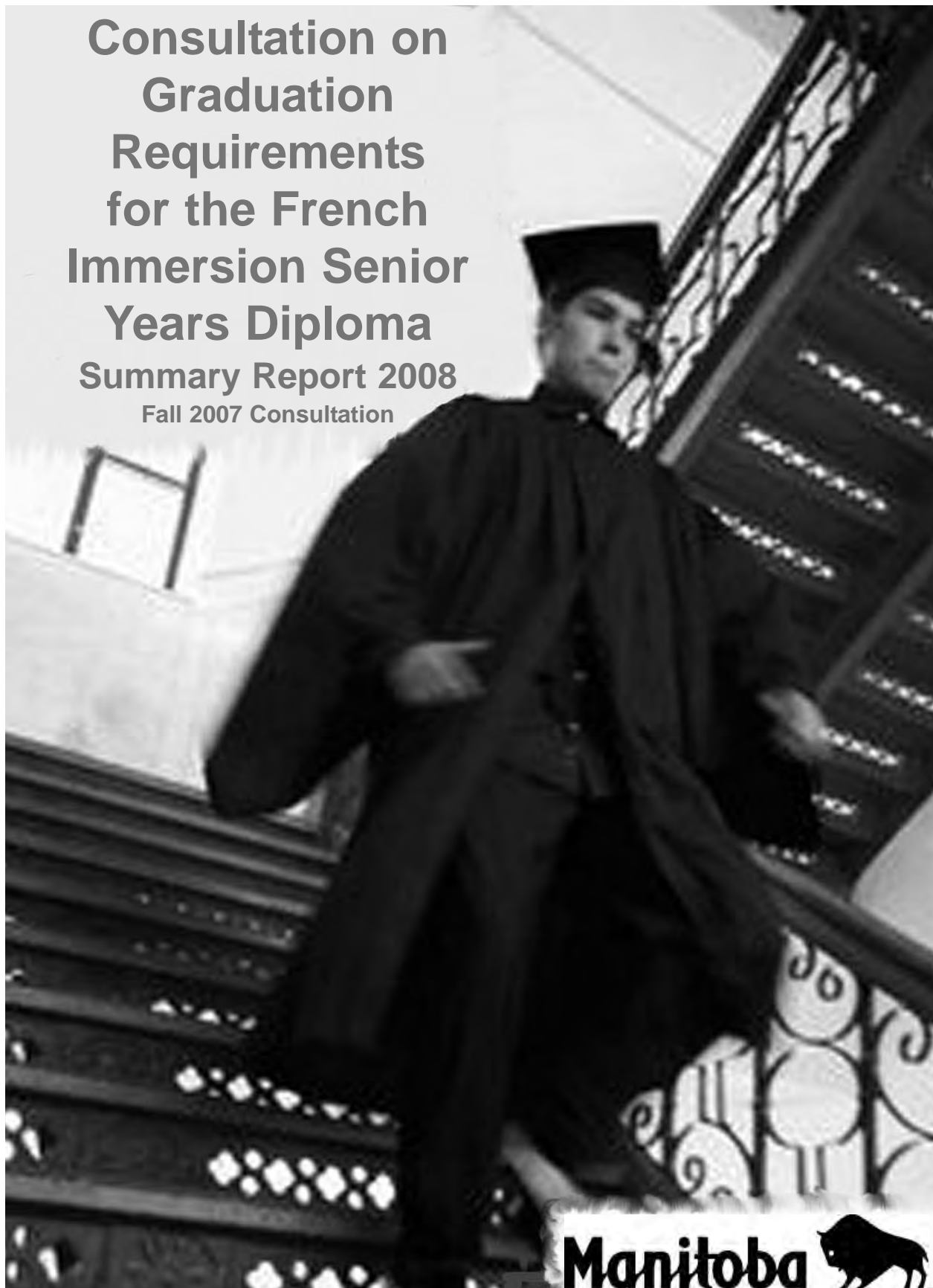


**Consultation on
Graduation
Requirements
for the French
Immersion Senior
Years Diploma
Summary Report 2008
Fall 2007 Consultation**



Manitoba 

Consultation on Graduation Requirements for the French Immersion Senior Years Diploma — Summary Report 2008

In the fall of 2007, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth requested feedback from schools and school divisions offering the French Immersion program as well as from other partners on issues stemming from changes in the Senior Years graduation requirements as they related to the French Immersion program. Other stakeholders in the French Immersion Program were also invited to contribute to the survey. This report summarizes the results of this survey.

We thank all those who took the time to reflect on these questions and provide feedback.

Results of Consultation Sessions

Two consultation sessions were held, one with Divisional language consultants/coordinators at a regular meeting of French Immersion consultants/coordinators on October 11, 2007, a second with the *Comité consultatif du français langue seconde (CCFL2)* on November 2, 2007. Feedback from these two groups outlined the importance of a rigorous program and an understanding of challenges faced by some schools offering the French Immersion program. Questions around a more flexible approach to granting the French Immersion diploma (Is number or % of credits obtained from courses taught in French the only criteria that should be used?) were raised. Participants at the two consultation sessions were encouraged to complete and return the stakeholder survey.

Results of Survey of Stakeholders

Question 1. Changes to Manitoba Senior Years graduation requirements (two new compulsory PE/HE courses in Grades 11 and 12) will have an effect on the existing Curriculum Policy for the French Immersion Program. Maintaining the current policy would impact school programming in the following way:

- **For students graduating in the 2009-2010 school year:
15 of the 30 credits earned would be from courses taught in French (a minimum of 50% of the instructional time being in the French language)**

Would it be possible for your school or school division to offer a minimum of 15 credits taught in French to students over the four Senior Years?

Yes: 13

No: 4

No answer: 3

a) Explain how this could be achieved.

Answers varied. Some schools, especially immersion centres and larger dual track immersion schools responded that students could already earn more than 15 credits from courses taught in French. Others felt it would be possible but a challenge to implement. Online learning, distance education, French instruction in new PE/HE courses and extra staffing were proposed as solutions to increasing the number of credits offered. Some schools (generally rural/Northern and dual track) indicated it would be challenging to offer more courses taught in French.

b) What are some of the challenges that may be encountered? Please explain.

A few schools/school divisions did not answer, likely because they are not faced with challenges pertaining to this issue. However a majority of schools/school divisions did share the following challenges: teacher recruitment and retention, low student numbers, scheduling conflicts in dual track schools, heavy student course load in the Immersion program, and lack of space/facilities to accommodate more courses.

c) Please explain how these challenges could be overcome.

Video-conferencing, distance education, IITV system use was often mentioned as possible solutions. The Department is asked to develop on-line courses for this purpose. Also mentioned: more professional development opportunities and support for rural and northern teachers, and supporting schools/school divisions with extra funding for staffing.

Question 2. In an effort to ensure that students are exposed to an appropriate amount of French language instruction, credits taught in the French language are distributed over the course of the four Senior Years. A possibility would have the 15th credit as a "floating" credit.

- in Grade 9, a minimum of 4 credits from courses taught in French;
- in Grade 10, a minimum of 4 credits from courses taught in French;
- in Grade 11, a minimum of 3 credits from courses taught in French; and
- in Grade 12, a minimum of 3 credits from courses taught in French.

(For graduates in the year 2009-2010 and beyond, the 15th credit would "float", that is, it could be earned at any one of the four grade levels.)

If a 15th credit were to be taught, should this credit "float" or should it be taught at a specific Grade level? Please explain.

A great majority of stakeholders support the notion of a floating credit (some indicating it would best be for Grades 11 and 12). A few immersion centres indicated this was not an issue for them.

Question 3. Do you think that teaching a minimum 50% of course credits in French is an important factor in maintaining a strong French Immersion program or is the current 14 credit requirement sufficient to maintain a strong French Immersion program?

50% (15/30): 12

Sufficient at 14 (14/30): 8

Of those who support moving to 15 credits or 50%, 5 expressed that it was important to do so, that it represents an important goal. Of those who gave an explanation for staying at 14 credits, 3 stakeholders indicated that the new PE/HE credits were not language based and with the out-of-school component, didn't have to be included in the mix.

Question 4. Given your understanding of both the philosophical underpinnings and practical implications of French Immersion education, what would be the best policy to implement regarding graduation requirements for French Immersion students?

10 stakeholders Making no change to the number of credits to be earned from courses taught in the French language, requiring that 14 of 30 credits be taught in the French language.

10 stakeholders Maintaining the present policy of 50% of instructional time in the French language, thereby requiring that students graduate with 15 of 30 credits in which the French language is the language of instruction.

One should note that, of the 10 stakeholders who indicated that the number of course credits taught in the French language remain at 14, 8 of 10 are schools/school divisions and these 8 are from rural and northern areas of the Province. Of the 10 stakeholders who indicated that the number of course credits taught in the French language should increase to 15, all are from Winnipeg and Brandon, with one exception.