

Conclusion

Since the 2013-2014 school year, Manitoba's French Immersion schools have been participating in the French Language Education Review. Schools have continued to work to fully implement the French Immersion Program by developing initiatives that build on their successes and address the challenges. As the five-year cycle of data collection has come to an end, it is appropriate to examine the extent to which schools have created a French Immersion Program that values students' experience and encourages them to become proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens. The analysis of the data over the five-year period reveals the successes and challenges that provide a current portrait of French Immersion in Manitoba today.

This report identifies certain areas of success:

- The French Immersion setting is characterized by an increasingly diverse student population and supported by significant levels of bilingual staff. Many initiatives have been implemented over the past five years to create a linguistically rich environment.
- *Validating students' linguistic and educational experience* is the key area of greatest focus with the largest number of initiatives implemented. An impressive amount of work over the five-year period has focused on pedagogical methods conducive to the acquisition of French for the purpose of improving students' language proficiency.
- Much professional learning is occurring across the province to support building teacher capacity in the French Immersion Program.
- Enrolment in French Immersion has increased steadily across the province during this five-year period.

These areas of success are essential, but insufficient to achieve full implementation of the French Immersion Program in all schools across Manitoba. Challenges still remain.

- It is still difficult to create and maintain a truly immersive environment, especially in the dual-track schools, due to the difficulty in recruiting qualified bilingual staff, particularly in the speciality areas, and the lack of visibility of French and opportunity to use it throughout the school.
- Program-expected outcomes, especially language acquisition, are not addressed consciously and consistently in all subject areas and school activities.
- Recruitment and retention of qualified personnel (teachers and school leaders) remain a challenge and affect the quality and accessibility of the Program.
- Student attrition continues at a significant rate from Kindergarten to Grade 12, posing a challenge to Program stability, especially at transition points, and impacting French Immersion diploma graduation rates.

These challenges impact the degree of full implementation of the Program, which consequently impact the quality of the students' French Immersion experience.

Going forward, it is recommended that collaboration and dialogue between schools, school divisions, and the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) continue as we collectively work to respond to the evolving needs of the French Immersion Program and improve the degree to which all schools implement the Program. **We must continually reflect on the question: How do we sufficiently engage students in learning and using French so that they acquire the linguistic competencies necessary to communicate effectively, become confident in their linguistic abilities, and see the relevance of French in their lives as they live as plurilingual members of society?**

Overall program success will be achieved by successfully targeting key initiatives where challenges have been identified in order to support students in the continual development of their French language proficiency, academic success and plurilingual identity.