

SOMMET SUR L'ANIMATION CULTURELLE



The role, importance, and recommendations for the successful
future of cultural enablement in Franco-Ontarian schools

Presented to the Ministry of Education of Ontario

By la Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne



Summary report
2022



MESSAGE FROM FESFO

Forty years ago, FESFO produced an opinion paper entitled *L'opinion du principal acteur*. This document, which was the result of consultations with 1,300 young Franco-Ontarians, focused on education. The first in a long series of documents on other equally important subjects, *L'opinion du principal acteur* helped FESFO position itself as the voice of high school students and, eventually, of all youth. The document, much of which is as relevant and timely today as it was 40 years ago, emphasizes the importance of recognizing the essential role of students and youth in the school system, not only as service users, but also as actors and leaders in their communities. This was the birth of today's well-known concept of *Par et Pour* (By and For). Originally, this was a rallying call for Franco-Ontarian youth who made it loud and clear that they wanted to play a key role in any decision impacting them.

Many things have changed since 1982. At that time, Franco-Ontarian youth did not yet have access to French-language secondary education in homogeneous institutions. There were French language schools and mixed schools. Fortunately, thanks to numerous representations, demands and, above all, a great deal of perseverance on the part of parents, community leaders, teachers, stakeholders at all levels of the education system and students, we now have 471 fully French-language schools managed by French-language school boards (Le Centre franco, 2020).

Many of the recommendations and wishes expressed by the students at that time are now part of today's reality, including the following :

"That school boards provide the necessary resources to implement cultural enablement services. Cultural enablement activities can vary in their format. What is important to us is the availability of a person who can work closely with the student groups involved." (FESFO, 1982)

Forty years later, we have embarked on a major consultation exercise with our members in order to assess where we are with respect to cultural enablement. This document presents the most accurate and representative opinions possible of students in terms of their needs, aspirations and hopes regarding cultural enablement.

We wish to acknowledge the tireless commitment of teachers, principals, cultural and community leaders as well as parents. Without your support, passion and confidence in our talents, abilities and leadership, none of what we do today would be possible.

We would also like to thank the stakeholders, school staff, principals, Ministry contacts, past FESFO members, and community leaders who contributed to this document through meetings, group facilitation, and interviews. Your perspectives and stories have given us a more complete picture of the issues at hand, the questions we needed to address, and the elements that influence decisions.

We hope that the information we have gathered – which will be shared – will serve to create spaces that promote dialogue, collaboration, cooperation and sharing. Our objective is clear: to demonstrate the importance of continuing to invest in the development of our Franco-Ontarian culture and to promote it in the same way in all regions.

Happy reading.

¹ Animation culturelle is generally defined as a method and set of practices that promote the participation of a group's members in the community through cultural activities. While there is no widespread equivalent term or concept in English, it has been translated here as "cultural enablement" for ease of reading.

SUMMARY

The *Politique d'aménagement linguistique* (Language Planning Policy), which is the result of an extensive community consultation and research process, is celebrating its 18th anniversary. Eighteen is the age when Franco-Ontarian students have already left high school and entered the job market, started college or university, or embarked on other paths. There is therefore an entire generation of young people who have grown up in an environment which prioritized building their Francophone identity, developing their language skills and fostering their sense of belonging to the community, from early childhood until the end of their high school years.

It is in this perspective of recognizing the past and looking to the future that **FESFO** undertook a consultation process on cultural enablement (*animation culturelle*) to highlight success stories, identify current issues and recommend various courses of action to the **Ministry of Education** in order to address these issues, build effective learning environments and create opportunities for dynamic Francophone community projects, while reflecting the dreams and aspirations of youth. This report articulates what was said by the students and stakeholders who participated in the consultation.

During the course of preparing the state of things, a number of issues emerged as priorities that should guide the Ministry and stakeholders when making decisions about cultural enablement.

On several occasions, students expressed their concerns about the **disparity in cultural enablement services** from one school board to another and even from one school to another within the same school board.

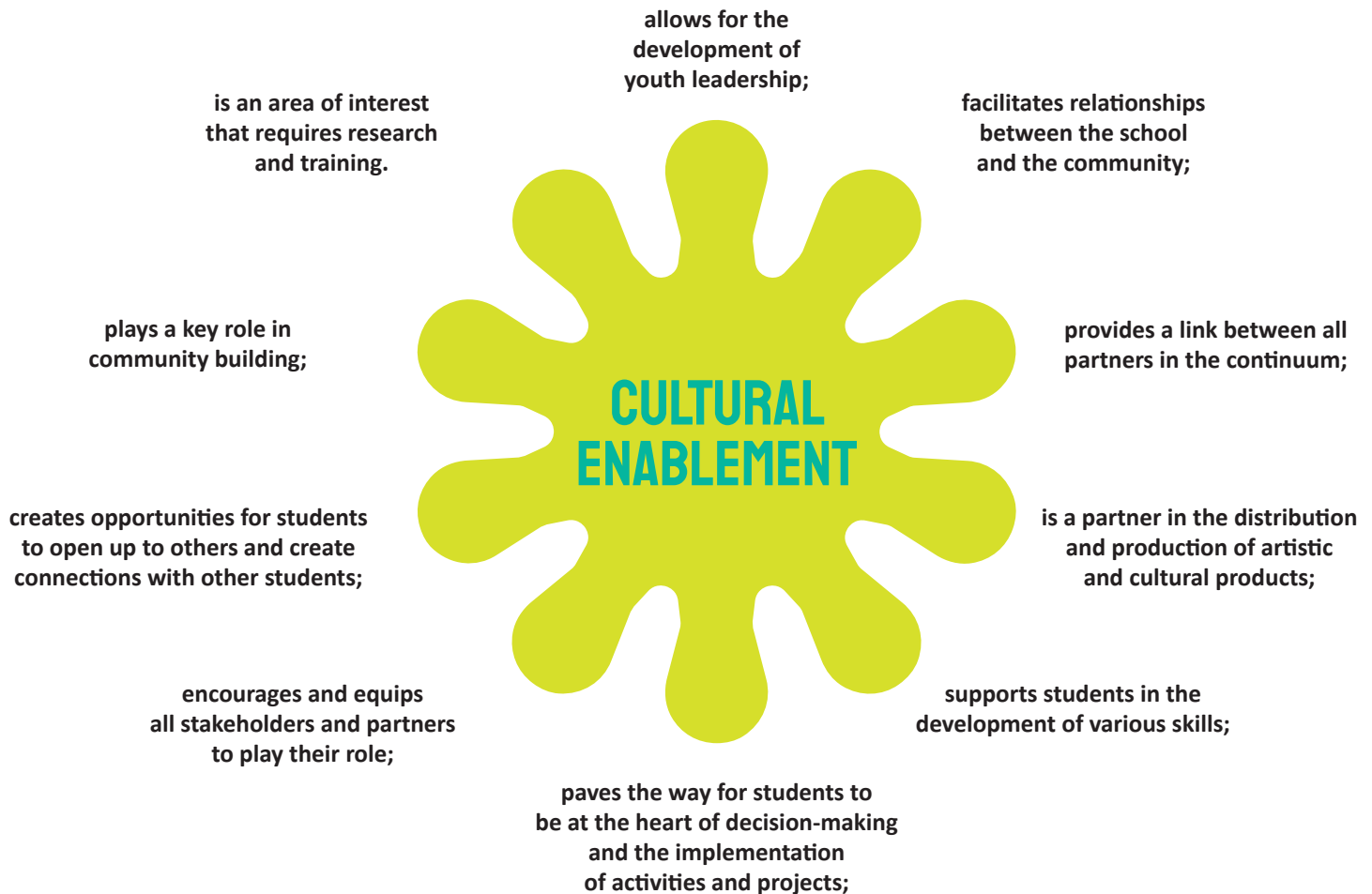
The consultation was conducted in a post-pandemic context, and the majority of discussions were held virtually. Among the students who took part in the consultation, many had never participated in in-person cultural enablement activities. Those who had experienced in-person cultural facilitation activities prior to the pandemic felt strongly that cultural enablement activities that were only offered virtually were not a viable option. Overall, students and stakeholders believe that a **post-pandemic cultural enablement intervention model** combining the best of in-person benefits and virtual opportunities is now needed to provide the best experience.

The potential of the **full continuum from early childhood to post-secondary education** requires special attention. The impact of a concerted and shared vision is invaluable. It is therefore essential to ensure that all partners work together to articulate this vision.

Naturally, the students and stakeholders of the **Centre Jules-Léger Consortium** were involved in the consultation process. While all of the recommendations apply to the Consortium, some elements of the report and some recommendations address issues specific to these students and stakeholders.

The consultation exercise helped to clarify the **role and importance of cultural enablement**. The following priorities were identified:





Finally, the consultation made it possible to identify 13 key recommendations that would make it possible to realize the ideas expressed and thus ensure that cultural enablement is at the forefront for maximum impact.

Here is a summary of the **THIRTEEN recommendations** as developed by the **Labo FESFO, focus animation culturelle**:

- 1 • Implement a structured feedback process led by **FESFO**
- 2 • Develop and track performance indicators
- 3 • Ensure the implementation of initial and ongoing training in the field of cultural enablement
- 4 • Develop a concerted strategy outlining a competency profile for those responsible for cultural enablement
- 5 • Ensure an equitable funding formula
- 6 • Ensure funding for student-to-student opportunities
- 7 • Recognize the essential role that **FESFO** plays
- 8 • Facilitate collaboration among continuum partners
- 9 • Invest in a cultural enablement service offer for students in grades 7 and 8
- 10 • Create a research fund
- 11 • Support communities through resource development
- 12 • Ensure the delivery of the Leadership course, GPP30
- 13 • Reserve resources for the **Centre Jules-Léger Consortium** to ensure full participation



THIRTEEN KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

During the consultations, students and the **Labo** developed 13 key recommendations. In order to implement them, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education guarantee the required investment to ensure that human, budgetary, physical and organizational resources are available so that students can realize their ideas, initiatives and projects.

1 • IMPLEMENTING A FEEDBACK MECHANISM

It is recommended that a feedback and consultation process be established with students so that they are at the heart of any decision-making. It is proposed that this process be carried out by **FESFO**, the official representative of Franco-Ontarian youth. Any consultation exercise on cultural enablement should include a budget, resources, objectives and expected outcomes. The more students are engaged in all decision-making aspects, the more they will develop the skills necessary to meet the challenges of the future.

2 • CREATING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Over the next two years, it is recommended that a set of performance indicators be developed for cultural enablement. These indicators will be used to track and measure the impact of any actions and strategies implemented by schools, school boards and partners. These performance indicators would include clear targets and metrics.

3 • INVESTING IN TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

It is recommended that on-the-job training be mandatory for cultural facilitators in school boards and schools:

- a. This training could take the form of a certificate and be delivered by one of the universities in the Franco-Ontarian university network.
 - i. This certificate should focus on the following:
 1. The foundations of education in a minority setting and identity building
 2. Understanding the Francophone and community context
 3. Exploring and applying strategies for planning, implementing and evaluating activities and programs
 4. How to intervene in a context of diversity for equity and inclusion
 5. Knowing, understanding and promoting the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
 6. Models and practices for actions in schools
 7. The child and adolescent development continuum and strategies for skill development
- b. This certificate should be recognized as professional development. Credits earned would be transferable to a Bachelor of Education program.
- c. In addition, it is recommended that the annual training offered by the Ministry of Education be continued with updated content based on current affairs.

4 • DEVELOPING A COMPETENCY PROFILE

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education support and encourage school boards in the development of a competency profile for cultural facilitators to ensure a baseline.

- a. It is recommended that a general profile be developed which school boards would then complete by adding elements that are specific to their realities. This profile would help narrow the current gap and recognize the professional nature of the cultural facilitator role, and would include a competency profile, a standard job description, performance indicators and evaluation criteria.



5 • ENSURING EQUITABLE FUNDING

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education provide equitable funding for school boards. The funding formula must take into account regional characteristics, remoteness, cultural isolation, access to French language resources, etc.

6 • CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET: A KEY STRATEGY WITH A GUARANTEED IMPACT

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education set aside a funding envelope to support initiatives that connect students with community stakeholders and role models. These role models should come from a variety of backgrounds and represent a variety of industries (e.g. arts, sports, politics, business). Meetings should help students project themselves into a Francophone future and thus give meaning to their language and culture and inspire the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

In all circumstances, students should take part in identifying and choosing the speakers, based on identified objectives and targets. The meetings will thus take on greater meaning and have a greater impact.

7 • WORKING WITH FESFO AS AN ESSENTIAL PARTNER

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education formally recognize the vital role of **FESFO** as an essential partner in the development of provincial youth leadership and that the resources necessary to fulfill this role be set aside. A strong youth network ensures strong future leadership. **FESFO** must have adequate financial resources to develop and implement programs to fully assume its role and develop a strong youth leadership network. Numerous stories gathered during the consultation confirm the importance of **FESFO** programs and activities for the future of the community.

8 • ENSURING CONTINUUM CONSULTATION

In the coming year, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education establish a committee representing all parts of the continuum. This committee would liaise between the various partners in the continuum, from early childhood to postsecondary education. This committee will implement cultural enablement programming throughout the continuum. It is also recommended that FESFO be the youth representative on this committee and that it ensure high school students are represented.

9 • RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF CULTURAL ENABLEMENT FOR GRADES 7 AND 8

It is recommended that a strategy be developed for the development of cultural enablement services specifically for grades 7 and 8. We believe that a specific strategy to meet their needs would have a significant impact on their cultural perseverance and on student retention.

10 • INVESTING IN A RESEARCH FUND

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education establish a research fund for issues related to cultural enablement. This fund would be used to support research and provide the school community with evidence to inform future actions. The establishment of a research chair could be the result of a collaboration between Franco-Ontarian postsecondary institutions, school organizations and community partners.

11 • RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Given that the school is a cornerstone of the Francophone community, a meeting place, a community space, a facilitator of connections, and an opportunity for students to discover their community, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education develop resources to support school boards in enabling greater community collaboration. By fostering co-creative processes between community and school partners, it will be possible to create strong and sustainable relationships, maximize the use of resources, and coordinate efforts to create vibrant environments in our communities that give greater meaning to culture and language for students.

12 • ENSURING THE AVAILABILITY OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP COURSE FOR ALL ONTARIO STUDENTS

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education encourage school boards to offer and deliver the Leadership PCG30 course where it is not available, beginning in September 2023. This course would recognize students' involvement in their communities and support them in developing their skills. We recommend that the Ministry of Education and school boards be creative in making this course available to students at all times. **FESFO** believes that the French-language Virtual Learning Consortium could be a valuable partner in making this recommendation a reality.

- a. This course could be delivered virtually as a provincial or regional course, thus increasing access for all
- b. This course could allow students to develop leadership skills and apply their learning within their school and community
- c. This course could include an internship of a certain number of hours, allowing students to complete their volunteer hours with community organizations such as **FESFO**, while being accompanied by a mentor
- d. Cultural leaders could support students in the development of initiatives and projects to be implemented in the school and in the community.

13 • MAKING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE CENTRE JULES-LÉGER CONSORTIUM

It is recommended that resources be made available to the Centre Jules-Léger Consortium to enable the full participation of students in hearing community activities and the development of programming to create links with the deaf community as well.



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of the consultation process are relatively clear. First and foremost, the consultations confirmed the importance of cultural enablement in the Franco-Ontarian educational environment. The dozens and dozens of stories collected during the process not only confirmed this, but also identified several good practices, avenues for improvement, development initiatives, as well as themes to be explored in future scientific research, both quantitative and qualitative.

A language and culture that has no life outside the walls of a school has no anchor and cannot be sustained. Creating links between young people, between young people and school staff, between different schools and between the school and its community, remains essential. It is through dialogue, collaboration, and cooperation among all stakeholders that the desired results will be achieved: preserving the language, developing a sense of belonging, building skills and promoting the Francophone community.

If cultural enablement is the ultimate tool to create these links, to foster communication and sharing, to initiate projects that allow the Francophone community to live and grow, it is without a doubt a tool that ensures the inclusion, development, and commitment of youth: **Aujourd'hui pour demain.**



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APPROACH AND REPORT PREPARED FOR FESFO BY:

