

Executive Summary – French Immersion Program

In 2016-2017, the French Immersion Program was offered throughout the province in twenty-two school divisions. Over 24,000 students in 113 public schools were enrolled in the program, about 13% of students in the K-12 public system. This includes over 12,000 students in K-3, 7,000 in Grades 4-8, and 4,500 in Grades 9-12.

The goal of the French Language Education Review (Review) is to ascertain to what extent schools fully implement a French Immersion Program that allows all students to develop their language proficiency, academic success, and plurilingual identity. The Review aims to aid school divisions and schools as they aspire to fully implement the Program.

To determine the level of success in full implementation, data is collected by surveying French Immersion schools in four key areas and on perceptions of student experience. The four key areas are: *Creating a French Immersion Setting*, *Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience*, *Education Staff and Professional Learning*, and *Student Enrolment Trends*.

This report provides a compilation of data from 2016-2017 and some comparative figures from the three surveys conducted over the five-year cycle (2013-2014, 2015-2016, 2016-2017). It includes data from the Educational Information System as well as self-reporting from schools.

The reporting process itself has helped inform schools and school divisions as to the nature of initiatives taking place with respect to French Immersion. Several specific areas have shown improvement over the reporting period.

- In line with previous recommendations, many initiatives were mainly focused on improving the French Immersion setting in schools. The setting is supported by relatively high levels of bilingual staff in support, leadership, and teaching speciality roles, despite ongoing recruitment difficulties.
- In line with the vision of French Immersion, schools are achieving moderate levels of success in exploring language acquisition in diverse subject areas. Developing language proficiency, along with motivation, engagement and confidence, must be addressed consciously and consistently so language learning becomes part of daily practice in all subject areas. Professional learning to support the development of language through content was equally a priority across all grade groupings.
- The report shows that the French Immersion Program is growing at a faster rate than the K to 12 public school population. This positive news should be tempered by the observation that the Program is losing nearly half of its Kindergarten students by the time they reach Grade 12.

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 it.

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.