French-Language Education in Simcoe County

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Theory and Policy Studies
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

French-Language Education in Simcoe County
Master of Arts, 2001
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This thesis traces the development of French-language and French-second-language education in public schools in Simcoe County. It examines the challenge of reconciling the French and English languages and cultures, which dominates Simcoe County, and indeed, Canada's history. It reviews the role of legislation, both federal and provincial, in the creation and implementation of French-language programs in Ontario. It recounts the attempts that have been made to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap that exists between the English and French, by government and individuals alike; and the success of Simcoe County's extended French classes in achieving this. The students in the extended French program seem to have a greater respect and understanding of the duality that exists in our country, an understanding that is essential to national unity.

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter one examines the historical context of French in Simcoe County, concentrating on the Penetanguishene and Lafontaine areas. Chapter two examines government policy, at the federal and provincial levels, that was and is relevant to French-language education. Chapter three examines the French-second-language programs in Simcoe County and the individuals who sought to implement more comprehensive programs. Chapter four examines the existing extended French program in Simcoe County at Barrie Central Collegiate, in order to assess its strengths, weaknesses and future direction.
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INTRODUCTION

The undertaking of a task as momentous as that of writing a thesis is bound to include some complications and crisis. Those complications, which affect the integrity and accuracy of this thesis, relate to missing materials and personnel issues at the Simcoe County Board of Education. Careful searches of the School Board office, Simcoe County Archives and Ontario Archives failed to uncover primary documents and reports revealing the history of the struggle for French-language education and programs in Simcoe County. In light of this, it is possible that information from interviews and telephone conversations might prove to be inaccurate at a later date if any of this material is discovered or recovered from other sources. It is almost certain that the documentation no longer exists, as per Board officials, who believe that all materials were destroyed and disposed of prior to 1990 when the Board moved to its new office in Midhurst.

As well, a brief explanation of Ontario’s French programs is necessary to understand the differences amongst them. Core French is mandated from grades four to nine. Students take one period of French a day for twenty minutes in grade four and forty minutes in grades five through eight at the elementary level, and complete a minimum of one hundred and ten hours, usually in grade nine, at the secondary level. Extended French requires students to study in French for a half day at the elementary level and to complete seven courses at the secondary level, including the Ontario Academic Credit course. Immersion French requires students to study for the full day in French at the elementary level and to complete a minimum of ten courses at the secondary level, including the Ontario Academic Credit course. Immersion French is divided into three categories, early
immersion begins at the primary level, middle immersion begins at the junior level and late immersion begins at the intermediate level. These three programs allow students to meet a basic, middle or top level of achievement based on the number of accumulated hours at the end of their French studies. These correspond to twelve hundred hours to attain the basic level of achievement, twenty-one hundred hours to attain the middle level of achievement and five thousand hours to attain the top level of achievement.
CHAPTER 1
THE FRENCH IN SIMCOE COUNTY

Exposing all of the children of the province to a meaningful period of French instruction can be supported on historical, cultural, political, and educational grounds.

Report of the Ministerial Committee on the Teaching of French (Gillin Report) - 1974

The British North America (BNA) Act recognised the presence of two founding nations, the French and the British, when the Dominion of Canada came into being on July 1, 1867. Almost two hundred and sixty years prior to this, the first permanent European settlement in North America was established by Samuel de Champlain, entrenching the French language, culture and institutions in the communities that were built along the St. Lawrence River. Champlain did not limit his exploration to the area that is today known as Quebec, sending members of his expedition to explore along the rivers and lakes of all of New France. The first European to reach Huronia, now known as North Simcoe County, was an eighteen-year-old Frenchman named Étienne Brulé. His arrival marked the beginning of centuries of French habitation in the area. The longstanding French presence in Simcoe County is inextricably linked to the establishment of French-first-language and French-second-language education in the County, influencing and being influenced by federal and provincial legislation as well as community members and the Simcoe County Board of Education.
The story of the French in Simcoe County began with the arrival of Étienne Brûlé in 1610. Sent from Quebec by Champlain, Brûlé was to learn all he could of the Huron Nation's language, customs, resources and geography. He later acted as an interpreter and chief organiser of the Huron fur trade with the French. As Brûlé was establishing the fur-trade business, the French Roman Catholic Recollet Order arrived in Huronia to found a mission. Father Joseph Le Caron was the first French missionary to celebrate mass in Huronia, in 1615, but the rigours and challenges of the work led to the Order being replaced by the Jesuits in 1626. The Jesuits, led by Jean de Brébeuf, spent only three years in Huronia before returning to France after New France fell into the hands of the English, but their dedication to the Huron people brought them back in 1634. Brébeuf and the Jesuit priests returned to re-establish their mission work, founding the mission of St. Joseph near present day Midland-Penetanguishene. An early description tells us that, "La maison-mère de Sainte-Marie I sera construite sur les bords de la rivière Wye, près de Midland, en 1639." Sainte-Marie, as the mission was known, was to become Ontario's first European settlement. It was staffed by the missionaries, priests, lay brothers, hired help and novices, who worked to bring Christianity to the Huron and other native people living in the Great Lakes region.

The Huron Wars, which erupted in 1641 and continued until 1651, led to the destruction of the mission. The missionaries fled to nearby Christian Island with Huron converts in 1649 from whence they dispersed in 1651. Over the next century the territory became the domain of the Iroquois and Ojibway people, although French fur traders often

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1 Paul-François Sylvestre, Penetang: L'École de la Résistance (Ottawa: Prise de Parole, 1980), 11. The first Sainte-Marie motherhouse was to be constructed on the banks of the Wye River, close to Midland, in 1639.
passed by way of Lake Simcoe on their way to the Michilimackinac trading post, thereby maintaining a French presence in the area. After England won control of much of North America in the 1750s and 1760s, certain rights of the French-speaking inhabitants were recognised and preserved through the Quebec Act of 1774, including French civil law, Roman Catholicism and the seigneurial system. The importance of Lake Simcoe and Huronia was secured as a key passageway to Fort Michilimackinac, built by the English in 1761, and located on the strait between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. The area remained sparsely populated by Europeans until after the War of 1812-1815, although a few English settlers began to arrive in Southern Huronia in 1759.

The area was officially named Simcoe County in 1793, when Governor Simcoe visited Huronia and named Lake Simcoe after his father, Captain Simcoe. In 1798, a treaty was concluded with the Ojibway, which allowed Governor Simcoe to begin constructing a naval fort in the Penetanguishene Harbour. Further negotiations led to treaties being signed between the government and the native people, allowing road construction to start from the Lake Simcoe portage, now Barrie, to Penetanguishene Harbour. Completed in 1811, the Penetanguishene Road, now Highway 93, was used to transport French furs traders goods from Lake Huron to York, present-day Toronto. The route was popular as it avoided passing by Lake Erie and the American frontier, as well as making the area accessible to new colonists.

The first wave of permanent settlers, joining the French-speaking fur traders who manned the trading posts, arrived as the result of a boundary decision made after the War of 1812. Drummond Island, located on the northwest part of Lake Huron, was awarded to the United States in the border survey of 1822 and officially turned over to the
Americans in 1828. The British garrison, stationed on Drummond Island, relocated to the Penetanguishene naval establishment where they were granted land by the British government. Along with the British soldiers came a group of *voyageurs* who had worked at the post and fought with the British against American attacks. David Dupuis, a local historian, states that, "These men of French-Canadian and Indian heritage had shown an intense loyalty to the British army during the war of 1812-1814." Many of these new French settlers would become guides for the military men and visitors to Huronia for years to come. Their descendants founded villages in Coldwater, Penetanguishene, Waubaushene and Victoria Harbour.

Settlement of the area continued into the 1840’s, with the arrival of pioneers from the County of Champlain in Quebec to the Lafontaine area. Many of their progeny continue to live in the area, and names such as Marchildon, Toutant, Maurice and Marchand would play an important role in the language disputes in Simcoe County in the 1970s and 1980s. These pioneers where followed by another wave of immigrants from the County of Joliette, who arrived looking for the prime farmland that they had heard was abundant in the area. Much of this land was taken, but the new arrivals chose to stay anyway and their names are still prominent in the area. In particular, the family names Beausoleil, DesRoches and Laurin are frequently heard, having lent themselves to the naming of the local geography. The final group of settlers arrived from the Counties of Vaudreuil and Soulanges in the 1850s and 1860s. Their expertise lay not in farming, but in the forest and timber trades. They settled in the southern part of Huronia, forming the

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2 David Michael Dupuis, *Welcome to the Place of the White Rolling Sands* (Penetanguishene: Austria Printing, 1990), 18.
French community of Perkinsfield. The French settlements in the northern part of Simcoe County made it one of the most populous areas north of York in the mid-1800s.

As Simcoe County grew, and its communities became firmly entrenched, inhabitants turned their thoughts to constructing schools. Andrew Hunter, Simcoe County’s best-known historian, estimated that prior to 1843, there were approximately fifty common schools in operation in the Simcoe County area. The School Act of 1841 led to an increase of another thirty-three schools by the year 1847. The Upper Canada Common School Act of 1843 led to the creation of the office of Township Superintendent of Schools in each of Simcoe’s twelve existing townships. The Common School Law of 1850 authorised school trustees and local superintendents to issue certificates of qualification to teachers in each county, which in turn brought about the creation of the Simcoe County Board of Public Instruction in 1851. The majority of the local superintendents were clergymen of the Protestant denomination, which was a source of concern for those of the Roman Catholic faith seeking to establish separate schools for their children. The Separate School Clause was included in the Act of 1853 to protect the establishment of Roman Catholic schools in Ontario. By 1859, there were four Roman Catholic separate schools in Simcoe County, in Nottawasaga, Orillia, Vespra and Barrie, as compared to ninety public, or Protestant, schools. The first District, later County, school in Simcoe to receive provincial government funding was the Barrie Grammar School in 1843. Local English-language public High Schools were established in Bradford, Collingwood and Orillia between 1857 and 1876.

In Ontario in the 1800s, the separate schools were maintained by the local Roman Catholic clergy. The Catholic Brothers and Sisters operated the separate schools,
opening them to all students of the Roman Catholic denomination. The development of French-language education in Simcoe County began with home schooling in the Penetanguishene area, followed by the opening of small parish schools. The first parish school opened in 1885, when the Sisters of Sainte-Croix organised a school to serve the population of about fifteen hundred people in Lafontaine. The English-speaking Sisters of Saint-Joseph replaced the French-speaking Sisters of Sainte-Croix in 1893 as the result of a misunderstanding in the community. The Sisters of Saint-Joseph, who came from Toronto, found it difficult to educate the French-Canadian population of Lafontaine, but continued to teach there until 1927.

The first public school in Penetanguishene was an English-language school, established in 1847. Despite the fact that the majority of students spoke French, the District of Simcoe resolved to teach only in English. Daniel Marchildon writes of this inequity that, "En ces premières années elle compte 49 élèves dont seulement 4 anglophones."3 Six smaller schools did continue to teach in French, including those in Perkinsfield and Lefaive's Corner. These local French language schools were not of great concern to the provincial Department of Education until Egerton Ryerson became Superintendent of Education in 1844. Although he prescribed French as part of the course of study for the grammar school, later named secondary school, he severely limited the right to teach in French. Father Brunelle, head of church and school in Penetanguishene, found it necessary to send three nuns to take summer courses in French in order to assist grade one French-speaking students succeed in their studies. He asked for and received approval from Bishop McGuigan to begin to educate local students in a

1 Daniel Marchildon. *La Huronie* (Ottawa: Le centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques, 1984), 157. In the school's first few years there were 49 students, four of whom were anglophones.
bilingual manner. This practice continued when the Penetanguishene Public School was
officially opened in 1874. About the same time that the school opened its doors, an anti-
French sentiment began growing in the Huronia region.

Despite the fact that the BNA Act of 1867 recognised the official status of French
and English in the parliament and federal courts in Canada, local English-speaking
inhabitants felt threatened by the use of French. This anti-French sentiment was not
contained to the Simcoe County area, but was prevalent all across Ontario. In 1885, after
the hanging of Louis Riel, the French-speaking traitor or hero depending on whether you
were English or French, the Ontario government required that all teachers speak English
and teach their classes at least partially in English. Since the majority of the teachers in
French-language schools were francophones from Quebec, many did not speak English
well, nor did they have the ability to teach two hours a day in English. From 1890
onward, it was mandated by the provincial government that English be the language of
communication in the school and with the community. Further to this, the Ontario
government opened an inquiry into the level of education in French-language schools in
1910. Francis Merchant, Chief Inspector of Schools, was charged with conducting the
study and writing his conclusions in a provincial report.

Merchant's report became the basis for the infamous and much hated Règlement
17 or Regulation 17. In it, he proposed improvements in teacher training and the
curriculum used in French-language schools, as well as the restriction of French to the
first two grades of school. Franco-Ontarians viewed Regulation 17 as an attack against
their language and culture and took measures to protect and preserve their rights. In
1910, they founded an organisation called L'Association canadienne-française
This organisation began to formulate a list of political demands, supporting them on the basis of historical, legal and constitutional fact, which guaranteed French-language minority education rights. They began to demand education in French as a right, not a privilege. The ACFÉO co-ordinated all efforts to repeal Regulation 17. They began a letter-writing campaign asking all French Roman Catholic Bishops and French parents to write the government demanding the right to French-language schools. It is important to remember that language and religion were seen as a single entity at this time, pitting French Catholics against English Protestants.

The ACFÉO contested the legality of Regulation 17 before the Supreme Court of Ontario, citing that the British North America Act of 1867, which served as Canada's Constitution until 1982, states in section 93:

In and for each Province the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education, subject and according to the following Provisions:
(1) Nothing in any such Law shall prejudicially affect any Right or Privilege with respect to Denominational Schools which any Class of Persons have by Law in the Province at the Union:
(2) All the Powers, Privileges and Duties at the Union by Law conferred and imposed in Upper Canada on the Separate Schools and School Trustees of the Queen's Roman Catholic Subjects shall be and the same are hereby extended to the Dissentient Schools of the Queen's Protestant and Roman Catholic Subjects in Quebec:
(3) Where in any Province a System of Separate or Dissentient Schools exists by Law at the Union or is thereafter established by the Legislature of the Province, an Appeal shall lie to the Governor General in Council from any Act or Decision of any Provincial Authority affecting any Right or Privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic Minority of the Queen's Subjects in relation to Education:
(4) In case any such Provincial Law as from Time to Time seems to the Governor General in Council requisite for the Execution of the Provisions of this Section is not made, or in case any Decision of the Governor General in Council on any Appeal under this Section is not duly executed by the proper Provincial Authority in that Behalf, then and in every such Case, and as far as the Circumstances of each Case require, the Parliament of Canada may make remedial Laws for the due Execution of the
Provisions of this Section and of any Decision of the Governor General in Council under this Section. (British North America Act 1867)

The ACFÉO used the BNA Act as the legal basis of their court challenge to provide French-language education in Ontario. They rallied support in Ontario's French communities and thus began to create a unified French front, opening dialogue amongst the francophones scattered throughout the province.

The ACFÉO founded a newspaper, *Le Droit*, in Ottawa, which helped to disseminate information to Franco-Ontarians province-wide and prepare them for the battle that would last the next eighty years. The relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and Franco-Ontarians was such that the English Roman Catholic Separate School Board (RCSSB) supported the ACFÉO in their fight for French-language schools. The Ontario government decided to withhold grant money usually given to separate schools when this alliance became apparent, and the RCSSB retaliated by closing all French and English separate schools in 1914. The schools were forced to reopen after an injunction filed by the Department of Education was upheld by the Supreme Court of Ontario. The provincial government next took steps to dismantle the separate school board in Ottawa, firing elected members and appointing new members of their choice. The Privy Council, in London, England, declared the new School Board Commission illegal in 1916, and the elected members were reinstated. Throughout the province, government resistance to Regulation 17 continued to manifest itself in a variety of ways. Most French schools, under the advice of the ACFÉO, simply shut their doors to provincial inspectors and set up residence in a neighbourhood home.

The ACFÉO continued to protest, petition, strike, take legal action and maintain French-language schools until 1920. The government, for their part, persisted in
upholding Regulation 17. In Simcoe County, Regulation 17 had a limited effect on schooling due to the restricted amount of French in use in publicly funded schools. In Penetanguishene, the teacher, Miss Donnelly, forbade the use of French in the school and declared that the students' use of French caused them to perform poorly on provincial examinations. The situation was very different in nearby Lafontaine where two hundred students studied in French under the tutelage of the Catholic Brothers and Sisters. Provincially, tensions continued to grow over the French-language school dispute, with neither side willing to compromise. Then, the ACFÉO decided to try a different tactic to diffuse the situation.

The ACFÉO took a new approach in 1923, developing bilingual teaching programs of a high calibre to educate French-speaking teachers. They created bilingual examinations to allow teachers access to the University of Ottawa its bilingual normal school, in which the principles and practices of standardised teaching were taught. These new teacher-training programs helped to ensure that French-speaking teachers had the ability to teach effectively in both French and English and to the satisfaction of the provincial school inspectors. In 1925, a school inspector, James Hughes, was invited to inspect the French schools in Ottawa. He reported that the students were able to communicate in English just as well as their anglophone peers. The ACFÉO next step was to enlist the help of Ontario's anglophones to the French-language minority school cause. The Unity League, as it was known, demanded equal educational rights for French students. They claimed that the French linguistic minority in Ontario was legally entitled, under the BNA Act, to French-language schooling. The group picked up momentum and gained the support of English-speaking university professors.
businessmen and journalists. The *ACFÉO* then decided to run members in the next provincial election in order to have direct involvement in the creation of government policy.

The *ACFÉO* continued to litigate and was able to persuade the government to form a second commission to investigate the issue of French-language education in 1925. The commission, headed again by Dr. F.W. Merchant, submitted its report in 1927. This time, the Premier of Ontario, G.H. Ferguson, chose to accept the suggested recommendations. Although Regulation 17 was not repealed until 1944, it was dramatically modified. The modifications, which were immediately put into effect, managed to make Regulation 17 completely ineffective. Changes were such that, "Le Règlement 17 continuerait d'exister, mais que les Franco-Ontariens pourraient établir et maintenir des écoles là où la demande justifiait avec l'approbation du ministre de l'Éducation; le français serait reconnu comme langue de communication et d'enseignement; le ministère de l'Éducation reconnaîtrait l'École normale de l'Université d'Ottawa; des écoles secondaires françaises pourraient être établies; les inspecteurs francophones seraient responsables des écoles françaises." Regulation 17 would be of particular importance in Penetanguishene in the 1970s, since it succeeded in uniting the French population scattered across Ontario. As a result of this new French alliance, support would be much easier to muster the next time such a battle was to take place; support that would be vital in Penetanguishene's future plaint.

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4Garfield Newman, * REGARD SUR LE CANADA* (Montreal: Chenelière-McGraw-Hill, 2001), 415. Regulation 17 remained in force, but Franco-Ontarians could establish and maintain schools where the demand is great enough with the approval of the Ministry of Education; French would be recognised as the language of communication and teaching; the Ministry of Education would recognise the normal school at the University of Ottawa; secondary schools could be established; French inspectors would be responsible for French schools.
Although French elementary education became firmly established after the modification of Regulation 17, secondary education was still in peril. Low salaries for teaching staff and a lack of textbooks and resources in French made the development of effective French secondary education almost impossible. In Simcoe County, there was no French secondary school until 1933, when Penetanguishene Secondary School (PSS) opened and provided students with the opportunity to study in French or English. This was possible due to Father Brunelle who organised the teaching of special French courses for interested French-speaking students. Unfortunately, the impact of the Great Depression led to the Penetanguishene School Commission choosing to reduce costs by withdrawing French courses from the curriculum. At this time, the French community of nearby Lafontaine began to demand that a continuation school, teaching grades nine and ten, be created to allow francophone students to study beyond the elementary level.

After meeting with much resistance from the local school board, Lafontaine parents succeeded in getting permission to open a school when the District School Commission agreed to redraw the municipal boundary. Lafontaine was thereby able to avoid any competition for students with the nearby high school. In September 1944, the Continuation B School was opened to thirty-five French-speaking students in grades nine and ten. The school educated on average fifty-five students each year for the twenty-two years that it was open. The francophone newspaper, Le Droit, ran an article in March of 1948 estimating the number of francophone students being educated in French in the Simcoe area, stating that, "...la population candienne-française dans les écoles de la région à 1 063 élèves repartis dans 33 classes bilingues, dont 16 à Penetanguishene avec
700 élèves. This estimate is probably high, but there is no doubt that a large number of French-speaking students were being educated in French at the elementary and secondary level in Simcoe County in the 1940s and 1950s. Satisfaction about the quality of French-language education would be short-lived, as Penetanguishene and Simcoe County entered into their most contentious period in regard to French-language education, the 1950s through the 1980s.

It began with the arrival of Monsignor Castex, a Roman Catholic priest, in Penetanguishene in 1938. Msgr Castex was a proponent of the assimilation of the French into the English culture, and he almost succeeded in eradicating the use of the French language in the region. He sat as a trustee on the school board, allowing him to influence curriculum choices and other decisions affecting every aspect of education in the community. Within the community itself, he had tremendous power and he refused to hear confession in French. An article in the Midland Free Press describing his radical stance states that, "Msgr. Castex was highly critical of what was described in the winter of 1959-60 as a 'pro-French' organization lobbying for improvements in the quality of French-language instruction... Castex nearly succeeded in assimilating all the French into the English culture." Msgr Castex was instrumental in the creation of the Midland-Penetanguishene District High School (MPDHS) in Midland, which resulted in the closing of the Penetanguishene Secondary School.

Penetanguishene Secondary School was closed in June of 1953 and its students sent to the Midland-Penetanguishene District High School in September of 1954.

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...the French Canadian population in local schools was 1063 students divided into 33 bilingual classes, of which 16 were in Penetanguishene numbering about 700 students.

According to Daniel Marchildon in his book, *La Huronie*, the number of French-speaking students attending the English-language MPDHS was forty-eight in 1940 and sixty-six in 1954. Only a small number of these French-speaking students ever progressed beyond grade ten as attested to by Marchildon who noted that according to Ministry of Education records, "...seulement une moyenne de 10 élèves poursuivent leurs cours après la 10e année." Many parents were dissatisfied with this schooling arrangement and decided to form a parent-teacher association (PTA) which demanded that French classes be available to students at the grades nine and ten level. The school inspector, M. Beaulieu from Toronto, met with Cardinal McGuigan to discuss the growing rift between the French community of Penetanguishene and Msgr Castex. Cardinal McGuigan put his support behind the creation of a French public school at the grades nine and ten level, and made his support known to Msgr Castex.

Msgr Castex seemed to concur with Cardinal McGuigan about the need for a French-language public school and victory seemed close, but it was not yet to be for the French-speaking students in Penetanguishene. Msgr Castex circulated a list of clergy friendly, therefore anti-French, candidates for the upcoming municipal election. It is important to remember that the elected school commission controlled what happened, or did not happen, in the local public schools. The result of this election was that no proponent of a French-language school was elected to council. The language battle continued to rage on, with the formation of a delegation named the Committee for the Improvement of St-Joseph’s English School, a separate school run by Catholic Brothers. The delegation demanded that French be taught no more than one and a half hours per

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On average, only about 10 students completed their studies after grade 10.
day, and that the French taught be oral comprehension only, with no written component to supplement it. The Committee also accused the bilingual teachers of being unqualified to teach at the secondary level. The teachers themselves, who had successfully passed both the English and special French evaluations administered by the Ministry of Education, quickly refuted this accusation.

Thus, in the autumn of 1960, one hundred and twenty students in grades nine and ten were enrolled in Penetanguishene's separate secondary schools. The Brothers of the Sacred Heart and the Sisters of Sainte-Croix were running three Roman Catholic separate schools, which encompassed grades one to ten. Within these three schools, eight hundred and fifty-three students were enrolled in bilingual classes and four hundred and two in English classes. French parents expressed their desire for government funding to pay for grades eleven and twelve in the separate schools, thereby encouraging students to choose the Catholic separate school for their final two years of education. They had no success in persuading the government to provide funds, and thus they tried to bear the expense of running grades eleven and twelve themselves, but the program failed after two years due to its high cost. In January of 1961, the Penetanguishene District School Commission made a request for funds for the construction of Corpus Christi, an English elementary separate school in Penetanguishene, which opened in 1963, just as the French secondary separate school failed.

There was a movement to open a new English public school in Penetanguishene in the early 1960s, and the region was rezoned to attach the township of Tiny to Penetanguishene. Parents in Lafontaine were persuaded to send their children, then attending the Lafontaine Continuation B School, to the new Penetanguishene District
High School. This was accomplished by the local School Commission promising to provide a principal or vice-principal who could speak French and understood French culture, and a guarantee made by the School Commission that when the numbers warranted, a French-language school would be opened to educate French-speaking students. Parent's agreed to this compromise and the Lafontaine Continuation B school closed in 1966. In the first few years at Penetanguishene Secondary School, a French principal was hired, but only French classes were taught in French, all other subjects were taught in English. Three years after PSS opened in 1969, the provincial school board amalgamation took place under the Robart government. The Robart's Plan, which overhauled education in Ontario, took the power to direct educational change from the local level to the county level and the Penetanguishene School Commission was absorbed into the Simcoe County Board of Education (SCBE), on January 1, 1969. With this amalgamation, Penetanguishene lost the right to determine its need for schools and was forced to renege on its promise to build a French-language secondary school. Although the Legislature of Ontario approved the financing of French-language schools from the public purse, the new and larger school boards often chose to do otherwise. The ensuing lengthy and costly battles over the place of French-language education in Ontario were about to begin, and Penetanguishene was destined to play a starring role.

The Ontario legislature had passed Bills 140 and 141 in 1968, permitting the establishment of French-language public secondary schools, where numbers warranted, at the grades nine and ten level. This was to be financed by the provincial government, so that in theory, the provincial government now funded French-language public schools from grades one to ten. French public secondary schools at the grades eleven, twelve and
thirteen level opened in 1968 in Ottawa and Sudbury, but these were accessible only to students able to pay the entrance fee, since the government did not finance these schools. The Association canadienne-francaise de l'Ontario (ACFO) replaced the ACFÉO in 1969, but their objective remained much the same, to continue to agitate for improved French-language education and government funding. The provincial government created French-Language advisory committees (FLACs) to help overcome the many problems that were arising in regard to the demand for French schools. FLACs were composed of six members elected by the French taxpayers and three members chosen by the school board. In Simcoe County, the FLAC was formed in March of 1969. It was to be the beginning of an uneasy relationship. The FLAC asked that courses other than French be offered in French at PSS and, in September 1969, the subject of histoire, history, was taught in French. In September 1970, busses for French students living in Midland became available for those students who wished to study in French at PSS. The SCBE applied to the Ontario Department of Education for bilingual status for PSS, but was denied this in 1972. The school offered several more courses in French over the next few years, including géographie, geography, and mathématiques, mathematics, but bilingual status was never conferred upon the school. The SCBE also tried to give preference to bilingual candidates when hiring teachers for PSS. Unfortunately, there were limited candidates for the positions and problems arose with the teaching staff, resulting in French subjects such as géographie being taught in English, due to the teachers' lack of fluency in French.

This was not the bilingual education that the students of Penetanguishene had been promised, and this inequity began a crisis that would have repercussions not only
for French-language education in Simcoe County, but across the nation. In November of 1976, a grade thirteen student at PSS, Denise Laiko, with a group of about twenty other students presented a letter at a regularly scheduled FLAC meeting. The students questioned the quality of the bilingual education that was being offered, and suggested twenty improvements that needed to be made to make the school truly bilingual and French-friendly. Recommendations were made that, "...on engage un bibliothécaire francophone compétent qui sera chargé de commander les livres français, classer les livres français et, surtout, aider les étudiants francophone dans leurs recherches... il est obligatoire que le francophone suive le cours d'anglais, qu'il soit obligatoire pour l'anglophone de suivre le cours de French... les professeurs bilingues soient encouragés par la direction à s'adresser en français aux étudiants français..."8 The Simcoe County FLAC had several more meetings after this before recommending to the SCBE that an independent French public secondary school be built in Penetanguishene.

This same request had just been made to and met by the Windsor-Essex School Board, with the help of the Minister of Education, Thomas Wells, who supported the financing of the school by providing funding to cover the construction costs. The Essex School Board had chosen to vote against the building of this new school, creating a serious schism between the anglophone and francophone factions in the community. In an attempt to avoid this type of conflict, the SCBE set up a study to determine what sort of school structure would best serve Penetanguishene francophones. The report was

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8 Sylvestre, Penetang: L'école de la résistance, 24-25.
...we hire a competent francophone librarian who will be responsible for ordering and organising French books and, above all, help students in their research... that it be obligatory for francophones to study English and anglophones to study French... bilingual teachers should be encouraged by administration to speak to francophones in French...
presented to the Board in April 1978, and made several recommendations, including the hiring of a French principal at PSS. This was, in the end, the only action taken by the SCBE, which removed the current principal, Mr. Don Beatty, to the board office and hired a bilingual principal, M. Gilles Saint-Marc, to replace him. At a board meeting in September 1978, the SCBE flatly refused to consider building a new secondary school for French-speaking students. The Simcoe County FLAC made an appeal to the Commission of Languages of Instruction of Ontario (CLIO) and a mediator was chosen to help resolve the issue.

In November 1978, the new Minister of Education, Bette Stephenson announced that she hoped to see the conflict resolved as quickly as possible with the help of a mediator, Mr. Berchmann Kipps. In January of 1979, Kipps submitted his report proposing that a French secondary school be built adjacent to PSS. This would allow for the sharing of technical equipment, the playing field and other costly resources. The SCBE voted in favour of this proposal, but this time it was FLAC that balked at the realisation of such a plan, demanding separate facilities located on a site of their choice. In April the fight became province-wide, when the Assemblée des Conseils scolaires français de l'Ontario endorsed a motion to support Penetanguishene in its attempts to obtain its own French-language school. The French Teacher's Association and Members of Provincial Parliament openly supported the Penetanguishene francophones in their fight for a school. The FLAC demanded the intervention of the provincial government, asking that a school be constructed by September 1980, on neutral ground at a distance from PSS. To make their plight better known, an estimated three hundred and fifty francophones from Huronia protested outside of Queen's Park in May 1979. This had the
desired effect of provoking Education Minister Bette Stephenson into calling a meeting in Simcoe County on June 4, 1979. The meeting resolved nothing, although it became apparent that the County's anglophone majority strongly opposed the financing of a French-language school by the SCBE. The SCBE, for its part, stated that it would administer a school built by the province, but refused to financially support the building of the aforementioned school.

An impasse had been reached in Simcoe County. The students, tired of not receiving any practical response from the SCBE or provincial government set up their own illegal school in an old post office on the main street of Penetanguishene on September 3, 1979. Although this was meant to be a temporary protest, fifty-five students and teachers attended l'École Secondaire de la Huronie for seven months. There was a shortage of books and school materials, amongst other things, but the students persisted, demanding the right to a French-language secondary school. Francophones from Huronia followed the Minister of Education to a meeting of provincial education ministers in Winnipeg in September, demanding that the issue be reopened and addressed immediately. At this time, the Penetanguishene municipal council adopted a resolution by a vote of five to three to not approve the building of a French-language school in Penetanguishene. Forced to act quickly, the provincial government called a meeting with the SCBE. It appeared as though Bill Davis' government was ready to apply its own French-language Education Law against the wishes of the local school board and a majority of Simcoe County taxpayers.

A meeting took place at 1 a.m. on October 4, 1979 at the Board office in Barrie, where Stephenson hastily presented her position to francophones and board members
after a copy of her speech was leaked to the press. In it she expressed concern that steps taken over the last ten years to improve French-language access would be for naught if the Simcoe County conflict was not quickly and satisfactorily resolved. She made it clear that the problem that needed to be resolved was not whether students had a right to an education in French, but rather whether they had the right to a separate building. She stated that the solution supported by the government would be the addition of facilities to PSS. The former Head of French at PSS, Gilles Bélanger, recalling the crisis in an interview in February 2001, said that, “There had always been a lot of animosity between various groups in town. It dates back centuries, not just French against English, but French against French and Catholic against Protestant.” As prejudices became more obvious, the tension more palpable, it became apparent that there would be no comprises. The only solution that would satisfy the French-speaking community was there own distinct school. This dilemma is corroborated by the President of the Conseil scolaire parallèle, Basile Dorion, leader of the fight for an independent French-language secondary school in Penetanguishene. He observed that, “De plus, des enfants d’un même foyer se retrouvent dans des camps opposés alors que l’un prend le chemin de la Huronie et les autres demeurent à P.S.S.” There would be no concessions this time.

French-English relations were a growing concern at the nation level, as René Levesque prepared for the first Separatist Referendum in May 1980. The referendum debate became linked to the fight in Penetanguishene, as politicians in Québec observed the lack of respect paid to French-language minority rights in Ontario. Penetanguishene

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9 Gilles Bélanger, interview by author, tape recording, Penetanguishene, ON, 23 February 2001.
10 Sylvestre, Penetang, L’école de la résistance, 73.
Students from the same household found themselves in opposing camps, one choosing the Huronia school, the other PSS.
was held up as an example of the suppression of the French language and culture for all the country to see. Meanwhile, students continued to study in the old post office, at l'École secondaire de la Huronie, through correspondence courses offered by the provincial government. Premier Davis, who was trying to present himself as the champion of federalism and national unity, was faced with a serious problem in the Penetanguishene crisis. René Levesque, premiere of Québec, had not only vocalised his support for the Penetanguishene cause, he had also made funds available to the ACFO and agreed to wear a badge, symbolising the fight in Penetanguishene, to a press conference following a speech given to Toronto businessmen in January 1980.

Consequently, it was no surprise when victory came at last the evening of April 23, 1980, with the government conceding and agreeing to finance an independent French-language public secondary school in Penetanguishene. There is little doubt that this concession resulted from Premier Davis’ desire to lead the way in the national unity debate. He simply could not afford to suffer any bad publicity, which would mar his reputation as a champion of French-language minority rights in Ontario, especially in the French press in Quebec. Four years later, in June 1984, Premier Davis made a speech in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario extending the right to all francophone children to be educated in French regardless of the number of students involved. Funding was extended to the separate school system to permit public funding of French-language schools from kindergarten to the last year of secondary school. This extension of funding resulted in more French-language public and French-language separate schools being established in cities such as, Ottawa, Timmins, Kapuskasing and Cornwall and, of course, in Penetanguishene. Furthermore, dual-stream or mixed schools, once called bilingual
schools, were opened in places such as Cochrane, Sturgeon Falls, and Pembroke to provide French-speaking children with a French education.

Penetanguishene had won its fight, and the newly constructed l’école secondaire Le Caron opened in September 1982, but there remained one last battle. When Le Caron was built, its facilities did not include technical workshops, so students were bussed to PSS in order to use the workshops there. Jacques Marchand filed suit against the SCBE in January 1984 on the grounds that the Board was not providing facilities equal to those in the English-language secondary school, PSS, as mandated by section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Supreme Court of Ontario ruled in favour of Marchand stating that, “...the plaintiff is entitled to be provided out of public funds for an education in French to his children. That means the same education as is given the majority language but in the other official language. This is to be a full and complete education not a limited, partial or truncated one, which necessarily would be an inferior education, a second class one.”

This judgement ensured that hundreds of years of inequities in French-language education were ended.

Although put into place to protect French language minority rights, section 23 of the Charter is used by French and English parents alike to provide a French-language education for their children, creating new problems for francophones. Federal studies have pointed out that the number of people who report through the census that their mother tongue is French is much lower than the number of students attending French-first-language schools. This might be due in part to the assimilation of the parent into the English linguistic and cultural majority attempting to recover their lost language and

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culture by sending their children to French-language schools, but it does not account for the increase in whole. In all likelihood, English-speaking parents are using these schools as a means of providing their children with a bilingual education. This occurs as a result of the limited availability of comprehensive French-second-language programs, as the majority of core French programs allow English-speaking students to attain only a minimum level of proficiency in the French language.

The danger of the English majority using the French-first-language schools in this way is that it results in the language of use outside of the classroom and in the playground being English, not French. This is well stated in an Office of the Commission of Official Languages report, which notes, "In some schools and programs, many Anglophone majority children learn French in programs designed for the minority. This swells minority school enrolment figures, without the services actually benefiting the Francophone minority."\(^{12}\) While the fact that English-speaking parents feel that their children should have the opportunity to learn French is laudable, it is unfortunate that this is at the expense of the French-speaking children attending the school. Francophone parents in Simcoe County have voiced their concern about the level of French being heard in the school as a result of anglophone children trying to learn French. The narrow parameters of their limited linguistic ability leads to an anglicisation of the French spoken at school. The only solution to this problem seems to be to improve French-second-language programs in English-language schools, and to encourage students to enrol in them.

Despite these difficulties, the small rural schools run by the poorly paid Roman Catholic Brothers and Sisters, the stifling restrictions of Regulation 17 and the under-funded schools of the 1940s, 50s, 60s and 70s are now a thing of the past. The French have been vindicated in the province of Ontario and in Simcoe County. Seven French elementary schools and three French secondary schools are operating as of September 2001, each with facilities equal to those of their English counterparts. Although, the French in Penetanguishene won their case, the cost was high. Families were divided, friendships ruined and malice still exists between the French and the English communities in Simcoe County. The battle for a French-language secondary school also affected an unsuspecting group of English-speaking parents. These parents, who wanted their children to have the opportunity to learn how to speak French in Simcoe County’s English-language public schools, where unaware of the recent French-language altercation. They too would turn to government legislation and provincial policy to win their own battle with the SCBE. A closer examination of this legislation is necessary to better understand the changes that have taken place in the government’s position over two hundred years and the shift in public opinion and attitudes towards the value of learning to speak French.
CHAPTER 2
THE GOVERNMENT, BILINGUALISM AND EDUCATION

"prejudice...is stronger than law itself"

Egerton Ryerson

Canadians have often used legislation as a means of righting inequities perpetuated over many years. One such inequity has been that of the right to services in French, including French-language education, in the province of Ontario. Education has been an important issue in Canadian history since the arrival of the first European colonists and their families. Although influenced by the policies of the countries from which they arrived, mainly France and Britain, new Canadians chose to try to educate their children with a minimum of class distinction. The first teachers in Canada were missionaries of the Récollet order from France, joined shortly thereafter by the Jesuits. These priests taught the three Rs of reading, writing and religion.\(^\text{13}\) Parish schools, known as the petites écoles, were the main source of elementary education, and were based on the same curriculum as schools in France. Secondary education in Canada is thought to have begun in 1636, when the Jesuits opened a College in Quebec which taught what was considered to be a classical curriculum of Greek and Latin literature, philosophy and theology.

Early education in Canada was funded from grants of land made by the state, France, to the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec. It is estimated that the Jesuits received 11.2% of all crown lands granted during the French regime. Unfortunately, the British conquerors did not see fit to continue to support educational objectives in their fourteenth colony, acquired by way of the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The post-conquest period neglected the education of two generations of French Canadians, as well as that of recent English immigrants. The rate of illiteracy climbed radically, but it was more with resignation than anger that the French-Canadians let their educational aspirations take a back seat to political and religious issues. The Quebec Act of 1774 allowed the French to continue the practice of civil law and the Roman Catholic religion, which made the burden of military defeat by the British somewhat easier to accept. The linguistic and cultural make-up of the country did not change greatly until the American Revolution, at which time thousands of United Empire Loyalists emigrated north to Canada in order to maintain their ties to the British Crown.

Due to this mass migration of people to Canada, the British government decided to create a more comprehensive constitution for Canada, and the Constitutional Act of 1791 came into existence. This Constitutional Act divided the colony into Upper and Lower Canada. It also guaranteed the right of Lower Canada, which remained predominantly French, to continue the use of French civil law when meting out justice and to practise the Roman Catholic faith without persecution. Upper Canada, which became the refuge of many Americans, as well as the final destination of many Scotsmen, Irishmen and Englishmen seeking to start a new life, became predominantly English and Protestant in its cultural and racial make-up. Thus, the scene was set for the creation of

14 Ibid., 8.
the nation of Canada, which would be known as a country of dual languages and cultures. This duality would be both a blessing and a curse for government legislators over the next two hundred years, as the fine line of minority rights was debated and examined many times over at all levels of government.

In Upper Canada, early records indicate the existence of common schools in Ernestown in 1784, Kingston in 1785 and York in 1789. Government assistance for education was first granted when funds were given to a grammar school in Kingston in the form of an annual grant of one hundred pounds to be used to pay a teacher. Funding was further extended, in a restricted manner, by the District Public Schools Act of 1807. This legislation authorised the creation of eight grammar schools in the larger districts of Upper Canada and obliged the government to pay one hundred pounds annually towards the salary of the schoolmaster. These first schools charged fees for admission and were therefore limited to those wealthy enough to pay the tuition and the residence costs. Although quite limited in its scope, the District Public Schools Act was the first step in the organisation of state-controlled schools that provided a secondary level of education.

Enacted shortly thereafter was The Common School Act of 1816, which was promoted by reformers in the legislature. It attempted to resolve the practical problem of elementary education in a mostly rural province. This Act, writes F. Henry Johnson in his book, A Brief History of Canadian Education, stated that, "Wherever parents of a locality could produce twenty scholars, they were empowered to provide their own schoolhouse and elect a three-man school board whose duty it was to appoint the teacher, set the course of studies and make any necessary regulations for the school."15 After

15 Ibid., 24.
establishing a school and an acceptable course of study, a school board would be eligible for a grant of up to twenty-five pounds annually to help pay for a teacher. No linguistic or religious distinction was made in the organisation of the first schools, although after the War of 1812, all teachers in government funded common schools were to be British citizens and were required to take the oath of allegiance.

In 1822, the government created a General Board of Education and appointed John Strachan, later Bishop Strachan, as Chairman. The Board existed until 1832 at which time it was abolished due to the fact that Strachan’s elitist educational policies were extremely unpopular in the legislature. Strachan had tried to maintain a hierarchical system of education that worked for the privileged few and ignored the general populace. The fierce opposition to Strachan’s plan would prove to be one of the cornerstones leading to the uprising that would be known as the Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada. The Rebellions of 1837 in Upper and Lower Canada led to the appointment of Lord Durham, by the British Crown, to investigate the causes of the discontent which had resulted in the two uprisings. Lord Durham was charged with the task of “deciding upon the form and the future government of the Canadian provinces.”¹⁶ This report would, in the 1840s, be the basis for the creation of a united government in Canada.

The Durham Report of 1839 was the first major report to look at education in Canada, and the section of the report dealing with education in the Canada concluded that, “the British government had ‘done or even attempted nothing for the promotion of general education.”¹⁷ He further stated that, “Even in the most thickly populated districts there are but few schools, and those of a very inferior character; while the more

¹⁷ Johnson, A Brief History of Canadian Education, 19.
remote settlements are almost entirely without any." This observation was probably quite accurate, given the fact that in Upper Canada many common schools were started without government assistance and run by uncertified teachers, namely those in the community who felt inclined to teach.

Durham's Report stated that the only solution to the political problems existing in Upper and Lower Canada would be to eliminate the two existing legislatures and create a single unified state. He perceived the problem to be not one of beliefs but one of race, stating that Canada was composed of "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state." He felt his solution, the unification of Upper and Lower Canada would resolve further conflict, as, "If this were done, representatives of a clear majority of English-speaking colonists (some 55 per cent of the combined populations of the two provinces) would legitimately dominate the joint assembly, and the French Canadians, reduced to a minority, would abandon their nationalist aspirations." By which Durham meant that the French Canadians would be assimilated into the English language and culture.

The resulting Act of Union in 1841 united the colony of Canada into one legislative entity, and changed the names of Upper Canada to Canada West and Lower Canada to Canada East. There would be one governing body consisting of a Governor, an appointed Executive Council or Cabinet, and a Legislative Assembly or Lower House with an equal number of elected representatives from each of the two provinces. Section 41 of the Act of Union established English as the sole language of use in Parliament and the writing of legislation. This section remained in force until 1848 at which time the two Houses of the Canadian Parliament requested its removal. "London repealed this

18 Ibid., 27.
19 Brown, The Illustrated History of Canada, 213.
section without replacing it with any other provision concerning the use of languages in
the colony." The Act of Union, as a concession to the French Canadians, permitted the
establishment of Roman Catholic Separate School Boards (RCSSB). There were few
educational regulations in place in the provincial school system, which made it quite
unstructured, when Egerton Ryerson, a leading proponent of compulsory education, took
control of it. Ryerson became Canada West’s Superintendent of Education in 1844, a
position he held for over thirty years. He promoted publicly funded education for all
children, and in legislation passed between 1840 and 1870, he encouraged using revenues
from taxation to pay teacher’s salaries and school’s tuition fees. Under his tutelage,
Ontario’s legislature passed a Free-Schools Act in 1871, providing a state-funded
elementary education for all. This legislation, while making schools more accessible to
students, also made them subject to greater government control.

Ryerson favoured a school system that was centrally controlled, in which
educational policy was determined by the Department of Education, as well as
implemented by it. In 1846, the Common School Act enabled the Department of
Education to standardise the use of school texts, classifying them according to grade
level. Ryerson noted that there was a problem with the creation of a standardised
curriculum and that local school boards were basically completely autonomous, so far as
cconcerned the standards of the school and the curriculum taught therein. Measures were
taken to rectify this by the passing of the Common Schools Act of 1850, which required
teachers in the Common Schools to be examined and certified by a governing body. The
role of French, as a language of instruction in Ontario schools, was first examined by the

21Ibid.
Department of Education in April 1851. Under Ryerson's direction, a clause was added to the program of examination and classification of teachers as follows, that, "In regard to teachers of French and German, that a knowledge of French or German Grammar be substituted for a knowledge of English grammar, and that the certificate to the teacher be expressly limited accordingly." This was reiterated in 1858 and 1871 and a special examination for such candidates was authorised in 1874 and again in 1883.

Further to this, the Public Schools Act of 1885 states that, "Where deemed necessary from the general use of the French or German language, it shall be lawful for the county council to appoint two additional examiners for the purpose of conducting examinations in either of the languages aforesaid, of such candidates as may present themselves for certificates to teach a public school, subject to the regulations of the Education Department." The addition of Regulation 155, also in 1885, added the qualification that, "every candidate for a teacher's certificate shall be required to pass such examinations in English grammar and in translation from French or German into English, as may be prescribed by the Board of Examiners." This was the first time that knowledge of English was required of all candidates seeking to teach in the public elementary system in Ontario.

The Department of Education, trying to maintain control over the use of French through a mandated curriculum, authorised a textbook list of French materials in 1868, but it was severely limited in its scope. However, in 1879, the Department of Education

23 Ontario, Province of Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1950), 394.
24 Ibid., 395.
25 Ibid.
adopted for use a list of books that were studied in Quebec. These textbooks were removed from the authorised curriculum in 1889, when the Department of Education authorised the use of provincially written French-English Readers and one grammar text. Another regulation, introduced by Education Minister George W. Ross, and approved in 1885, required the introduction of English into the curriculum of every public school in Ontario. This included a minimum of two hours per week for the first four years of study and four hours per week for the last four years of the eight-year elementary school programme. In 1889, a commission was appointed to examine the teaching of English in public schools in Prescott, Russell, Essex, Kent and Simcoe.

The commission found that the level of English being taught was not adequate, and made several recommendations, while recognising that, "For many years, the French people were allowed to conduct their schools in their own way, no exception being taken either by the Education Department, or by the Public. Special provisions were made to secure French teachers for them and French textbooks were authorised for their schools...."25 Numerous regulations were enacted over the next few years to ensure that English was being taught in every elementary school in Ontario. Bilingual schools were created in regions with a high concentration of francophones, to educate them in French and English. Thus, at the turn of the century in Ontario, elementary schools followed a prescribed provincial curriculum, and it was commonly accepted that few of these students would continue on to the secondary level. It was understand that those who did would study in English only. It is important to note that most French-language schools

25 Ibid., 394.
became separate schools during this time period, thereby allowing them to avoid close scrutiny of their use of English by the Department of Education.

The provincial government broadened its funding of schools in Ontario in 1859. The Common Schools Act, passed in this year, established elementary schools from grades one to nine, which were to be non-denominational and funded by the government through local taxation. Roman Catholic separate schools became more prevalent with the passing of the Separate Schools Act of 1863, which guaranteed funding and the right to and management of denominational elementary schools in Ontario. Separate school trustees were elected to carry out the same duties in respect to school management as their public school counterparts. Since there was a considerable French-speaking population attending these schools, many offered instruction in French or in French and English as bilingual schools. The High Schools Act of 1871 promoted the creation of exclusively English public secondary schools, formalising the existing situation. Unfortunately, the existence of the above mentioned bilingual separate schools become a major concern for many English-speaking Ontarians, who felt threatened by the French presence in their English province. To calm this concern, the government created the Merchant Commission

In 1910, F. W. Merchant was commissioned by the Department of Education to investigate and report upon the state of English-French public and separate schools in Ontario. His report of 1912 concluded that, “It is evident from an examination of the results of all tests applied that the English-French schools are, on the whole, lacking in efficiency. The tests combine to show that a large proportion of the children in the communities concerned leave school to meet the demands of life with an inadequate
Merchant later stated that it was preferable for a child to be educated in his mother tongue in the first two years of schooling. After the initial two years, he felt that English should be the language of instruction since the child would be comfortable with the school environment and should have learned a sufficient amount of English to make learning lessons studied in English feasible. He believed that it was necessary to organise schools so that French and English students were in separate classrooms initially, but integrated in the third year of study. English was to be the language of communication in all matters pertaining to everyday school life. Modern French readers were to be adopted, and teachers better trained. Merchant’s report would be the basis for Regulation 17, which was introduced during the 1912-1913 school year.

Although the government chose not to introduce many of Merchant’s recommendations, some elements of his report were included in its June 1912 proposal. Regulation 17 stated that, "Le français pouvait être employé comme langue d’enseignement et de communication, mais cet usage ne devait pas se prolonger au-delà de la deuxième année de l’école primaire." "Dans les autres années du cours primaires, l’enseignement du français ne devait pas dépasser une heure par jour." "Dès que l’élève entrait à l’école, il devait être mis à l’étude et à la pratique de la langue anglaise." "Tout enseignant devait avoir la compétence d’enseigner et de communiquer en anglais. Sinon, il serait congédié." "Deux inspecteurs, l’un responsable de l’enseignement en anglais et l’autre de l’enseignement en français, visiteraient toutes les écoles. L’inspecteur responsable de l’enseignement en anglais avait plein pouvoir sur les écoles de sa

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26 Ibid., 405.
There is no doubt that the continued existence of French education in Ontario was in jeopardy with the passing of this legislation.

Regulation 17 was a disastrous piece of legislation, a source of tension, court challenges and misunderstanding for the next fifteen years. The turmoil caused by Regulation 17 led to the government’s creation of a second commission. In 1925, Merchant was called upon again to sit on the English-French School Enquiry Board with two other appointed members. The conclusions of this report were presented in 1927, and this time, the recommendations were not nearly as drastic or inflammatory as those of 1912. Teacher training was stated to be an issue in immediate need of improvement, as well as an updated curriculum and current textbooks for use by students and teachers alike. Further recommendations included having only two school designations, either Public School or Roman Catholic Separate School, as opposed to those that were recognised by language and denomination.

Consequently, in 1928 the first courses of study, and examinations for the study of French, were outlined in the provincial school textbook circular. These outlined what students were to study until the last year of middle school. A revision, made in 1928, included requirements for upper school French literature and composition examinations to be administered beginning in 1929. Thus, French was acknowledged as a language of instruction and study. This was discussed in detail in the Hope Report of 1950. The Hope Report stated, in its examination of the education system up to the 1940s, that, “It is

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27 Newman, Regard sur le Canada, 411. French could be used as the language of teaching and communication until the end of grade two at the elementary school level. In the other elementary grades, teaching in French can be for no longer than one hour per day. As soon as the student enters school, he must begin to study and speak English. All teachers must have the ability to teach and communicate in English. If not, they shall be fired. Two inspectors, one responsible for English teaching and the other for French teaching shall visit all schools. The inspector in charge of teaching in English shall have full power over the schools in his region.
an anomaly that, although the approval is only to ‘introduce French as a subject of instruction’, in practice, French is used exclusively as the language of instruction and communication in the earlier grades, and is used in common with English in higher grades. In the organization of classes, it is now apparently the common practice to set up parallel schools, or parallel classes, for English-speaking and French-speaking pupils, rather than, as was originally done, mixed classes of English-speaking and French-speaking pupils.”28 This system was to be radically altered in the 1950s, based on the findings and recommendations of the Hope Commission.

The Hope Commission, formally known as the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario, was appointed in March of 1945 and completed in December of 1950. Under the Honourable Mr. Justice John Andrew Hope, the Commission investigated all aspects of the education system of Ontario. He noted that there was a strong difference of opinion in Ontario as to the place of French in the provinces publicly funded schools, citing such examples as, “In Brief 201, submitted by the Joint Legislation Committee of the Grand Orange Lodges of Ontario East and West, it is stated that, ‘Bi-linguial schools were never intended to have a place in the Public or Separate School systems of Ontario. They are a fungous growth on the school systems. If continued, they will create a widening division among our people which does not tend to promote the growth of a true democratic state, but undoubtedly acts as a hindrance.’”29 Hope notes other like-minded opinions before continuing on to discussion of French at the secondary level.

French at the secondary level was viewed as a subject of study, with the emphasis on reading and writing, not listening and speaking. The Hope Report states that, “As a

29 Ibid., 436.
modern language, French has been a subject of study in the programme of the secondary schools of the province for many years. For most students, therefore, the study of French is begun in grade IX.\(^30\) The Report downplayed the negativity and outright prejudice to the use of French in publicly funded schools that had been growing since the mid-1800s. The Hope Report contends with the problem that French is an official language in Canada, as sanctioned by the BNA Act, but that most Ontarians are far from bilingual. Furthermore, it recognised that French and English had equal status only in the province of Quebec, the Houses of Parliament and the Courts of Canada. To improve this flaw in the system, Hope turned to current pedagogy, which indicated that modern languages should be introduced as a subject of study at an earlier age in order to allow English-speaking students the opportunity to increase their proficiency in French.

The Hope Report would recommend that local school boards be given the authority to introduce French into both public and separate elementary schools with the approval of the Minister of Education. It bears mentioning that although the approval applied to French as a subject of instruction, the report acknowledged that French could be used as the language of instruction and communication in these schools, much as it already was in certain areas of Ontario. It seems as though vague wording was deliberately used to make teaching in the French language less offensive to the province's anglophone majority. The Report noted that in order for students to receive adequate instruction in the use of the English language, as was to be required by the Department of Education, that it would be necessary to reduce the amount of study in music, art and science. The committee also recommended that all official records kept by publicly funded schools be in English.

\(^30\) Ibid., 438.
The Hope Report acknowledged the existence of twenty-five publicly funded High Schools and Continuation Schools, including those in Penetanguishene and Lafontaine, which were permitted to offer special French courses for French-speaking pupils. These were not recognised as French schools since English was taught, and in theory, used as a language of instruction. Memorandum 1964-65: 85 further extended the use of French at the secondary level, allowing instruction in French for the study of Latin, history and geography beginning in 1966. In 1968, Bills 140 and 141 authorised the teaching in French of all subjects at all levels. French-language schools were officially recognised as such, and special French courses were replaced by a standard French curriculum. French-language public secondary schools received government sanction and more importantly, government grants. This extension of funding for French-language education at the secondary level coincided with school board amalgamation in 1969. French-language advisory committees, known as FLACs, were established to advise anglophone public school boards on matters pertaining to teaching in the French language. Many of these changes took place concurrently with a massive undertaking by the federal government, the writing of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

The B and B Commission, as it was commonly called, was struck to study and address the problems that were faced by English and French Canadians across the nation. In July 1963, the Pearson government asked that the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, "make recommendations on measures "to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership of two founding races, taking into
account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada...”*31 Between 1967 and 1970, the six volumes of the B and B Commission’s final report were published. These would be supported by eleven studies of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and thirteen Documents of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Study ten, *The Law of Language in Canada*, noted that bilingualism was an accepted part of the Canadian identity at least eighteen years prior to the passage of the BNA Act since the Governor General, Lord Elgin had read the Throne Speech in both French and English. Perhaps it was accepted, but it was definitely not practised.

In Book II of the B and B Commission, the focus is on education. Highlights of Book II include a recommendation that provinces and territories expand the curricula offered to their minority official-language communities at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. Book II further recommended that the federal government accept responsibility for the additional costs incurred by the provincial governments in providing this education. The federal government approved of these recommendations and, in September 1970, announced the establishment of the Bilingualism in Education program, later renamed Official Languages in Education. The government had two objectives they hoped to attain, that of providing minority-language Canadians with an education in their mother tongue, and that of providing the opportunity for all Canadians to learn their second official language, be it English or French.

Over thirty years after the publication of the *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, much of it remains relevant in regard to minority-language issues. Statements such as, “In some provinces, at the moment, it is difficult

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for citizens to realize that the other cultural group really exists; minority-language schools would heighten their awareness of our duality.\textsuperscript{32} There is no doubt that these sentiments persisted into the 1970s and 1980s, as the anglophone majority continued to fight the building of French-language schools and the implementation of French-second-language programs in English-language schools. One of the most important recommendations emerging from the Report of the B and B Commission was that which called for the development of a federal Official Languages Act to oversee the administration of Canadian bilingualism. This happened with the establishment of the Official Languages Act (OLA) in 1969, later revised in 1988, and the first Commissioner, Keith Spicer took up his duties in 1970.

Spicer's vision inspired and shaped the direction of the newly formed Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL) throughout its first years. He chose to implement few of the recommendations of the B and B Commission, instead focusing on Section two of the Report, pertaining to the status, rights and privileges of both official languages across Canada. As well, Spicer believed that national unity could only be realised if Canadian youth were educated in both official languages, allowing them to achieve mutual linguistic and cultural understanding. His distancing of the OCOL from the federal government helped to maintain the independence of the Office and its investigation into complaints filed about language violations. Spicer would be a force behind the creation of Canadian Parents for French (CPF) in 1977, whose mandate was to promote French-second-language programs in schools across Canada. This group would

play a central role in the extension and creation of French-second-language programs in many communities across Canada, including Simcoe County.

Although the B and B Commission changed the face of minority and second-language learning, a greater revolutionary force for educational change was introduced in the 1960s in Ontario. The Hall-Dennis Report was published in 1968, providing the first comprehensive study of education in Ontario in twenty years. Officially called, The Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario, but known as the Hall-Dennis Committee, it was created by an Order-in-Council of the Ontario Department of Education in April 1965. The Committee used briefs submitted by groups throughout the province as the basis for change. The eighty-eight brief presentations were followed by discussion and recommendations for improvements, modifications and overhauls of the educational system. Amongst the final recommendations were those that the Department of Education, "...designate French or English as the second language to be offered for study...Develop methods of instruction which will individualize the French program during the remaining school years to encourage students with a demonstrated language competency...Use oral French in school French programs, at all levels of learning." Many of these recommendations were put into action, to some degree, by provincial school boards.

Further change occurred in 1969, when the thirteen hundred and fifty-eight existing school boards were reorganised into one hundred and ninety-two boards. This amalgamation meant the loss of smaller, specialised boards, which had followed local

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34 R.D. Gidney, From Hope to Harris: the reshaping of Ontario's schools (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 1999), 49.
mandates. Other changes followed, and in 1972, the Conseil supérieur des écoles de langue française was created to advise the Minister on minority-language issues. In 1973, the passage of Bills 180 and 181 amended, clarified and expanded the role of the French-language advisory committees (FLAC), and offered concrete suggestions for the creation of a French-language curriculum. Also in 1973, a twelve-member Ministerial Committee was appointed to establish improved methods of teaching French to English-speaking students, led by Mr. Robert Gillin. Named the Ministerial Committee on the Teaching of French, it produced the sixty-eight recommendations, and completed the task of reviewing the aims of French-language courses in elementary and secondary schools in Ontario, in what became known as the Gillin Report.

The Committee accepted submissions from across the province and the newly formed Simcoe County Board of Education (SCBE) was one of many groups to submit a report. Dated December 20, 1973, and available in French and English, the brief was prepared by the Board’s FLAC and addressed to the Honourable Thomas Wells, Minister of Education, on the subject: To Safeguard and Improve the Future of Francophone Students in Simcoe County. The submission discusses the problem of assimilation of the francophone population in the Huronia and Georgian Bay region. These included, isolation from other French centres; French not required to live and work in the area; the only local French organisations are l’Association Canadienne Française de l’Ontario (Simcoe North), the Club Richelieu and l’Association des Enseignants Franco-Ontariens; the poor quality of reception of French radio and television; the extreme difficulty for a majority group, whose language and culture is not threatened, to fully understand the efforts, the hopes, and sometimes, the actions of a minority group whose existence is on
the verge of disappearing. These were all legitimate concerns, and the SCBE seemed willing to try to do what they could to support the French in Simcoe County.

The SCBE listed what they felt were viable objectives to promote the use and maintenance of French in Simcoe County, in particular for the francophone students from Lafontaine, Perkinsfield and Penetanguishene, where twenty-five per cent or two hundred and fifty students at the secondary level were French speaking. They finished by including proposals for the Ministry of Education to consider in an effort to slow down the assimilation of the francophone population. The Board concluded by reiterating its commitment to bilingual education at the secondary level, especially if that included financial help from the provincial government.

It is likely that many submissions drew on the direct experience of francophones in Ontario, as they desperately fought to maintain their language and culture. The Gillin Report was used as the basis for major changes in the Education Act in 1974 in regard to French-first language and French-second language education. The Report identified the value of second-language learning in that it fostered positive attitudes towards the second languages culture and people in the province, that being French. It expressed the belief that national unity could be promoted by communication and mutual respect of both the French and English languages, and encouraged Ontarians to develop the ability to use both official languages. It continues by acknowledging the geographical proximity and historical ties of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, and the need for Ontario to lead the way in encouraging positive English-French relationships.

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55 Simcoe County Board of Education, To Safeguard and Improve the Future of Francophone Students in Simcoe County (Barrie: Simcoe County Board of Education, 1973.)
In November 1974, the Minister of Education, T. R. Wells, referred to the Gillin report in a debate in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario stating, “This province has the educational system, the wealth and the goodwill to ease some of the strains in the fabric of Confederation. ...we are dedicated to progress in this area - this in the particular area of teaching French to anglophones in our new French-language school system; that is, the school system for francophones - because we feel that Ontario as Quebec’s neighbour has to move ahead in this area and that through moving ahead we can do something for Canadian unity.”36 The report also established minimum hours of study required in order to attain different levels of proficiency in the French language. These included thirteen hundred and eighty hours for a basic level of proficiency, twenty-four hundred hours for a middle level of proficiency and fifty-three hundred and ten hours for a top level of proficiency.

Further reports and studies, dealing with French-language schools and education, were examined over the next ten years by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education produced the booklet, Teaching and Learning French as a second language in 1977, outlining changes to existing French-second language programs. Based in large part upon the Gillin Report, it recognised the different opinions held by Ontarians about the value of learning French. A key point in the document, possibly to placate anti-French sentiment, was that, “While the Government will provide significant grants and other incentives to encourage school boards to expand and improve French instruction in their schools, the nature and the extent of the programs will continue to be the school board prerogative, based upon the needs and wishes of their constituent

36 Ontario, Province of, Debates of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1974). 4990; 5085.
In order to facilitate boards wishing to increase the number of French-second language programs offered, the Ministry of Education made several commitments. It announced its willingness to increase provincial grant money for French instruction, to work on developing curriculum and materials to support program implementation and to encourage more teachers to become involved as qualified professionals in the teaching of these programs.

As well, the Ministry of Education embraced a broader perspective in terms of the value of knowing a second language for future work opportunities, making statements in the 1977 policy document that, "A unilingual education is out of date." Viable programs are listed, based on instructional time as, core, extended and immersion, and all were to be considered a valuable part of the daily school curriculum. Grant money was organised based on the number of minutes of instruction per day at both the elementary and secondary levels. The document is highly optimistic, outlining the grants available for several different core programs, as well as immersion and combined core-extended French programs. A plan of action was laid out for materials development and teacher training. The 1977 document was supported by the publication of Ontario's FSL Programs: Teaching and Learning French as a Second Language in the 1980s and French, Core Programs 1980. All three documents reiterate the sentiment prevalent at the time, that in order to foster national unity, both official languages needed to be respected and valued, and that second-language programs were the key to success.

French-second language programs continued to be promoted by the Ministry of Education, and French became a mandatory subject of study in grade nine based on the

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Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior Divisions (OS.IS) document of 1984. In order to earn the new Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), students were required to earn one credit in French as a second language. This document eliminated grade twelve French, replacing it with two Ontario Academic Credits (OACs), offering English-speaking students province-wide a total of five secondary French courses. French Core Programs 1980 was the curriculum guide for these courses, an outline for secondary French courses to help students achieve a meaningful level of bilingualism. Unfortunately, the government’s commitment to French-second language programs extended only as far as each school board wished it to, and was therefore still very limited. This lack of a firm commitment is demonstrated by a statement made in the curriculum document that, “The development of detailed courses of study, appropriate to the type of program, starting grade, time allocation, and the students in individual school boards, is a local responsibility.”39 Many Ontario students would not have a meaningful French-language experience under these guidelines.

Another major piece of federal legislation regarding French-language education rights is The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which came into force in 1982 as part of the repatriated Canadian Constitution. Section 23 of the Charter states,

(1) Citizens of Canada a) whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or b) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province, have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province. (2) Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary

38 Ibid., 7.
or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language. (3) The right of citizens of Canada under subsections (1) and (2) to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province a) applies wherever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction; and b) includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds. (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms 1982)

As previously mentioned, section 23 of the Charter was invoked in a court challenge in 1984 by Jacques Marchand, who won his case in the Supreme Court of Ontario in 1984 and later, in 1986, in the Appeals Court of Ontario. Bill 75, passed in 1986 provided for minority language sections in school boards and guaranteed that they would have representation in said school boards. In 1988, the creation of the Metropolitan Toronto French-language School Board and the Ottawa-Carleton French-language School Board was realised. Further rights were extended to the francophone minority in Ontario in 1989 when the French Language Services Act came into force, designating twenty-two regions as eligible for access to government services in French due to their large francophone population.

In 1995, the government of Ontario made a commitment to transform the education system in Ontario. This included an overhaul of the French-language programs. French As a Second Language: Core French was produced in 1998, providing curriculum guidelines from grades four to eight. The French Core Programs 1980 document was replaced in September 1999 by the new Ontario Curriculum document, French As a Second Language - Core, Extended, and Immersion French for grades nine and ten. In 2000, French As a Second Language - Core, Extended, and Immersion
French for grades eleven and twelve was published. Produced by the Ministry of Education and Training, these documents have restructured the way in which French is taught in Ontario schools, and they continue the trend of promoting French second-language programs as a viable option for English-speaking students wishing to learn to speak French. Provincial legislation in 1997 created the Education Improvement Commission, which in turn amalgamated the one hundred twenty-nine school boards into seventy-two district school boards, including four French public boards and eight French Catholic boards.

The degree to which revised French-second-language programs succeed will be based on the same variables as those of one hundred and sixty years ago. These variables include; the availability and quality of teaching staff, a curriculum and materials that meets student needs, and a positive attitude that fosters respect and an appreciation for a culture that is at once familiar yet different. This is the ongoing challenge of French-second-language education in Simcoe County and English communities across Canada. This challenge has been accepted by teachers and parents across the country, and their successes have been many. In Simcoe County in particular, French-second-language programs were modified and expanded in response to the demands of a local parents group. The Simcoe County Chapter of Canadian Parents for French and the SCBE have worked against and with each other to provide viable and effective French programs for students. These programs have helped, and continue to help students achieve a meaningful level of bilingualism and cultural understanding through their study of French.
CHAPTER 3

THE VOICES OF CHANGE

It is absurd that the prejudice-ridden calls of elitism should be given equal or even greater weight than evidence gathered over decades, evidence that shows repeatedly and clearly that all children who, early on in life, are given the opportunity to learn a second language intensively not only gain learning advantages for the rest of their lives but are generally more tolerant to people of other cultures, enjoy income-earning advantages, are well-positioned to learn a third or even a fourth language, and are able to adapt with relative ease to the stresses of living and working in a foreign country.

The State of French-second-language education in Canada, 2000

Advocates of French-second-language programs are many, as are its foes. The story of French-second-language programs in Simcoe County is tied to the county’s French roots and to federal and provincial governmental policies. It is also linked to a group of parent supporters whose enthusiasm and persistence helped to make more intensive French-second-language education opportunities available to students in Simcoe County. These parents wanted to make a difference in their communities and Canadian society at large, and started the process of effecting change. It began with only two individuals, Susan Charters and Lin Wilson, but the number of advocates quickly grew, with support increasing in many Simcoe County towns. These advocates were inspired and motivated by a variety of goals and objectives; their children’s future, national unity and greater cultural understanding.
Canadian communities were embroiled in a national identity crisis during the 1960s and 1970s. Many Quebeckers felt that their rights and their role in Canadian society had been overshadowed and undermined by the English-speaking majority. The federal government tried to address these concerns by promoting new bilingual policies, based on such documents as the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, but these policies had a minimal impact on the population at large. The crisis came to a head in November 1976 when Réné Levesque and his separatists came to power in Quebec. The separatist agenda compelled thirty individuals in the Ottawa-Carleton region to take matters into their own hands in 1977, when they formed an organisation supporting national unity. Their actions would be felt in schools across Canada, including those in the rural school board in Simcoe County.

The name of this organisation was, and is, Canadian Parents for French (CPF) and they have played a pivotal role in the creation of French-second-language programs in schools across Canada. They were, and continue to be, instrumental in the introduction of French culture to many students across the nation through outreach programs and organised cultural activities. Their beginnings were humble, but their motivations were genuine. Canadian Parents for French formed in 1977 after interested parents attended a conference on bilingualism in Ottawa. Here, Keith Spicer, the first Commissioner of Official Languages, had articulated the need for formalised bilingualism to begin in schools nation-wide. Spicer proposed that mutual linguistic and cultural understanding could be achieved through second-language education programs. CPF concurred with this philosophy, and after being officially named in March of 1977, produced its first national newsletter in June. In 1978, the national office opened in Ottawa with two part-time
staff, firmly planting its roots. Later that year, a national conference was held in Calgary and a resolution was passed to create a national French language resource centre in Ottawa to distribute information about French-second-language programs.

Growing interest in the organisation led to the first paid membership coming into effect in July 1979, at the cost of five dollars per membership. Later that year, the Secretary of State funded a pilot project for CPF, a national study of parents’ interest in French-second-language learning for their children. 1980 saw great growth in the organisation, and the parent primer, So You Want Your Child to Learn French was published in January. The first edition of the CPF Immersion Registry was published in 1980, as was the first Summer Programs in French booklet. In 1981, the Yukon and Northwest Territories became members of the CPF National Board thus leading to full Canadian provincial and territorial membership. The publication of numerous pamphlets to help inform the public at large about CPF and its goals occurred between 1982 and 1983. One of these pamphlets made its way into the hands of Mrs. Lin Wilson in Barrie. Other activities sponsored by CPF included, the first CPF conference on post-secondary French availability held at Glendon College in Toronto in September 1983, and a 1984 Gallup Poll, which found that two out of three Canadians wanted their children to be bilingual.

Concurrent to CPF activity in 1984, there was great educational upheaval as a result of the introduction of a new provincial intermediate and secondary curriculum called OS:IS. It was also a key date in regard to the creation of an extended French program in Simcoe County. In January 1984, a number of parents had organised themselves in three Simcoe County towns, and joined together after connecting with each
other at a school board meeting, forming the Simcoe County Chapter of Canadian Parents for French. They began actively lobbying the Simcoe County Board of Education for improved French-second-language programs. As a result of much hard work and perseverance on the part of these parents, an extended French program would be introduced in September 1989 in four of the seventy-six elementary schools across the county. The years leading up to the 1989 decision were fraught with activity and hard work.

Materials pertaining to the struggle which led to the introduction of the extended French program are scarce as a result of the SCBE moving to a new building in Midhurst in March of 1990. At this time, school board officials decided to consolidate information pertaining to the decision to implement extended French into a single binder. This binder is a compilation of annual board reports from 1984 to 1998. Unfortunately, all supporting documentation and resources were disposed of when this task was completed.

A recent interview with Bea Harper, SCBE French Consultant from 1969 to 1990, gives some insight into the SCBE position towards the creation of an expanded French-second-language program. Mrs. Harper had been hired as a halftime French Consultant, after the provincial school board amalgamations took place in Ontario, on January 1, 1969. She oversaw twenty-one years of French-second-language programming in Simcoe County, doing much of the French-second-language pedagogical research herself and keeping abreast of innovations and philosophical changes.

Mrs. Harper recalled the problems that she faced in 1984, in her attempt to help trustees understand that the needs of English-speaking students were not being met in regard to French-second-language learning. Trustees were wary of French-second-
language programs having just waged a battle with the Ontario Supreme Court, over the support of French-language public schools, and losing. They felt that the needs of students were being met by the existence of French-language public schools, such as *Le Caron*, which both French and English-speaking students were attending to study in French. Another problem, according to Mrs. Harper, were municipal elections which could lead to a change in trustees and the voting down of a new French-second-language program from one year to the next. It was difficult to persuade parents to enrol their child in a different school without a guarantee of program continuity the next year. Mrs. Harper stated that it was the lobbying of parents on behalf of their children who were, "always looking for opportunities for their children to become bilingual" that led to the SCBE beginning to research the possibility of expanding its core French program and adding more comprehensive French classes.

One of these parents, Sue Charters, a founding member of the Simcoe County chapter of CPF, was instrumental in lobbying for the creation of an immersion French program in Simcoe County. In an interview with Mrs. Charters in February 2001, she described her surprise at the negative reaction some people in her community expressed to the idea of introducing French immersion into a local school. She stated that this reaction only strengthened her resolve to fight for the right to introduce more extensive French programs into Simcoe County. They next four years would be very challenging for the members of the Simcoe County Chapter of CPF. The SCBE's motion to introduce a more comprehensive French-second-language program was defeated three times. In two cases, in 1985 and 1986, as a result of tie votes which were interpreted as a defeat of the motion.

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Mrs. Charters discussed problems that the group encountered such as racial intolerance and a general anti-French sentiment. She recalls how a friend who had grown up in the area explained this as resulting from the fact that, "because there is a long-standing French community that kept to itself, a sense of animosity developed, a wall between the two cultures."41 Still, CPF persevered, and in 1988, finally managed to win an affirmative vote by the trustees to run a trial year of an extended French program in four schools if a minimum of twenty-four students registered at each school for the program. In Simcoe County, the extended French program is one in which students study for a half day in French at the elementary level and take seven prescribed courses in French at the secondary level. The program start at the grade five year, giving students a total of eight years of extended French-second-language education. Mrs. Harper and CPF had hoped for a more comprehensive immersion French program, one in which students studied for a full day in French at the elementary level and could choose from a selection of courses at the secondary level. Nevertheless, they were satisfied that the SCBE was prepared to implement a trial year of extended French, and let the matter rest.

The SCBE's decision to offer an extended French program as opposed to an immersion French program merits examination. The Board had frequently quoted from CPF handbooks and guides when presenting statistics on French-second-language programs, and an examination of these reports shed light on popular pedagogical thinking of the day. They also relied on the many government documents that were published on French-second-language learning in the 1970s and 1980s. These documents and books are listed and reviewed in appendix I. Another important pedagogical source, used

41 Sue Charters, interview by author, tape recording, Penetanguishene, ON, 20 February 2001.
extensively by Mrs. Harper, was Hector Hammerly's, *An Integrated Theory of Language Learning*, published in 1985, and also reviewed in appendix I.

The above-mentioned reports and policy documents were available as a reference and used by Mrs. Harper and the Simcoe County Chapter of CPF when preparing their presentations in order to effectively lobby the Board trustees. Although far from all encompassing, there was no Ministry document pertaining to extended or immersion French courses from grades nine to eleven, until 1993, they were a starting point for change. These documents outline expectations for both linguistic and cultural achievement in core French programs and are particularly helpful in understanding the place of French-second-language teaching in Ontario's curriculum.

These documents were most likely written with both the federal *Report of the Royal Commission of Bilingualism and Biculturalism* and the provincial *Gillin Report* in hand. Both reports were instrumental in changes happening at both the federal and provincial levels in regard to bilingualism and French-second-language educational initiatives. Sue Charters was familiar with the *Report of the Royal Commission of Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, and had used copies of the 1975 document, *The Formative Years* and the 1977 document, *Teaching and learning French as a second language* to support the lobby effort of CPF. She annotated her copy in the margins with comments pertaining to better communication and thinking skills and made reference to language programs in both Canada and Europe. Simcoe County parents were stocking their arsenal of second-language educational facts in order to effectively lobby the Board trustees to implement immersion French programs in SCBE schools.
The Board, unable to ignore the changes happening around the province, responded to this lobby by issuing a parent interest survey, a basic questionnaire of six questions, located in appendix II, which was sent home with students in October of 1984. Based on the survey response, it was determined that there was enough interest to recommend the introduction of a minimum of eight to a maximum of twelve classes of grade six French immersion in September 1985. At this time, the Board made a commitment to conduct a French-second-language program feasibility study in 1984. The 1984 study was carried out by Mrs. Harper and Program Services and presented to the Board on January 28, 1985.

The study outlined the logistics and objectives of a late French immersion program. It was hoped that such a program would allow for the achievement of a middle level of French proficiency by the end of the students' OAC year. The rationale for choosing a late immersion French program was based on recognised pedagogy of the day and included; student commitment to the program, completion of two years of core French study, students seen as cognitively mature and efficient learners, and a shorter term of commitment. The shorter term of commitment can be viewed as being advantageous from the perspective of both the students and the Board. As well, it was anticipated that screening for learning difficulties would have been accomplished by this point, so that those students who would most benefit from the program would be the ones who enrolled.

Other considerations in the creation of a late immersion program in Simcoe County were its geographic distances, small schools and declining enrolment. Different

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systems were examined in the initial feasibility study, such as dual-track versus full immersion schools, in which the advantages and disadvantages of each were studied in some detail. Staffing concerns, staff development and the creation of curriculum materials were also studied. It was recognised that no amount of Board and community support would ensure the success of immersion French in Simcoe County without a dedicated and capable staff to implement the program. Finally, the two most important issues in the development of immersion French programs in Simcoe County were examined, those of transportation and finances. The introduction of a French immersion program would incur additional costs through start up expenditures and increased bussing costs. Calculations were done by the Business Department of the Board to determine the cost of initiating a grade six immersion program. Despite government grants, which were provided to encourage the development of such programs, the Board would be required to subsidise the program by an amount ranging from $267,450 to $414,950, depending on the number of classes introduced in September of 1985. In a school board that was experiencing a decline in enrolment, this was a problem.

As mentioned above, CPF had an important ally at the Board in the 1980s, Mrs. Bea Harper, French Consultant for the Simcoe County Board of Education. Mrs. Harper was a tireless advocate for the expansion of second-language education in Simcoe County. She organised exchanges and cultural events and became a vocal proponent of the importance of second-language programs in Simcoe County schools. Furthermore, she had two grandchildren whom she hoped would have the opportunity to study French in a French immersion program. The SCBE held parent information meetings for the first time in November 1985, at seven elementary schools throughout Simcoe County,
with the understanding that these meetings were being held only to determine parental interest. Throughout this period, CPF continued to lobby the Board and build its membership. After a majority vote by the trustees in 1988, the Board finalised plans to start an extended French program at the grade five level in September of 1989.

The extended French program was not as well-known, or documented, as the immersion French program, but it required less of a financial commitment from the Board and fewer French teachers needed to be hired. For all involved, this was deemed to be an acceptable starting point. French programs had become more prevalent in the 1980s due to increased exposure and the growing awareness on the part of parents and the government of the advantages of having a bilingual citizenry. The 1983 Ontario’s FSL Programs policy document states, “Students entering secondary school in September 1984 or later will normally be required to complete one credit course in French to earn the Ontario Secondary School diploma.” This meant that students would now study French for a minimum of six years in Ontario, from grades four to nine. This acknowledgement of the importance of the French language for Ontario students helped give credence to parents’ claim for the need of more extensive language programs in Simcoe County. Making French a diploma requirement at the secondary level meant that the study of French was taken more seriously, and considered to be a valuable and even necessary part of a student’s education.

The value of French-second-language programs continued to be promoted by CPF at the national level. They continued to receive funding from the Secretary of State, based on its partnership with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and began to hire language experts to give academic credence to the objectives of the
organisation. With a growing membership, CPF could pay for research to be done by national polling companies and by the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), in order to gage national interest in French-second-language programs. CPF then collated and published these findings in the publications reviewed in appendix I. The literature produced by CPF provided step-by-step guidelines for parents to follow while organising themselves to win the right of improved French-second-language programs. The comprehensive bibliographies in both books were an excellent reference for readers, listing the most up-to-date work in the field of second-language education. CPF was very well informed in making the books accessible in content to the lay person, the parents, trustees and others who were looking for guidance and good advice in this area.

Other material produced by CPF, which gave more detail about the organisation and existing French-second-language programs included, More Members, s’il vous plait and the Canadian Parents for French Chapter/Section Manual. There was an ever growing pamphlet series, which included such titles as, Choosing a French Program, Why Learn French? and How to be an Immersion Parent. There are also special reports, which were released periodically to introduce new findings about French-second-language education and the efficacy of different programs. As well, CPF co-sponsored cultural events, such as the annual concours d’art oratoire, a French-second-language public speaking contest, with winning participants receiving a generous financial prize and a trip to Ottawa.

In 1983, CPF publications and events became known to Mrs. Wilson, a Simcoe County parent. Mrs. Wilson met Mrs. Charters at a SCBE meeting shortly there after,

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41 Ministry of Education, Ontario’s FSL Programs (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1983), 3.
and the Simcoe County Chapter of CPF was established by them in 1984. According to the membership records that still exist, there were three members in 1984. Mrs. Wilson became and remained the president of the Simcoe County Chapter for the next ten years.

The first Simcoe County CPF newsletter, published in April 1987 by Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Charters, encouraged parents to get out to the upcoming SCBE meetings to show their support for an immersion French program. The 1986 defeat of the proposal to expand French-second-language programs in Simcoe County had been discouraging, but CPF soldiered on. They were determined to achieve their goal of attaining improved French-language programs for Simcoe County students.

The next Simcoe County CPF newsletter was published in January 1988. Again, members and interested parents were encouraged to attend the January 19th Board meeting to approve, or reject, a request to develop a policy on French Immersion in Simcoe County schools. It discussed the two presentations made in previous months to Board officials and trustees in an attempt to sway their decision. They had included statistics and academic reports on the success of immersion French programs across Ontario and they requested the right to have what was being offered to seventy-two percent of Ontario children. The newsletter continued to be produced, and included information on core French cultural support projects and a French-Canadian storyteller, which the Simcoe County Chapter had booked for local schools. The Simcoe County Chapter of CPF followed its mandate to increase the profile of French with great energy and imagination.

The Simcoe County Chapter of CPF remained active for five years after the approval of the extended French program, until the program seemed to be fairly well
established in county schools. In 1994, the Board had threatened to close the Orillia extended French program, where Mrs. Charters' children attended school, but the Orillia contingent of the Simcoe County Chapter of CPF produced an Extended French Program Review in 1994 to counter this threat. The Review detailed the educational benefits, student and parent commitment and positive impact of the program in the school. The Review was presented to the SCBE trustees and the program was spared. Once implemented at the grade nine level, the organisation stopped meeting and faded away. Mrs. Charters recounted that once parents felt that the program was no longer in danger of having its funding removed, they seemed to lose interest in CPF. Interestingly enough, Simcoe County does have an active chapter of CPF, which currently meets in the town of Midland. The members are all anglophones who have enrolled their children in the local French-first-language school in Penetanguishene.

Several conclusions can be drawn at this point. Firstly, improved French-second-language programs would most likely not have been developed in Simcoe County for many more years without the organisation of the Simcoe County Chapter of CPF. Although, membership was not extensive, there appear to have been no more than twenty-four card-carrying members of CPF in Simcoe County in the 1990s, these members were very active and acted as liaisons with parents who were not members, but whose children were enrolled in extended French programs. They notified parents about upcoming SCBE meetings, and were responsible for mobilising them to write letters and make phone calls to trustees, encouraging them to vote in favour of the extended French

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program at the review held each year. The dedication and the hours spent by these parents to support French-second-language education is remarkable.

Secondly, the type of program and the grade level of the program were influenced by CPF members. Although many recommendations were ignored due to financial and staffing limitations, the CPF members often seemed able to find a compromise. An example is found in the January 1988 newsletter, which stated the rationale for supporting a late immersion program was as follows. "Simcoe County CPF has been requesting that the board institute a middle or late immersion program starting in grade four or five for these reasons: children are rapid learners by grade four, learning difficulties will have been screened, children of later immersion programs retain more French at the high school level, cost (fewer years of maintenance program) more appealing to board." This was persuasive information which was wisely considered by the SCBE when it made its decision.

Thirdly, CPF provided the SCBE with much of the literature used to persuade them that French-second-language programs were valuable for all students, and not just frills for the privileged few. The Board members, and to some extent the public at large, had a perception that immersion programs were for a very bright minority and not worthy of financing by a public school board. This perception was a widely held, although largely unsubstantiated belief, and was addressed as such in SCBE Reports written by Mrs. Harper, the Gillin Report and academic writing from this time. It is a belief that persists to this day, and does have some grounds for existence, as a seemingly disproportionate number of surgeons', dentists', lawyers', judges' and teachers' children

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2 Simcoe County Chapter of Canadian Parents for French, newsletter, January 1988
successfully complete the program and the secondary level. This belies the fact that it is a diverse economic mix that enters into the program in grade five in Simcoe County.

This elitist perception in Simcoe County has been perpetuated for several reasons including the availability of public or private transportation, the value attributed by parents to the learning of a second language and career aspirations of students. Often, it is the well-informed parent who insists on the child remaining in the program, as they envision a brighter future for a bilingual child. Such a child will have problems successfully persuading their parents to allow them to drop out of the program. Many of these parents have a degree of second-language fluency themselves, thus allowing them to help their child with schoolwork. Socio-economics play a role in some cases, providing affluent students with more opportunities for participation in exchanges and travel to areas where the language is used. Many students travel with their family and others pay the required amount to participate in exchanges. It is in these situations that the French language is experienced in a real-life context. It is an ongoing challenge for educators to make French a living and relevant subject for all students living in areas that have no immediate access to daily or weekly activities happening in French outside of the classroom.

As well, in Simcoe County, providing transportation to students has been one of the most serious problems in the implementation of the extended French program. It is an important consideration for a geographically large board due to its serious financial repercussions. In a board as large as Simcoe County, transportation costs absorb much of the budget, even when additional government subsidies are generated. Bus routes are long and some students spend up to two hours on the bus each day. The Simcoe County
Chapter of CPF was fortunate that the extended French program was implemented in 1989, and therefore had the use of the public school buses and the local transit system buses throughout the elementary years while the program was being established. Bussing was reduced over six years, from 1993-1999, before being eliminated completely in 1999.

The Simcoe County Chapter of CPF was frequently in contact with other provincial chapters of CPF regarding transportation issues and solutions. The effects of the loss of transportation were not as devastating to the extended French program as anticipated. Although some classes were lost at designated extended French schools, new extended French classes began to be offered in other elementary schools where numbers warranted, especially if students could to walk to school or use the local transit system. The number of parents who organised carpools to transport their children in the morning and after school also helps to keep the program alive. Although disruptive, these budget considerations were understandable given the cutbacks of the 1990s.

For some parents and staff, the 1999 decision to eliminate bussing privileges for extended French students seemed like an underhanded way of sabotaging a program that now ran in the black and did not cost the SCBE any additional monies to operate. It should be noted that extended French bussing privileges in Simcoe County simply meant that the student could ride on busses that travelled outside of their boundary area. They would take the first bus to another bus in central location, which would ultimately transport them to the elementary or secondary school where the extended French program was offered. There is still a possibility, in the event that there is an unclaimed seat on a bus, that it may be given to an extended French student who needs transportation to
another bus route to get to a designated EFSL school. The group of students hardest hit were those whose parents worked long hours and those living in a home were there is no access to a car during school hours. Despite this loss of bussing, numbers were preserved at a level which allowed for the extended French program to be maintained. It is hoped that in times of less drastic fiscal restraint that bussing privileges might be restored to allow access to all interested students.

The ten-year anniversary of the introduction of extended French into schools in Simcoe County was celebrated in 1999. In 1998, a recommendation was made for a comprehensive review of the EFSL program in Simcoe County. This review was to replace the annual report made by Student Services to the SCBE in that year. In November 1998, the following motion was made, ‘That Student Services provide some academic tracking-enrolment and costing data with respect to the EFSL program since its inception in 1988/89.’ Two options were given, and the second, less comprehensive and expensive one, option B. was completed. The Extended French as a Second Language Program Review, presented in November 1999 detailed the program as it existed during the 1998-1999 school year. Sixteen pages in length, it touched on enrolment, funding, and summarised feedback on three open-ended questions, located in appendix III, asked of parents of both extended French and core French students. Parental response was generally favourable, although non-extended French parents did express concern over access to the program for reasons such as the lack of Board supplied transportation or access to a vehicle.

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The growth in Simcoe County cities, such as Barrie and Bradford, has definitely influenced the Boards programming choices. Parents moving from urban areas to the Simcoe County expected to have the choice of enrolling their children in an extended French or immersion French program. This support has helped to increase enrolment on a yearly basis, and the extended French program has proven to be popular and is now an integral part of the curriculum of the SCBE. This success, based to some extent on a growing population base, has also been influenced by a change in how people perceive the value of French second-language education.

Linguistic and cultural understanding is so important in our sometimes divided, deaf and defiant country. In 1967, while celebrating one hundred years of confederation, Charles de Gaulle, President of France, declared, “Vive le Québec libre.” These four small words were a turning point for many Canadians, forcing the nation to reexamine its acceptance of the doctrine of two founding nations. Unfortunately, one founding nation continues to feel that its language and culture are jeopardised and at risk of disappearing. French-language education is seen as a panacea, the great equaliser in creating better understanding between people by teaching Canadians to communicate effectively in either French or English. The parents active in CPF were able to see the value of a bilingual education and strive to make it a reality for their children. Students all across Canada have benefited from their initiative, including those in Simcoe County, and it is hoped that the nation as a whole will profit as these students grow into adults and begin to take their rightful place as leaders in Canadian society.
CHAPTER 4

THE FRENCH-SECOND-LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN SIMCOE COUNTY IN 2001

It is the basic right of every child in this province to learn French by the best available methods for as many school years as he can profit from the experience.

Report of the Ministerial Committee on the Teaching of French (Gillin Report)

French-second-language research has been a mainstay of pedagogical investigation for the last thirty years. This field of research is vast and ever changing, producing data and information that never seems to be fully assimilated by school boards before the next wave of change. Core French programs, mandating that students study a single period of French each day, became popular in the 1960s. These programs were structured to teach students how to read and write French, but were unsuccessful at teaching students how to understand and speak French. The first experiment in teaching English-speaking children to become bilingual occurred in Quebec, just outside of Montreal in a immersion French program, which would be the basis for the national French immersion programs that were about to explode onto the Canadian education scene.

The experiment began in the St. Lambert Elementary School and the impetus to initiate the program was a concerned parent's group. Parents were worried that their children were not becoming proficient speakers of French and sought a solution to this problem. This educational experiment was closely watched by pedagogues and parents alike, and carefully documented by the McGill University Language Research Group under the direction of Professors Lambert and Tucker. The acquisition of the French language was the goal of the program, and educators and academics were elated by the early successes at St. Lambert. The timing was perfect as the climate for change and political instability hit Canada hard in the 1970s. French-language programs became a focal point in education institutions across Canada and continue to be an area of growth and pedagogical interest.

The 1970s had led to a rude awakening in much of English Canada to the reality that many Quebeckers were discontented with their position in Canadian society. National unity was a major motivator for political change, and with it, the belief that closer linguistic and cultural ties with Quebec could help allay the alienation many Quebeckers felt. Ontario was seen as a potential leader in the strengthening of French-English relations in Canada, and the province took up this challenge of inclusion, albeit with some reluctance. The Ontario Ministry of Education produced new curriculum documents to help school boards clarify and implement newly mandated French-language programs. Many of these documents are reviewed in appendix I. In Simcoe County, in 1969, French language programs became mandatory at the grade seven and eight levels, providing twenty minutes of French instruction per day. The Board continued to provide core French instruction, with few modifications, for the next ten years. Then, in October
1984, parental lobbying lead to the initiation of a study to examine the needs of the community and determine whether or not it would be possible to introduce a French immersion program at the grade six level. Although an expanded program was offered to students entering grade five in 1989, this was an extended, not immersion, French program.

In January 1989, the SCBE voted to start grade five extended French programs at four elementary schools. As of September 2001, programs are operating in nine elementary schools. At the secondary level, there are five high schools operating extended French programs and a sixth high school running split core/extended classes. Staffing issues are an ongoing challenge as is staff development and support. Curriculum development has been severely restricted due to the cost and distance of schools from one another. Individual teachers in each school are responsible for determining what will be taught and finding the materials to support this curriculum. It is interesting to note that it was only on March 23, 2000 that secondary teachers had their first curriculum-planning meeting, six years after the introduction of the program at the secondary level. Despite these difficulties, most staff has accepted the challenge of teaching a worthwhile French program, ignoring negative attitudes and lack of resources.

For these teachers, it is important to understand the end result of the extended French program. Students are the only source of this information, and their perceptions of the program provide valuable insights as to the future direction of the extended French program in Simcoe County. In order to have students give their input into the structure of the program, providing details of what they thought worked to help them increase their knowledge of French, a survey was administered to students who had completed their
Ontario Academic Credit (OAC) year. Students who had graduated from the program between 1997 and 2001 were surveyed for their thoughts about the Simcoe County extended French program. The survey used to question the students is based on several developed by Sharon Lapkin at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE).

Seventy-five surveys were distributed to students who could be located. The following information breaks down into percentages based on the results of thirty-nine surveys that were filled out and returned by students who had completed the OAC extended French program at Barrie Central Collegiate (BCC). One hundred and seven students have received certificates of extended French from the BCC program in Simcoe County over a five-year period. Of these students, seventy-six, or seventy-one per cent, were female and thirty-one, or twenty-nine per cent, were male. This is consistent with data from other extended and immersion French studies carried out by OISE. Numbers do not always add up to one hundred per cent, as not all students answered all questions. It is difficult to make comparisons with Ontario students, as OISE surveys generally examine French immersion, rather than extended French programs. It is for this reason that the Simcoe County results are compared with those of a late French immersion school in Calgary. Calgary faces similar problems to Barrie in that it is difficult for students to find authentic French-speaking opportunities, and both cities have restricted access to French cultural events and activities outside of the classroom.

The Calgary study dealt with French proficiency, attitudes and future plans of grade twelve students in the program. The Simcoe County survey focussed on these three areas as well, although to a lesser degree in the area of proficiency, which is beyond scope of the research being done for this paper. The Calgary Board sample included four
classes, which constituted all bilingual education, or late French immersion classes, in Calgary in 1987-1988. The questions are divided into six subsections, the first, section A, gives background information on the students enrolled in the program. The results of these questions show the students to be a homogeneous group for whom English is the preferred language.

A. The following questions ask about languages used in your home.

1. Were you born in Canada? 39 respondents
38 were born in Canada
One student was born in England and came to Canada at the age of eight.

2. Is there any language, not counting English and French, that you can understand at all? 39 respondents
Yes - 38%
No - 62%

3. Please list the language(s), not counting English and French, that you can understand when they are written and/or when they are spoken.

Written:
- Spanish 4
- German 7
- Latin 2
- Italian 1

Spoken:
- Spanish 3
- German 7
- Punjabi 1
- Cantonese 1

4. Where did you learn the language(s)?
The 15 students who answered this question learnt the language(s) in different ways, including:

- School: 8
- Home: 2
- Relatives: 5
- Self-taught: 2
- Friend's home: 1

5. Compared to French, how easy is it for you to use this language for each of the following?
Easier than French  About the same  Less easy than French  Much less easy than French  Can't do at all in this language

Speaking  1.4  2  4  5  0
Listening  2.2  3  6  4  0
Writing  3.4  0  6  2  2
Reading  4.5  2  4  3  1

One student indicated that they had not tried to speak or write the language and couldn’t rate themselves in these two areas.

6. How often do you use the language(s)?

daily  weekly  biweekly  monthly  rarely
5  3  1  1  2  4

7. What are the main ways you use the language(s) you’ve written down in question 4? (For example, speaking to your parents, writing relatives, watching TV, reading letters or newspapers)

Speaking with family and relatives: 7
Travel: 4
Writing letters: 3
TV or Internet: 3
Reading: 2
School: 2
Work: 1

8. What languages do your parents speak (even if not used often) not counting English? Mother -  Father -

French: 5  French: 5
German: 3  German: 1
Spanish: 1  Spanish: 1
Danish: 1  Polish: 1
Finnish: 1  Swahili: 1

9. How often are English and any language other than French spoken in your home?

Most or all the time  About half the time  Sometimes  Hardly ever  Never
English  6.36  0  1  0  0
10. How well do your parents speak English? (For example, in speaking to your teacher)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very well</th>
<th>Moderately well</th>
<th>Somewhat well</th>
<th>Not well</th>
<th>Can't speak English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>9.36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>10.36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Was your elementary school an extended French or an immersion school? What is its name and where is it located?

- Prince of Wales, Barrie, Ontario: 28 extended French
- Frère André, Barrie, Ontario: 4 French school
- École la source, Barrie, Ontario: 4 French school
- Mazo de la Roche, Newmarket, Ontario: 2 French immersion
- Corpus Christi, Oshawa, Ontario: 2 French school
- Humbercrest, East York, Ontario: 1 French immersion
- Robert Baldwin, Milton, Ontario: 1 French immersion
- W.G. Davis, Brampton, Ontario: 1 ?
- Agnes Taylor/Earnscliff Sr. Public, Brampton, Ontario: 1 French immersion
- Centre éducational Castor Valley, Ottawa, Ontario: 1 ?

The majority of Simcoe County students are from longstanding Canadian families of Western European descent. Most are from middleclass families with professional parents, and they receive academic encouragement and enrichment opportunities at home. Seventy-two per cent of the students came from the local extended French elementary school, Prince of Wales. The remaining students were enrolled in either French-first language schools or immersion French programs. Ninety-two per cent of students responded that they speak English at home the majority of the time. Other languages that
are written or spoken by students were, for the most part, learnt at school. An important secondary effect of the extended French program is an increase in the number of students studying a third language at Barrie Central Collegiate. Thriving language programs, including German and Latin, are now an integral component of the school’s curriculum.

Section B asks students to rate themselves on their French proficiency relative to a francophone student at the same grade level. The results are consistent with what one would expect from students who have accumulated twenty-one hundred hours of French at the time of their graduation. Most students are aware of the fact that they have acquired a middle-level of fluency and require an immersion experience of several months to perfect their language ability.

B. The following questions are about how you think you’re doing in learning French. Please answer with your own opinion. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

1. Thinking about a person your age, whose first language is French, for example, someone from northern Ontario, Québec or a French-speaking country, how would you compare your French to theirs in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My French is</th>
<th>about the same</th>
<th>somewhat worse</th>
<th>much worse</th>
<th>don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>11. 8% (3)</td>
<td>46% (18)</td>
<td>41% (16)</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>12. 18% (7)</td>
<td>59% (23)</td>
<td>18% (7)</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>13. 18% (7)</td>
<td>36% (14)</td>
<td>44% (17)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>14. 31% (12)</td>
<td>44% (17)</td>
<td>18% (7)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two students indicated that they were between somewhat worse and much worse on the speaking scale. One of the students felt that he/she was between somewhat worse and
much worse on the listening scale. Two students indicated that they were between somewhat worse and much worse on the writing and reading scales.

Simcoe County students like their Calgary counterparts rated themselves as being closest to their francophone peers in the area of reading. It is probable that this is due to the large amount of time students spend focusing on novel studies and doing research for independent reports which are handed in or presented to their classmates. Hart, Lapkin and Swain noted that "...listening/speaking, reading/writing average scores indicate that students judge their receptive skills (listening, reading) as closer to native speakers than their productive skills (speaking, writing)." This indicates that the curriculum needs to reflect this dichotomy and try to help students bridge the speaking and writing gap in their classroom activities.

2. Please indicate how well you can do the following in French.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Without any problem</th>
<th>With little difficulty</th>
<th>With some difficulty</th>
<th>With much difficulty</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read and understand a French newspaper or magazine.</td>
<td>15. 15% (6)</td>
<td>33% (13)</td>
<td>51% (20)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch and understand a French movie (on TV or in a theatre).</td>
<td>16. 10% (4)</td>
<td>28% (11)</td>
<td>51% (20)</td>
<td>10% (4)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to and understand a French radio show.</td>
<td>17. 5% (2)</td>
<td>28% (11)</td>
<td>41% (16)</td>
<td>23% (9)</td>
<td>0 (38)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Give street directions to someone, face to face.  
18. 21% (8)  44% (17)  33% (13)  0  0 (38)

Write a letter in French.  
19. 28%  49% (19)  18% (7)  3% (1)  0 (11)

Explain the plot of a movie or book to someone, face to face.  
20. 18% (7)  36% (14)  38% (15)  8% (3)  0

Explain the plot of a movie or book to someone in a letter.  
21. 23%  36% (14)  28% (11)  8% (3)  0

An asterisk (*) indicates that the student felt that they fell between the higher and lower of the choices marked.

Findings in the Calgary study indicate that the late immersion students felt that their ability to conduct real-life activities in French was not comparable to that of francophones or early immersion students. Simcoe County students responded in a similar way to that of the Calgary late immersion students. The scale is in fact effectively out of four, not five, as no students chose five. Not at all, as a response. The majority of Simcoe County students felt that they were capable of performing the given activities with little or some difficulty. This could be an area improved upon in future curriculum development. A modification of assignments to include such things a journal d'écoute, or listening journal, could emphasise the need to listen to and write French in situations that provides authentic French learning opportunities.
Section C focused on student activities that were performed by students outside of the classroom. Students enrolled in the BCC extended French program make up thirteen per cent of the student body. Although students are very conscientious about speaking French to their teachers outside of the classroom, it doesn’t appear as though they spend much time speaking to each other in French. The results, which are similar to those in the Calgary survey, were not encouraging. Perhaps the focus needs to be on students finding ways to use the language outside of the classroom in a series of aural assignments and projects. Instead of written homework, the students might be given listening homework and asked to report orally on what they chose to listen to, attempting to incorporate new vocabulary into the presentation.

C. The following questions are about your actual use of French.

1. For each of the following situations, please indicate how often you use French instead of English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>About half the time</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Hardly ever</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between classes or at lunch at school</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
<td>41% (16)</td>
<td>56% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with friends outside of school</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
<td>36% (14)</td>
<td>49% (19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please indicate how recently (if at all) you have done each of the following. (Do not count activities in or for school)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never past year</th>
<th>Within the past 6 months</th>
<th>Within the past 12 months</th>
<th>Within the past 18 months</th>
<th>Within the past 24 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talked in French to a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Simcoe County</td>
<td>Calgary 1</td>
<td>Calgary 2</td>
<td>Calgary 3</td>
<td>Calgary 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person whose first language is French</td>
<td>24. 13% (5)</td>
<td>23% (9)</td>
<td>21% (8)</td>
<td>28% (11)</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked on the telephone in French for at least a few minutes</td>
<td>25. 10% (4)</td>
<td>8% (3)</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
<td>23% (9)</td>
<td>44% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watched a French movie that did not have English subtitles</td>
<td>26. 5% (2)</td>
<td>26% (10)</td>
<td>26% (10)</td>
<td>21% (8)</td>
<td>21% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read a book in French</td>
<td>27. 8% (3)</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
<td>18% (7)</td>
<td>28% (11)</td>
<td>33% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had at least a ten minute conversation in French outside of school</td>
<td>28. 14% (5)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
<td>27% (10)</td>
<td>19% (7)</td>
<td>38% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listened to a French language radio station</td>
<td>29. 11% (4)</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
<td>26% (10)</td>
<td>45% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a conversation in French at home</td>
<td>30. 8% (3)</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
<td>15% (60)</td>
<td>67% (26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section, the Simcoe County results were quite different to those of students in Calgary. The majority of Simcoe County students do not ever use the French language outside of school. A full sixty-seven per cent of students have never had a conversation
in French at home. It appears as though there are few authentic opportunities for students in Barrie to use French in the city or Simcoe County, and the teachers challenge will be to create or manipulate these situations. Perhaps trips to the library when the bilingual librarian is available, or having guest speakers from government funded agencies such as the employment centre come to the school to make a presentation on careers in French would be a good motivator.

3. Have you ever spent a week or more in a place where you had to use French to do most everyday activities?
   Yes: 31   No: 7

4. Altogether, how many months have you spent in places where you had to use French for most everyday activities?

   1 week: 8
   10 days: 1
   2 weeks: 5
   1 month: 6
   6 weeks: 1
   2 months: 5
   3 months: 1
   4 months: 2
   5 months: 1
   34 months: 1

   In contrast to their Calgary peers, eighty-two per cent of students indicated that they had spent one week or longer in a place that required them to use French on a daily basis. Calgary students indicated that seventy per cent of them had spent a week or more in a milieu requiring them to speak French daily. One explanation for this might be the proximity of Ontario to Quebec, allowing more Ontario students to visit with a school program or their family. BCC teachers actively promote language field trips, from one day in length to three-month exchanges, with good success. This introduction to a wider
use of French has often encouraged students to continue post-secondary studies in French, or to continue the study of French concurrently with their science or business studies.

Section D provided insights into students' perceived use of the French language in the classroom. There are definite shortcomings that need to be addressed in the program to improve the dichotomy between the receptive and productive use of the French language.

D. The following questions are about your extended French program.

I. Please indicate how often you use French in your classes to do the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write a paragraph to answer a question asked by the teacher</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a letter (for example, for information, to a pen pal)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give a long spoken answer (more than a phrase), speaking about for example, a story, in a discussion, a debate, etc.</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Yes (%)</td>
<td>No (%)</td>
<td>Participation (%)</td>
<td>Yes (%)</td>
<td>No (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students on a group project to be presented in class</td>
<td>11% (4)</td>
<td>58% (22)</td>
<td>26% (10)</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
<td>0 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with other students on a group project to be written up</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
<td>34% (13)</td>
<td>45% (17)</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
<td>3% (1) (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give an oral presentation on a project you've done</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29% (11)</td>
<td>*68% (26)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read French texts or literature</td>
<td>53% (20)</td>
<td>29% (11)</td>
<td>11% (4)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3% (1) (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read French newspapers or magazines</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18% (7)</td>
<td>26% (10)</td>
<td>42% (16)</td>
<td>13% (5) (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to a French tape or radio program</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
<td>39% (15)</td>
<td>50% (19)</td>
<td>5% (2) (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch a French movie or TV program</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19% (7)</td>
<td>57% (21)</td>
<td>22% (8)</td>
<td>3% (1) (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to French-speaking adults other than your teacher</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5% (2)</td>
<td>*53% (20)</td>
<td>34% (13) (38)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Present a play or give a presentation in French.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>42.</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>*38% (15)</th>
<th>56% (22)</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>3% (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Talk with my teacher about learning French.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>43.</th>
<th>*3%</th>
<th>23% (9)</th>
<th>*21% (8)</th>
<th>41% (16)</th>
<th>8% (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The results of this section are not comparable to that of the Calgary students, as these questions were not asked of them. The results indicated that there is a huge gap in the student use of French in its spoken forms. Most students use French to read and write in class with eighty-two per cent of students responding that they read at least weekly in class and seventy-six per cent responding that they write answers to questions asked by the teacher weekly or more frequently. It was disturbing to note that in response to three questions pertaining to listening, the one hundred per cent of students were not hearing any French spoken by an adult other than their teacher at school. Steps must be taken to remedy this as the majority of students, as noted above, only have the opportunity to hear French in the classroom and the majority of extended French teachers are anglophones. It is important for students to be exposed to a variety of accents and vocabulary in order to enrich their learning and understanding of the French language.

Section E asks students to consider the place of French in their future plans. Although this is a difficult question for students to answer, since many of these students will complete their final year of high school the year after having completed their last extended French course, it is an important one. It indicates to the teacher the comfort...
level of the student in so far as whether or not the student can envision French playing a role in their future education or career.

E. Please indicate your answers to the following questions regarding your use of French in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Most likely</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Not likely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I plan to continue my study of French after high school.</td>
<td>44.31%</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
<td>18% (7)</td>
<td>26% (10)</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to study another language in the future.</td>
<td>45.26%</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
<td>44% (17)</td>
<td>8% (3)</td>
<td>10% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan on using French in my chosen career.</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
<td>*41% (16)</td>
<td>26% (10)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan on using French when I travel.</td>
<td>47. *46%</td>
<td>38% (15)</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Simcoe County students feel that there is a strong possibility of them using their French-language skills in their chosen career. Sixty-nine per cent of students chose that they would possibly, most likely or definitely use French in the future. A total of eighty-five per cent of Calgary students anticipated using French in their future career. Sixty-two per cent of Simcoe County students planned on continuing their study of French after high school, presumably at university or community college. This is comparable to the
sixty-seven per cent of late immersion students in Calgary who wish to continue their study of French at the post-secondary level.

Section F was an open-ended question asking students for their input into how the extended French program could be improved. Most students took the time to reflect on their answers before responding. The results are summarised below.

F. Please make constructive comments to help assess the BCC extended French program.

1. Please specify in which grades or course; français, géographie, histoire, médias, you spoke and wrote French the most. Explain.

There were three clear winners here. Fifteen students indicated that their français courses were those in which they spoke the most French and thirteen in each of the grade eleven médias and OAC French.

Individual student comments pertaining to what allows them or motivates them to speak more French are as follows.

• At the OAC level, there were more projects and discussions.

• The students knew more French therefore it is easier to communicate their ideas.

• The topics were more interesting and encouraged discussion.

• They did the most reading and speaking in this class.

• They wrote an independent study.

• There was a lot of interaction and more projects.

In the grade eleven médias class, students focussed on their oral work when making presentations.

• The students watched more French film, television, etc.

• They made videos.
• The class was more about using your French than studying French.

• Students examined current events.

One student chose to write a full page, signed letter, making suggestions that she thought would encourage the use of French in the classroom. She stated, "I think there should be more reading of actual French publications though - like Quebec newspaper etc. Maybe listen to the French radio station during classes."49

2. In your opinion, which activities encouraged and promote your use of French during class time? Why?

Student answers varied considerably to this question and they frequently omitted to state why they felt it would encourage and promote the use of French, anticipating for the most part that the why would be self evident based on their answer.

• Discussions - 11

• Can form an opinion and want to express it to the class (need to pre-teach vocabulary)

• Presentations - 8

• Drama - 7

• Reading aloud - 5

• Videos - 4

• Group projects - 4

• Games - 3

• Writing - 2

One each for the use of culture, grammar, small class size. Independent Study Unit (ISU) and the loss of marks.

49 Brenda Jostin to Denise Minardi, 22 June 2000.
The majority of these responses relate to the oral communication component of the French-language program. Students indicated that they would like more opportunities to practise the spoken language as opposed to the written form of the language. Given that a language is most valuable in its spoken form, when the speaker feels comfortable communicating with the language, this result is appropriate. Also, the fact that most students have little or no opportunity to use the language outside of the classroom, suggests that these suggestions must be seriously considered when making changes to the program.

3. What would encourage you to speak more French in class? (bonus marks, rewards...)

Students listed a wide range of motivators for speaking French in class. The following list breaks down student suggestions.

- That they receive bonus marks for participation - 15
- None needed/nothing - 9
- Games, food, party (incentives) - 7
- Bonus marks for oral work - 4
- Whole class on-side and speaking French - 3
- Exchanges - 2
- Punishment/lines - 2
- Group projects - 1
- Teacher who got mad - 1
- Class trip - 1
- More discussions - 1
Most students indicated that they would like to receive individual recognition for their efforts to use French in class. Since the new Ontario curriculum does not allow for the use of participation marks, it is necessary to devise a new way of giving individual marks for students for their effort to speak and participate in French. Innovation will be the key to finding a system that compliments the new government guidelines and evaluation format.

Over all, it appears as though Simcoe County extended French students are performing at a similar level to late immersion students in Calgary, although they rate their oral proficiency at a lower level. The challenges of learning French in a community that does not have a French-speaking population or that has an isolated French speaking population are many. After careful reflection and using the new Ontario Curriculum as a reference for grades nine, ten, eleven and twelve, the following recommendations are made.

Firstly, that greater authentic writing and speaking opportunities be created for the students and that these be implemented on a daily basis. Suggestions include having a different activity each day of the week allowing students to establish a routine such as; on Monday students, might listen to a broadcast of the daily news and provide a response in their journal on one of the current events in the broadcast. On Tuesday, students might listen to a French poem from a different French country and discuss the vocabulary and content of the poem. Wednesdays could involve students listening to a French-language song and filling in missing words, known as a cloze passage. Thursday could be a day during which different students are given excerpts from French plays, again from a variety of milieus and time periods, which they re-enact for the class. Friday could
involve students watching clips from advertisements, television shows or films requiring students to critique what they have seen, or contrast it to similar English material. This approach would ensure that students include all four forms of communication, reading, writing, listening and speaking, with more of an emphasis on listening and speaking than currently exists.

Practical problems in changing the program emphasis from written to spoken include availability of resources, the closest French bookstore to Barrie is the Librairie Champlain in Toronto and knowing what to purchase. Purchasing decisions require that many hours be spent researching materials, and countless hours of supplementary work are necessary to integrate the chosen material into the curriculum. Access to French television in Simcoe County is non-existent unless one has cable or a satellite dish. One solution to this is to encourage students to sign out videos and music from the public library, which has a respectable collection of French-language material. Requiring students to do a different type of assignment, such as listening or viewing a variety of French programs over a period of eight and ten weeks and recounting the main ideas or story line of what they have heard or seen, would give them more aural exposure.

This sort of project would increase the number of hours of a student’s exposure to French outside of the classroom and provide an opportunity for students to hear other accents as well as adding an important cultural element to the program. Any difficulties in comprehension can be noted, whether it be accent, pace of speech or vocabulary and discussed with the teacher and classmates. Students could give recommendations to their classmates as to whether or not they should listen to or view the program. A preliminary trial of this activity, last year at Barrie Central Collegiate, had an one hundred per cent
completion rate of four weeks or more of listening to or watching a French program or film. Modifying the eight week project to include teacher checks of student progress every two weeks and randomly choosing students to present their opinion of what they have listened to or watched could improve the eight week completion rate.

Other improvements or refinements to the program include ensuring that French is used in class. In the past, students who spoke French earned participation marks, but with curriculum changes that disallow this practice, it is necessary to incorporate new methods to motivate students. Incentives might include small rewards for students who speak French almost one hundred per cent of the time or a work related exemption. Most importantly, teachers need to be properly trained in second-language pedagogy to ensure that they feel confident with their own linguistic abilities and are capable of providing a exemplary model for their students. Time and again, in the literature of French-second-language pedagogy, teachers are cited as the strength or the weakness of the program. Supporting teachers of all ages is of the utmost importance if students are to be graduated with the ability to competently speak French.

Simcoe County students now have the opportunity to complete a Certificate of Extended French and a small percentage of students achieve this each year. The program, in September 2001, is entering its twelfth year of existence and continues to grow. There have been many successes and frustrations along the way. New initiatives, as introduced by both the government and teachers, can better the current program and increase the fluency of extended French students. Providing students with the opportunity to challenge themselves and learn a new skill is the goal of the extended French program in Simcoe County, one that it is being accomplished to a large extent.
CONCLUSION

From the first French explorer in 1610, to the widespread acceptance of French-second-language programs in 2001, the French language and culture has played an important role in shaping and defining Simcoe County. The Simcoe County Board of Education has found itself in the midst of several controversies due to the demand for French-first-language schools and French-second-language education programs. The Board's decisions have been based, in part, on changing public opinion and attitudes towards French, as well as the need to maintain a balanced budget during difficult fiscal times. Government legislation, parental lobby groups and a changing workplace have also impacted choices made by the Board. The extended French program has withstood many challenges over the last twelve years and continues to provide students with an alternative for learning French in Simcoe County. It will continue to do so into the twenty-first century if modifications are made to reflect the needs of students and Canadian society at large.

This document was and continues to be a model for the three types of French-second-language programs offered in Ontario. One hundred and seventy-three submissions were received by this Committee, including one sent by the Simcoe County Board of Education. This document presents the widely perceived need for students to have the opportunity to use French in real-life situations. Financing of programs and availability of qualified teaching staff is also examined. Sixty-eight recommendations were made by the Committee to improve and in some cases begin to implement viable French-second-language programs in Ontario.


This document sets out the Ministry of Education policy for the primary and junior grade levels. It summarises provincial goals and expectations for teachers, administrators, trustees and parents. It is the first of a series of documents to be published to start implementing changes to the Ontario education system. It details changes to be made in terms of the basic skill requirements that Ontario students are expected to meet. In particular, standards pertaining to arithmetic, reading and writing are outlined.


This document is a follow-up to the 1975 *Formative Years* publication, and sets out the Ministry of Education policy for the introduction of major improvements to the teaching and learning of French as a second language in elementary and secondary schools in
Ontario. The *Gillin Report* and the sixty-eight recommendations made in it are quoted at length. This is the first mention of three types of French programs defined as Core, Extended and Immersion, which are based on instruction time using the French language. The funding model for the different types of French programs is outlined in detail.


This document outlines impending changes in French language programs beginning September 1984. In 1984, the Ministry of Education began implementing the OS:IS curriculum that would allow Ontario students to complete all diploma requirements in four years instead of five. Language programs would now take four years to complete. *Ontario’s FSL Programs* also includes tables calculating grants for FSL programs and other subjects taught in French. A short bibliography is included.


This policy document governed the teaching of the French language in Ontario until the release in 1999 of the new Ontario curriculum. This document focuses on core French programs and outlines the time division to be spent teaching the four language skills listening, speaking, reading and writing. It includes sample activities as well as detailed tables of language structures to be taught at the different grade levels. There is also a bibliography of materials for teacher and student use.

A forty-seven page document that reformed secondary education in Ontario and remained in effect until 1999. This document outlined new requirements for successful completion of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), including one credit at the grade nine level in French as a second language. It was hoped that most students would fulfil the thirty-credit requirement in four years instead of five, but this did not happen.


This document covers course planning, course content and evaluation of OAC courses. It divides French courses into the three types of French programs defined by the Ministry as core, extended and immersion French. It gives a detailed breakdown of the grammar structures to be taught at the OAC level. There is a brief bibliography included at the end.


Hammerley uses the term linguistics to discuss his theories on second-language learning which include the optimisation of induced learning under the given conditions of language, teacher, student and context. He discusses the problem of communication at the cost of accurate use of the language. His was a dissenting voice, and he states on page 41 that, Immersion is a situation that should be built up to, gradually, not plunged into at the beginning of the program, for in such deep water a beginner surrounded by other beginners can do nothing but drown as far as linguistic competence is concerned.

The emphasis of this book is on disseminating information to parents working to convince their school boards to improve or create new French second language programs. This compendium of writings on French language learning is well laid out and easy to read. The papers chosen represent all three types of French programs, core, extended and immersion, and showcase a wide range of contributors, from parents to professors. It includes such things as a brief history of bilingualism, a checklist for parents, resource lists and French language activities throughout Canada. Problems that students might encounter are addressed and most importantly, each article ends with a bibliography.


This is a companion book to So You Want Your Child to Learn French. It addresses new information about second-language learning and teaching and furthers the efforts of the previous book in the creation of improved French second language programs. French second language learning at the secondary and post-secondary level is also discussed. It examines the difficulties of English parents helping their French speaking children to study, and makes practical suggestions to resolve common dilemmas. There is a section in which students rate their French language learning experience. Again, each article is followed by a comprehensive bibliography.


This book was written as a primer for students in grades six to nine who were in, or had just completed a French immersion program. It attempted to help students measure how
well they were doing in their development of French language skills as well as strategies to keep up their use of French. It was used by both parents and students interested in an account in layman's terms of the results of the first years of French immersion programs across Canada.


This publication is revised regularly as core French programs in Canada change to meet Ministry of Education guidelines. It clearly lays out, school board by school board; existing programs by grade and time spent study French as a second language, teacher training, textbooks chosen, and supplementary cultural activities. It makes it easy to compare the French programs offered in different parts of the province and country.


This publication provides a multitude of resources, divided by activity, not province, for French second language enrichment. Many of the suggested resources include a cultural component such as exchanges, summer programs and contests or presentations. Starting with a quote from French Core Program 1980, ideas are discussed in detail and examples provided for school boards, teachers and parents who want to offer authentic language experiences for their student or child.
## APPENDIX II

### The Simcoe County Board of Education
**Feasibility Survey**
**Late Immersion French Program**
*(Grade 3 Parents)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s):</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>city/town</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postal code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>township</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lot no.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concession</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of child:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade level as of November 1, 1984:**  ___________________________________________  **Present School:**  ___________________________________________

### Please answer each of the following:

1. My child would attend a late (Grade 6) French immersion program, if it were to be offered in September, 1985, at our present school.
   - [ ] Yes  
   - [ ] No

2. My child would attend a late (Grade 6) French Immersion program if it were to be offered in September, 1985, at another school with transportation provided by The Simcoe County Board of Education.
   - [ ] Yes  
   - [ ] No

3. My child would attend a late (Grade 6) French Immersion program if it were to be offered in September, 1985, at another school with transportation NOT provided by The Simcoe County Board of Education.
   - [ ] Yes  
   - [ ] No

4. Please take this opportunity to clarify any of your answers to questions 1, 2 or 3.
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

5. My child has received instruction in or exposure to French, other than the Simcoe County Board of Education French program.
   - [ ] Yes  
   - [ ] No
   If yes, please clarify:
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

6. Please take this opportunity to make any comments related to the feasibility of The Simcoe County Board of Education offering a late (Grade 6) French Immersion program.
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

Thank you

I have received the Late Immersion French Feasibility Survey and do not wish to respond.

Please return to the Principal of your child's school by December 1, 1984.

**Parent(s)/Guardian(s): Signature**
SCDSB Extended French Program  
School Council Feedback Form

Extended French is an optional program that is presently available in eight elementary and six secondary school sites in Simcoe County. The program has been in existence in Simcoe County District School Board since 1995. At the elementary level, the program begins in Grade 3 and French curriculum is taught for 30% of each school day. At the secondary level, students take 7 credit courses to receive the SCDSB Extended French Certificate.

We would appreciate your comments and recommendations in the following areas to help us to plan for future developments in the SCDSB Extended French program. If you require additional space, please use the reverse side of this form or attach additional pages.

1. Current Registration Process/Admission to the Program:

   

2. Curriculum Delivery/Program Expectations:

   

3. Impact on Student Learning:

   

4. Other:

   

Please return all forms to Thérèse McNamara, at the Education Centre by October 15, 1999.

Thank-you.
APPENDIX IV

EFSL Interview Questions

The following is a list of leading questions that will be asked of all interviewees. All questions will be open ended, allowing participants to freely express their thoughts and opinions of the EFSL program and the proceedings which led up to its implementation.

1. What is your name and occupation?

2. Describe existing FSL programs in Simcoe County leading up to 1989.

3. What role did you play in the creation of the EFSL program in Simcoe County?

4. Describe what you remember of the reports and meetings leading up to the vote to implement an EFSL program.

5. Were you satisfied with the decision to implement this particular program? Why?

6. What were the greatest challenges you had to confront while the process to decide whether or not to implement a program was being discussed?

7. What is your most vivid memory pertaining to this issue?

8. Is there anything that you would like to add?
APPENDIX V

Barrie Central Collegiate-Extended French Survey

A. The following questions ask about languages used in your home.

1. Were you born in Canada?   Yes____  No____   if Yes go to question 3.  
   If no, what country were you born in? __________________________________________
   How old were you when you came to Canada? ______________________________________

2. Is there any language, not counting English and French, that you can understand at all?   
   Yes ____  No ____   if No go to question 9.

3. Please list the language(s), not counting English and French, that you can understand when they are written and/or when they are spoken.
   When written ________________________________________________________________
   When spoken ________________________________________________________________

4. Where did you learn the language(s)? __________________________________________

5. Compared to French, how easy is it for you to use this language for each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Easier than French</th>
<th>About the same</th>
<th>Less easy than French</th>
<th>Much less easy than French</th>
<th>Can't do at all in this language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>1. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>2. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>3. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>4. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. How often do you use the language(s)?
   daily ______  weekly ______  biweekly ______  monthly ______  rarely ______

7. What are the main ways you use the language(s) you've written down in question 4?  
   (For example, speaking to your parents, writing relatives, watching TV, reading newspapers)
   a) ________________________________________________________________
   b) ________________________________________________________________
   c) ________________________________________________________________

8. What languages do your parents speak (even if not used often) not counting English?  
   Mother _________  Father _________

9. How often are English and any language other than French spoken in your home?
   Most of all the time _______  About half the time _______  Sometimes _______  Hardly ever _______  Never _______
   English 6. A  B  C  D  E
   Other 7. A  B  C  D  E
   Other 8. A  B  C  D  E
10. How well do your parents speak English? (For example, in speaking to your teacher)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very well</th>
<th>Moderately well</th>
<th>Somewhat well</th>
<th>Not well</th>
<th>Can't speak English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>9. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>10. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Was your elementary school an extended French or an immersion school? What is its name and where is it located?

8. The following questions are about how you think you’re doing in learning French. Please answer with your own opinion. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

1. Thinking about a person your age, whose first language is French, for example, someone from northern Ontario, Québec or a French-speaking country, how would you compare your French to theirs in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My French is</th>
<th>about the same</th>
<th>somewhat worse</th>
<th>much worse</th>
<th>don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>11. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>12. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>13. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>14. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please indicate how well you can do the following in French.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Without any problem</th>
<th>With little difficulty</th>
<th>With some difficulty</th>
<th>With much difficulty</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read and understand a French newspaper or magazine</td>
<td>15. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch and understand a French movie (on TV or in a theatre)</td>
<td>16. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to and understand a French radio show</td>
<td>17. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give street directions to someone, face to face.</td>
<td>18. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a letter in French.</td>
<td>19. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Explain the plot of a movie or book to someone, face to face.

Explain the plot of a movie or book to someone in a letter.

C. The following questions are about your actual use of French.

1. For each of the following situations, please indicate how often you use French instead of English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>About half the time</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Hardly ever</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between classes or at lunch at school</td>
<td>22. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with friends outside of school</td>
<td>23. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please indicate how recently (if at all) you have done each of the following. (Do not count activities in or for school)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Within the past week</th>
<th>Within the past month</th>
<th>Within the past 6 months</th>
<th>Within the past year</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talked in French to a person whose first language is French</td>
<td>24. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked on the telephone in French for at least a few minutes</td>
<td>25. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watched a French movie that did not have English subtitles</td>
<td>26. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Have you ever spent a week or more in a place where you had to use French to do most everyday activities?  
   Yes ___  No ___  
   If No go to Q.

4. Altogether, how many months have you spent in places where you had to use French for most everyday activities? _______ months

D. The following questions are about your extended French program.

1. Please indicate how often you use French in your classes to do the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write a paragraph</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to answer a question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asked by the teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31. A   B   C   D   E

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write a letter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for example, for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information, to a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pen pal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32. A   B   C   D   E

Give a long spoken answer (more than a phrase), speaking about for example, a

33. A   B   C   D   E
story, in a discussion, a debate, etc.

Work with other students on a group project to be presented in class.

Work with other students on a group project to be written up.

Give an oral presentation on a project you've done.

Read French texts or literature.

Read French newspapers or magazines.

Listen to a French tape or radio program.

Watch a French movie or TV program.

Listen to French-speaking adults other than your teacher.

Present a play or give a presentation in French.
Talk with my teacher about learning French.

E. Please indicate your answers to the following questions regarding your use of French in the future.

I plan to continue my study of French after high school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Most likely</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Not likely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I plan to study another language in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Most likely</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Not likely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I plan on using French in my chosen career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Most likely</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Not likely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I plan on using French when I travel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Most likely</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Not likely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. Please make constructive comments to help assess the BCC extended French program.

1. Please specify in which grades or courses: français, géographie, histoire, médias, you spoke and wrote French the most. Explain.

2. In your opinion, which activities encouraged and promote your use of French during class time? Why?

3. What would encourage you to speak more French in class? (Bonus marks, rewards...)
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Hunter, Andrew F. *A History of Simcoe County: in two parts*. Canada: The Historical Committee of Simcoe County, 1948.


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