure will collect the following data to define the French language teacher shortage:

In the first phase, many superintendents and human resources directors took part in target groups to identify pertinent variables and validate them before the launch of pilot projects.

“We are now broadening our reach to include provincial and territorial system administrators, and CASSA plays a large role in facilitating these meetings and encouraging their members to participate,” Mary-Ann says. “CASSA will play an increasingly important role as we expand our reach to all school systems across the country.”

Since the project’s last roundtable, and as pandemic gathering restrictions were lifted, the Putting Data to Work project team has been able to attend more in-person events to promote the proposed technology and the value-added benefits to school systems.

“We were invited to facilitate a workshop for elected members at the CSBA Annual Congress in Saskatoon and we will have a presence at the FNCSF annual congress in Whitehorse. We have met in person and provided information to school board members through ASBA general meetings in Alberta and to system administrators at BC at the BCSSA fall conference. We have extended our reach to many provincial ministries, universities, and national education associations to ensure that all are kept informed of the progress we are making.”

Looking ahead to 2023/2024, the project has six key steps planned:

- **Promote** the database in provinces, territories, and local jurisdictions;
- **Expand** participation from five pilots to all francophone systems;
- **Design** and test local dashboards within five pilot anglophone systems;
- **Identify** provincial integrators for larger jurisdictions;
- **Create** secure, cloud-based framework for integrating the data; and
- **Launch** the national data collection.

There are several ways that CASSA members can help support the project, Mary-Ann says. Leaders can encourage their school system’s participation in the project, talk about the data infrastructure at their provincial or territorial table, raise awareness at the local level, invite the Putting Data to Work team to present at an event, and forward project

How can CASSA help?

- 1 Encourage your school systems’ participation in the project
- 2 Talk about the data infrastructure at your provincial/territorial table
- 3 Raise awareness at the local level
- 4 Invite us to present!
- 5 Forward project information to your school systems

information to staff within their local school system.

It may be helpful for school system leaders to ask themselves what they have heard from principals about the French language teacher shortage, what discussions have taken place at their administrators’ table, and what does the French language teacher shortage look like in their system.

Putting Data to Work mobilizes key partners in education through collaboration; generates accurate, standardized, quantitative data to define French teacher shortage; gathers input from school system administrators to determine what is relevant; commits to minimizing duplication of efforts for HR and IT departments; enhances workforce planning; and provides a versatile educational data collection tool with further potential.

“Our job was to create buy-in and to really build engagement with all these associations so that we could work together and broaden not just our networking system but our reach from the national to the provincial and territorial level – we did that in our first year,” Mary-Ann says. “But then we ran into the issue of how to do this so that it’s not a one-shot deal, so it’s not a project where we collect data and then it’s over?”

In 2022, she says, the vision is for a scalable database that can be returned to year after year. “We want to build something that will, in a timely manner, collect data for each school system and allow them to do a comparative analysis of what’s happening in other provinces or perhaps within the Canadian picture.”

Putting Data to Work is truly a value-added project. It will be an impressive and comprehensive data collection infrastructure. It will help system leaders gain a better understanding of the variables affecting the French language teacher shortage; inform decision-making in all matters of recruitment and retention of French teachers; provide access to accurate standardized data from across Canada, support access to federal financing; develop a versatile technology framework that allows for data collection in all areas of education; and promote open dialogue between ministries, universities, and school systems to collaborate in taking on challenges and preserving programs.

To stay up to date on the latest information about the project, check the CASSA website and social media. To get involved in upcoming pilot projects, signal your interest to your regional CASSA affiliate, or contact Mary-Ann Zauhar-Hiscock at mazauhar@gmail.com. ○

Students in French immersion programs (Canada)

2000–2001 = 277,839
 2005–2006 = 295,197
 2010–2011 = 341,613
 2015–2016 = 428,625
 2019–2020 = 487,185

Students in francophone minority schools (Canada)

2000–2001 = 255,381
 2005–2006 = 249,390
 2010–2011 = 239,841
 2015–2016 = 244,584
 2019–2020 = 259,410

Source: Statistics Canada

Mark Your Calendars for CASSA's Annual Conference in 2023!



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July 5-7, 2023

Victoria, British Columbia

The CASSA Annual Conference looks forward to seeing you in beautiful Victoria, British Columbia, in 2023! Re-connect school system leaders from across Canada to learn and share information on current topics in education. **Save the date!**



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