



FRENCH IMMERSION LEADERSHIP IN MANITOBA: EMPOWERING LEADERS FOR SUCCESS

MAY 3, 2023

WHAT WE HEARD

FRENCH IMMERSION CONFERENCE

OVERVIEW

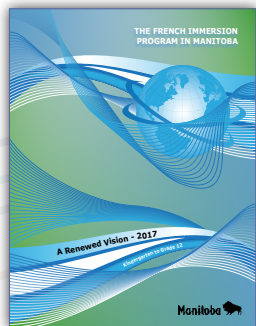
The **French Immersion Leadership in Manitoba: Empowering Leaders for Success** conference, held on May 3, 2023, included over 200 school and system leaders who offer the French Immersion Program, as well as educational partners from across the province. Participants were given the opportunity to network, explore and engage with colleagues regarding the new French Immersion Policy, while reflecting on the question, *Who am I as a French immersion leader and what is my role in the full implementation of the French Immersion Program?*

With a view on the past, present and future of French immersion in Manitoba, highlights of the conference included the following:

The Minister of Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning welcomed participants and recognized the importance of the shared partnership and commitment to French immersion education across our province.

The Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning discussed Manitoba's vision for student success and how the French Immersion Program builds upon this vision by focusing on students' French language proficiency, and on building their confidence and pride as plurilingual members of society.

The Coordinator of the French Language Education Policy & Planning Unit anchored participants in an understanding of the **vision** of the French Immersion Program. Participants were asked to reflect on their role as a leader and to keep the vision of the Program at the forefront, with an understanding that their work ensures students in every French immersion school in our province are provided with a rich experience where they can **develop their French language proficiency, achieve academic success, and cultivate their plurilingual identity.**



www.edu.gov.mb.ca/m12/frpub/ped/fl2/vision/index.html



Minister Ewasko, Sandra Drzystek (Coordinator), and Deputy Minister Rudy

Post-conference survey:

A survey was sent by email to all the conference participants (excluding Department personnel). The results from this survey are showcased in the “What we heard” bubbles throughout this report, including selected written responses to the related questions. For complete survey quantitative results, see Appendix A.



STARTING WITH THE PAST

The conference program began with a **video** of words of wisdom from Sœur Dumesnil, principal of the first French immersion school in Manitoba, who shared the beginnings of the French Immersion Program, provided recommendations to guide leaders in their professional journeys and paved the way for future generations of leaders. The Minister acknowledged the legacy of Sœur Dumesnil with a tribute to this pioneer of French immersion.

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/frenchimm/index.html

What we heard:

87.7% of respondents answered 'very' or 'extremely' when asked if the video of Sœur Dumesnil supported them in their role as a leader to strengthen the French Immersion Program.

- *It is really inspiring to see where the French Immersion Program in Manitoba came from.*
- *C'est la première fois que j'entends parler de Sœur Dumesnil. Quel plaisir de rencontrer la fondatrice de l'immersion au Manitoba!*
- *J'ai été profondément touché, ému et inspiré par l'œuvre de Sœur Dumesnil et, de plus, elle était parmi nous.*



EXPLORING THE PRESENT

In a video presentation, students from across Manitoba shared their experiences in the French Immersion Program, allowing participants a glimpse into their current realities and the chance to reflect on the extent to which the vision of the French Immersion Program is being realized in our schools.

www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/frenchimm/index.html

What we heard:

94.7% of respondents answered 'very' or 'extremely' when asked if the video *Student Voices* supported them in their role as a leader to strengthen the French Immersion Program.

- *The video featuring student voices was impactful. It made me reflect on our programming, approach, and attitude as educators and leaders in the field of French immersion.*
- *La vidéo Voix des élèves était informative. Il est très important que leur voix soit entendue.*

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

A panel discussion took place and panelists, who were all of French immersion leaders from the field, shared their thoughts on what they heard in the student video presentation and offered their perspectives on the role of leaders by discussing the following question: *As we go forward, how do we lead in our schools to strengthen the Program and to ensure that students develop their language proficiency, achieve academic success and cultivate their plurilingual identity?*



What we heard:

82.4% of respondents answered 'very' or 'extremely' when asked if the *Panel Discussion: Leadership Perspectives* supported them in their role as a leader to strengthen the French Immersion Program.

- *I thoroughly enjoyed hearing the leadership perspectives, as I often find learning from my colleagues to be the most beneficial.*
- *The multiple voices and perspectives of the panelists allowed for learning and conversations.*
- *J'aurais aimé avoir l'occasion de poser des questions aux panélistes.*

LAUNCHING THE NEW FRENCH IMMERSION POLICY

In 2022, Manitoba's K to 12 Education Action Plan was released and included a commitment to strengthen the French immersion policy. This commitment was met with the launch of the new French Immersion in Manitoba Policy, which included a presentation with an overview the structure the policy, principal changes from the previous policy and a review of new sections comprising of concrete and actionable steps. Five afternoon sessions further allowed participants to delve deeply into the foundations and the full implementation of the Program, as well as familiarize themselves with school self-assessment tools. Participants were provided with a copy of *The French Immersion Policy in Manitoba*, a summary table of the full implementation of the Program, Implementation Guidelines, as well as school self-assessment tools. These documents can be found at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/m12/frpub/pol/pol-curr/index.html.

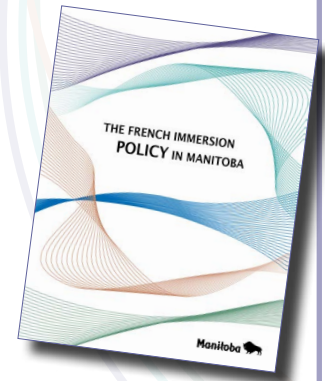


What we heard:

- 84.2% of respondents answered ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ when asked if the overview and exploration of the new French Immersion Policy in Manitoba supported them in their role as a leader to strengthen the French Immersion Program.
- 72% of respondents answered ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ when asked if the afternoon workshops supported them in their role as a leader to strengthen the French Immersion Program.
- 96.5% of respondents answered ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ when asked if the conference materials provided supported them as leaders in the full implementation of the French Immersion Program.

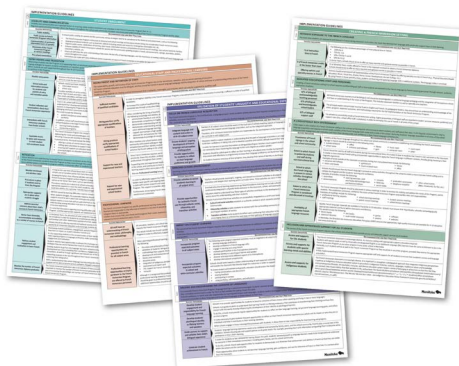
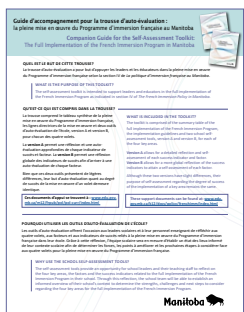
New French Immersion Policy in Manitoba:

- *Je peux me référer au document de politique et plus facilement souligner les aspects qui devraient être prioritaires au niveau de la province, des divisions scolaires et des écoles.*
- *Il y a des priorités concrètes que nous pouvons partager et communiquer avec notre communauté scolaire.*
- *The policy document provided to us at the conference was helpful for my own understanding and gave me a starting point for sharing and discussing with my staff.*
- *Would have liked more time exploring actual policy.*



Afternoon workshops and support documents:

- *Les ateliers nous ont permis de discuter des enjeux liés à la réalisation de la vision.*
- *J'ai beaucoup aimé avoir le temps de feuilleter ces nouvelles ressources.*
- *Working through the documents was incredibly helpful.*
- *Les outils sont essentiels pour bien avancer dans nos efforts de soutenir nos enseignants pour la mise en œuvre du programme.*
- *I will use the materials provided as we begin to look to the future planning at our school and incorporate them in our school planning.*
- *The self-assessment tool is fabulous. As a new French Immersion leader who is not familiar with the Program, it gave me an excellent starting point. It also provided an opportunity for open dialogue to see where we can make improvements.*



A BILINGUAL APPROACH

To meet the linguistic needs of all leaders, a bilingual approach to the conference was adopted. It was important to consider both languages, French and English, in order to develop a mutual understanding of the bilingual nature of the students in our schools. To eliminate communication barriers, presenters modelled an approach where information was shared in both languages, simultaneous interpretation from French to English was available, and support materials were bilingual.

What we heard:

87.7% of respondents answered 'very' or 'extremely' when asked if the bilingual format of the conference supported a positive learning environment.

- *Bilingual format provided a sense of belonging especially for all participants allowing all voices to be heard. This was welcoming, beneficial and inclusive.*
- *We have leaders in our French immersion schools who do not speak the language but who are strong advocates for the program. The formatting of the presentation gave them entry to the learning and conversations.*
- *As an English-speaking individual, I felt valued and like I belonged at the conference. Thank you for going out of your way to ensure all were included and for recognizing the importance of all leaders in the program and how we can all contribute to continuing to build its success.*
- *Très approprié de l'offrir dans les deux langues, qui est vraiment une représentation du cheminement de nos jeunes.*
- *Je comprends l'approche, toutefois j'aurais aimé qu'on mette davantage l'accent sur l'utilisation du français.*
- *Ceci était fantastique et respectueux et devrait se passer tout le temps.*

OVERALL CONFERENCE IMPACT: EMPOWERING LEADERS FOR SUCCESS

The conference provided leaders with the opportunity to become familiar with the policy and support documents, consider their leadership practices, and explore new ideas with colleagues while deepening their understanding of the French Immersion Program. The various components of the conference allowed participants to reflect on the key question: *Who am I as a French immersion leader and what is my role in the full implementation of the French Immersion Program?* This reflection led to thinking about how they bring the vision of the Program to life and what they should prioritize to ensure that students develop their language proficiency, achieve academic success and cultivate their plurilingual identity.

What we heard:

Upon considering the impact of the conference as a whole, 100% of respondents indicated that they felt better equipped in their role as a leader to support the full implementation of the French Immersion Program; of these respondents, 77.2% answered being “very” or “extremely” better equipped.

- *Attending this conference grew my understanding of French Immersion in Manitoba and how I can better support my French Immersion administrators and teachers within our division.*
- *Le nouveau document comprend plusieurs nouveautés. Participer à la conférence m’a permis de bien les saisir, d’en discuter avec mes collègues et de considérer comment les implanter dans notre division scolaire.*
- *I feel like the new policy, conversations, and newly made connections have provided me with the foundational knowledge that I need to begin having some reflective and sometimes difficult conversations.*
- *I do feel more equipped and confident in leading my staff and school in bringing the vision of the French Immersion Program to life.*
- *J’ai vraiment apprécié la conférence. Ceci nous dit que l’immersion française est importante au ministère.*
- *La conférence, pour moi, a fourni une très bonne combinaison d’inspiration et d’information.*
- *Cet événement était fantastique pour “ré-énergiser” tous les acteurs principaux qui jouent un rôle de leadership en immersion!*
- *Knowing expectations, successes and challenges of other schools supports understanding and planning for next steps.*

NEXT STEPS

Going forward, respondents were asked to identify possible initiatives, collaborations or materials that would further support the full implementation of the French Immersion Program; the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) will review this feedback as we consider future initiatives.

What we heard:

Respondents indicated that professional learning, networking, collaboration, integration of French culture, oral language and mentorship would further support the full implementation of the French Immersion Program.

- *I would like to have more PD days for my staff so that they can familiarize themselves with the new protocols and materials.*
- *Professional development around inclusion for French Immersion teachers.*
- *Pedagogy training for teachers—how to teach second languages.*
- *J'aimerais travailler en collaboration avec les gens du BEF.*
- *Absolutely looking at working at developing our French culture in our school and community.*
- *Moving forward, continued collaboration of French Immersion leaders would support implementation, including the opportunity to visit and observe a variety of school contexts.*
- *A mentorship program for French Immersion leaders, especially those within first 5 years, would be a supportive initiative to assist in the full implementation of the Program.*
- *Le réseautage est essentiel pour faire vivre le Programme.*
- *Nous anticipons utiliser plusieurs de ces matériaux avec les enseignants du Programme d'immersion de notre division scolaire.*

Conclusion:

The *French Immersion Leadership in Manitoba: Empowering Leaders for Success* conference inspired and guided leaders, enabling them to collectively move forward with renewed momentum and strengthen the French Immersion Program for the benefit of our students.

APPENDIX A

FRENCH IMMERSION CONFERENCE SURVEY – QUANTITATIVE DATA

Question: Please rate the extent to which the following statements apply.

The following program component supported me in my role as a leader to strengthen the French Immersion Program: Video: Words of Wisdom from Sœur Dumesnil	Extremely	45.60%
	Very	42.10%
	Moderately	12.30%
	Slightly	0%
	Not at All	0%

The following program component supported me in my role as a leader to strengthen the French Immersion Program: Video: Student Voices	Extremely	45.60%
	Very	49.10%
	Moderately	5.30%
	Slightly	0%
	Not at All	0%

The following program component supported me in my role as a leader to strengthen the French Immersion Program: Panel Discussion: Leadership Perspectives	Extremely	36.80%
	Very	45.60%
	Moderately	14%
	Slightly	3.50%
	Not at All	0%

The following program component supported me in my role as a leader to strengthen the French Immersion Program: Overview and Exploration of the new French Immersion Policy in Manitoba	Extremely	38.60%
	Very	45.60%
	Moderately	15.80%
	Slightly	0%
	Not at All	0%

The following program component supported me in my role as a leader to strengthen the French Immersion Program: Afternoon Workshops	Extremely	24.60%
	Very	47.40%
	Moderately	22.80%
	Slightly	5.30%
	Not at All	0%

The conference materials provided are useful to support me as a leader in the full implementation of the French Immersion Program (e.g., the policy document, the vision document, the posters of implementation guidelines, and the school self-assessment tools).	Extremely	54.40%
	Very	42.10%
	Moderately	3.50%
	Slightly	0%
	Not at All	0%

<p>The bilingual format of the conference supported a positive learning environment.</p>	Extremely	57.90%
	Very	29.80%
	Moderately	12.30%
	Slightly	0%
	Not at All	0%

<p>Considering the impact of the conference as a whole, I feel better equipped in my role as a leader to support the full implementation of the French Immersion Program.</p>	Extremely	31.60%
	Very	45.60%
	Moderately	21.10%
	Slightly	1.80%
	Not at All	0%

