

SECTION II – WHAT IS FRENCH IMMERSION AND HOW IS IT ORGANIZED IN MANITOBA?

2.1 – WHAT IS THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM?

The **French Immersion Program** is defined as a form of bilingual education in which students whose first language is not French receive the majority of their instruction in French to learn the language.

French immersion integrates language instruction with content-area instruction. Students learn to communicate in French while learning most subjects in French.

French is used as the language of instruction and as a means of communication in the classroom and throughout the school.

2.2 – WHO IS THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM FOR?

French immersion is an inclusive program intended for **ALL students** with various abilities and needs whose first language is not French and who have little or no knowledge of the French language.

2.3 – WHAT IS THE VISION FOR STUDENTS OF THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM?

The goal of the French Immersion Program is to develop proud, confident, engaged, plurilingual global citizens. The French Immersion Program enables students to interact spontaneously, autonomously, and confidently in French with pride and ease. They seek opportunities to engage in the Francophone community. Their identity as Canadian citizens, competent in both French and English, creates lifelong opportunities and fosters openness to other languages and cultures.

For more information on the vision for the French Immersion Program in Manitoba, see www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/french_imm/vision/index.html.

2.4 – SCHOOL DELIVERY MODELS

What are the school delivery models of the French Immersion Program?

There are two models for organizing a French Immersion Program: the **single-track school** and the **dual-track school**. Both models include the following:

- French immersion curriculum documents developed by the Province of Manitoba (BEF) guide student learning.
- French is the language of communication among French immersion teachers, students, and other staff.
- Communication with parents is mainly in English, including report cards, parent meetings, newsletters, etc.
- Parents play a strong role in promoting the French Immersion Program and supporting their child in achieving their goals.
- Support services are offered in French.
- School leaders are fluent in French and have experience with French immersion philosophy and pedagogy.

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The following table describes in more detail the implementation of each model for Manitoba:

Single-Track School	Dual-Track School
The French Immersion Program is the only program in the school. The entire student population is enrolled in the French Immersion Program.	The French Immersion Program and the English Program coexist in the same school. The student population is enrolled either in the French Immersion Program or the English Program.
School leaders are fluent in French and have experience with French immersion philosophy and pedagogy.	At least one school leader is fluent in French and has experience with French immersion philosophy and pedagogy.
The French immersion teaching staff is fluent in French. Generally, all other staff is fluent in French.	The French immersion teaching staff is fluent in French. Other members of the staff might speak French.
French is the language of communication at all times among all teachers and other staff, students, and school leaders.	French is the language of communication between French immersion teachers and students, and may be the language of communication with school leaders and other staff.
Students are immersed in the French language in class. Speaking French is encouraged outside of class.	Students are immersed in the French language in class. Although speaking French is encouraged outside of class, there may be a higher prevalence of English.
All subjects except English Language Arts (ELA) are taught in French in Early and Middle Years, including courses taught by specialists (e.g., Music, Visual Arts, Physical Education/Health Education, and optional courses). In Senior Years, all required and optional courses are offered in French except ELA.	In Early and Middle Years, all subjects except ELA are taught in French. However, courses taught by specialists (e.g., Music, Visual Arts, Physical Education/Health Education, and optional courses) might be taught in English. In Senior Years, at least the minimum number of credits required (15 out of 30) for a French immersion diploma are offered.
Extra-curricular activities take place in French.	Extra-curricular activities typically take place in English.

Note: An immersion centre can be established in the same building as an English Program. Such a centre has its own administration and facilities and is, for all intents and purposes, an autonomous **single-track** school operating in the same facility as another school.

2.4.1 – RECOMMENDATION

The French Immersion Program can be implemented effectively in both models. It is important to note that a linguistically rich environment and intensive exposure to the French language are essential to second language acquisition. To this end, the single-track model offers greater opportunity for a linguistically rich experience for students. Therefore, where viable, it is recommended that the single-track model be considered from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in all school divisions in the province. Viable is understood to mean any school division where the student population is significant enough, there are enough schools to enable such a model, and the single-track model would meet the needs of the community.

2.5 – ENTRY POINTS

When can a student enter the French Immersion Program?

In Manitoba, there are three official entry points into the French Immersion Program. No matter when students enter the Program, the intent is that students continue through to Grade 12. All entry points are intended for students whose first language is not French and who have little or no knowledge of French prior to entering the Program. The three official entry points are as follows:

- Early Immersion – Kindergarten or Grade 1
- Middle Immersion – Grade 4
- Late Immersion – Grade 6 or 7

In middle and late immersion, students will experience a period of intensive language learning when they enter the Program. They can then follow the curricula as outlined for their grade level.

2.5.1 – ACCESS AND FLEXIBILITY TO THESE ENTRY POINTS

It is important to provide students with equitable opportunities to access the French Immersion Program. The most common entry point offered by school divisions to the Program is early immersion; few school divisions offer middle and late immersion entry points. This is not sufficient to meet the needs of students unable to enter at an official entry point. Therefore, in the interests of equity, the department encourages flexibility in regards to entry points when working with students and families by considering the following:

- School divisions offer more than one official entry point to ensure student access to the Program.
- School divisions consider allowing students to enter at any grade level, with appropriate academic and linguistic supports in place.
- School divisions consider allowing re-entry if a student leaves the Program for an extended period of time.

School divisions and schools may consider the following when making decisions around flexible entry or re-entry:

- The motivation and resiliency of the student.
- The partnership and shared decision making between the school and the family.
- The ability of the school to provide appropriate academic and linguistic support to the student.

2.6 – PROPORTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME IN FRENCH

What is the proportion of time taught in French?

The recommended minimum percentage of instruction time in the French language is as follows:

- In Kindergarten, French is the language of instruction for 100% of the time.
- From Grade 1 to Grade 6, French is the language of instruction for 75% to 80% of the time.
- For Grades 7 and 8, French is the language of instruction for the majority of the time, from 50% to 86%.
- For Grades 9 to 12, a minimum of 15/30 credits or 50% of instructional time is required to be taught in French in order to obtain a French immersion diploma.

2.7 – GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

For a student to receive a French Immersion Program diploma, a minimum of 15 credits out of 30 must be taught in the French language. Although this meets the threshold of 50% intensity of instructional time in the French language, schools are strongly encouraged to offer as many Senior Years credits in the French language as possible and to motivate students to take more than the minimum required credits.

Students starting Grade 9 in the 2023/2024 school year will continue to require a minimum of 14/30 credits in order to obtain a French immersion diploma, as per the previous policy for the French Immersion Program. Beginning in the 2024/2025 school year, students starting Grade 9 will require a minimum of 15/30 credits taught in French. By the 2027/2028 school year, all Senior Years students will be required to obtain a minimum of 15/30 credits.

The following table outlines the minimum required number of credits in every Senior Years grade, as well as compulsory courses in French. These parameters for graduation apply to all points of entry in the French Immersion Program. The full graduation requirements can be found at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/grad_require.html.

Credit Requirements for the French Immersion Diploma

	Required Minimum Number of Credits from Courses Taught in French	Compulsory French Courses	Other Credit Requirements from Courses Taught in French
Grade 9	4 credits	<i>Français arts langagiers – immersion</i>	Students must earn 11 or more credits from courses taught in French from the options available to them. Requirements for graduation can be found at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/grad_require.html .
Grade 10	4 credits	<i>Français arts langagiers – immersion</i>	
Grade 11	3 or 4 credits	<i>Français arts langagiers – immersion</i>	
Grade 12	3 or 4 credits	<i>Français arts langagiers – immersion</i>	
	Minimum of 15 credits	4 credits	Minimum of 11 credits

2.8 – STAFF – LANGUAGE AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENTS

School Leaders

The principal and/or vice-principal must be fluent in English and French. All school leaders should be knowledgeable of the vision and the full implementation of the French Immersion Program in Manitoba, and have an understanding of the foundations and methodology of French immersion.

Teachers

All French immersion teachers must be bilingual and should be knowledgeable of the vision of the French Immersion Program in Manitoba, the philosophy of additional language acquisition and French immersion methodology, as well as the integration of Francophone cultures.

Other Staff

Schools should prioritize bilingual staff in all roles wherever possible, including educational assistants (EAs), school office staff, and custodians.

2.9 – FUNDING FOR THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning provides financial support through base funding and additional grant allocation to school divisions for French language education. This funding, disbursed to school divisions, is intended to support the full implementation of the French Immersion Program (see www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/finance/fr_grant/index.html).