

## Section 4

### Student Enrolment Trends

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Section 4 provides data regarding student enrolment trends in the French Immersion Program.

In today's global world, increased plurilingualism among students is an important issue. Recruitment and retention of French Immersion students are vital to the success of this Program and are key indicators of its full implementation. A firm commitment to provide the best possible learning conditions for students will contribute to the quality of the French Immersion Program, thus long-term growth.

Schools and school divisions were asked to provide information on how they monitor enrolments and enrolment trends at all levels, as well as addressing related issues to ensure Program stability, such as supporting struggling learners, promotion, entry points, transition and public visibility.

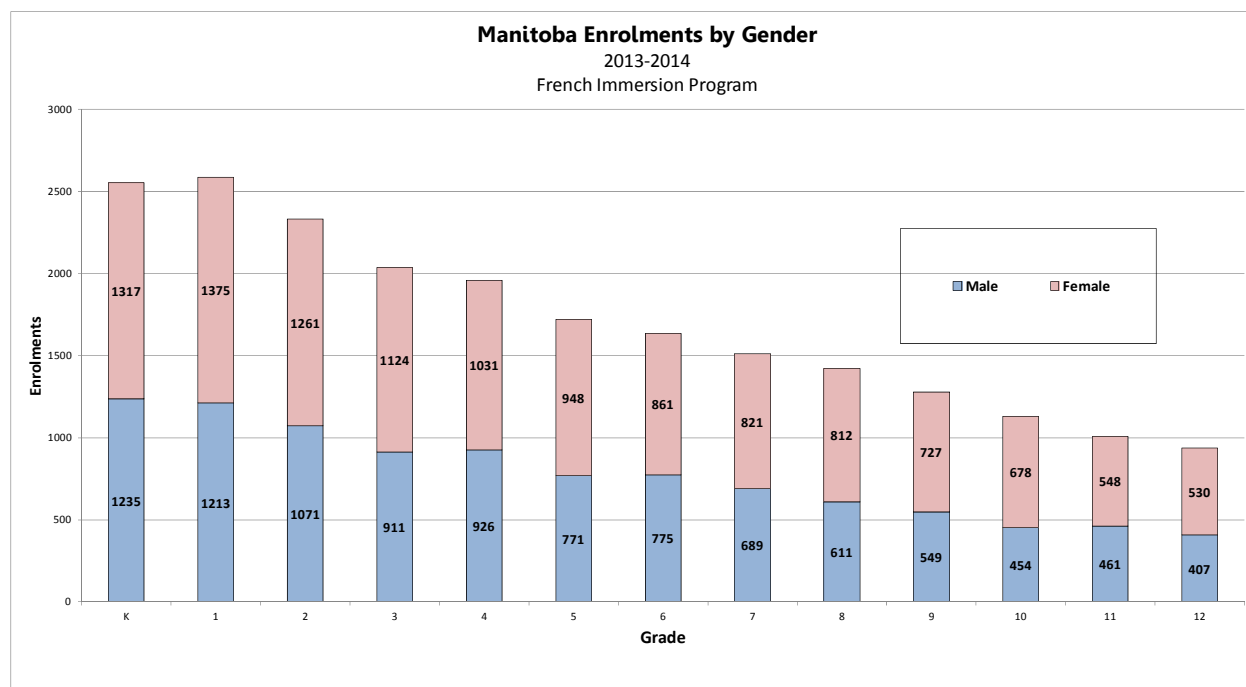
To provide a more comprehensive profile of the implementation of the French Immersion Program across Manitoba, previously collected enrolment statistics for the 2013-14 school year as well as enrolment trends over an 11 year period are first presented in this section. The analysis of the questionnaire responses follows.

## Provincial Enrolment Statistics

The following provincial statistics provide a portrait of enrolment and enrolment trends for the French Immersion Program for the 2013-2014 school year as well as an overview of an 11 year period from 2003-2004 to 2013-2014. These statistics are presented in the same format as the individual school and divisional statistics included in the Administrator's Guide. Additional charts, showing enrolment data by school division, have also been included.

### Current Year Observations:

Chart A



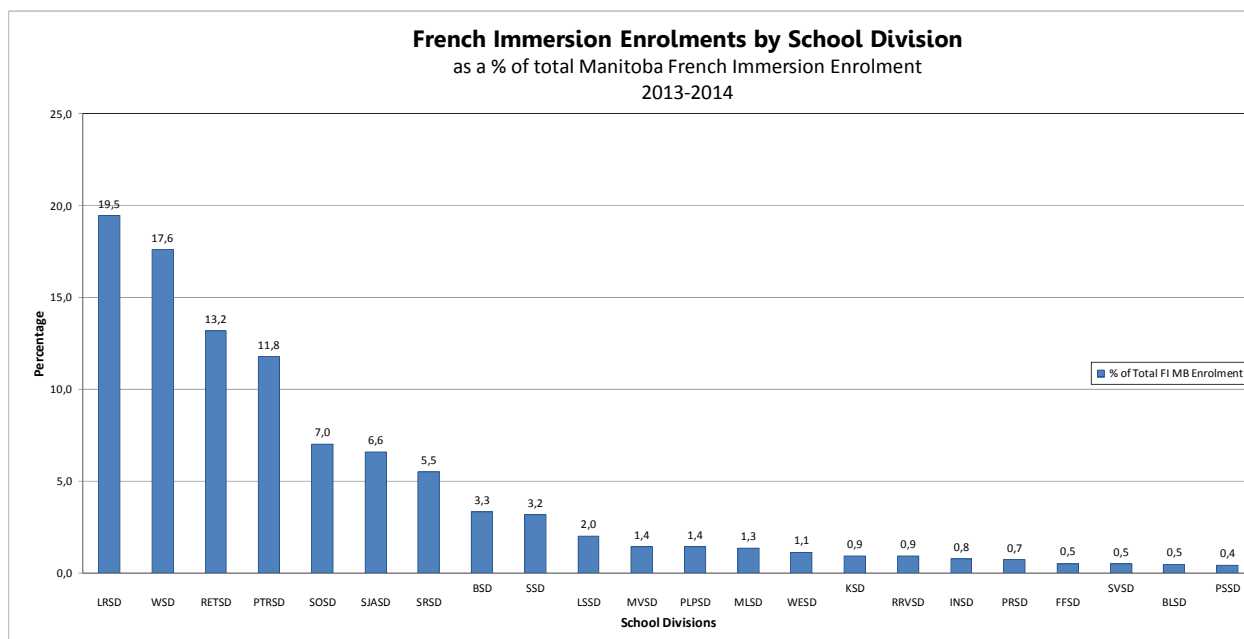
- Chart A shows that the number of students enrolled per grade diminishes as the grade level increases. This is very different from the distribution of Manitoba's total public school enrolments by grade where there is a relatively equal number of students at each grade level.
- Furthermore, Chart A demonstrates that the distribution of French Immersion enrolments by grade and gender shows the predominance of females over males at each grade level. This is very different from the distribution of Manitoba's total public school enrolments by grade and gender where there are more males than females at each grade level.

### Other Key Current Year Observations:

- Excluding Pre-Kindergarten and Special Education enrolments, Manitoba's 2013-2014 total public school enrolment was 178,217 students. Thus, the French Immersion Program represented 12.4 % of Manitoba's total public school enrolment.
- In 2013-2014, of the 22,106 students in 105 schools, 11,277 students (or 51%) were enrolled in 37 single track French Immersion schools, while 10,829 students (or 49%) were enrolled in 68 dual track French Immersion schools. Although there are fewer single track French Immersion schools, these schools have a greater number of enrolments than the dual track schools.

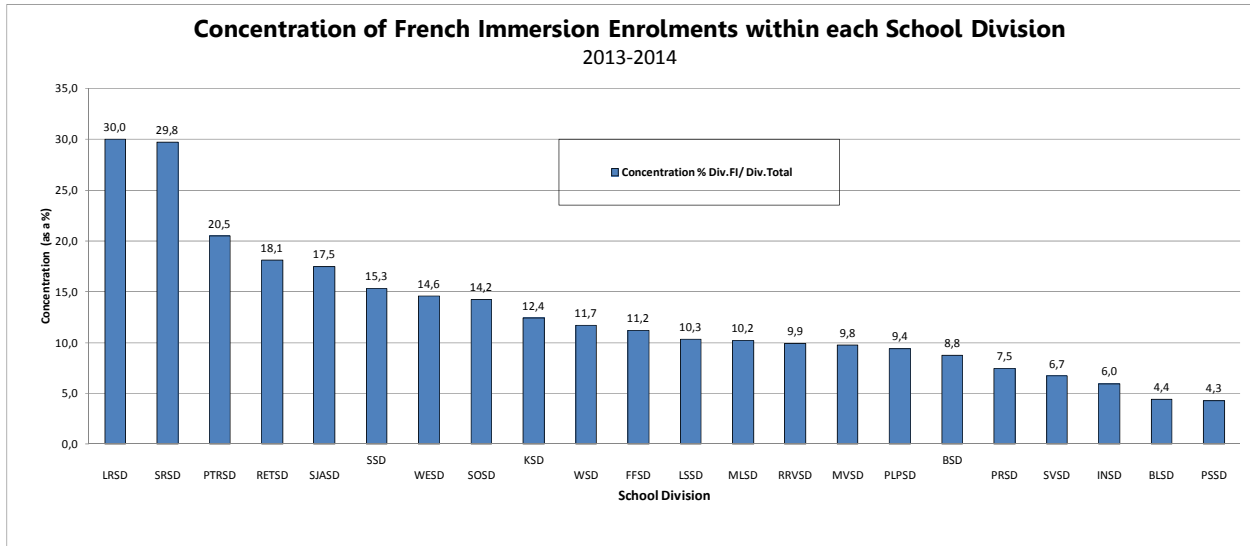
- With respect to the above 22,106 French Immersion students, the vast majority of them, 21,674 or 98% entered the Program in Kindergarten or Grade 1, while 134 students (or 0.6%) started in Grade 4 and 298 students (or 1.4%) entered in Grade 7. This shows that if a student misses the opportunity of starting the French Immersion Program in Kindergarten or Grade 1, there are few opportunities to enter the Program in midstream.
- Also, 17,074 (77.2%) of the 22,106 French Immersion students were from the metropolitan Winnipeg region, 4,002 students (18.1%) were from rural school divisions, and 1,030 students (4.7%) were from northern school divisions. Comparatively, the overall public school population had 94,055 students (54.3%) from metropolitan Winnipeg, 62,690 students (36.2%) from rural divisions and 16,470 students (9.5%) from northern school divisions. This data clearly shows that the French Immersion Program in Manitoba is largely an urban phenomenon.
- To provide more details on the regional breakdown of French Immersion enrolments, Chart B below shows the distribution of French Immersion enrolments by school division in school year 2013-2014. The six (6) urban school divisions have the largest groupings of French Immersion students from 19.5% in the Louis Riel School Division to 6.6% in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division. The next four (4) school divisions: Seine River (5.5%), Brandon (3.3%), Sunrise (3.2%), and Lord Selkirk (2.0%) are either school divisions close to Winnipeg, or urban centres outside of Winnipeg. The remaining school divisions are either “rural” or “northern”.

Chart B



- Another interesting statistic is the concentration of French Immersion enrolments within each school division; that is, the proportion of French Immersion enrolments as a percentage of each school division’s total public school Kindergarten to Grade 12 enrolment (i.e. excluding Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten as well as Special Education enrolments). Chart C below presents the “concentration” data for each school division offering the French Immersion Program. Louis Riel School division (30.0%) and Seine River School Division (29.8%) have the largest concentrations of French Immersion students within their school division boundaries. It is interesting to note that the Winnipeg School Division which had the second largest grouping of French Immersion students provincially (3,890 students or 17.6% of total French Immersion enrolments) had the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) largest concentration of French Immersion students within its boundaries at 11.7%.

Chart C



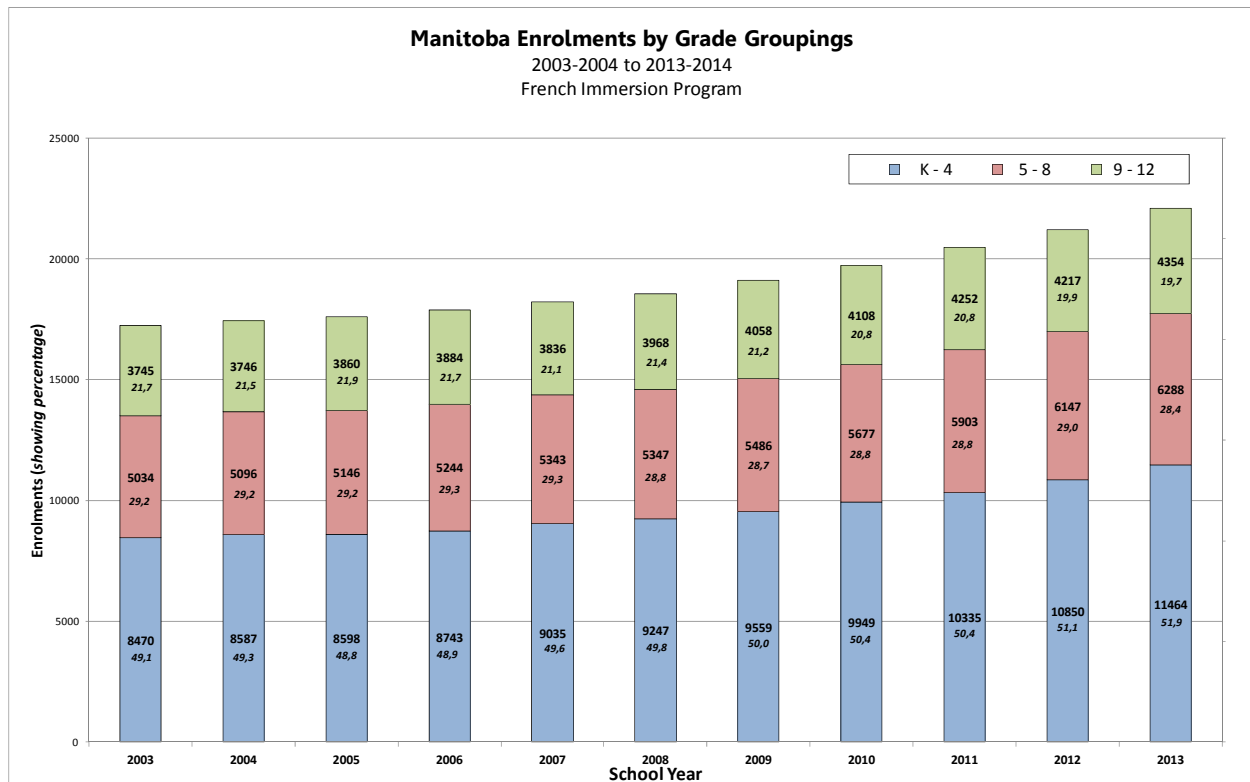
### Historical Data – Observations over Time

Chart D presents French Immersion enrolment by grade, as well as the number of French Immersion schools, for the school years 2003-2004 to 2013-2014. Over this period, Manitoba’s total French Immersion enrolment increased from 17,249 to 22,106, a difference of 4,677 students representing a percentage increase of 26.8%.

Chart D

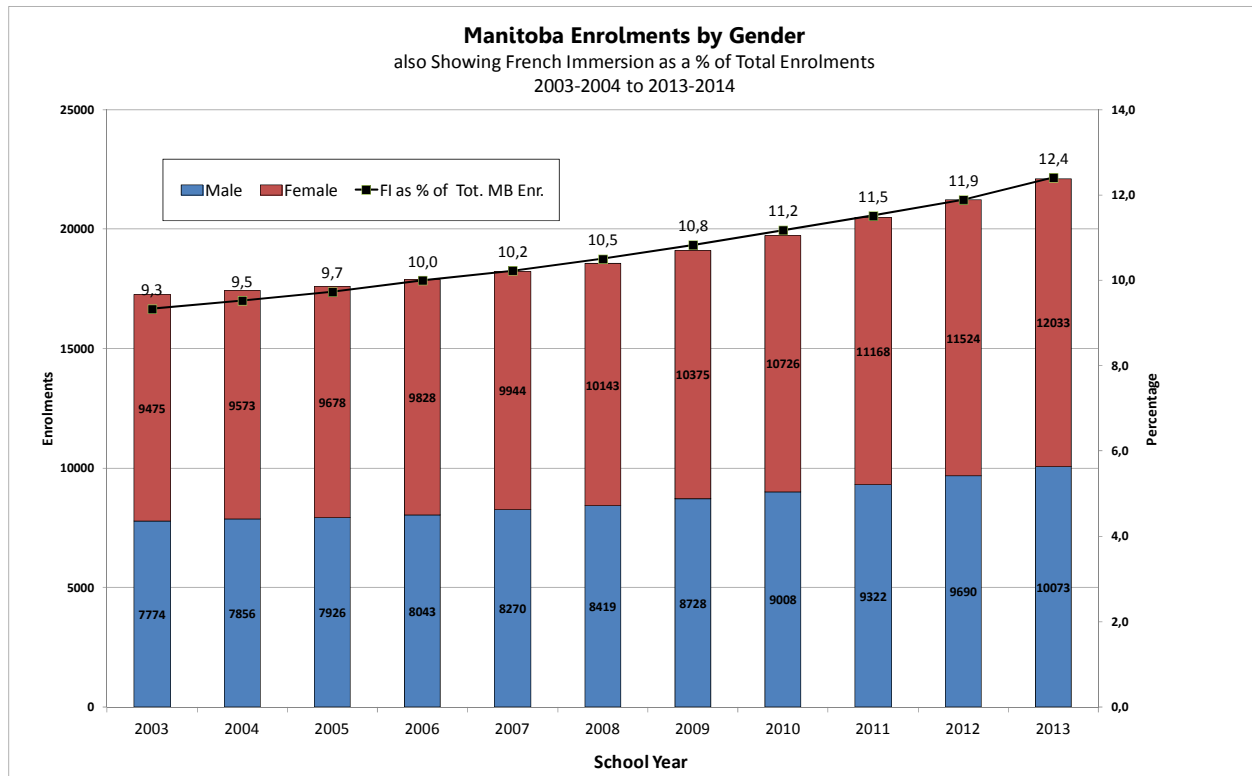
<b>Number of students in the French Immersion Program</b>															
By school year and grade (excluding Special Education)															
Manitoba (public schools only)															
School Years 2003-2004 to 2013-2014															
School Years	No. of Schools	GRADE													
		K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2003-2004	97	1820	1816	1730	1615	1489	1327	1240	1271	1196	1078	924	880	863	17 249
2004-2005	97	1912	1840	1681	1621	1533	1417	1253	1217	1209	1049	979	880	838	17 429
2005-2006	97	1903	1939	1686	1552	1518	1455	1320	1228	1143	1124	956	921	859	17 604
2006-2007	97	1956	1924	1803	1594	1466	1414	1376	1301	1153	1070	1037	914	863	17 871
2007-2008	98	1963	2008	1835	1715	1514	1413	1337	1356	1237	1057	1012	931	836	18 214
2008-2009	99	1969	2011	1890	1742	1635	1436	1339	1301	1271	1149	952	935	932	18 562
2009-2010	101	2094	2054	1935	1793	1683	1548	1366	1309	1263	1178	1068	865	947	19 103
2010-2011	102	2192	2186	1972	1854	1745	1612	1476	1320	1269	1133	1103	999	873	19 734
2011-2012	103	2297	2249	2129	1887	1773	1637	1524	1449	1293	1174	1049	1043	986	20 490
2012-2013	104	2466	2419	2142	2020	1803	1696	1579	1476	1396	1174	1074	980	989	21 214
2013-2014	105	2552	2588	2332	2035	1957	1719	1636	1510	1423	1276	1132	1009	937	22 106
<b>School Year 2013-2014 detailed analysis comparing French Immersion enrolments to total English Program enrolments (excl. Français Pgm. enrolments):</b>															
		K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
MB - Total enrolment		13306	13642	13217	12769	12874	12891	12993	13115	13308	14174	14321	14238	17369	178 217
minus : MB - Fran. + Imm. Pgms.		535	535	501	426	428	449	406	457	394	354	350	318	336	5 489
equals: MB - English Pgm. enrol.		12771	13107	12716	12343	12446	12442	12587	12658	12914	13820	13971	13920	17033	172 728
	<b>K-4</b>	<b>FI :</b>	<b>FI :</b>	<b>FI :</b>	<b>FI :</b>	<b>5-8</b>	<b>FI :</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>FI :</b>	<b>9-12</b>	<b>FI :</b>	<b>4354</b>	<b>K-12</b>	<b>FI :</b>	<b>22 106</b>
		% FI Total :	51.9	% FI Total :	28.4	% FI Total :	19.7	% FI Total :	100.0	(2013-14) MB Total :	60102	(2013-14) MB Total :	178 217	% :	12.4
		(2013-14) MB Total :	65808	(2013-14) MB Total :	52307	(2013-14) MB Total :	12.0	(2013-14) MB Total :	7.2	(2013-14) MB Total :	60102	(2013-14) MB Total :	178 217	% :	12.4

Chart E



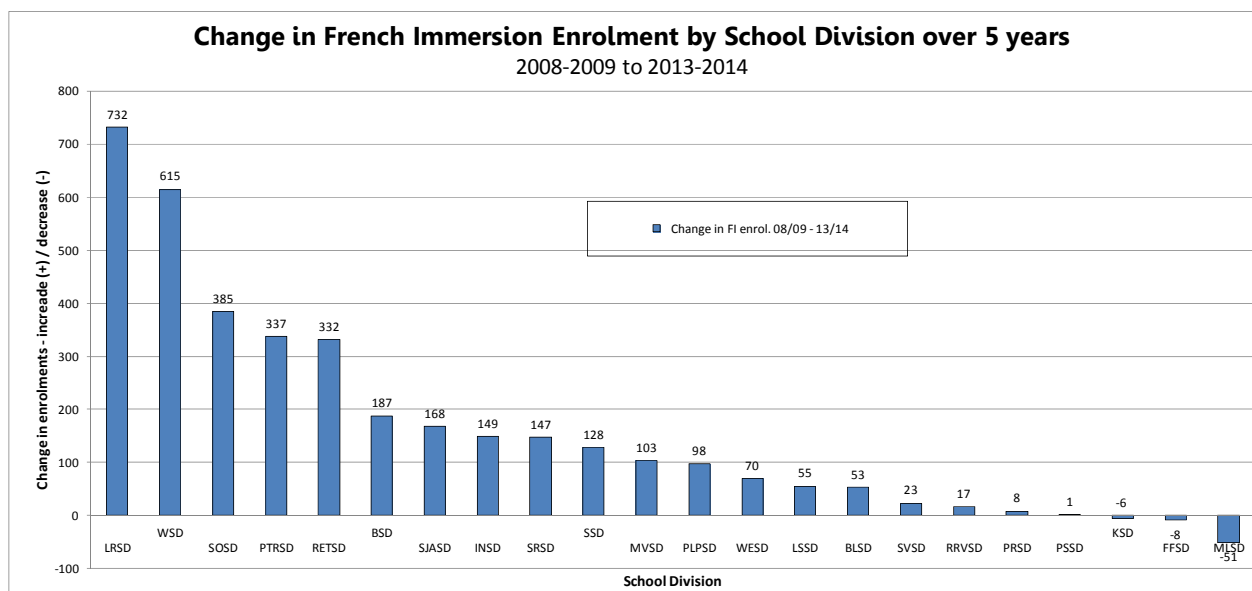
- Chart E above presents the distribution of French Immersion enrolments by grade groupings (Early Years K-4, Middle Years 5-8, and Senior Years 9-12) by school year for the 2003-2004 to 2013-2014 school year period, the chart clearly shows that as French Immersion enrolments increased over time, the distribution in percentage terms for the 3 grade groupings have remained relatively the same, showing small increase in each grade grouping.
- Chart F below presents essentially the same data, except the French Immersion enrolment by school year is broken down by gender instead of grade groupings. It also shows the progression over time of the percentage or proportion of French Immersion students as compared to the total provincial public school K-12 population.
- From Chart F we clearly see that this proportion showed an important increase from 9.3% to 12.4% during this period.
- Female enrolments have also been greater than that of their male counterparts for each school year over the period and represent approximately 55% of total French Immersion enrolments.

Chart F



- Chart G below presents data on the change in French Immersion enrolments by school division over the last five (5) school years. The school divisions showing the largest increases in absolute numbers are all urban school divisions. Louis Riel School Division and Winnipeg School Division showed the largest increases with 732 and 615 students respectively.
- During this 5 year period, three (3) school divisions experienced losses in French Immersion enrolments: Kelsey (-6), Flin Flon (-8) and Mystery Lake (-51). Mystery Lake's large loss was due to the DSFM's opening of a *Français* school in Thompson (École La Voie du Nord) in September 2009.

Chart G



- Chart H below presents the percentage change in French Immersion enrolments by school division over the last 5 school years. The two (2) school divisions showing the largest percentage increases from 2008-2009 to 2013-2014 are Interlake School Division and Border Land School Division which have each experienced relatively “new” development in their respective French Immersion programs. Because they both had lower, initial enrolment values, their respective percentage increases are inflated.
- It is noteworthy that school divisions with more established French Immersion programs such as: Louis Riel, River East Transcona and Seine River are showing increases of over 10%: 20.5%, 13.7% and 12.9% respectively.

Chart H

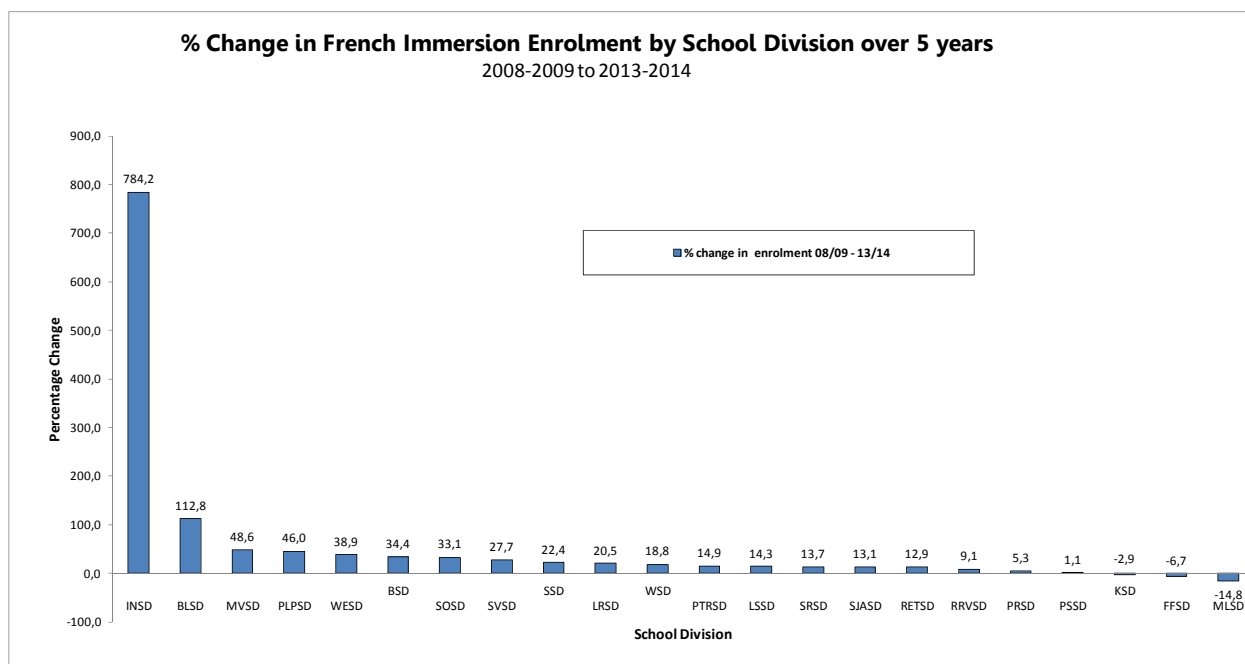


Chart I

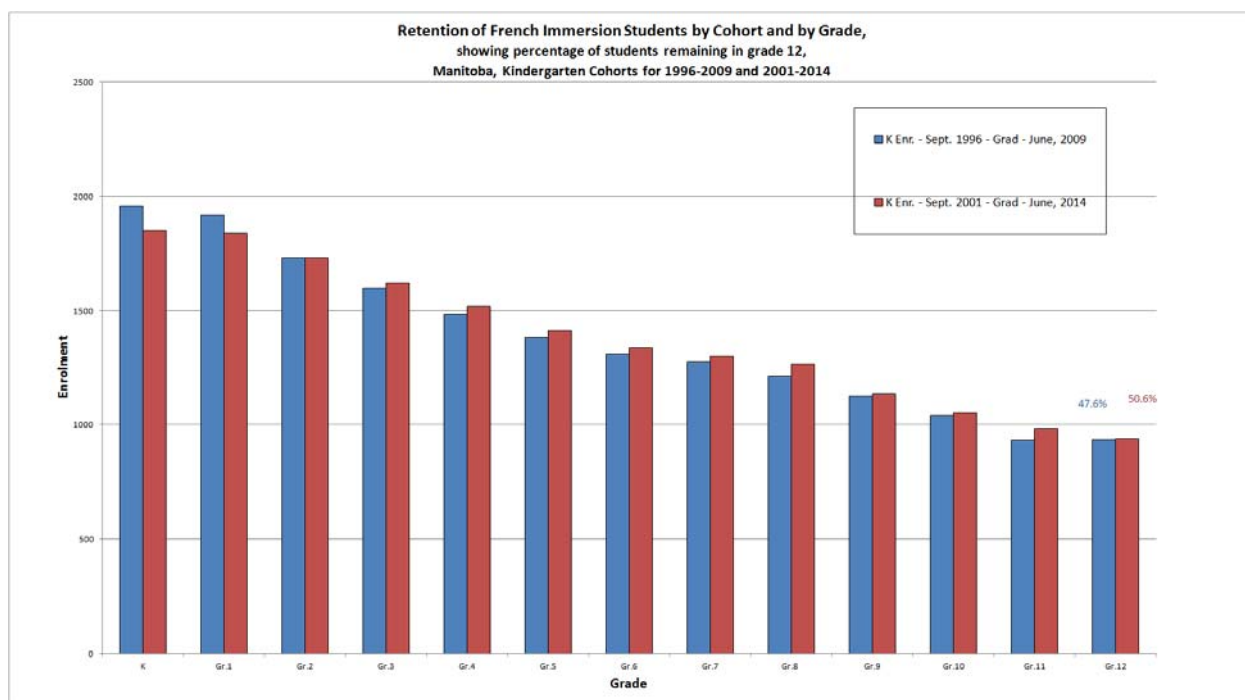
**French Immersion Enrolment as a Percentage of Manitoba Total Public School Population by Grade**  
**School years 2003-2004 versus 2013-2014**

Grade	2003-2004 (%)	2013-2014 (%)	Difference
K	14.8	19.2	4.4
1	14.2	19.0	4.8
2	13.0	17.6	4.6
3	11.7	15.9	4.2
4	10.6	15.2	4.6
5	9.5	13.3	3.8
6	8.8	12.6	3.8
7	8.7	11.5	2.8
8	8.2	10.7	2.5
9	7.1	9.0	1.9
10	6.3	7.9	1.6
11	6.2	7.1	0.9
12	5.1	5.4	0.3



- The summary table above presents French Immersion Program enrolments by grade as a percentage of Manitoba’s total public school population (excluding pre-kindergarten and special education), school year 2003-2004 as compared to school year 2013-2014. The data shows that at all grade levels French Immersion enrolments as a proportion of total public school enrolments are increasing. However, as the grade levels go up, the increase in the proportion diminishes. The data also shows that at all grade levels, French Immersion enrolments have been growing at a rate greater than that of public school enrolments overall.
- Despite increases in French Immersion enrolments, the data from Charts A and I, which show decreasing French Immersion enrolments by grade in absolute numbers and decreasing percentages of French Immersion enrolments as a percentage of the total public school population by grade, suggest a retention problem with French Immersion enrolments which requires further analysis.
- Chart J below shows two (2) Kindergarten cohorts: the first starting in school year 1996-1997 and finishing (or graduating) in school year 2008-2009; the second, starting in school year 2001-2002 and finishing (or graduating) in school year 2013-2014. The chart demonstrates the enrolment level of the cohort in each grade over each school year as the students advanced through the French Immersion Program.

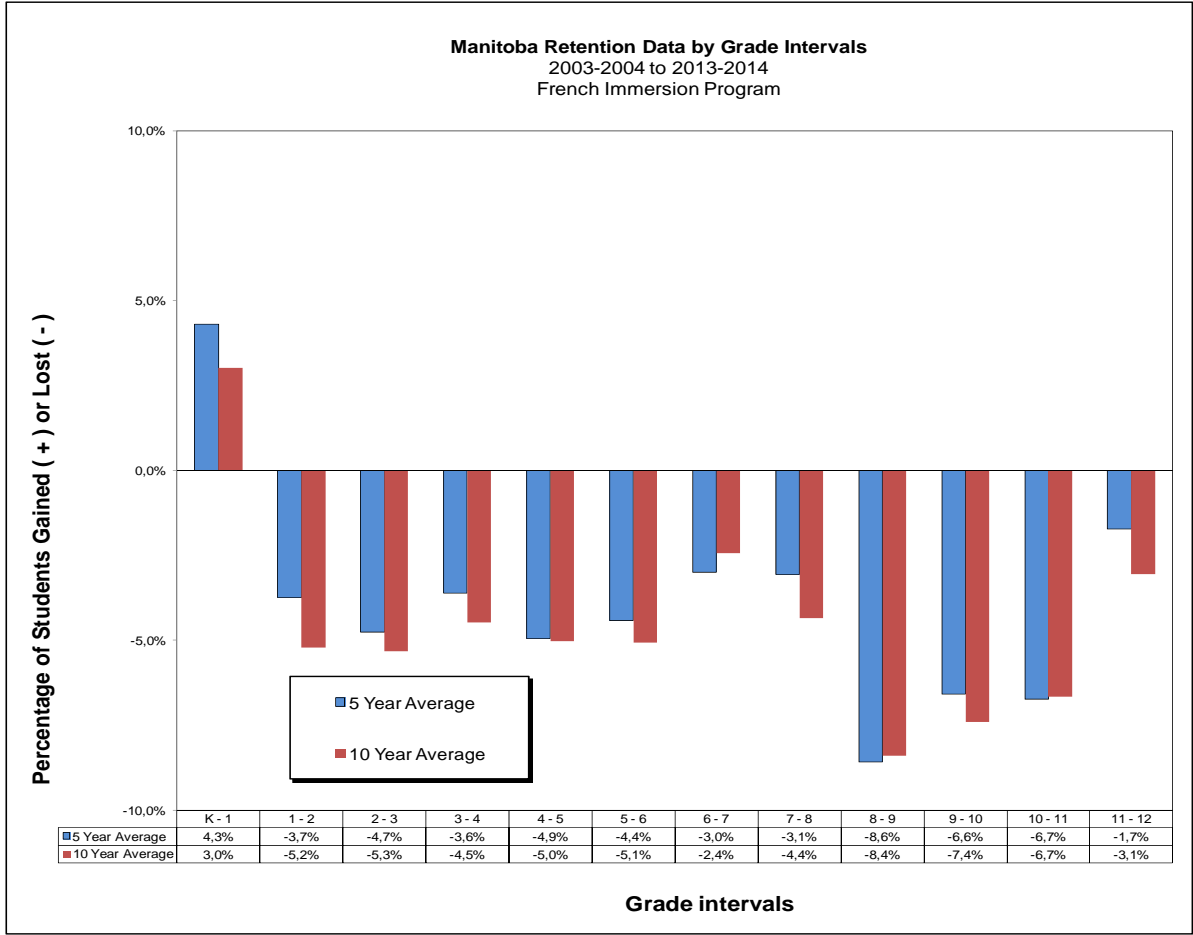
Chart J



- This table reveals that there were 1,958 French Immersion students who started in Kindergarten in 1996-1997, but only 932 (or 47.6%) were enrolled in Grade 12 thirteen years later in 2008-2009 despite new enrolments in Grades 4 and 7. Similarly, there were 1,851 French Immersion students who enrolled in Kindergarten in 2001-2002, but only 937 (or 50.6%) were enrolled in 2013-2014 thirteen years later despite new enrolments in Grades 4 and 7.
- Briefly, the data reveals that the French Immersion Program loses approximately half of its students as they move from grade to grade through the school system until completion in Grade 12, and this, despite new students entering the French Immersion Program in Grade 4 and in Grade 7.

- Chart K below examines the retention/attrition issue by grade intervals over a 5 year period and over a 10 year period from school years 2003-2004 to 2013-2014. The data reveals that, apart from small enrolment increases between Kindergarten and Grade 1, there is a continuous loss of students from Grades 1 to 12, with a small improvement when comparing the 5 year to the 10 year moving average data. The largest losses occur between Grades 8-9, 9-10 and 10-11.

Chart K



**Conclusions:**

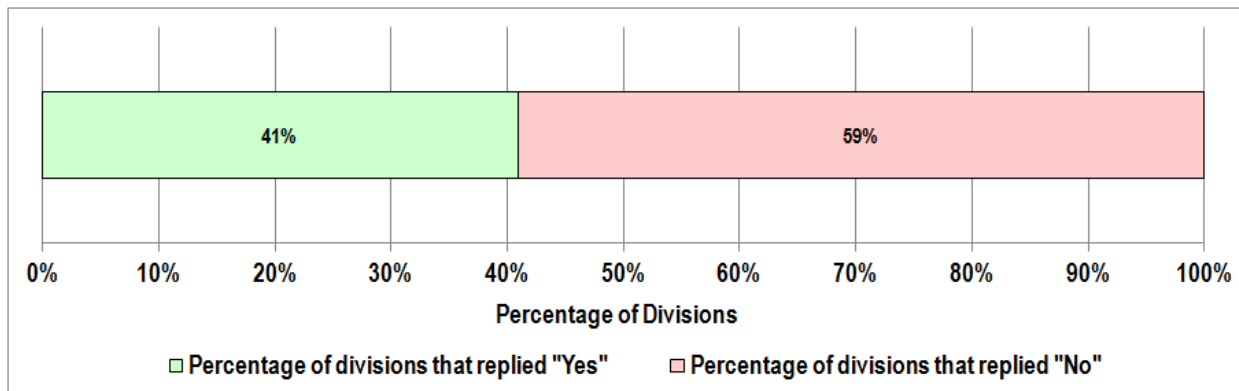
- French Immersion Program enrolments are growing at a rate greater than that of the overall K to 12 public school population. However, the French Immersion Program is losing nearly half of its Kindergarten students by the time they reach Grade 12. This phenomenon requires further investigation in the field.
- The predominance of female enrolments over male enrolments at all grade levels, especially after Grade 8, in the French Immersion Program may also be interesting to study in greater detail.
- The predominance of dual track French Immersion schools representing nearly half of total French Immersion enrolments given the issues related to the full implementation of the French Immersion Program may also be the subject of continued conversations.

The following information presents data regarding student enrolment trends that was gathered through the questionnaires.

The subsequent 12 questions were included to ascertain: the possibility of overcrowding in Manitoba French Immersion schools due to increased enrolments, the effectiveness of the current entry points into the French Immersion Program, the commonalities among schools and school divisions with respect to the promotion of the French Immersion Program, and the main reasons for attrition by grade level.

Chart 53 presents the school divisions' perspective regarding overcrowding in their schools.

**Chart 53:** Percentage of **school divisions** experiencing overcrowding in their French Immersion schools

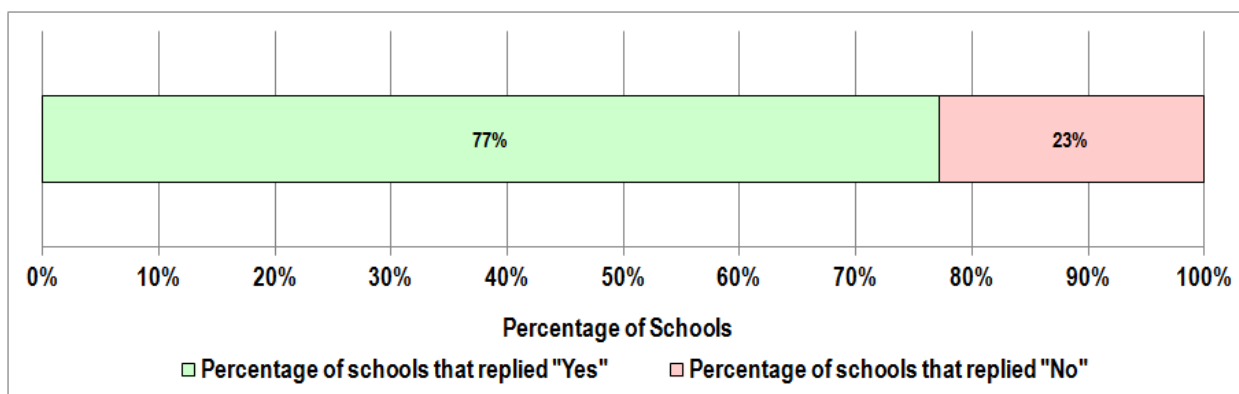


The data indicates that 41% of school divisions are experiencing overcrowding in their French Immersion schools. As stated in the provincial enrolment data presented previously in this section, student enrolment in the French Immersion Program continues to increase in all areas of the province; confirming the viability and success of the Program. However, the lack of space in offering the Program leaves school divisions with the challenge of reorganizing their schools in order to meet the needs of the community.

## Visibility and Communication

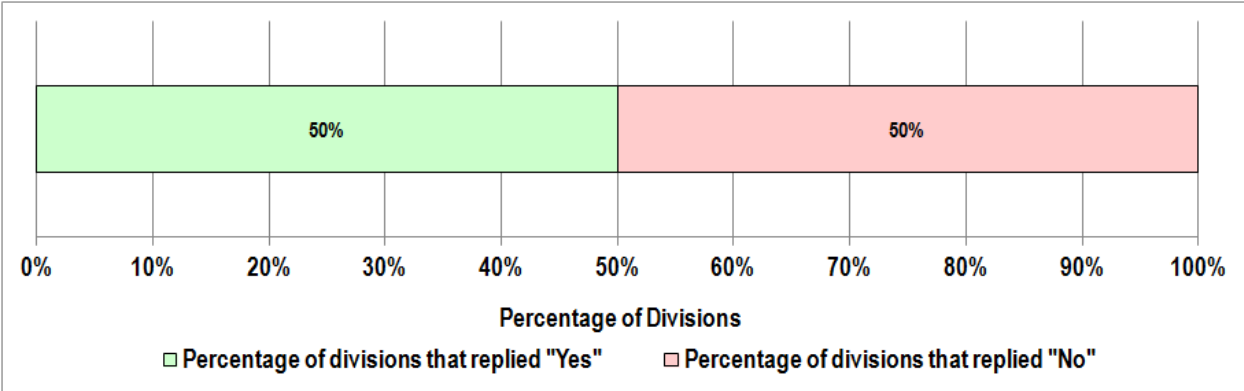
Charts 54 and 56 examine the schools' responses regarding activities that value and promote the Program and influence student enrolment trends, while Charts 55 and 57 explore responses with respect to school divisions.

**Chart 54:** Percentage of **schools** that organize activities to recruit and retain students in the French Immersion Program



The data reveals that 77% of the 105 schools organize activities to recruit and retain students in the French Immersion Program and promote the Program by communicating various types of information to parents and the community, whereas 23% of schools are not involved in such activities. Future dialogue in school divisions is needed regarding the value of promoting the French Immersion Program as a means of recruiting, retaining, validating students' linguistic and educational experience, building the school community, and establishing a greater understanding of the Program.

**Chart 55:** Percentage of **school divisions** that organize activities at the divisional level to recruit and retain students in the French Immersion Program



The data reveals that 50% of the 22 school divisions organize activities to promote the French Immersion Program. Undoubtedly promotion is vital to recruitment and retention of students, and impacts the success of the Program. Therefore dialogue amongst stakeholders regarding the value of the learning of languages as part of today's global world as well as its implications on divisional planning is necessary.

Chart 56 reflects the schools' responses regarding promotional activities offered that value, and thus promote, the French Immersion Program and influence student enrolment trends. Schools were asked to identify a maximum of 5 activities along with the grade grouping as well as the target audience.

**Chart 56:** Activities organized by **schools** to promote the French Immersion Program in the 2013-2014 school year

When considering data from Chart 56, an activity can target more than one audience, resulting in the total number of activities being less than the totals reflected under target audience.

Promotion of the French Immersion Program (Schools)															
Activities	Target audience														
	Students			Parents of new students			Parents of existing students			Community			Newcomers to Canada		
	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY
<b>Information sessions/discussion groups (93)</b> Information evenings, open house, welcome day, PAC, café français, etc.	6	15	4	51	20	7	19	13	3	9	6	2	3		
<b>Enrichment activities (82)</b> French cultural day, festivals, culturama, olympiques, arts, guest speakers, performers, divisional rally, divisional debate, cultural trips, student exchange, semaine de la francophonie, radio, etc.	34	52	25				17	23	3	9	10	4			
<b>Transition initiatives (47)</b> School visit, presentations, incoming student activities, pathway planning, tour of USB, CPF activities (French for life), etc.		29	6	1	6	1		4		1	4				
<b>Showcasing student achievement (29)</b> Celebration of learning days, assemblies/announcements-student-led, spectacle, school band, Remembrance Day ceremony-student-led, portfolio, art display, etc.	10	11	1	2	1		17	16		6	5		1	1	
<b>Promotional material (22)</b> Posters, newspaper articles, brochure, divisional and school newsletters, video, website, local media, CPF, etc.	1	3	1	11	2	1	6	3	2	6	1	2	2		
<b>Supports for students (12)</b> Kinderstart/3 year old clinic, French Immersion Support Lead Teacher, new courses, better course selection, homework club, summer camp, etc.	4	4	1	2			5	4	1	2	1				
<b>Community building (12)</b> Community BBQ, Soirée familiale, movie night, weekend outing, literacy evenings, Halloween soirée, etc.	8	5	1				10	8		3	2				
<b>Subtotal</b>	63	119	39	67	29	9	74	71	9	36	29	8	6	1	0
<b>Total</b>	221			105			154			73			7		

Chart 56 reveals that the two primary promotional activities offered by schools are *Information sessions/discussion groups* (93 activities) and *Enrichment activities* (82 activities), while the least frequently offered are *Supports for students* (12 activities) and *Community building* (12 activities).

In addition, most activities were geared towards *Students* (221 activities) as well as *Parents of existing students* (154 activities), while few activities targeted *Newcomers to Canada* (7 activities). Data further indicates that the majority of activities pertain to Early Years (246 activities) and Middle Years (249 activities), while fewer activities are offered at the Senior Years (65 activities).

*Information sessions* mainly involved Kindergarten information evenings as a means of promotion. These types of information sessions should be more varied in nature and take place more frequently at the Middle and Senior Years levels in order to retain students as they advance through the Program.

Due to the French Immersion Program being somewhat unfamiliar to immigrant families and the fact that EAL students now represent 6% of Manitoba's total French Immersion enrolment, as per Chart 12, it is clear that additional activities are required in order to promote a full understanding and appreciation of the Program. It is evident that *Newcomers* require support in all areas and more specifically, student supports are required to successfully transition into the Program. Yet, no reported activities targeted specifically *Newcomers*.

As for *Enrichment activities*, they were dealt with in great detail in Section 2, but in that section the target audience was not considered. Chart 56 reveals that *Enrichment activities* mainly target students at all levels by engaging them in French cultural and linguistic activities. These activities also provide an opportunity for parents and the community to validate students' language learning experiences in an "out-of-classroom" context and help to promote the French Immersion Program.

Furthermore, *Transition initiatives* are vital in supporting parents and newcomers and should not be limited to Middle Years students. *Transition activities* between school levels, from Early to Middle Years, Middle to Senior Years, and Senior Years to Postsecondary, are crucial as they reduce student anxiety, provide continuity in students' linguistic and educational experience, involve parents in their child's education, and impact student retention.

As per Section 2, highlighting student achievement was listed as one of the main successes, yet *Showcasing student achievement* is one of the least organized activities in the Senior Years. Although these activities occur at the K to 8 levels, it is essential that they continue at the Senior Years for validation of students' success plays an important part in their retention in the French Immersion Program. Meanwhile, it also provides students with encouragement in pursuing their language learning experience beyond school grounds and helps to develop their identity as plurilingual members of society; today and in the future.

Even though *Community building* is reported as having the least activities, it is without a doubt an essential element in sustaining enrolment. Activities which contribute to retention mainly target students and existing parents; however, in order to increase recruitment, new parents and newcomers should also be included. *Community building* activities could complement information sessions offered as they would target a wider range of audiences. Therefore, integrating some elements of *Community building* in *Information sessions/discussion groups* should be considered.

Moreover, data also indicated that the use of *Promotional material*, although limited, targets all audiences, especially parents.

Chart 57 reflects school divisions' responses regarding promotional activities offered that value, and thus promote the French Immersion Program and influence student enrolment trends. School divisions

were asked to identify a maximum of 5 activities along with the grade grouping as well as the target audience.

**Chart 57:** Activities organized by **school divisions** to promote the French Immersion Program in the 2013-2014 school year

When considering data from Chart 57, an activity can target more than one audience, resulting in the total number of activities being less than the totals reflected under target audience.

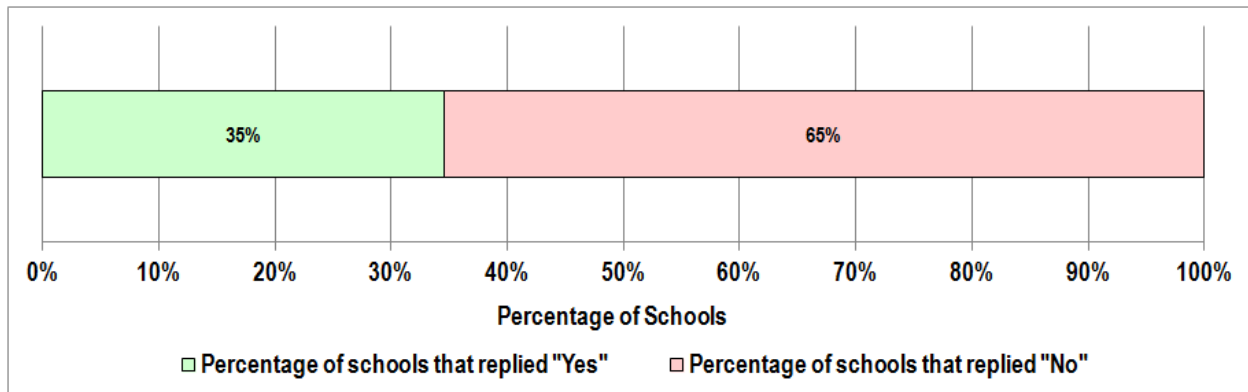
Promotion of the French Immersion Program (School Divisions)															
Activities	Target audience														
	Students			Parents of new students			Parents of existing students			Community			Newcomers to Canada		
	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY
<b>Information sessions (13)</b> French Immersion information night, keynote presentations at these sessions (DELF, exchange programs etc.), consortium event.	1			9	1		2	3	1				1	1	
<b>Promotional material (9)</b> Brochures, welcome to Kindergarten package, Kindergarten information sheet, local paper advertising, website, etc.				4						3	3	3			
<b>Enrichment activities (7)</b> French Immersion Cultural day, Ralliements, Semaine par excellence, Hockey Academy, 3&4 years old fairs, débats divisionnaires, etc.	2	3	5	1		1	1	1	1	1	1				
<b>Transition initiatives (2)</b> School visits by Grade 12 students to Grade 8, other school visits.		2													
<b>Subtotal</b>	3	5	5	14	1	1	3	4	2	4	4	3	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	13			16			9			11			2		

In comparison to Chart 56, the data reveals that very few promotional activities are taking place at the divisional level. The promotional activity most often offered by school divisions is *Information sessions* (13 activities), while the least frequently offered is *Transition initiatives* (2).

The activities reported were mainly geared towards *Parents of new students* (16 activities) as well as *Students* (13) through enrichment activities, while few activities were offered to *Newcomers to Canada* (2). Furthermore, the greater part of activities pertains to Early Years (25), while fewer activities are offered at the Middle Years (15) and Senior Years levels (11).

Chart 58 indicates the schools' responses regarding entry points while Chart 59 examines the schools' perspective with respect to challenges incurred at different entry points.

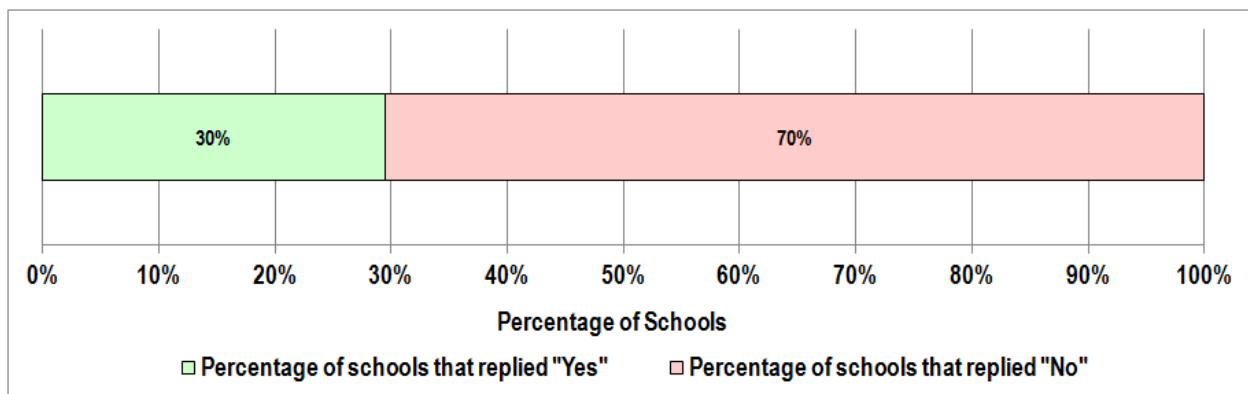
**Chart 58:** Percentage of **schools** allowing students to enter the French Immersion Program at grade levels other than the three official entry points (i.e. K-1, Grade 4 and Grade 7)



The data indicates that 35% of the 104 responding schools allow students to enter the French Immersion Program at other grade levels while 65% only allow entry into the Program at one of the official entry points.

Despite the fact that there are three official entry points (K-1, Grade 4, and Grade 7), through local decision making, some schools are allowing students to enter the French Immersion Program at various grade levels. This confirms comments from the field that there is a demand by parents who either missed the K-1 or Grade 4 entry points or have immigrated to Canada and wish that their children start at a different entry point.

**Chart 59:** Percentage of **schools** indicating if the current entry points (i.e. K-1, Grade 4 and Grades 7) into the French Immersion Program create a challenge for their school



The data indicates that 70% of the 105 French Immersion schools reported that the three current entry points into the French Immersion Program did not present a challenge for their school. Schools that answered "Yes" to the above question were then asked to explain the reason behind their response. The responding schools reported that the current entry points created a challenge when parents wanted their child to start at a different grade level than the current provincial entry points and when adapted supports were unavailable. It is possible that some of the challenges encountered by schools could also stem from limited knowledge on how to support EAL students, hence professional learning geared towards strategies that respond to students' needs is necessary.

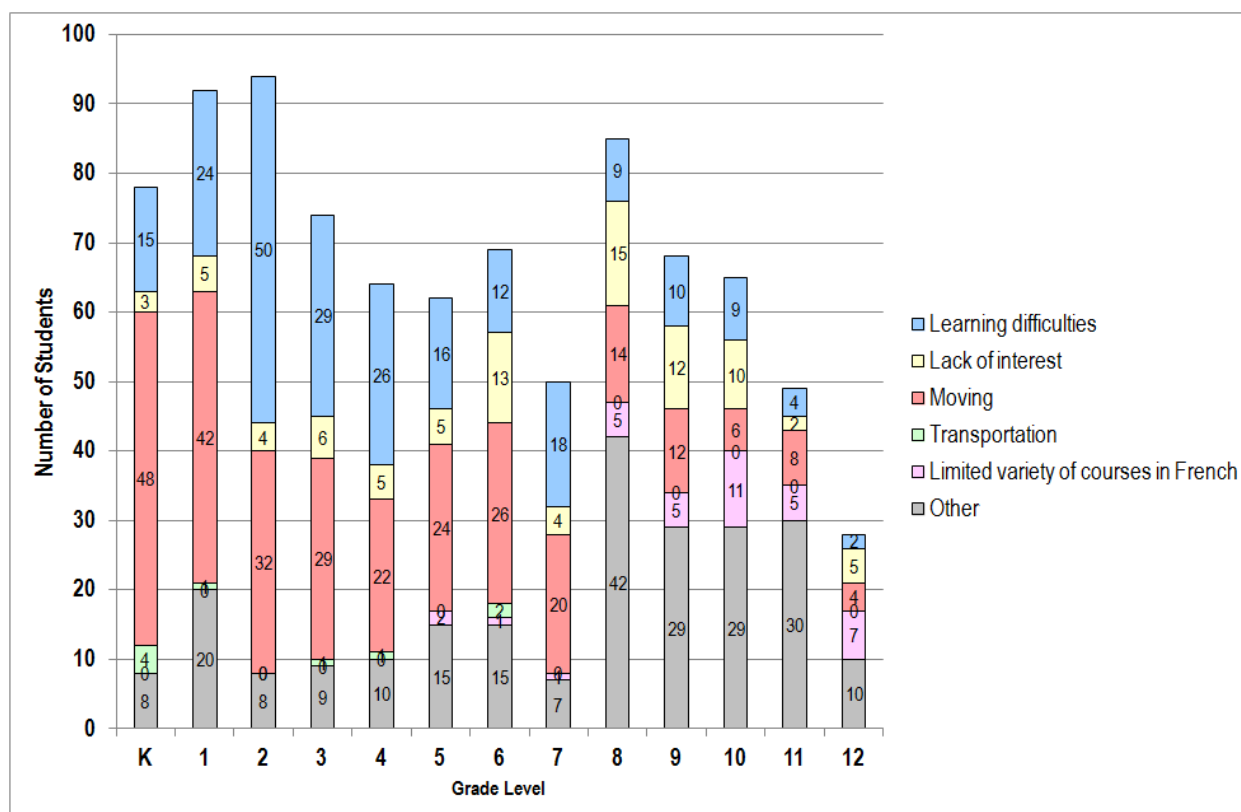


## Enrolment and Retention of Students

Retention of students greatly affects the viability and success of the French Immersion Program. Knowing the factors that influence attrition and how to address them is essential to maintain enrolment.

Chart 60 examines the number of students that left the French Immersion Program and their main reason for leaving.

**Chart 60:** Attrition by grade and reason - Number of students by grade level that left the French Immersion Program in the 2013-2014 school year, also indicating the main reason for leaving



As per Chart 60, the two main reasons for leaving the French Immersion Program from Kindergarten to Grade 7 are *Moving* and *Learning difficulties*. The data reveals that students withdraw from the Program especially in Grades 2, 3, and 4 due to *Learning difficulties*. *Lack of interest* and *Transportation* issues also account for student loss from the Program but not in consistently high numbers across Grades K to 7.

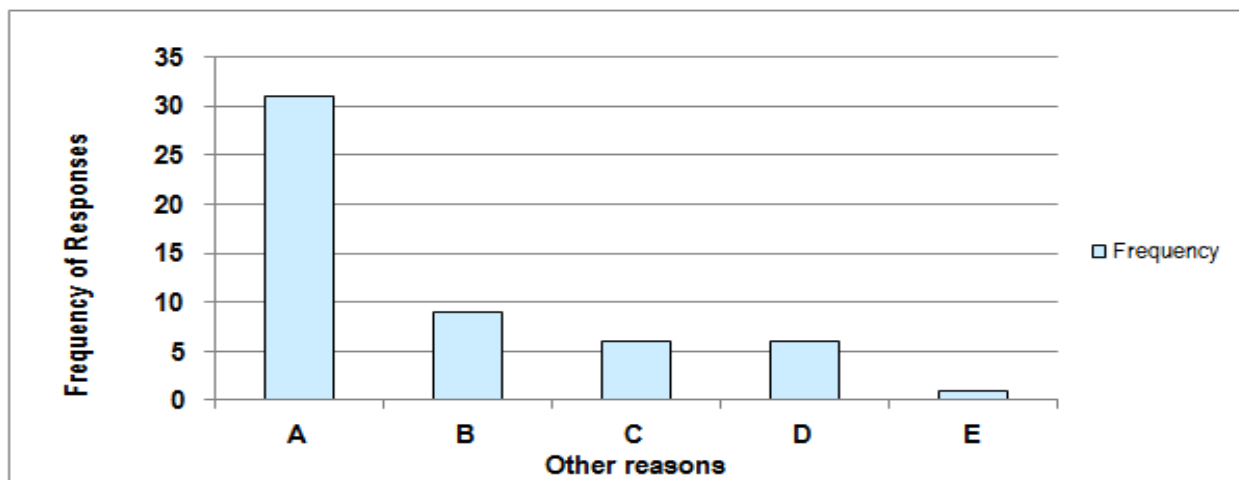
Once students have *Moved*, it is difficult to keep records of the Program they have chosen. This reason for attrition is not necessarily alarming as students may simply choose the French Immersion Program in another school or school division. However, attrition caused by *Learning difficulties* is concerning and requires schools to question current practice. It is vital that discussions regarding learning difficulties and second language acquisition occur with parents before they consider removing their child from the Program, and that appropriate supports are established to meet the child's needs.

Schools need to ensure that staff is well informed on the research with respect to students with learning difficulties and second language acquisition. A common understanding amongst educators must also be in place regarding appropriate supports for these students to achieve success throughout their K to 12 immersion experience.

The data further indicates the reasons for leaving the French Immersion Program, from Grades 8 to 12, were varied, however the main reason for leaving is *Other*. This accounts for a loss of 42 students in Grade 8, 29-30 in Grades 9 to 11, and 10 in Grade 12.

Chart 61 presents the *Other* reasons identified for student attrition.

**Chart 61:** Reasons students left the French Immersion Program in 2013-2014 indicated under the grouping *Other*, by frequency of responses

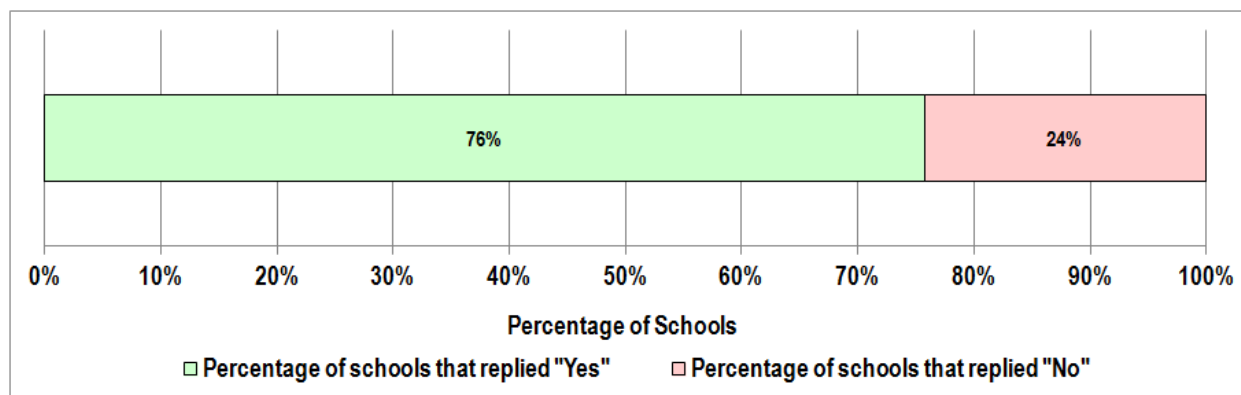


- A - Choose another school system or Program (independent school, DSFM, vocational, homeschooling)
- B - Relationships (follow peers, difficult relationships)
- C - Parent perceptions of language education (worried about English skills and grades, French competencies were sufficient)
- D - Distance from French Immersion School
- E - Moving out of town, transient

The data reveals that 31 responses (A – 58.5%) indicated students were leaving the French Immersion Program in order to *Choose another school system or Program*. The 22 remaining responses identified (B – E) 4 other reasons for leaving. Although the data reflects responses from K to 12, *Other* reasons are mostly prevalent in the Senior Years.

With respect to students leaving the French Immersion Program, the following chart refers to the percentage of schools that have a procedure in place.

**Chart 62:** Percentage of schools that have a procedure in place when students want to leave the French Immersion Program

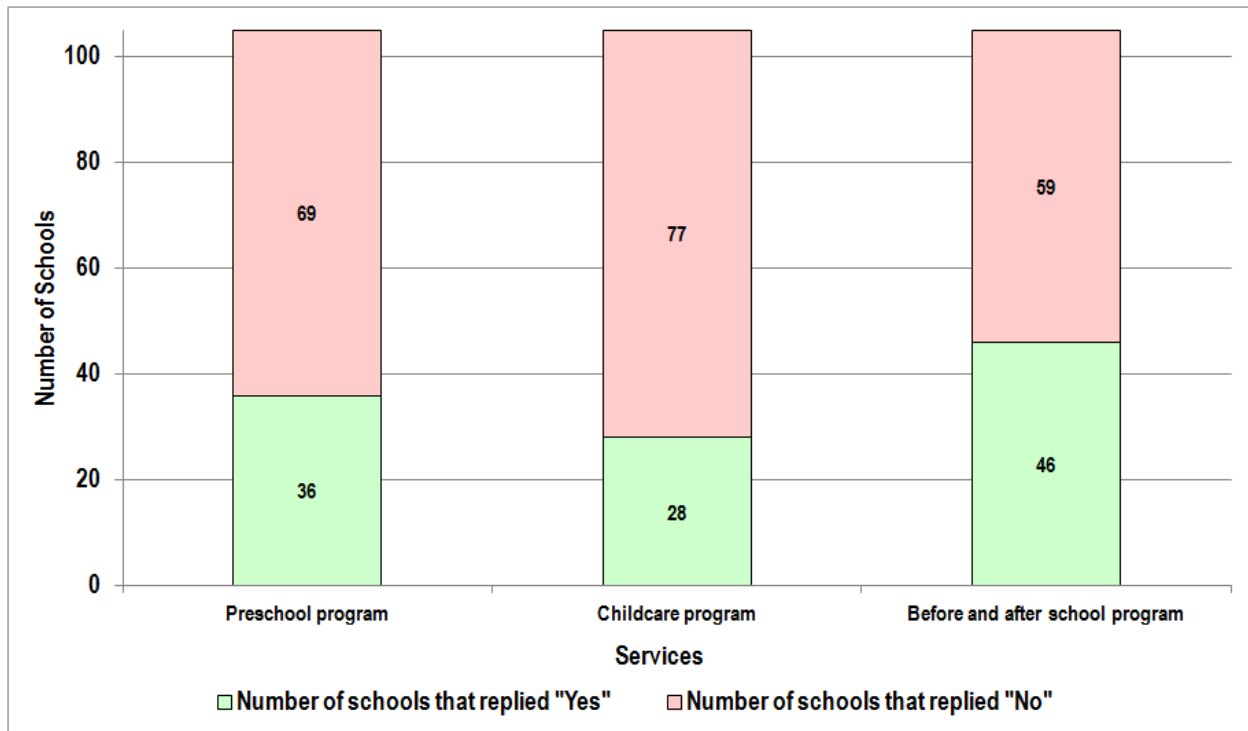


The data suggests that 78 of the 103 responding schools (76%) have a procedure in place when a student considers leaving the Program.

It is important that a procedure be in place in all schools whereby communication, especially through dialogue, occurs with students and parents to establish ongoing appropriate supports, and assure retention in the Program. Conversations with parents could also address the myth that “transferring a student to the English Program will remediate the problem”.

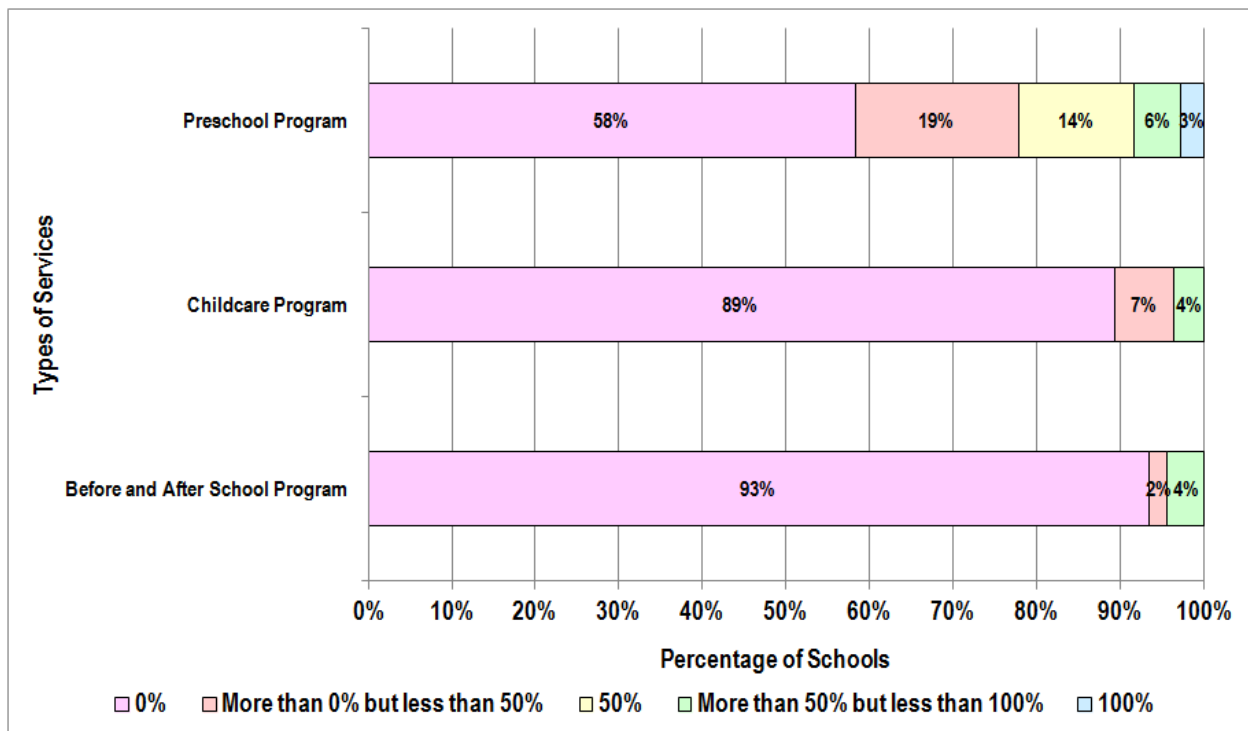
In the Senior Years, the attraction of other Programs may pose a challenge to retention. Creative solutions to scheduling should be considered in order for students to simultaneously take part in the French Immersion Program and other offerings in high school. Nonetheless, it is essential that students and parents be reminded of the advantages offered by an immersion education in today’s society.

**Chart 63:** Frequency of French Immersion schools providing child care services, by type of service offered



The data indicates that less than 45% of French Immersion schools offer a variety of child care services. These types of services are attractive from a parental perspective and providing them may influence recruitment and retention of students.

**Chart 64:** Intensity of French by type of child care service



Based on the data in Chart 64, it is apparent that if some type of child-centred service or program is offered in a French Immersion school, it is mainly in English. However, other anecdotal evidences indicate that some parents are starting to demonstrate interest in having bilingual child-care services.

## **Reflection on Student Enrolment Trends**

Upon completion of Section 4 of the questionnaire, schools were asked to reflect on the extent to which they have successfully ensured program stability through the recruitment and retention of French Immersion students by having students and their parents understand that:

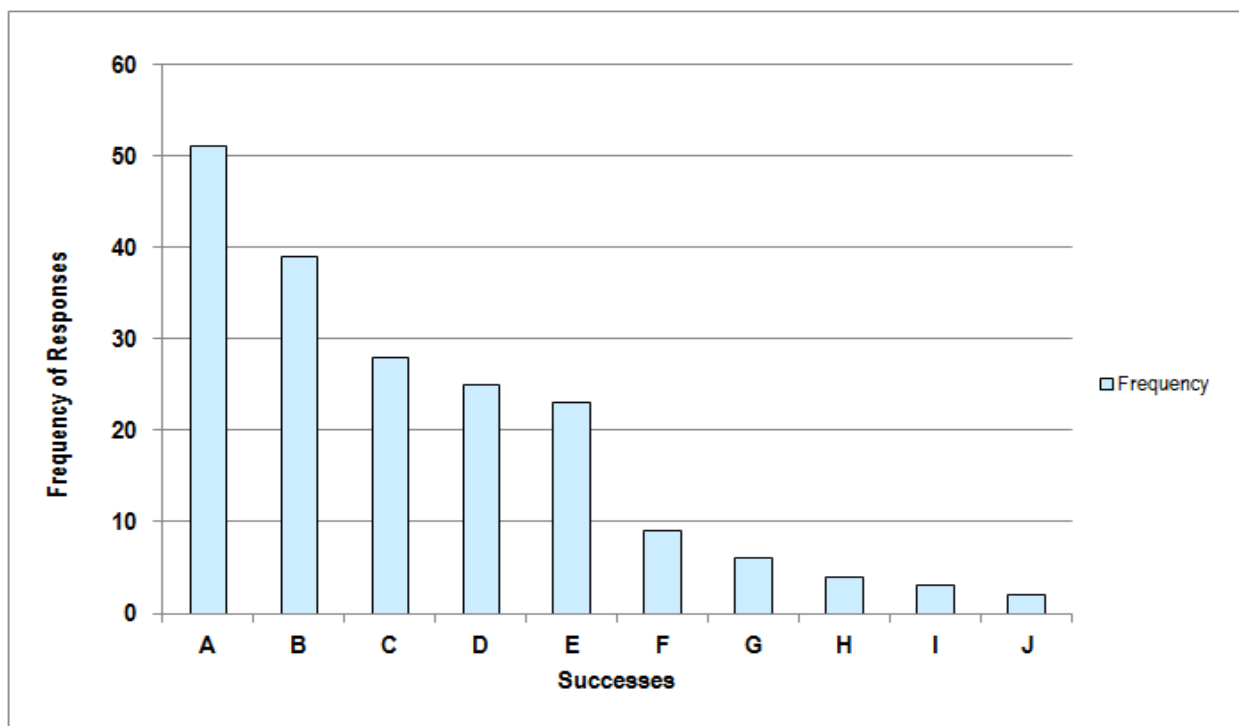
- the value of developing one's linguistic and intercultural competencies fosters cognitive and personal growth
- being bilingual or plurilingual is a viable option in today's society
- the school guides and supports students' learning throughout their French Immersion experience

This reflection included identifying successes achieved and challenges encountered while contributing to the recruitment and retention of French Immersion students and are subsequently presented in Charts 65 and 66.

Schools were then asked to complete an overall school self-assessment with respect to student enrolment trends. Hence, Chart 67 represents the schools' perspective regarding their degree of success in addressing issues of recruitment and retention which in turn ensures Program stability.

Chart 65 presents the main factors identified as successes regarding student enrolment trends, and demonstrates the number of responses by factor.

**Chart 65:** Successes in insuring Program stability through maintaining or increasing student enrolment, showing frequency of responses



- A - Student enrolment is stable or increasing
- B - Community involvement/relationship with parents
- C - Provide a rich French Learning Environment
- D - Offer appropriate support to students due to quality of staff
- E - Promotion
- F - Offer a sufficient number of French Immersion credits
- G - Possibility for enrolment of out of catchment students
- H - Daycare, after school program
- I - Former students are now parents
- J - Student success in French communication skills

The data indicates that schools perceive one of their two main successes to be in the area of a *Stable or increasing student enrolment* (A – 51 responses). Identifying the reasons behind this success could lead to further support or replication of the elements required to maintain or increase student population in schools, thus ensuring Program stability.

The second main success, *Community involvement/relationship with parents* (B – 39 responses), is a key factor in ensuring the success of school initiatives. This involvement lends itself to promoting, establishing and supporting the French Immersion Program, as well as parental validation of students. In return, this form of validation contributes to improving student achievement and attitudes towards learning and living in a second language.

Although the next three successes *Provide a rich French learning environment* (C – 28 responses), *Offering appropriate support to students due to quality of staff* (D – 25 responses) and *Promotion* (E – 23 responses) have fewer responses, they remain important factors to consider in order to maintain

or increase student enrolments. Hence, Program quality and stability contribute to the overall credibility of the French Immersion Program, making it a viable choice for parents and students.

For many northern and rural schools, the ability to *Offer a sufficient number of French credits (F)* enables students to graduate with a Province of Manitoba French Immersion Diploma, a significant success that has been realized through innovative approaches such as *Collabaunord*.

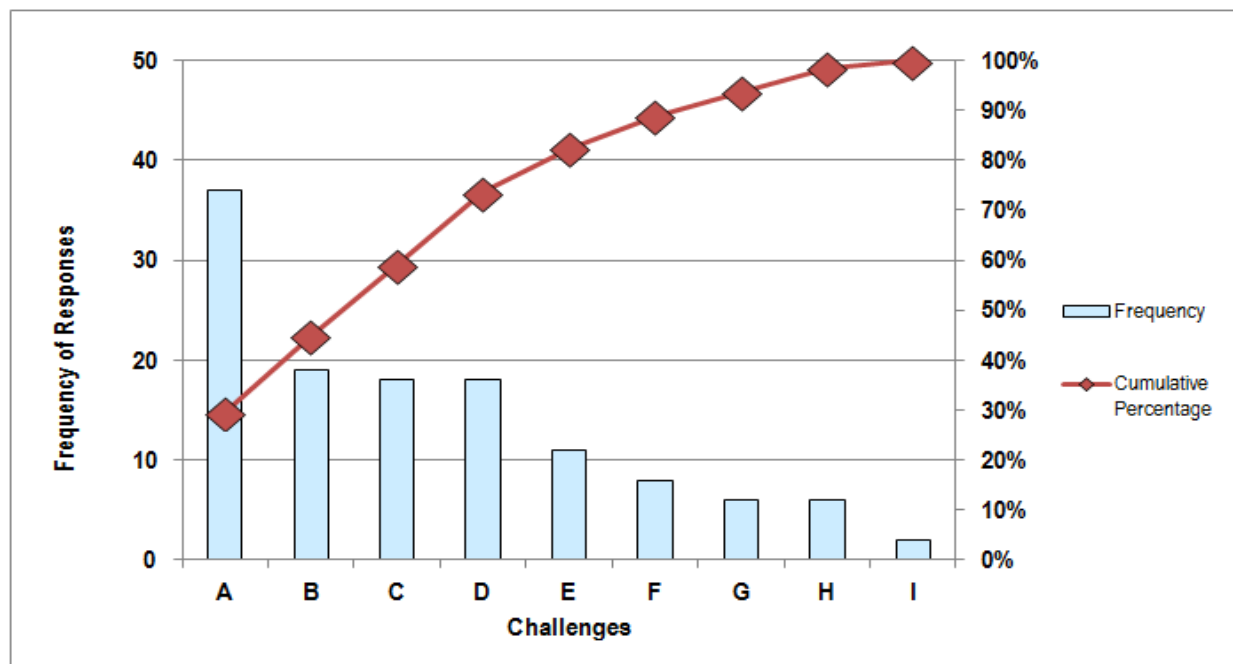
The *Possibility for enrolment of out of catchment students (G)* allows for continued instruction in the Immersion Program at the Senior Years level where credits are more readily available in French and also helps to maintain local French Immersion enrolment from K to 12. These enrolments can further increase when schools offer *Daycare and after school programs (H)* as extra supports for parents.

Moreover, the credibility of the Program is further reinforced as *Former French Immersion students (I)* who have become new parents enrol their children in the Program. These parents understand the value and relevance of French in their lives and wish the same thing for their children.

The least identified success, *Student success in French communication skills (J)*, plays an integral part in guiding and engaging students on their pathway to becoming plurilingual. This particular factor is vital to retention and should be considered by all schools as a key element in successfully retaining students in the French Immersion Program.

Chart 66 presents the main factors identified as challenges regarding student enrolment trends, and demonstrates the number of responses by factor.

**Chart 66:** Challenges in insuring Program stability through maintaining or increasing student enrolment showing frequency of responses and cumulative percentages



- A - Different perceptions about language learning (myths)
- B - Switching to specialized Program (Senior Years)
- C - Limited resources to support struggling students
- D - School unable to offer more courses in French
- E - School division's transportation not always available for French Immersion
- F - Limited space and resources
- G - No preschool or before and after school program
- H - Transient student population
- I - Accepting students at any grade level other than provincial entry points

The challenges identified by the schools are presented in the Pareto chart above. The Pareto Principle states that by addressing the factors that cause 80% of the challenges, strategies developed may become more focussed and resources may be allocated more effectively. As a result, most if not all of the remaining 20% of the challenges may also improve. In analyzing this data, the focus was on the challenges that need the most attention, those that represent a cumulative value of 80%.

The data reveals the challenge most commonly mentioned by schools is *Different perceptions about language learning (myths)* (A – 37 responses). This suggests that Program outcomes as well as myths need to be clearly communicated to parents through various means in order to ensure a common understanding with respect to their perceptions and expectations.

The next three challenges identified and almost equally represented, are French Immersion students *Switching to a more specialized Program in Senior Years* (B – 19 responses), *Limited resources to support struggling students* (C – 18 responses) and the *School is unable to offer more courses in French* (D – 18 responses).



In reference to *Switching to a more specialized Program in Senior Years*, most Senior Years schools offer two or more competing programs such as Technological/Vocational or International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement Programs. French Immersion Program students are very interested in these Programs. Therefore, in order to support students who wish to pursue various options, creative timetabling could allow these students to continue taking certain academic courses in French.

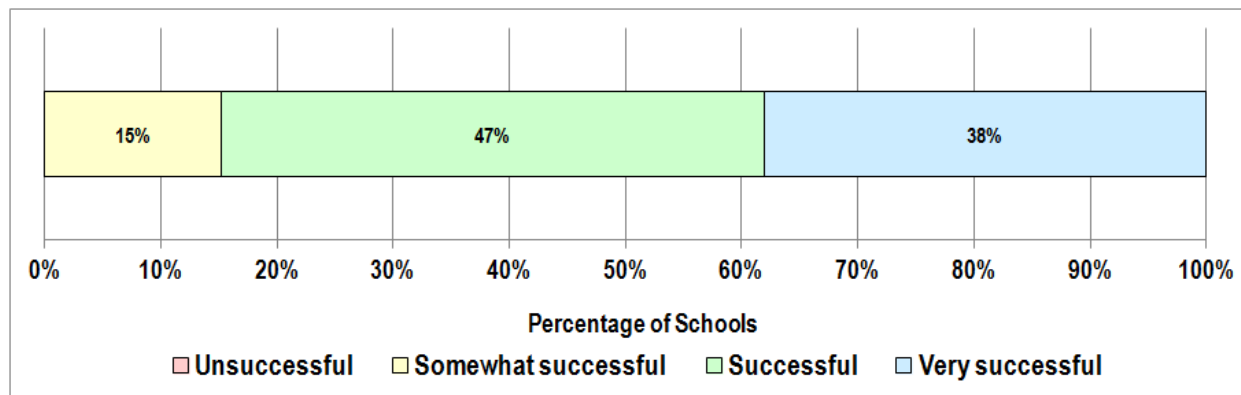
Notably, the challenge of having *Limited resources to support struggling students (C)* and that a *School is unable to offer more courses in French (D)* will require dialogue among educators at the school division level and even between school divisions in order to provide students with a full French Immersion learning experience.

Furthermore, schools are also faced with challenges regarding *Transportation issues (E)*, *Limited space and resources (F)*, and *Accepting students at any grade level other than the provincial entry points (I)*. Understanding the factors causing these challenges lends itself to reassessment and improvement, thus growth in French Immersion enrolments.

The remaining challenges should be taken into consideration and reflected upon as they could be applicable to each school and divisional context.

The following chart indicates the extent to which schools perceived their level of success regarding student enrolment trends.

**Chart 67:** Percentage of schools indicating their level of success with respect to successfully ensuring Program stability through student enrolment in the French Immersion Program



The data reveals that of the 105 schools, 85% perceived themselves as being *Very successful* or *Successful* while 15% indicated being *Somewhat successful* in ensuring Program stability through maintaining student enrolment.

This perception is justifiable due to schools considering their own individual context and student enrolment numbers along with their established initiatives. Although many schools are achieving success in student enrolment trends, the overall provincial data portrays a very different picture for 50% of students leave the Program as they progress from K to 12. These variances in perceptions could be attributed to the fact that attrition of students appears differently at the Early, Middle and Senior Years levels as well as in rural, northern and urban contexts.

By considering that every school context represents one piece of the divisional picture, full comprehension of student enrolment trends can start to occur and an accurate account of the overall picture, which includes recruitment and retention, can now be assessed. This assessment could be based on the following questions: What are the different needs in the Early, Middle and Senior Years

contexts? Which grade groupings require more focus regarding recruitment strategies? Which grade groupings require more focus regarding retention strategies? To what degree are retention strategies being studied and to what extent are they successful? How do transition points contribute to enrolment trends? By what means does our local context influence retention? To what extent are enrolment trends being discussed at the division level? Do current strategies address high attrition numbers at particular grade levels?

It is only with a full understanding of divisional enrolment trends that school divisions will be able to determine actions to ensure student retention from K to 12 and to closely monitor retention rates. If these questions were considered in a more divisional context, rather than by individual school context, the lens with which successes are perceived would most likely be different.