

Final Reflection

As a final reflection, schools were asked to review their successes and challenges from each section and, based on their professional judgement, indicate the extent to which they thought their school had successfully established a French Immersion Program that valued and encouraged students' experience in becoming proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens.

Perceptions of Students Experience

Charts 68 and 69 provide data from the five questions used to establish the degree of student success in the French Immersion Program. The scale used for this reflection included the following choices: *None, Some, Many, Most, All* or *Unsure* (Chart 69 only).

Chart 68: School perception of student success in the French Immersion Program, by percentage of schools and by outcome

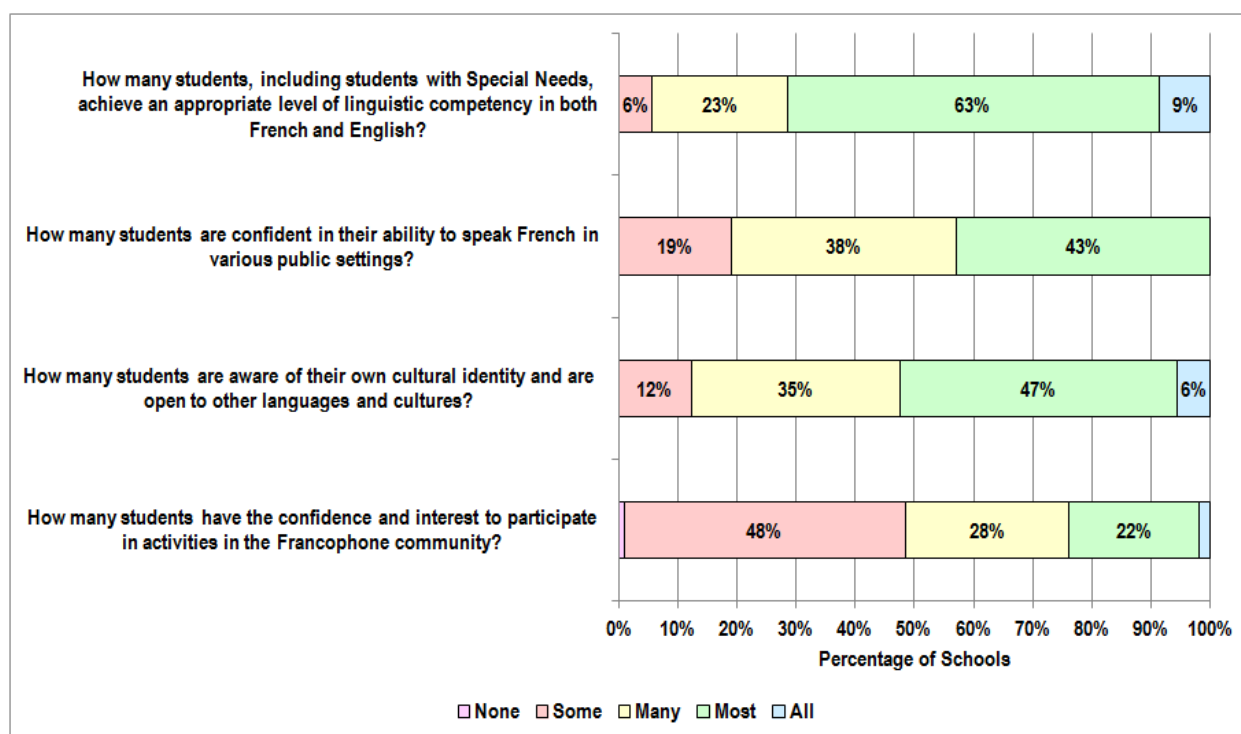
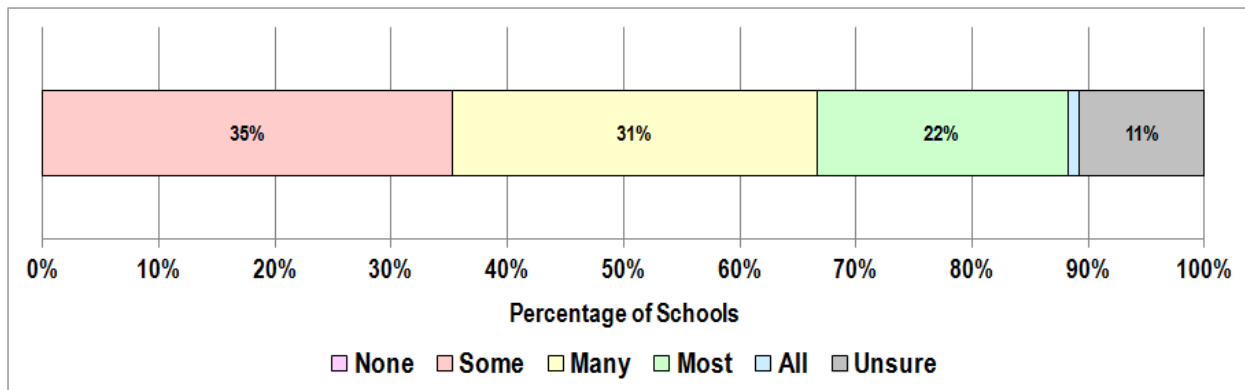


Chart 69: School perception of students who valued the learning of languages as a key to global citizenship and who saw themselves as lifelong language learners overall, by percentage of schools



In this analysis, the indicator of success has been identified as the sum of *All* and *Most*.

The data in Chart 68 reveals that of the 105 French Immersion schools, 72% perceive that they were successful in having their students achieve an appropriate level of linguistic competency in both French and English; 53%, maintain that their students are aware of their own cultural identity and are open to other languages and cultures; 43%, feel that their students are confident in their ability to speak French in various public settings; 24%, perceive that their students have the confidence and interest in to participate in French activities organized in the Francophone community. The data in Chart 69 reveals that of the 102 responding schools, 23% perceive that they were successful in making their students value the learning of languages as a key to global citizenship and see themselves as lifelong language learners.

These perceptions of student success are consistent with the data presented in each of the four key areas of the questionnaire, further confirming and validating the coherence of this data. In order to improve these results, it is important to understand the interrelation between these outcomes and to give them continual focus and attention. Particular attention should be paid to **ongoing language development** in all content areas to improve language proficiency for all students as they move from K-12, and to **developing student identity, engagement, and confidence** in order for students to see the relevance of French in their lives and wish to continue to use and learn French today as well as in the future.

Further success in **developing language proficiency** can be attained by ensuring student exposure to a rich linguistic environment throughout the day and by providing more opportunities for students to speak in authentic and meaningful ways in all curricular areas. The key areas to focus on to bring about this improvement are: second language methodology which equips teachers to integrate language teaching into content more explicitly while using corrective feedback and assessments tools that specifically assess language competencies. This approach would ensure a continual focus on language development in all subject areas thus improving student language proficiency and supporting better understanding of content while building student **confidence**.

Student identity is constructed by exploring different perspectives throughout curriculum. This exploration allows students to look at the world in different ways, develops their openness towards others, stimulates their curiosity in learning about cultures as well as cultural perspectives, and helps them to engage in different ways in their interactions with others. It is by developing students' willingness and openness to explore various world perspectives that their identity evolves and they

discover who they are. Within the French Immersion Program, this happens in the French language. Therefore, it is also important to support students in the development of their identity as French learners and speakers and in their understanding of how the languages they speak play a role in their lives and in shaping their identity. This part of their identity evolves through varied social, cultural and academic interactions in French as well as through significant use of the language in curricular areas thus further developing their **language proficiency** and **engagement**. In addition, leading students in conversations about their linguistic and educational experience in the French Immersion Program guides and supports them in developing an awareness of the impact that the French language has on their learning, on their **evolving identity** and on **their place in society as plurilingual citizens**.

Student confidence is an area that also requires attention. Students need to be given as many opportunities as possible to activate their French language in various academic, social and cultural contexts. Providing students with such opportunities to interact with various French speakers and exposing them to different dialects and accents gives them a purpose for speaking French, develops their **identity** as French speakers and prepares them for **sustaining their bilingualism**. Students also need to have opportunities to discuss the challenges or discomfort they may feel when they are communicating in various situations and to discuss what strategies they can use to improve their level of comfort and confidence. Guiding students to go from the language learned in school to living the language by creating these types of interactions not only supports further **language development** but is **key to building their confidence, engagement and plurilingual identity**.

As schools and school divisions work to improve these results, student success will be determined by how successfully key initiatives are targeted so that the outcomes are consistently and intentionally being attended to every day inside and outside the classroom.

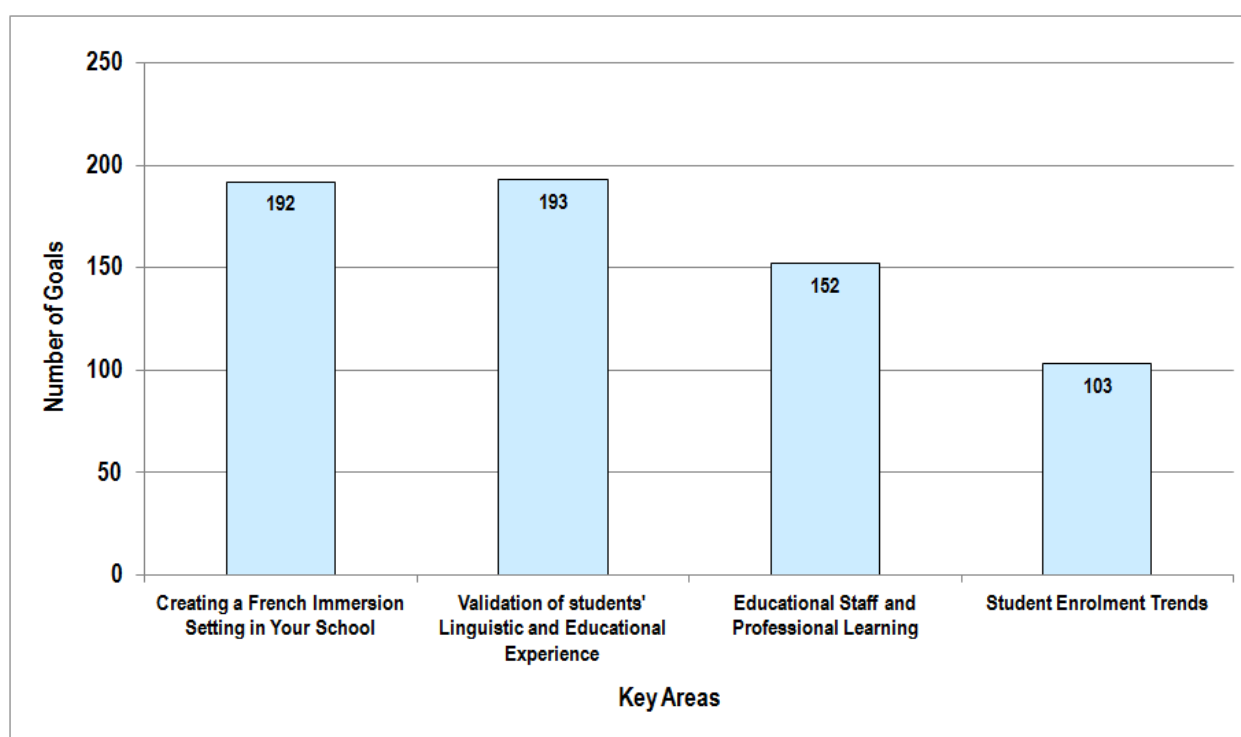
Next Steps

Upon completion of the questionnaire and its components (reflection on successes, challenges and self-assessment), schools were required:

- to set expected outcomes to further enhance the linguistic and educational experience for their French Immersion students
- to outline an action plan comprised of up to five initiatives based on the identified outcomes
- to identify under which of the four key areas (*Creating a French Immersion Setting, Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience, Educational Staff and Professional Learning, or Student Enrolment Trends*) the outcome and actions fell.

In Chart 70, school initiatives are presented according to the four identified key areas for the full implementation of the French Immersion Program.

Chart 70: Number of school initiatives by key area



When considering data from Chart 70, one must be aware that schools could select more than one key area per initiative.

The data reveals that the largest number of initiatives are found in the key areas of *Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience* (193 responses) and *Creation of a French Immersion setting* (192 responses). As observed throughout the four sections of the questionnaire, the creation of a setting that is conducive to learning the French language and culture further enhances the validation of students' linguistic and educational experiences. Notably, this recurring observation suggests that improvement in one key area will positively affect other areas.

Although the next two key areas *Educational Staff and Professional Learning* (152) and *Student Enrolment Trends* (103) have fewer initiatives, they are vital to the full implementation of the French Immersion Program as all four key areas are interrelated.

Next Steps (French Immersion Schools)

The following table summarizes the key initiatives proposed by schools which are organized according to the four key areas of the questionnaire. The raw data found in the chart above was further analyzed and categorized into the key area that most accurately reflected the initiative. This explains the differences in the number of initiatives in each key area between Chart 70 above and the table below. The common thread linking these initiatives is the commitment to ensure a more cohesive and unified approach to the delivery of the French Immersion Program. The focus being to create environments and conditions that allow students to acquire the language competencies to communicate in French with confidence, as well as the attitudes and behaviours to appreciate plurilingualism as a 21st century reality.

Section 1 – Creating a French Immersion Setting (48 initiatives)

Linguistically Rich Environment (36)

- Increase visibility of French language in schools (assemblies in French, school newspaper having articles in French, make all announcements bilingual, display student work, bilingual bulletin boards, etc.)
- Increase French signage around schools
- Encourage staff members to speak French at all times
- Encourage students to speak French during non instructional time
- Create a French Immersion area in a dual track school

Exposure to the French Language (10)

- Increase the percentage of French Language instruction time
- Increase the number of French Immersion credits offered in Senior Years
- Survey students' interest to determine optional courses to be offered

Educational Staff (1)

- Increase bilingual staff in all positions

Inclusion and Appropriate Support for All (1)

- Create inclusive classrooms for all learners

Section 2 - Validation of Students Linguistic and Educational Experience (149 initiatives)

Impact on Student Learning (105)

- **Improve students' numeracy skills (5)**
 - Use a variety of tools to assess students' mathematical skills
 - Encourage the use of different strategies and tools to engage students
 - Encourage students to communicate their mathematical thinking
 - Use data to drive teaching and set goals in developing number sense skills for students
- **Improve students' reading and writing skills in French (42)**
 - Use a wide variety of tools to assess student reading levels and analyze data
 - Use a variety of strategies to support students in their reading abilities (Reading Apprenticeship, Daily 5, Individualized literacy programs, Phonological awareness, *Club de lecture*, Stop, Drop and Read in French, Guided reading, Cross-grade buddy reading, etc.)
 - Use a variety of strategies to support students in their writing abilities (Journal writing, Writing corrector, etc.)
 - Increase French vocabulary base of K-3 students before commencing formal reading in French
 - Ensure accessibility to a wide variety of French texts at each level
 - Implement a cross-curricular reading and writing continuum
 - Offer Parent literacy sessions to provide strategies and supports for families to support their learners
 - Increase teacher and educational assistants participation in Professional Learning Communities(PLC) and professional development sessions (*La lecture - un processus en construction*, balanced literacy instruction, assessment, etc.)
- **Improve students' French oral language (58)**
 - Increase usage of French during instructional and non-instructional time (cross-grade activities, Touchstones, etc.)
 - Expose students to a variety of French language models and accents (French monitor, Experience Canada – Student Exchange Program, etc.)
 - Increase student vocabulary, oral proficiency and confidence to speak French in academic and social contexts
 - Engage students in discussion around French language acquisition

Section 2 - Validation of Students Linguistic and Educational Experience (149 initiatives)

- Develop students' intrinsic motivation to speak French (have students set personal goals for language use)
- Use a wide variety of tools to assess student oral competencies and analyze data
- Identify clear learning benchmarks so students can be tracked for French language proficiency
- Use of French speaking incentive system

Enriched School Environment (37)

- Build a French community in the school (cross-grade activities, etc.)
- Provide a variety of cultural experiences to complement students' language learning and extent their intercultural knowledge (classes networking with French students in other communities through Skype, *expression de la semaine*, Immersion language camp, French language cinema, SEVEC exchange, etc.)
- Expose FI students to French language opportunities available (Explore Program, Post-secondary education, etc.)
- Develop and improve citizenship awareness in students

Valuing and Encouraging the Learning of Languages (7)

- Encourage student leadership by supporting a sense of belonging (involvement in the planning of school activities)
- Provide opportunities for students to identify themselves as bilingual citizens (invite community members, former students, grand-parents to share their experiences; expose students to a variety of French language models and accents, etc.)
- Encourage students to volunteer in the francophone community
- Encourage students to reflect and talk about their progress and engagement (student survey, student self-assessment, goal setting, reflective portfolio, etc.)

Section 3 – Educational Staff and Professional Learning (49 initiatives)

Building Teacher Capacity (40)

- Meet regularly to discuss topics specific to French Immersion (vision, *French Immersion in Manitoba: A Handbook for School Leaders*, PD opportunities, availability of cultural experiences, etc.)
- Establish networking opportunities through: French divisional coordinator, PLC, mentorship, etc.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to attend PD sessions pertaining to French Immersion (literacy, numeracy, methodology, assessment practices, language acquisition, etc.)
- Encourage and support ongoing development of language skills

Hiring (9)

- Recruit and retain qualified teachers who speak fluently and are knowledgeable in current methodology
- Attend provincial and out of province recruitment fairs
- Recruit bilingual personnel through universities
- Focus on early advertisement and recruitment

Section 4 – Student Enrolment Trends (17 initiatives)

Entry Points and Transition (11)

- Monitor students' attrition and retention in the French Immersion Program
- Increase promotion of the French Immersion Program at feeder schools
- Review timetabling at the high school to provide more flexibility for students
- Establish a procedure for students considering leaving the Program

Section 4 – Student Enrolment Trends (17 initiatives)

Visibility and Communication (5)

- Promote the French Immersion Program through open houses, parent information sessions, divisional and school websites, newsletters etc.
- Discuss with students and parents the value of developing one's linguistic and intercultural competencies and that being plurilingual is a viable option in today's society
- Invite parents to participate in organized French cultural school events
- Increase family participation in the Francophone community
- Maintain or establish relationship with Canadian Parents for French Manitoba

Expanding French Immersion Program (1)

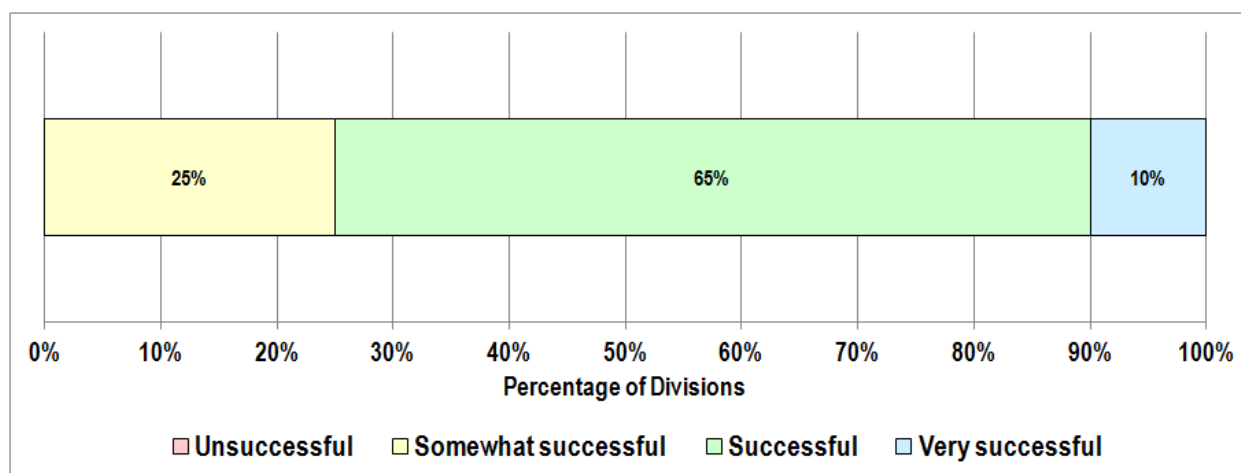
- Discuss with Senior administration
- Survey parents to ascertain interest in expanding the French Immersion Program
- Hold parent information sessions

Divisions' Self-Assessment – Full Implementation of the French Immersion Program

After having analysed the data from their 2013-2014 Divisional Profile, which contained all of the responses from the School Questionnaire and Divisional Questionnaire, school divisions were asked to indicate how successfully they had implemented the French Immersion Program.

The following chart indicates the extent to which schools perceived their level of success in implementing a French Immersion Program that values and encourages students' experience in becoming proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens.

Chart 71: Percentage of **school divisions** indicating their level of success in implementing the French Immersion Program



The bar chart reveals that 75% perceived themselves as being *Successful* or *Very successful* and 25% indicated that they were *Somewhat successful*.

In response to their schools' responses to the *School Questionnaire*, school divisions have identified many successes and challenges in the four identified key areas. However, certain challenges influence the degree of success achieved in each key area and a deeper analysis of the data or further inquiry at the school division level may be required to improve the level of success. School divisions can then determine their priorities in order to enhance the plurilingual and educational experience for students.

In the key area of *Creating a French Immersion Setting*, school divisions felt that there was an appropriate level of French instructional time offered to students from K to 12 with some exceptions at the Senior Years due to the difficulty of providing optional courses in the French language, particularly in rural and remote areas. Almost all school divisions indicated that they had difficulty providing and maintaining a truly French Immersion environment in a dual track setting. Challenges include signage, an insufficient number of bilingual personnel, and English being the main language of communication spoken by students and teachers during non-instructional time and during school wide announcements and events. It was noted that these challenges were found to be less of an issue in single track schools. This poses a concern as 68 of the 105 French Immersion schools in 2013-2014 were dual track. One cannot forget that the setting created in a French Immersion school is the primary condition for student success and needs to be continually attended to by all personnel.

In *Validating Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience*, school divisions indicated that schools experienced success in focusing on language acquisition while teaching content as well as providing students with a variety of class and school based linguistically rich learning opportunities. School divisions also identified certain challenges in this key area: providing enrichment opportunities beyond the

classroom, motivating student participation in the Francophone community, and informing students and parents regarding post-secondary opportunities. To deepen this analysis, one must question the extent to which students are achieving the seven Program outcomes. These seven outcomes are crucial to student engagement and motivation as they support and nurture students' identity as plurilingual learners and speakers as well as their academic success. It is suggested that the meaning of validating students' linguistic and educational experience needs to be further discussed, understood and analysed amongst all educators, as this key area is an essential element in all Manitoba classrooms impacting student learning, motivation and retention.

In the key area of *Educational Staff and Professional Learning*, school divisions further regard themselves as being successful in empowering their educational staff in fully implementing the French Immersion Program. Supports for new teachers through mentorship are in place, consultants or lead teachers have been hired and various professional learning opportunities are being offered. However, school divisions still indicated that teachers continue to reiterate a lack of professional learning related to the French Immersion Program. The specific needs of immersion teachers, their role as second language teachers, and the goal of the Program need to be taken into consideration when offering professional learning. Creating learning networks amongst immersion teachers and administrators as well as collaborations with other school divisions regarding professional learning or issues pertinent to French Immersion are essential in strengthening knowledge and understanding of second language instruction and pedagogy within school divisions.

Despite the efforts in attending recruitment fairs, school divisions continue to experience challenges in hiring French Immersion personnel due to a limited number of qualified applicants. The lack of potential candidates, who possess both language skills and second language methodology, has an impact within the four key areas required for the full implementation of the French Immersion Program. A renewed divisional recruitment plan, comprised of long-term planning as well as retention of personnel, becomes a crucial piece in maintaining stability within the Program and ensuring its full implementation.

In the key area of *Student Enrolment Trends*, the vast majority of school divisions felt that they were experiencing success as French Immersion enrolments are increasing across the province. School divisions who have indicated challenges mentioned that attrition during transition years, lack of options at the Senior Years level, and student learning difficulties were factors influencing retention.

Since overall enrolments are increasing across the province, all schools and school divisions may not be noticing retention issues especially at the Middle and Senior Years. These increased enrolments often mask the challenges of student retention as there is a loss of approximately half of the French Immersion students as they move through the school system. It is important for school division leaders to consider the complete picture of enrolment trends including recruitment and retention for an accurate portrait to be generated. Through a full understanding of divisional trends, school divisions will be able to determine actions to be taken to improve student retention from K to 12.

Improving student success and increasing student retention in the French Immersion Program can only be ensured through strong leadership that considers the vision of the Program and implements initiatives in the four key areas that focus on the program outcomes. This can be achieved through fostering **language development in all content areas** to improve language proficiency for all students as they move from K-12. It is through ongoing conversations and assessments of language acquisition that students will gain a better understanding of their language competencies as well as be provided with opportunities for continual improvement inside and outside the classroom. This can also be achieved through **developing student identity, engagement, and confidence** in order for students to see the relevance of French in their lives and wish to continue to use and learn French today as well as in the future. Fostering student engagement will impact student confidence in communicating in French in real and meaningful ways and empower them to use the language in their daily lives for academic, social, and cultural endeavours and

support students in the development of their plurilingual identity. With a leadership that fully values language learning and guides the whole school community, students will be able to become proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens.