



FEDERAL ELECTION April 2025

BRIEFING NOTE to all election candidates

RE: Advocacy for a National Education Framework – Horizon Education Foundation

BACKGROUND

Canada remains the only G7 nation without a general national education framework (other than the existing Official Languages and First Nations education framework). This disparity results in significant differences in special education programs and services across provinces and territories. These inconsistencies in program and service delivery, particularly eligibility criteria to access programs and services, present barriers and obstacles for all families relocating within Canada (such as military families) and especially impact students with special needs. A unified national framework is essential to ensure accessible and equitable public education services for all students across Canada.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Fragmented Policies:** Each province and territory has distinct policies and structures creating obstacles for families in cross Canada mobility. <https://cmec.ca/299/Education-in-Canada-An-Overview/index.html>
- **Neurodiversity-affirming Approach:** Special education documents do not use neurodiversity-affirming language despite research indicating this as best practice ([Pub Med](#), [Sage Journals](#)). Current language and terminology in documents are deficit based.
- **Cross Canada Migration Impact:** Annually, approximately 275,000 Canadians move between provinces and territories, exacerbating the challenge of inconsistent education policies ([Statistics Canada](#)). The need for digitization of education records is essential.
- **International Models:** Countries with centralized education structures and guidelines successfully implement standardized, consistent practices benefiting all students and meaningful individual accommodations for students with special needs ([OECD](#)).

FACTS AND FIGURES



275,000 Canadians migrate interprovincially each year, impacting special education program and service delivery for students ([Statistics Canada](#)).

In [2021](#), nearly 1 million people were not living in the same province or territory as 5 years earlier - a larger number of people than in each of the 5 previous census periods. The main reasons [cited](#) for moving to another province were employment and family.



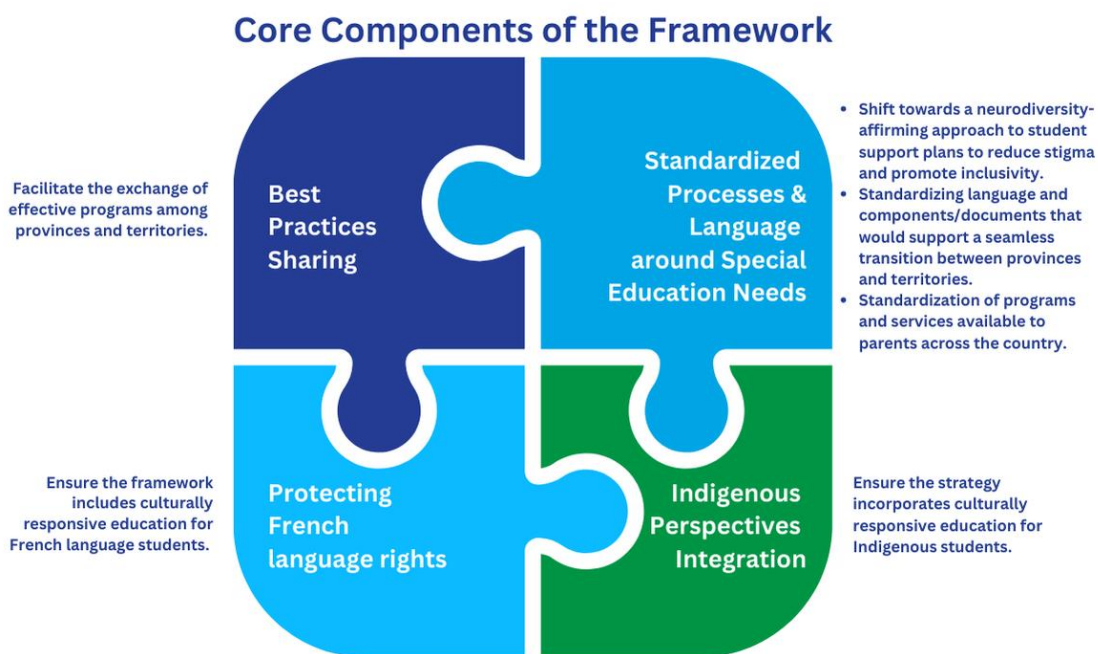
850,000 Canadian children live with a disability

Countries with national education frameworks have better accommodations for students with disabilities ([Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research](#), [Biomed Central](#), [Finnish National Agency for Education](#)).

Neurodiversity-affirming policies improve student engagement and outcomes in inclusive education settings ([Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry](#)).

PROPOSED ACTION

To address these challenges, the creation of a **Federal Minister of Education** position, working alongside the **Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)** and provincial and territorial Ministries of Education, to promote national alignment in student rights language, policy and document sharing practices, while respecting provincial and territorial autonomy in education. A key responsibility would be to ensure that International and Canadian Charter rights for students are respected in provincial and territorial education policy.



REFERENCES

For further information, research and references, please see the detailed citations via the hyperlink or visit the website.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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