



MAY 28, 2021 | 058-21

## Partnership between Laurier and local school boards offers educators access to French teaching qualifications

BRANTFORD – Finding enough qualified French teachers to meet the needs of Ontario’s elementary and secondary students continues to be a challenge for many school boards. In response to this need, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCDNB) and Grand Erie District School Board (GEDSB) partnered with Wilfrid Laurier University to provide local access to the French as a Second Language (FSL), Part 1 additional qualification program. Successful applicants may also qualify for tuition subsidies thanks to pilot project funding from the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association.

Laurier’s Faculty of Education is offering the FSL Part 1 course to be taught virtually on weekday mornings from July 5 to 23. Current teachers at BHNCDNB and GEDSB who have French language skills but do not possess teaching credentials in the subject area may qualify for full reimbursement of the \$685 tuition fee as well as the \$50 French Proficiency Test fee upon successful completion of the course. Teachers not currently working for either board who apply to them for employment can qualify for a \$500 tuition subsidy and – if hired – will receive further subsidy to cover the remainder of their tuition and testing fees. All applicants must pass a French proficiency test as a prerequisite.

The pilot project is the brainchild of Jackie Whiting and Heidi Soules. French consultants at the BHNCDNB and GEDSB respectively, the pair will provide guest lectures during the course, which will be taught by instructor Wanda West. “The challenge of finding qualified French teachers is a shared one,” said Soules. “When we came upon the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association pilot program to fund initiatives aimed at recruiting more French teachers, we knew that a partnership approach involving both school boards would be best. We approached Laurier’s Faculty of Education regarding delivery of the program, and we are thrilled that all three organizations were able to collaborate in a way that will have a direct, positive impact on students and families in our local communities.”

“We recognize that the idea of a French proficiency test may seem daunting, especially for those who haven’t used their French language skills in some time, but it doesn’t have to be,” said Whiting. “We are committed to supporting all French as a Second Language educators, both current employees and potential new hires. Workshops will be offered to help participants prepare. We’re here to help set candidates up for success by brushing up on their French listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.”

“Our Faculty of Education is pleased to partner with BHNCDNB and GEDSB to promote and develop French language teachers for the benefit of the local educational communities,” said Maria Cantalini-Williams, dean of Laurier’s Faculty of Education.

...more

## French teaching/Page 2

The deadline to register for the course is June 10. Additional information is available [online](#) and applications can be emailed to [aq@wlu.ca](mailto:aq@wlu.ca). For questions regarding the subsidy, hiring, or proficiency test support, contact Jackie Whiting ([jwhiting@bhncdsb.ca](mailto:jwhiting@bhncdsb.ca)) or Heidi Soules ([heidi.soules@granderie.ca](mailto:heidi.soules@granderie.ca)).

### **Executive Quotations:**

"We are eager to welcome additional educators to our FSL team in order to fill both Core and French Immersion positions and this project that offers financial support to teachers that are interested in taking the FSL AQ course, is an additional step in showing our commitment to supporting our teachers within these roles. The FSL Part 1 Additional Qualification course is an excellent way to build confidence and proficiency in teaching the French language and offers participants the opportunity to learn the latest strategies and tools to meet the needs of today's students. We are very pleased that this collaborative project will financially support not only current employees, but also potential new employees of BHNCDSB to pursue an AQ course as we highly value and encourage life-long learning."

- *Lorrie Temple, Superintendent of Education, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board*

"This fantastic opportunity showcases the strong community collaboration between the Grand Erie District School Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board to invest in education and employment in our region. At both school boards, we are looking to grow our French as a Second Language community across Brantford, and Brant, Haldimand, and Norfolk Counties. We are seeking educators to join our French team that spans from Kindergarten to Grade 12, in the Core French, French Immersion, and Extended French programs. Whether it is an existing employee or a prospective employee, we are investing in building our French as a Second Language (FSL) team by offering subsidies for the Additional Qualification course FSL Part 1, through Wilfrid Laurier University. The FSL community in our region is close-knit and supportive which is why the French Consultants from both Grand Erie and BHNCDSB are reaching out to offer assistance with preparations for the FSL Part 1 Additional Qualification course, particularly the pre-requisite French Proficiency Test."

- *April Smith, Superintendent of Education at the Grand Erie District School Board*

"We know that Ontario families value access to quality French language instruction. Laurier's Faculty of Education is pleased to engage in this innovative approach to building capacity at local school boards for French as a Second Language instruction with our partners at the Grand Erie District School Board and Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board. This initiative is yet another example of the meaningful campus-community partnerships for which Laurier is known. We hope that this pilot project is the beginning of continued efforts to support students, families and lifelong learning in Brantford and the surrounding areas."

- *Maria Cantalini-Williams, Dean of the Faculty of Education, Wilfrid Laurier University*

...more

## CONTACTS

Beth Gurney, Associate Director, Communications & Public Affairs  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
[bgurney@wlu.ca](mailto:bgurney@wlu.ca)

Tracey Austin, Manager of Communications and Community Relations  
Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board  
[taustin@bhncdsb.ca](mailto:taustin@bhncdsb.ca)

Veronica Pang, Interim Manager of Communications  
Grand Erie District School Board  
[veronica.pang@granderie.ca](mailto:veronica.pang@granderie.ca)

-30-