



**Waterloo Region
District School Board**

Education Centre

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February 10, 2017

Honourable Mitzie Hunter
Ministry of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Hunter:

At the January 23, 2017, Committee of the Whole meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board, Trustees requested we write to you to express our concern at the lack of qualified, fluent French teachers in the province of Ontario.

While our board currently has enough French teachers to meet our classroom demands, it is difficult for us to find suitably qualified French-speaking teachers for our occasional teacher roster and long-term occasional list. As a result, we periodically face challenges providing consistent programming for our students when French classroom teachers are away.

To address the lack of qualified French teachers available to our system, our Human Resources department is proactively working with universities and colleges across Ontario to secure teachers before they graduate. However, we are concerned about the long-term sustainability of this approach as all school boards compete for the same limited pool of newly-qualified French teachers.

We ask the Ministry of Education to explore ways it can encourage post-secondary institutions to expand French programs to grow the number of qualified French-speaking teachers in Ontario and improve the quality of French-fluent teachers available.

Demand for French Immersion programs in Waterloo region has increased by more than 11 per cent in five years, and we believe measures are needed immediately to ensure we can continue to meet the demands of our community while continuing to ensure that students achieve their potential and we protect the well-being of our system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott McMillan".

Scott McMillan
Chairperson of the Board

Cc: OPSBA
Ontario School Board Chairs