

VISION 2020

Schooling for Tomorrow Canada

**Ministry of Education, Ontario, Canada,
French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch**

Vision 2020

Introduction

This document provides an overview of the *Vision 2020* project, an initiative developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education in the fall of 2002 under the auspices of the OECD.

The *Vision 2020* initiative is being undertaken as part of the OECD's *Schooling for Tomorrow*, a major international project designed to foster the development of methods and tools aimed at addressing tomorrow's challenges in education. *Schooling for Tomorrow* is being carried out by the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI).

This report documents the development and implementation of *Vision 2020* from the fall of 2002 to the present, and provides a preliminary analysis of the outcomes of Phase III of the project, as of January 2006.

The *Vision 2020* initiative

In the summer of 2002, the Ontario Ministry of Education was invited by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to take part in its *Schooling for Tomorrow* project. The ministry decided to run two parallel *Schooling for Tomorrow* initiatives, one in English (Teaching as a Profession) and one in French, named *Vision 2020*.

Developed and implemented by the Ministry's French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch, *Vision 2020* was designed on the basis of the province's French-language education needs, six years after Ontario's francophones had gained access to school governance. At the time, the Ministry, French-language educational institutions and the various partners in education, felt the need to assess their progress, define the challenges they face in delivering quality French-language education, and reflect on the future of French-language education in Ontario. The *Vision 2020* initiative provided an ideal platform for this reflection.

The provincial context

Ontario's education system is sub-divided into four school systems: English-language public, English-language Catholic, French-language public and French-language Catholic.

In 1998, distinct (Catholic and public) school systems were established for Ontario's francophone community. School governance has made it possible for francophone parents to gain more control over their schools through French-language school boards, and many new schools have been opened. The francophone minority is nevertheless concerned about assimilation and the erosion of its culture heritage.

The threat of assimilation is the principal challenge facing the Franco-Ontarian community. In fact, the challenges faced by the half-million francophones living in a minority environment in Ontario are similar to those faced globally by the world's minority communities:

- Marginalization and erosion of their linguistic and cultural space;

- Low francophone birth rates;
- The arrival of immigrants, a great majority of whom adopt English on their arrival in Canada (nine out of 10 immigrants adopt English) (Commissioner of Official Languages, 2002);
- Rising rates of exogamous marriage;
- A small francophone population representing 4.5% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2002);
- Distribution of the francophone community across a geographically large and predominantly anglophone population;
- Saturation by English-language media.

These factors contribute to the uncertainty surrounding the long-term continuity of Ontario's French-language community. In this context, schools must respond to many challenges with respect to transmission of the language, building of a francophone identity, appropriation of the culture, academic performance and success in a minority environment, and recruitment and retention of those students who have the right to receive instruction in the minority language.

Given this context and these challenges, the participants in *Vision 2020* consultation forums have been especially sensitive to the issues implicit in the OECD scenarios with respect to the very future of schooling in the larger context of the changes that are occurring internationally. The *Schooling for Tomorrow* project and its toolbox of six (6) futures scenarios have provided an ideal opportunity to resume reflection on the future of French-language education in Ontario.

The goals of the initiative

The key objective of Vision 2020 is to establish a dialogue involving the Ministry of Education, education partners, and representatives of the "new generation", aimed at the development of a shared vision of French-language education in Ontario, and joint strategies for achieving it.

School governance was established as a result of claims from the French-language community regarding access to education services that would meet their needs. The challenge now is to enable the various education partners to move beyond this stage and to begin to reflect on the long-term future of the French-language education system within the province and to engage in open discussion on a matter of public policy with respect to its own vitality and survival. It must ask itself the question: What kind of French-language school do we want in the future? Such a question also calls for an assessment of the methods that could be used to define the parameters of the French-language school of tomorrow.

The OECD scenarios are short hypothetical descriptions of what teaching, learning and education systems might look like in 10 to 20 years. The scenario-based approach, as adapted to the *Vision 2020* initiative and used to visualize the parameters of the school of the future, has proven worthwhile as a means to develop the capacity to think about the future, in part because it challenges our tendency to perceive the majority model as the ideal model both in the present and for the future. The approach provides an opportunity to consider other options for the school of tomorrow. In addition, forward-thinking allows us to challenge concepts and expectations that limit our ability to act in the present.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCENARIO-BASED APPROACH

The three phases of *Vision 2020*

Vision 2020 was initially designed to initiate a dialogue on the future of French-language education. Throughout the process, scenarios were used to launch discussions and free participants from everyday concerns that might prevent them from seeing desirable futures. As the project took shape, the scenario-based approach was developed through three separate phases.

Phase I An approach based on OECD scenarios and the evaluation of their impact on French-language education (September 2002 to February 2003)

In the first phase, an Expert Panel was established. During this phase participants familiarized themselves with the forward-thinking approach by considering the question, “If any of the six OECD scenarios prevailed in our society, what impact would each scenario have on the French-language school?” Discussions considered topics such as the governance of French-language schools, cooperative structures for the public and Catholic components of the system, administrative models for the recruitment and training of leaders, the viability of secondary schools and their programs and prospects for specialization programs and the nature of parent and community participation and involvement.

Phase II Exploration of the links between language planning policy (*politique d’aménagement linguistique*) and the OECD scenarios (March 2003 to December 2003)

In the second phase of *Vision 2020*, analysis of language planning policy showed that this policy implicitly includes forward thinking. Once the scenarios inherent in language planning policy were made explicit, the Expert Panel was able to think about the links between the scenarios inherent in language planning policy and the OECD scenarios and to assess the impact that the OECD scenarios might have on language planning policy.

Phase III The exploration and development of scenarios through the values filter (since January 2004)

In 2004, the OECD scenarios were explored with groups representing the “new generation” of young people, parents and teachers, through a filter of individual and shared values in order to develop a seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future on the basis of what were considered to be key fundamental values. This process was continued in 2005 with three other groups composed of administrators, managers and student representatives.

The characteristics of each phase

The design process for *Vision 2020* was slow and deliberate, in order to encourage dialogue and build participants’ capacity to think about the future. Responses to initial discussions by Ministry representatives and members of the Expert Panel led to significant changes to the project.

In the first phase of *Vision 2020*, Panel members wanted more time to examine the OECD scenarios, so an analytical framework and a visualization guide for scenarios were developed to make them easier to understand.

In the second phase of the project, the members of the Expert Panel and a group of francophones from various Ontario government ministries began exploring the links between the scenario-based approach and the process used to develop public policy, in this case the Government of Ontario's language planning policy, which was being developed at the time.

In doing so, participants noted the scenario-based approach's limitations in taking context into account, especially challenges faced by minority communities, and linguistic and cultural issues. Phase III of the *Vision 2020* Project—the exploration of the OECD scenarios through the values filter and the creation of a seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future—was developed in order to give this context greater consideration.

Workshop development in Phase III

The *Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne* (FESFO), which has considerable expertise in youth facilitation, was key to the design of this third phase. In January 2004, an agreement was reached between the Ministry of Education and the *Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne* (FESFO) concerning the approach, facilitation formula and logistics of organizing a workshop for young Franco-Ontarians.

The approach used in that workshop has been used and continuously improved in subsequent ones during 2004 and 2005 with groups of the “new generation” and education partners. In the *Vision 2020* workshops, activities are focused on the *Schooling for Tomorrow* scenarios published by the OECD in 2001. The participants take ownership of the scenarios through a series of facilitated discussions that last 12-15 hours over two or three days.

Step 1: Identification of values

Participants use the facilitation tool developed by FESFO to identify their own key values and the values shared by the group for the French-language school of the future.

Step 2: Scenario work

Using a facilitation framework developed by FESFO and the Ministry, the participants are divided into six groups. Each group is asked to carry out an in-depth analysis of one of the six OECD scenarios and to become expert in this scenario. The participants are asked to identify the advantages and challenges of such a scenario, the winners and losers, and the values inherent in the scenario under discussion, and to evaluate the impact of such a scenario on the French language school. The members of each group are then asked to develop their own stories based on the scenario they have explored, and to present the scenario to all of the other participants, in the plenary session, in the form of a skit or some other kind of presentation.

Step 3: The seventh scenario

Lastly, the participants are divided into sub-groups and asked to develop a seventh scenario that describes the parameters of the French-language school of the future based on the values deemed to be essential and desirable. Each sub-group then presents or describes its seventh scenario to the other participants during a plenary session. The desired outcome of this step, and ultimately of the project, is the development of a shared vision of the future for French-language education in Ontario.

PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES AND IMPACT OF PHASE III

The overall outcomes of the *Vision 2020* project cannot be evaluated until a comparative and cumulative analysis of the content of all of the consultations has been carried out at the end of the process, which is expected to conclude by the end of 2006. Consequently, the observations reflected here should be considered preliminary.

We believe the *Vision 2020* project is leading toward the development of a vision for French language schooling in 2020, in part through the approach that we have developed during Phase III of the project. This approach, which is based on shared values, enables us not only to further explore the OECD scenarios but to develop a seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future, based on values that are considered essential and desirable by the participants.

After initial testing of the approach with a group of 24 young people in February 2004¹, 17 parents in June 2004² and 24 teachers in November 2004³, we updated the facilitation formula for use with a group of 23 French-language school principals in April 2005, 23 directors of education and school board trustees in May 2005 and 25 members of the management and professional staff of the Ontario Ministry of Education's French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch. During the process, we compared the "visions" that emerged from each group to verify the extent of their complementarity.

Of the six groups consulted in 2004 and 2005, five groups were consulted on a homogeneous basis and one (the group made up of directors of education and school board trustees) on a heterogeneous basis. At the end of the consultations held during the third stage of the *Vision 2020* project, it was considered that sufficient material had been gathered to evaluate the facilitation process as such and give it a definitive form and also to complete the analysis of the content of each of the consultations, compare the consultations with each other and present the resulting vision of French-language education for tomorrow.

The learning process

Among the observable outcomes of Phase III of *Vision 2020* is the fact that the project is becoming a significant consultation initiative. In addition, in December 2004, consultation-planning tools and research tools for a comparative analysis of the content of these consultations began to be developed.

In 2005, in order to help education partners and community agencies take ownership of the consultation process, we began to design and produce in co-operation with FESFO a *Vision 2020* Facilitation and Consultation Kit that will eventually be made available to them.

1. French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch. *Compte rendu analytique du Forum Jeunesse Vision 2020, 27 au 29 février 2004* (Analytical Report of the *Forum Jeunesse Vision 2020*, February 27-29, 2004), (prepared by Monique Gauvin, consulting sociologist), Ontario Ministry of Education, Toronto, May 5, 2004.

2. French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch. *Compte rendu analytique du Forum Vision 2020 avec les parents, 18 au 20 juin 2004* (Analytical Report of the *Forum Vision 2020* with parents, June 18-20, 2004), (prepared by Monique Gauvin, consulting sociologist), Ontario Ministry of Education, March 2005.

3. French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch. *Compte rendu analytique du Forum Vision 2020 avec les enseignantes et les enseignants* (Analytical Report of the *Forum Vision 2020* with teachers): work in progress.

Learning through an inclusive and experimental approach

The challenge of the consultation and facilitation approach adopted in Phase III of the *Vision 2020* project was to encourage the participants to take ownership of the process, which consists of analyzing and further exploring the OECD scenarios through a values filter and creating a seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future that takes the shared values into consideration. We believe we have now assembled the winning conditions for such ownership.

The appropriateness and benefits of an inclusive approach

Of course, the adoption of an inclusive approach, from the grassroots to the decision-makers and encompassing those who study, teach, administer and manage within the French-language education system, is based on the premise that change in the French language education system cannot be conceived of solely as a movement that trickles down from the top of the hierarchy to the bottom. The adoption by *Vision 2020* of an inclusive approach that begins with those at the bottom of the hierarchy has so far been very favourably received by the participants.

For example, some adults said they appreciated the fact that young people were consulted first, and some young people felt valued because their point of view was considered. Asking partner organizations to help with the recruitment of participants gave these organizations an opportunity not only to see members of their “new generation” in action, but also to assess the appropriateness of the consultation and facilitation process on site and take part in its ongoing evaluation.

The approach that has been adopted is also supported by the idea that no education system in a minority environment can be developed, and no reflection on its future can be conceived of, without the perspective and contribution of the community it is meant to serve. This approach reflects the spirit of the language planning policy⁴ that has been implemented by the Ontario Ministry of Education. In this respect, *Vision 2020* is contributing, as far as possible, to all stakeholders’ involvement in reflection on the future of French-language education in Ontario.

The appropriateness and benefits of a partnership between the Ministry and the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO)

One aspect of Phase III of *Vision 2020* was the creation of a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the *Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne* (FESFO) to establish a model for the forthcoming consultations and organize these consultations.

The partnership between the Ministry Working Group (which coordinates logistics and research) and the *Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne* (which takes part in recruitment, is responsible for facilitation and contributes to evaluation) has proven highly productive. Having a third party assume responsibility for facilitation frees the Ministry to listen to and analyze the consultation sessions, and enables the young people and adults who

4 . The Ontario Ministry of Education’s *Politique d’aménagement linguistique de l’Ontario pour l’éducation en langue française (Aménagement linguistique—A Policy for Ontario’s French-Language Schools and Francophone Community)* was officially released in October 2004.

are being consulted to experience a facilitation and consultation process that has been developed primarily by FESFO.

The limitations of the scenario-based approach

Of course, the OECD scenarios do have certain limitations in their capacity to encourage forward-thinking, limitations that were in fact noted by several of the jurisdictions that took part in the *Schooling for Tomorrow* project. With respect to *Vision 2020*, we have seen that the participants in the *Vision 2020* forums perceived several of the scenarios as more relevant to the present than to the future. And in fact, the forward-thinking indicators in the *Vision 2020* project look ahead 20 years or less, to the relatively near future.

In view of such limitations, the facilitators have made a special effort to encourage workshop participants to look beyond their present-day concerns and do their utmost to see themselves in 2020. To better prepare the participants, a visualization exercise has been introduced at the start of the consultation, during an icebreaker session. The participants are encouraged to introduce themselves, to tell the others where they were 15 years ago, to assess the most important change that has occurred since then and to evaluate what, in their opinion, has been the most important change in the past 15 years.

Evaluation of the consultation and facilitation approach

During Phase III of *Vision 2020*, we were able to confirm whether or not we were on the right track by means of ongoing evaluation of the facilitation process used by FESFO through the inclusion of evaluation questions in the participants' guide and the facilitators' guide and an evaluation session for the main organizers at the end of every consultation.

Drawing on aspects considered positive, as well as criticisms made after each consultation by participants and organizers concerning aspects such as the way that the groups consulted understand the OECD scenarios, the method used to analyze and explore the scenario content and the approach used to develop a 7th scenario for French-language schools in 2020, the stakeholders of the *Vision 2020* project have made continuous improvements in consultations.

Learning through participant ownership of the process

The challenge of the facilitation approach was to enable the participants to take ownership of the process of analyzing and further exploring the OECD scenarios and creating a seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future. Within the framework of the process that was used in Phase III of *Vision 2020*, the participants were able to:

- identify both their individual values and the values that they as a group consider the values of the French-language schools;
- analyze and further explore the OECD scenarios, reflect on the values inherent in the scenarios, the advantages and disadvantages or challenges posed by the scenarios, identify the winners and losers in each scenario, thereby recognizing others' realities in the scenario, whether they be students, teachers, parents, administrators, etc.;
- imagine themselves as a group in a given scenario because the participants were encouraged to ask themselves questions about the impact of each of the six (6) scenarios on francophonie and, specifically, on French-language schools and French-language education;

- identify those values they consider essential and desirable and develop a seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future with reference also to people who have parental responsibilities, who are studying, teaching or acting as administrators;
- to design a structure for a French-language education system in the desired scenario, the distribution of power in such a scenario, and so on.

In general, the participants tend to appreciate the weekend they have spent reflecting on the French-language school of the future.

Based on the consultations that were begun in January 2004 and have been analyzed thus far, and on the evaluations submitted by participants in the consultations that have already been carried out, the participants:

- feel they have experienced an authentic consultation process in which they feel respected;
- generally say they appreciated the Ministry's attentiveness and felt their opinion counted;
- say they appreciated the facilitation skills and professionalism of the *Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne* (FESFO);
- appreciate the opportunity to explore their personal values (a time for reflection that they do not often have at school) and to identify the values they share with others by identifying as a group the French-language school of the future; in their evaluations many of them stated that they appreciated the opportunity to realize they were not the only ones who felt like that;
- are aware of the increased problems of social exclusion and the inequities which they observe both in their visualization of some of the OECD scenarios and in the current situation; one area where inequities are observed is in the distribution of resources between Ontario's minority and majority education systems; some participants are also concerned that the scenarios resulting in privatization could reduce access to education for students from less wealthy families; others are also concerned that performance standards or evaluation criteria that are too high or too inflexible could result in even greater exclusion of students with learning disabilities.
- tend to incorporate in their development of a seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future issues related to immigration and diversity, the environment and information and communication technologies;
- were able, in their homogeneous groups, to ask in-depth questions about the roles of parents, students, teachers and principals in the context of the situations described in the scenarios and of a seventh scenario for the French-language school in 2020;
- noted the changing nature of family and community life in their exploration of the OECD scenarios and took this into consideration in the development of the seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future, and reflected on the impact of such changes on the link between the school, the family and the community;
- believed that the development of the seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future generally enabled them to articulate the desired scenario and to identify the key elements of a shared vision of French-language education of the future;
- appreciated the opportunity to reflect on the future of the French-language school outside the usual context and its contradictions and to explore a variety of potential changes and directions in the development of French-language education.

Overall, the approach developed during Phase III of *Vision 2020* enabled the participants to initiate dialogue, develop the capacity to reflect on possible or probable futures through the OECD scenarios

and imagine the French-language school of the future based on the shared values that were collectively considered essential and desirable.

Unexpected outcomes of Phase III of the Vision 2020 project

The consultations that have been carried out so far have resulted in valuable outcomes that were not anticipated initially.

Participants' awareness of their identity

The discussion by francophone students, teachers and parents of the future of French language education and the challenges posed by the collective future is an opportunity for participants from various regions and ethnocultural communities in the province to get to know one another better, to share their unique characteristics, their differences and their similarities, to discover what they have in common, and to become aware of what unites them. The process of exploring the OECD scenarios and developing a seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future is in fact similar to collective action research that incorporates reflection on the features of a collective identity.

Unanticipated transforming effects

Many participants say their participation in the *Vision 2020* forum prompted them to want to become more involved in the French-language education system. Others created exchange networks after the consultations to continue the reflection or take action as a group. These are indicators that the consultations could have a transforming effect on participants.

Furthermore, many participants spontaneously made a connection between the concept of the learning community in one of the OECD scenarios and the concept of the learning community that is part of the language planning policy. They also made the connection between the concept of schools as core social centres, which appears in the OECD scenarios, and the necessary strengthening of the links between family, school and community advocated by the language planning policy by proposing structural changes in the seventh scenario that are conducive to the establishment of such connections.

Initiatives prompted by participants

After the consultation with teachers, some participants decided to design and organize *Vision 2020* consultations in their elementary and secondary school classrooms. These initiatives are paving the way for the development of *Vision 2020* classroom learning tools. The Ministry and FESFO plan to reflect these experiences in the preparation of the *Vision 2020* Facilitation and Consultation Kit.

Development of methods for planning and organizing consultations

The development of research tools

Once the facilitation approach had been determined, we developed the following tools to document and analyze the content of the consultations and highlight the vision of French-language education that emerged:

- A *Gabarit de cueillette de données*⁵, or data-collection template, for use by note-takers during consultations;
- A standard method for analyzing consultations using analytical reports produced by the Ministry;
- A method for evaluating the facilitation process using a report written by FESFO after each consultation;
- A *Grille de comparaison des consultations Vision 2020*⁶ used to map changes in the facilitation process and identify the analytical categories of the content of the consultations.

The development of a Vision 2020 Facilitation and Consultation Kit for education partners and community agencies

In Phase III of *Vision 2020*, we tested a new consultation and facilitation approach based on the analysis and further exploration of the OECD scenarios through the filter of individual and shared values and the creation of a seventh scenario based on values that were considered essential and desirable. After testing such an approach in the five consultations carried out between February 2004 and May 2005, and refining the process with the help of the evaluations from each consultation, we feel we can produce a definitive version of the process, in the form of a *Vision 2020* Facilitation and Consultation Kit which we would like to publish in autumn 2006 and distribute widely in 2007.

The kit is intended to support our education partners and agencies in the francophone community in their reflection on the future of French-language education in Ontario. The kit must be flexible and geared to a democratic and inclusive approach. It could also include a *Vision 2020* learning tool for the classroom.

Use of the OECD Scenarios

During Phase III of *Vision 2020*, we gave the participants abridged versions of the OECD scenarios for use in the discussions.

Participants' perceptions of the OECD scenarios

Since only a few of the consultations completed thus far have been analyzed, we would like to point out that the following analysis of participants' perceptions of the scenarios is incomplete and these comments could change to reflect upcoming consultations.

5. French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch. *Gabarit pour la cueillette de données lors des consultations Vision 2020 en 2005* (Template for Data Collection during *Vision 2020* Consultations in 2005), Working Document No. 2 (prepared by Monique Gauvin, consulting sociologist), Ontario Ministry of Education, April 2005.

6. French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch. *Tableaux synoptiques comparatifs des consultations / Grille de l'évolution du processus d'animation et des catégories d'analyse* (Comparative Synoptic Charts of Consultations/Grid Mapping Changes in the Facilitation Process and Analytical Categories, Draft No. 2 (prepared by Monique Gauvin, consulting sociologist), Ontario Ministry of Education, February 14, 2005.

- For the time being, even in Phase III of *Vision 2020*, the preferred scenarios are still the “Schools as Core Social Centres” scenario and the “Schools as Focused Learning Organisations” scenario, which are generally considered more reflective of the values of the French-language school;
- Thus far, the “Extending the Market Model” scenario does not appear to be part of a desirable future for the participants;
- Thus far, two scenarios are considered more relevant to the present than the future: the “Teacher Exodus” scenario and the “Bureaucratic School Systems Continue” scenario;
- Two scenarios are often discussed as solutions (the solution to something unacceptable in its current version): the “Teacher Exodus” scenario and the “Learning Networks and the Network Society” scenario.

The use of the OECD scenarios as a forward-thinking method and their exploration through the values filter encourage the participants to imagine themselves in probable or possible futures while reflecting on the values the OECD scenarios convey and the potential impact of each scenario on the French-language school.

The seventh scenario for the French-language school

In their reflection on the seventh scenario for the French-language school of 2020, the participants have been able thus far to explore and identify what they consider the preferable or desirable future of the French-language school. The facilitation challenge has been to ensure the participants have enough time during the consultations to develop such a scenario and are provided with indicators in order to describe the scenario as clearly as possible. As the series of consultations continued, the categories of discussion that were used to help the participants describe the seventh scenario changed and eventually became the following questions:

- How would you describe the French-language school of the future in terms of learning and its organization, administration and governance, resources and infrastructure and teachers?
- What values are inherent in the seventh scenario for the French-language school of the future?

For the time being, the summary description of the content of the seventh scenario, as created by the participants, appears in the analytical report that was produced for each consultation that has been analyzed thus far. We plan to use the comparative cumulative analysis of the consultation discourse to describe the vision of French-language education that emerges from the consultations as a group.

Vision 2020 and Public Policy Development

Vision 2020 has changed and progressed to become, by Phase III, an extensive consultation project in which participants are asked to take ownership of reflection on the French-language school of the future, and the consultation and facilitation approach is designed to encourage this ownership process and to create spaces and tools so that this ownership can take place. In *Vision 2020*, the Ministry acts more as facilitator, partner and participant than absolute owner of the process. The Ministry also agreed to embark on a process in which not everything is pre-determined, and testing and research play a substantial part. But what link can be made between *Vision 2020* and public policy development?

In our opinion, the strongest link consists of taking a component that is often taken for granted in the public policy development process, i.e. consultation, and introducing an element of risk – the risk of placing oneself in a listening position and giving the floor to those who do not often have it in a school system that we claim must meet their needs. The results have often been strikingly authentic, fostered by an awareness of others' experience and the capacity within each person to effect change.

Vision 2020 and the language planning policy

Phase III of *Vision 2020* took place when the language planning policy was being implemented in the French-language district school boards. The policy promotes the building of a francophone identity and the development of participatory leadership through the establishment of learning communities, and advocates linguistic and cultural reproduction and the sustainable development of the French-language community through increased family/school/ community partnerships or alliances.

While they are the product of an international initiative, the *Vision 2020* consultation forums are an arena for discussion on what a learning community in operation could be. They are also a place where ideas emerge concerning methods to implement for the structuring of such learning communities but also to strengthen the links between family, school and community in a context of globalization, the development of information and communication technologies and the development of a knowledge-based economy.

CONCLUSION

In its vision statement, the Ontario Ministry of Education expresses the belief that in order to marshal widespread commitment and resourcefulness to deal with the most substantive education issues, it will strive to establish relations with its education partners and the public which are more interactive and more responsive to mutual influences. Included in the four strategies the Ministry proposes for achieving such a vision is a reference to involving students, families and communities in the establishment of a positive learning environment.

Vision 2020 has changed and progressed to become a consultation project in which participants are asked to take ownership of reflection on the future of school, and the consultation and facilitation approach is designed to encourage this ownership process and to create spaces and tools so that this ownership can take place. Consequently, *Vision 2020*, through its consultative and inclusive nature, is contributing to the development of a culture of partnership among the Ministry, the education partners and the community and, in this case, to the community's involvement in the definition of the future of its education system.

In 2005, the Ontario Ministry of Education undertook to continue its cooperation with the OECD in Phase III of the *Schooling for Tomorrow* project. This report has tracked the progress of the *Vision 2020* project up to end of December 2005 (see Phase III, p. 5-6) and presented the main preliminary outcomes and impact of Phase III. After completing the six consultations held on an experimental basis in 2004-2005, we plan in 2006-2007 to complete the summary and analysis of each consultation, make a comparative analysis of the consultations and finish the *Vision 2020* Facilitation and Consultation Kit aimed at enabling education partners and community agencies to take ownership of these consultations.

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