Provincial Report

French Immersion Program

Fall 2016

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Executive Summary

Towards the Full Implementation of the French Immersion Program
Supporting Students on their Pathway to Becoming
Proud, Engaged, Confident, Plurilingual Global Citizens

This executive summary provides a synopsis of the provincial data based on the 2013-2014 *French Language Education Review* (The Review), an initiative of the Bureau de l'éducation française Division (BEF) to further support the full implementation of the French Immersion Program in Manitoba. The data was obtained by surveying 105 schools and 22 school divisions offering the French Immersion Program. The goal of the Review was to ascertain the degree of success in the full implementation of the French Immersion Program across the province. The analysis of the data provides insight regarding **how well students are doing, what factors influence student success** and **what should be prioritized going forward**.

How well are students doing?

French Immersion schools reported their perceptions of student success based on five indicators that embody the vision of the French Immersion Program which revealed that 72% of schools perceived that most if not all of their students achieved an appropriate level of linguistic competency in both French and English; 53% maintained that their students were aware of their own cultural identity and were open to other languages and cultures; 43% felt that their students were confident in their ability to speak French in various public settings; 24% perceived their students as having the confidence and interest to participate in French activities organized in the francophone community; and 23% felt students value the learning of languages as a key to global citizenship and see themselves as lifelong language learners. These outcomes are all interrelated and need ongoing focus and attention in order to support students on their pathway to becoming plurilingual and integrating the French language as a natural part of their everyday lives.

What factors influence student success?

The factors influencing these results are described and explained through the overall analysis of the successes and challenges within each of the four key areas of the survey. The schools' self assessment in each of the four key areas revealed that schools perceived their greatest successes in the areas of *Student Enrolment Trends* (85%) and *Educational Staff and Professional Learning* (80%). They also felt that they were relatively successful in the areas of *Validating Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience* (62%) and *Creating a French Immersion Setting* (58%). It is important to note that all four key areas leading to the full implementation of the French Immersion Program are interrelated and certain challenges encountered in one key area may influence the degree of success achieved in another key area.

In the first key area, *Creation of a French Immersion Setting,* the overall exposure to the French language was identified as a success. The majority of schools perceived that the intensity of French instructional time offered to students was sufficient to create an immersion setting from K to 8 with some exceptions at the Senior Years due to the difficulty of providing optional courses in the French language, particularly in rural and remote areas. In addition, the difficulty in hiring teachers and French speaking specialists such as physical education, music, art and library also impacted the intensity of instructional time in French. However, it became apparent through further analysis that creating a linguistically rich French environment posed the greatest challenge within schools. Most schools indicated that they had difficulty providing and maintaining a truly French Immersion environment especially in the dual track setting. Results also revealed that a number of school areas required a richer French milieu and more

visibility of the French language. Furthermore, the data revealed a smaller percentage of bilingual staff by position within dual track schools as compared to single track schools, limiting students' exposure to the French language. When considering the analysis of the data from this key area, **creating a linguistically rich environment** should be prioritized in order to maintain students' interests and motivation in speaking and learning French.

The analysis of the data in *Validating students' Linguistic and Educational Experience* revealed that schools are generally successful in this key area, but the degree to which they validate students' linguistic and educational experience is inconsistent. Schools reported that their teachers *always* (31%) or *often* (51%) focus on language acquisition while teaching content. However, in order for students to develop their linguistic competencies more actively through all subject areas and throughout the school day, the 31% (always) needs to increase. The data also revealed that most activities offered to students are academic in nature and mainly take place in the *français* course. Cultural activities were frequently offered while social, citizenship and transition activities were less prevalent. Across K to 12, the Program expected outcomes for students (develop language proficiency, confidence, engagement, intercultural awareness and identity, and awareness of the Francophonie and participation in the francophone community) are being addressed to varying degrees but do not appear to be consistently targeted in the different subject areas nor through the various other school activities**,** thus not always intentionally supporting the development of these competencies in students. When considering the data from this key area, **focusing on language acquisition** and **consistently targeting the student expected outcomes** should be prioritized in order to ensure students' academic success, engagement and motivation as well as to nurture students' identity as plurilingual learners and speakers.

In the key area of *Educational Staff and Professional Learning*, schools and school divisions were successful in empowering their educational staff in delivering a strong program. The data indicated that a high percentage of K to 12 teachers participated in professional learning activities related to the French Immersion Program, but a lower level of participation from school principals and other non-teaching professionals was noted. Schools further reported that the development of reading skills as well as the development and assessment of students' oral proficiency were the two main professional learning priorities from K to 12. In addition, the data revealed that most French Immersion schools encountered challenges in hiring qualified staff for all positions, and that the limited number of qualified applicants was the main challenge. This issue particularly impacts rural and remote school divisions whose schools are predominantly dual track. This limited number of potential candidates impacts the four key areas and the ability to fully implement the French Immersion Program. This also highlights the need for retention of current teachers as this may eventually affect the quality and accessibility of the Program and in turn impact student enrolment. When considering the data from this key area, **recruitment and retention of personnel** should be prioritized as a crucial piece in maintaining stability within the program and ensuring its strong delivery in fostering student success.

In the key area of *Student Enrolment Trends*, divisions are experiencing success as French Immersion enrolments are increasing across the province and enrolment levels continue to grow every year. These increased enrolments often mask the challenges of student retention as there is a loss of approximately half of the French Immersion students as they move through the school system from K to 12. Despite this unsettling statistic, schools perceive themselves as being successful as they continue to experience increased enrolments and the losses do not seem to be viewed as critical. However, success needs to be measured by both analysing the increase in enrolments as well as the losses within student cohorts. School divisions have also indicated that the main challenges influencing retention are student learning difficulties in Grades 2 to 4, while attrition during transition years and lack of options at Senior Years account for losses in Grades 8 to 12. Furthermore, transition initiatives that would improve retention rates were mainly limited to Middle Years students, and initiatives for other K to 12 transition points should be considered. In addition, most schools and some school divisions promoted the French Immersion Program through a range of activities that mainly targeted students and parents of existing

students at the Early and Middle Years. However, up to this point, newcomers have seldom been targeted. When considering the data from this key area, **strategies to retain students** should be prioritized in order for students to continue to develop necessary language competencies to use French throughout their lives as plurilingual members of society.

When school divisions were asked to provide an overall assessment regarding the degree of success in the implementation of the French Immersion Program, 75% perceived themselves as being *successful or very successful*. The degree of success achieved in each key area varies due to the unique context of each school division as well as each regional context: urban, rural, and north.

What should be prioritized going forward?

Keeping in mind these factors from the 4 key areas and the goal of improving student success, one must continually reflect on how to improve student results by asking the question: **How do we sufficiently engage students in learning and using French so that they acquire the necessary language competency 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?** As we work towards the full implementation of the French Immersion Program, overall program success will be determined by how successfully key initiatives are targeted where challenges have been identified in supporting students in the continual development of their French language proficiency, academic success and their plurilingual identity.

As we attend to the evolving needs of the French Immersion Program in Manitoba, the analysis of the data suggests that the following priorities should be targeted to maintain and improve the results:

Creating a linguistically rich environment
Given that the setting is the foundation necessary to ensuring success for all students, a more concerted effort must be made to improve the French Immersion setting in all schools, and even more importantly in dual track schools. This is accomplished by establishing high visibility and use of the French language throughout the school by all staff and students. Nurturing students' language acquisition in all areas of the school would enhance students' engagement and motivation as well as help them develop pride and confidence in their French language competencies.

Focusing on language acquisition
The entire premise of the French Immersion Program is based on the philosophy of learning language through content in authentic and meaningful academic, cultural and social situations; therefore, a more systematic focus on language is necessary to improve students' language accuracy and proficiency. To nurture language acquisition, all teachers must specifically attend to language while teaching content on a consistent basis and make this part of their classroom culture. Student confidence and engagement are further achieved through the development of fluency and accuracy. A common understanding of pedagogical and assessment practices among educators is also essential for students' language to evolve. Literacy development in French is a priority and the BEF encourages the use of the integrated approach; a methodology that strengthens students' French language proficiency and supports student literacy and understanding of content.

Consistently targeting student expected outcomes
To further support language acquisition and prepare students to sustain their bilingualism, educators need to more consciously and consistently target the student expected outcomes (develop language proficiency, confidence, engagement, intercultural awareness and identity, and awareness of the Francophonie and participation in the francophone community) as they work through all curricular areas. Ensuring that all outcomes are targeted specifically in all subject areas as well as other enrichment activities is crucial in providing students with an enriched school environment. In addition, a

clear and common understanding among educators of how to enrich academic and linguistic learning for students by means of classroom, school, and community activities in all of the categories (academic, cultural, social, citizenship and transition**)** is essential.

Recruiting and retaining personnel
The sustainability and the growth of the French Immersion Program rely on the recruitment and retention of educators with the necessary competencies; language skills, cultural knowledge and second language methodology as well as succession planning. To increase the supply of qualified bilingual teachers and administrators, provincial stakeholders must address this issue in a concerted way through productive dialogue and collaboration. School divisions should also consider initiatives to retain current French Immersion teachers. If the hiring of teachers with all of the required competencies proves difficult, school administrators need to ensure that once hired and throughout their career, teachers gain the required skills and knowledge by attending various types of professional learning. In addition, administrators need opportunities to keep up to date with current research and issues in French Immersion and to dialogue with other French Immersion administrators to address the specific needs of the program. Subsequently, they are better equipped to provide leadership in the school community. Furthermore, encouraging current French Immersion teachers to consider administrative roles in the future and supporting them in acquiring the appropriate skills would ensure succession in leadership roles

Retaining students
Since attrition poses a challenge to Program stability, a concerted effort is required to retain more students in the French Immersion Program. While it is understandable that some losses are inevitable the reasons for student attrition should be tracked and analysed on a continual basis as most other losses are avoidable. Implementing strategies that reduce attrition when students are struggling or during transition points are important, however developing student confidence, engagement, and identity are also factors that have yet to be fully integrated and may also impact student retention from K to 12. A proactive approach is recommended whereby all these factors are targeted so that students wish to remain in the Program. It is by supporting students in the co-construction of their identity as French learners and speakers that they will develop a better understanding of themselves, will make ongoing progress in language proficiency and will see the relevance of French in their lives. As their identity evolves through varied social, cultural and academic interactions as well as through significant and relevant use of the language, they will want to make learning French a lifelong endeavour. Guiding and supporting students in this way throughout their French Immersion experience is vital in retaining them in the French Immersion Program.

Conclusion

Improving student success and **increasing student retention** in the French Immersion Program can only be ensured through strong leadership that considers the vision of the Program and implements initiatives in the four key areas that focus on the program outcomes. This can be achieved through fostering language development in all content areas to improve language proficiency for all students as they move from K-12. It is through ongoing conversations and assessments of language acquisition that students will gain a better understanding of their language competencies as well as be provided with opportunities for continual improvement inside and outside the classroom. This can also be achieved through developing student identity, engagement, and confidence in order for students to see the relevance of French in their lives and wish to continue to use and learn French today as well as in the future. Fostering student engagement will impact student confidence in communicating in French in real and meaningful ways and empower them to use the language in their daily lives for academic, social, and cultural endeavours and support students in the development of their plurilingual identity. With a leadership that fully values language learning and guides the whole school community, students will be able to become proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens.

Introduction

This document is the first Provincial Report under the **French Language Education Review - French Immersion Program** and was prepared by the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF), the French Language Education Division of Manitoba Education and Training. The report presents a compilation and an analysis of the data collected from the 2013-2014 School and Divisional Questionnaires with responses from all 105 French Immersion schools and all 22 school divisions offering the French Immersion Program in Manitoba. It provides a comprehensive profile of the French Immersion Program, highlighting the schools' and school divisions' successes and challenges in the delivery of the Program. Furthermore, the BEF's analysis of this data determined what should be prioritized going forward in order to ensure student success.

The context of the French Language Education Review is based upon the understanding that the vision of the French Immersion Program in Manitoba is **to ensure that students become proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens**.

Background and objectives

Manitoba Education and Training (MET) provides financial support through base funding and grant allocations 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 in Manitoba schools[1].

In September 2014, the BEF introduced the **French Language Education Review** (Review) to ascertain to what extent school divisions have fully implemented the French Immersion Program that allows all students to develop their ability to communicate in French effectively, with confidence, while developing their plurilingual identity.

 The purpose of this Review is to provide schools and school divisions with:
* clear expectations with respect to their role and responsibilities in delivering the French Immersion Program as well as in their reporting accountability;
* a standardized process to report on French Immersion programming ensuring data validity and reliability through the use of questionnaires;
* qualitative and quantitative data in order to enhance the French Immersion Program and to track progress over time;
* an opportunity to reflect on successes, challenges, and to develop initiatives that build on their successes and address the needs of their French Immersion Program.

The Review also aims:
* to bring about collaboration and dialogue between schools, school divisions, and the BEF regarding the full implementation of the French Immersion Program in Manitoba and to respond to its evolving needs
* to collect provincial data that will be used to develop a comprehensive annual provincial report on the state of French second language education in Manitoba under the Canada-Manitoba Agreement in Education.

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[1] This funding is also intended to support the successful delivery of French courses (English Program) in Manitoba schools. See *French Language Education Review, 2013-2014, Provincial Report, French (English Program), Fall 2016*.

The Review has the following components:
- standardized questionnaires for schools and for school divisions
- divisional profiles, a Provincial Profile and a Provincial Report
- a provincial follow-up meeting between school divisions and the BEF to discuss the Provincial Report and initiatives to further enhance the full implementation of the French Immersion Program.

Survey Method

Two questionnaires were developed, one for the schools and one for the school divisions. All 105 French Immersion schools and all 22 school divisions that offered the French Immersion Program in Manitoba in 2013-2014 were requested to complete online questionnaires. In both questionnaires, questions were grouped into four key areas that support the full implementation of the French Immersion Program in Manitoba:

- Creating a French Immersion Setting
- Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience
- Educational Staff and Professional Learning
- Student Enrolment Trends

The summary table entitled *Full Implementation of the French Immersion Program* on page 8 summarizes the underlying philosophy of the Review by outlining the expected outcomes for students and the four key areas that support the full implementation of the Program.

Superintendents and principals from school divisions offering the French Immersion were invited to eight regional half-day orientation sessions. During these orientation sessions, the BEF explained the purpose and the process of the Review; presented an Administrative Guide that included divisional statistics (enrolment and percentage of instructional time), grant allocations, the school questionnaire, the divisional questionnaire, as well as an example of a divisional profile.

Following the sessions, an instructional email was sent to the superintendents and principals. It included a link to access their respective online questionnaires on the Fluid Surveys website. Schools and school divisions were given six weeks to complete their questionnaires and submit their responses electronically to the BEF. BEF personnel was available to assist schools and school divisions during this exercise.

To determine how successfully students achieved the outcomes of the Program, schools and divisions were asked to consider the following while responding to the questionnaires:

- Does our Immersion program allow students, including students with special needs, to achieve a high level of linguistic competency in both French and English?
- Are students proud of their linguistic competencies and do they have confidence in their ability to speak French in various public settings: small and large group discussions/presentations inside and outside the classroom as well as outside of school?
- Are students aware of their own cultural identity and are they open to other languages and cultures?
- Do students have the confidence and the interest to participate in activities in the Francophone community, here and elsewhere?
- Do students value the learning of languages as a key to global citizenship? Do they see themselves as lifelong language learners?

Survey Results

The responses from the 105 schools and the 22 school divisions were compiled and grouped into the four key areas that support the full implementation of the French Immersion Program. Certain schools or school divisions did not respond to every single question. Therefore, the number of responses does not always equal the total number of schools or divisions.

The data collected was compiled and presented in form of graphs, charts, tables or qualitative summaries. When appropriate, data from two questions was combined into one chart. For opened-ended questions, responses were treated in two different ways; some were coded and presented into chart forms, others were summarized into paragraphs.

FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM IN MANITOBA

A LINGUISTICALLY RICH EXPERIENCE
STUDENTS AS PROUD, ENGAGED, CONFIDENT, PLURILINGUAL GLOBAL CITIZENS

PROGRAM EXPECTED OUTCOMES - STUDENT PATHWAY

Develop language proficiency	Develop confidence in French language skills	Engage in learning and using French	Participate in the francophone community	Develop self identity as a plurilingual and lifelong language learner	Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie	Develop intercultural competencies

Key Area   Key Area   Key Area   Key Area

CREATING A FRENCH IMMERSION SETTING				VALIDATION OF STUDENTS' LINGUISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE				EDUCATIONAL STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING		STUDENT ENROLMENT TRENDS		
Intensive Exposure to the French Language	**Qualified Educational Staff and Personnel**	**A Linguistically Rich Environment**	**Inclusion and Appropriate Support for All Students**	**Focus on French Language Acquisition**	**Enriched School Environment**	**Impact on Student Learning**	**Valuing and Encouraging the Learning of Languages**	**Recruitment and Retention of Staff**	**Professional Learning**	**Visibility & Communication**	**Entry Points & Transition**	**Retention**
Sufficient % of instruction time in French K-12	Bilingual teaching personnel	Signage & visibility of the FI Program	EAL students	Encourage the use of the Integrated Approach (Integrating language & content instruction)	Classroom based activities to enrich learning in content areas	Incorporate Immersion program outcomes in all subject area	Develop student engagement & responsibility for language learning	Sufficient number of qualified candidates	All staff have an understanding of French Immersion philosophy and methodology	Public visibility of School Board support of the FI Program	Policy for entry points	Monitor enrolment and attrition rates; Procedure in place when students wish to leave the program
Sufficient number of FI credits at the SY level	Bilingual administration	French spoken by students & staff during non instructional time	Special needs students	Encourage ongoing development of French language & intercultural competencies	Classroom, school & community based opportunities for authentic French use through cultural, social, citizenship and transition experiences	Incorporate Immersion program outcomes in school & extracurricular activities	Develop students' bilingual identity as lifelong learners and speakers	Hiring practices verify appropriate qualifications of teachers	Professional learning opportunities are provided in French for all subject areas	Public access to FI Program information (websites, brochures, etc.)	School visits and information sessions for students and parents at transition points	Appropriate supports are in place when students struggle academically
Phys. Ed., music, arts, library services offered in French	Bilingual support staff	Presence of French language in various activities and throughout the school	First nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) students	Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their language proficiency (metacognition)			Guide parents to support and validate their child's bilingual experience	Support for new and experienced teachers	Professional learning opportunities on topics pertinent to the FI Program are offered to FI personnel	Communicate pertinent information about FI Program to K-12 parents	Student reflection & conversations about their FI experience	Address parental concerns about their child's success in French Immersion
		Discussion of the FI Program at meetings					Highlight student achievement and abilities in French	Hiring practices verify appropriate qualifications of administrators		The FI Program is discussed at various divisional meetings	Interactions with FI students from feeder schools	SY timetable accommodates accessibility to a variety of courses in French
		Appropriate French resources for classrooms, libraries, etc.						Support for new and experienced administrators in the FI Program		Pre-school connections	Schools have sufficient space and resources to meet enrolment demands	Address student engagement and motivation to learn French
												Monitor the number of FI diploma graduates

Provincial Report

2013-2014

Section 1

Creating a French Immersion Setting

Section 1 provides data regarding the creation of a French Immersion setting in schools and school divisions offering the French Immersion Program across Manitoba.

A French Immersion school is the first and often the only space where students interact in French. The setting created in French Immersion schools becomes the primary condition or the foundation that allows for full implementation of the French Immersion Program where the entire school community supports and validates students' language acquisition. The visibility of French increases opportunities to use the French language throughout the school and engages students by exposing them to a rich linguistic environment giving them purpose and motivation to further acquire the French language.

While completing Section 1, schools and school divisions were asked to consider the following factors to determine the state of their current setting:
- intensive exposure to French language and culture
- qualified educational staff and personnel
- a linguistically rich and inclusive environment
- varied educational resources
- appropriate supports for all students

French Immersion Curriculum Policy

In September 1996, the Department of Education introduced a provincial *Curriculum Policy for the French Immersion Program* which has been revised in February 1999 and July 2008. The goal of the policy is to offer guidelines that establish a strong foundation for planning, implementation, and maintenance of the French Immersion Program.

With regards to the current policy, the first question included in the divisional questionnaire was to ascertain to what extent school divisions had developed their own French Immersion Program policy.

Chart 1 presents school divisions having a policy for the French Immersion Program.

Chart 1: School divisions having a French Immersion Program Policy
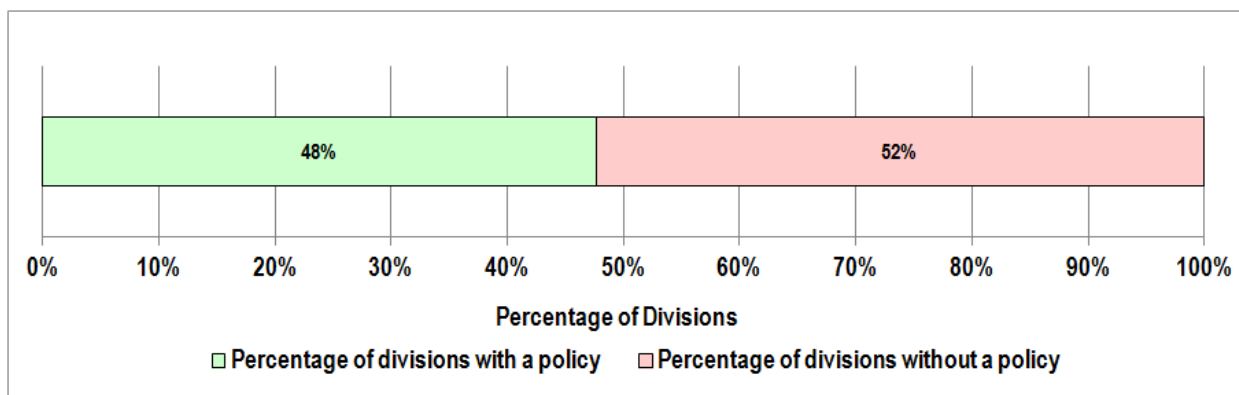
The data indicates that 48% of school divisions have their own divisional policy for the French Immersion Program. Due to the lack of a divisional policy in 52% of the school divisions, it would be interesting to examine if there exists a relationship or impact between having a divisional policy and the degree to which the French Immersion Program is fully implemented in schools.

Intensive Exposure to the French Language

The provincial French Immersion Curriculum Policy clearly states the intensity of instruction required in the French language at each grade level from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

The policy recommends the minimum percentage of French instruction time by grade as follows:

- K (100% of the time)
- Grades 1-6 (75% of the time)
- Grades 7-12 (50% of the time)

Upon receiving the questionnaire, schools were presented with their own detailed data on the actual intensity of French language instruction by grade level. School divisions also received the corresponding information relating to each of their schools.

Since most schools in the province follow the recommended percentages of instruction time by grade level, the subsequent question was included to ascertain if the schools themselves perceived the intensity of French instruction to be sufficient in order to establish an immersion setting at all grade levels.

In reference to the percentage of French instruction time, Charts 2 and 4 indicate the schools' and school divisions' perception regarding the sufficiency of time offered respectively, while Chart 3 presents the main factors influencing the schools' intensity of instructional time.

Chart 2: Number of **schools** indicating that the percentage of French instruction time (intensity) offered in their school was sufficient (yes) or insufficient (no) to create an immersion setting by grade level
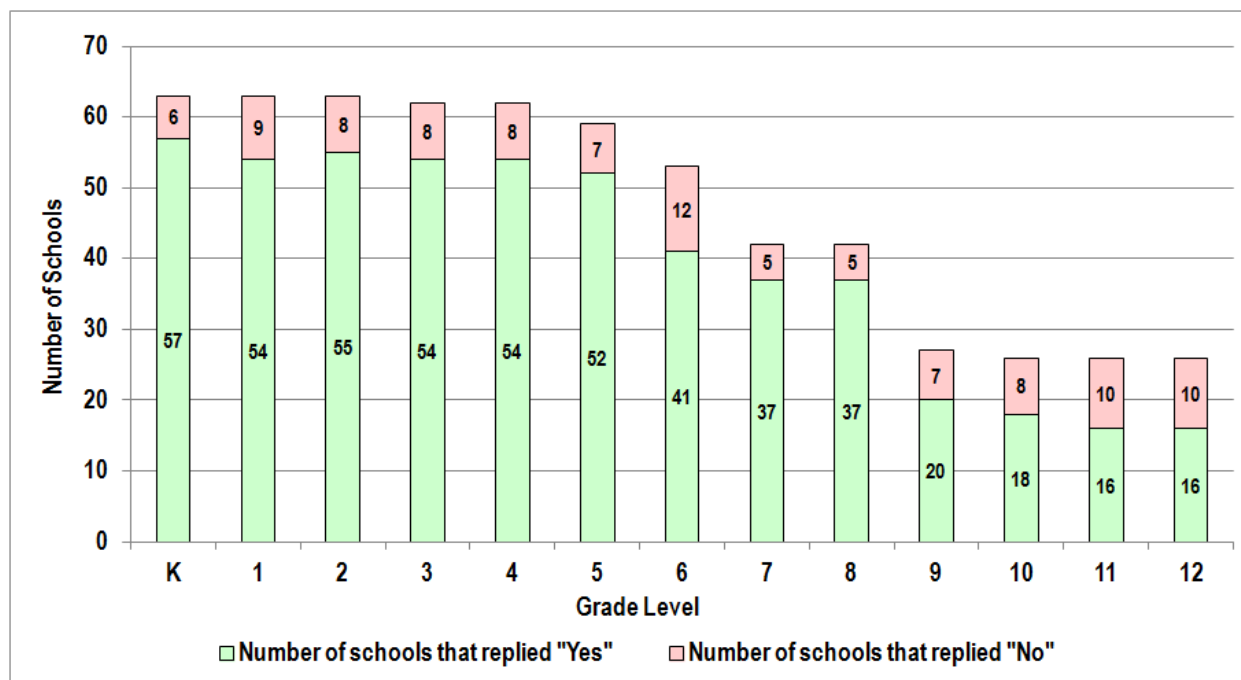

When considering data from Chart 2, the relative height of each bar reflects the number of schools offering French Immersion at a particular level.

Taking this into account, the data reveals that schools are generally satisfied with this result and think that the intensity of French instruction offered is sufficient to create an immersion setting. For grades K to 8 the level of satisfaction varies from 77.4% in Grade 6 to 90.5% in Kindergarten. While in Senior Years, the level of satisfaction is slightly lower, the percentage ranging from 69.2% in Grades 10 to 12 to 74.1% in Grade 9.

Chart 3 depicts the responses that were provided as optional comments in relation to the schools' intensity of instructional time.

Chart 3: Main factors influencing the intensity of instructional time in French showing the frequency of responses
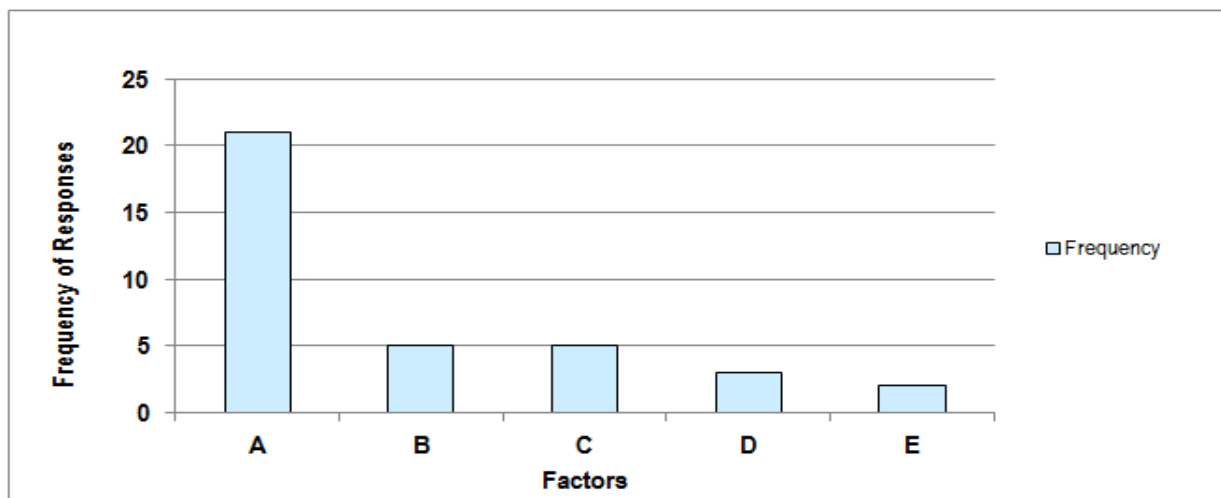
A - Schools cannot offer all courses in French due to staffing (Physical Education, Music, Arts, Library)

B - Schools have extended Grade 1 French Instructional time to 100%

C - Senior Years schools offer a limited number of courses in French

D - Schools offering junior Kindergarten/preschool/nursery in French

E - Divisional or school policy requires more than 14 credits for the Provincial French Immersion Diploma at the Senior Years

The data reveals that the most important identified factor, 58% of responses for factor 'A', is the difficulty with teacher recruitment and the hiring of specialists who can teach ancillary subjects in French such as Arts, Music, and Physical Education. The lack of satisfaction in the Senior Years with regards to intensity is due to the limited number of courses offered, 20% of responses for factors 'C' and 'E'. In addition, 22% of responses, factors 'B' and 'D', indicate that some Early Years schools are increasing their intensity of French instruction and some schools also adding preschool education in French.

As most school divisions follow the recommended percentages of instruction time by grade level, the following question was included to ascertain if school divisions perceived the intensity of French instruction time offered in their schools to be sufficient in order to establish an immersion setting at all grade levels.

Chart 4: Number of **school divisions** indicating that the percentage of French instruction time (intensity) offered in their division was sufficient (yes) or insufficient (no) to create an immersion setting by grade level
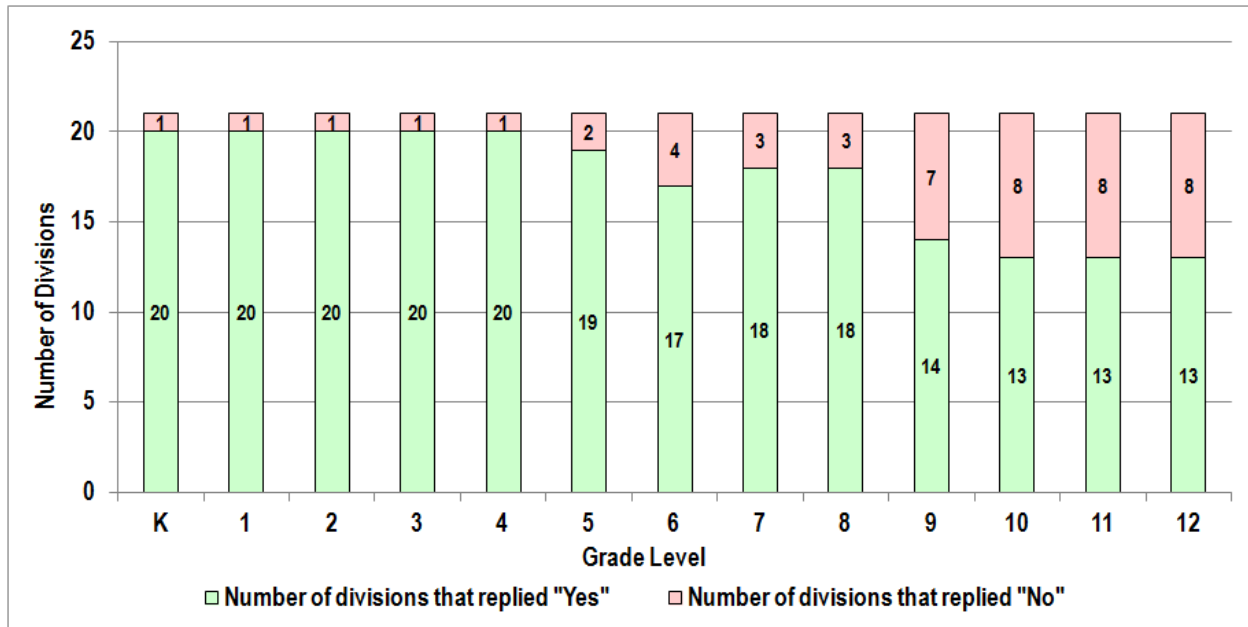
The data revealed that 20 of the 21 responding school divisions, over 95%, indicated that the intensity of French instruction offered in Early Years (Grades K-4) was sufficient to create a proper immersion setting. In Middle Years (Grades 5-8), the number remained relatively high, between 17 and 19 of 21 responding school divisions, (81% and 91%), but with a slight decrease. The number dropped at the Senior Years level (Grades 9-12), between 13 or 14 of the 21 responding school divisions (62% to 67%).

The school division results are therefore similar to the school results in relation to the Middle Years levels where it becomes more difficult to secure specialist teachers who are able to teach subjects such as Arts, Music, Physical Education, Home Economics and Industrial Arts in French. In addition, at the Senior Years level, rural and remote high schools with low immersion enrolments have difficulty offering more than a few courses in French.

Graduates from the French Immersion Program

Senior Years schools with a high intensity of French instruction impact the number of French Immersion students graduating with a Province of Manitoba French Immersion Diploma. To obtain this diploma, students must have successfully completed a minimum of 14 credits in French from the required total of 30 credits.

Based on enrolment data collected over the years, the Department can infer that, province-wide, approximately 50% of the students who enrolled in Kindergarten 13 years earlier continued on to Grade 12. Presently the Department holds no reliable information with respect to the number of French Immersion students graduating with a French Immersion Diploma.

The School Questionnaire provided a means to collect the number of French Immersion graduates who received a French Immersion Diploma. Twenty-six high schools answered and reported 856 graduates as of June, 2014.

Chart 5 presents the number of French Immersion graduates (with a French Immersion Diploma) as of June 30th, 2014 by region and school track in comparison with Grade 12 enrolments as of September 30th, 2013.

Chart 5: French Immersion Graduates with a Province of Manitoba French Immersion Diploma as Compared to Grade 12 French Immersion Enrolments by Region and Track (as of June 2014)

Regional Grouping		Single Track	Dual Track	Total
Urban	Graduates	313	441	754
	Enrolled	328	476	**804**
	% of Graduates	**95.4%**	**92.6%**	93.8%
Rural	Graduates	7	80	87
	Enrolled	14	87	**101**
	% of Graduates	**50.0%**	**92.0%**	86.1%
North*	Graduates	0	15	15
	Enrolled	0	32	**32**
	% of Graduates	----	**46.9%**	46.9%
Total	Graduates	320	536	856
	Enrolled	342	595	937
	% of Graduates	**93.6%**	**90.0%**	**91.4%**

* North includes the following school divisions: Mountain View, Swan Valley, Kelsey, Flin Flon and Mystery Lake.

The data indicates that the overall graduation rate in the French Immersion Program is 91.4%. The majority of graduates come from urban high schools (754), followed by rural areas (87) and northern areas (15). These numbers reflect the same orders of magnitude as actual enrolments.

When comparing the number of French Immersion graduates to French Immersion Grade 12 enrolments in urban high schools, single track French Immersion high schools have a slightly higher graduation rate as compared to dual track high schools, 95.4% compared to 92.6%.

In northern areas, there are no single track French Immersion high schools and slightly less than half (47%) of those enrolled in Grade 12 French Immersion graduate with a French Immersion Diploma. Even though the number of graduates with a French Immersion Diploma (15) may seem low, it should be noted that these students are the first French Immersion graduates from the North. This recent success is due in great part to the *Collabaunord* project between northern school divisions and the BEF who worked together to increase the number of courses offered in French in these high schools.

Qualified Educational Staff and Personnel

Since teachers have a considerable influence on the overall success of French Immersion, staffing remains one of the most important responsibilities of administrators. The creation of a French Immersion setting in a school requires students to be exposed to the French language by French-speaking personnel through relevant, authentic and varied situations.

Therefore, the following question was asked in order to ascertain the number of French-speaking personnel by staff position in schools which is represented in Chart 6.

Chart 6: Bilingual (English/French) staff in your school by position, school year 2013-2014*
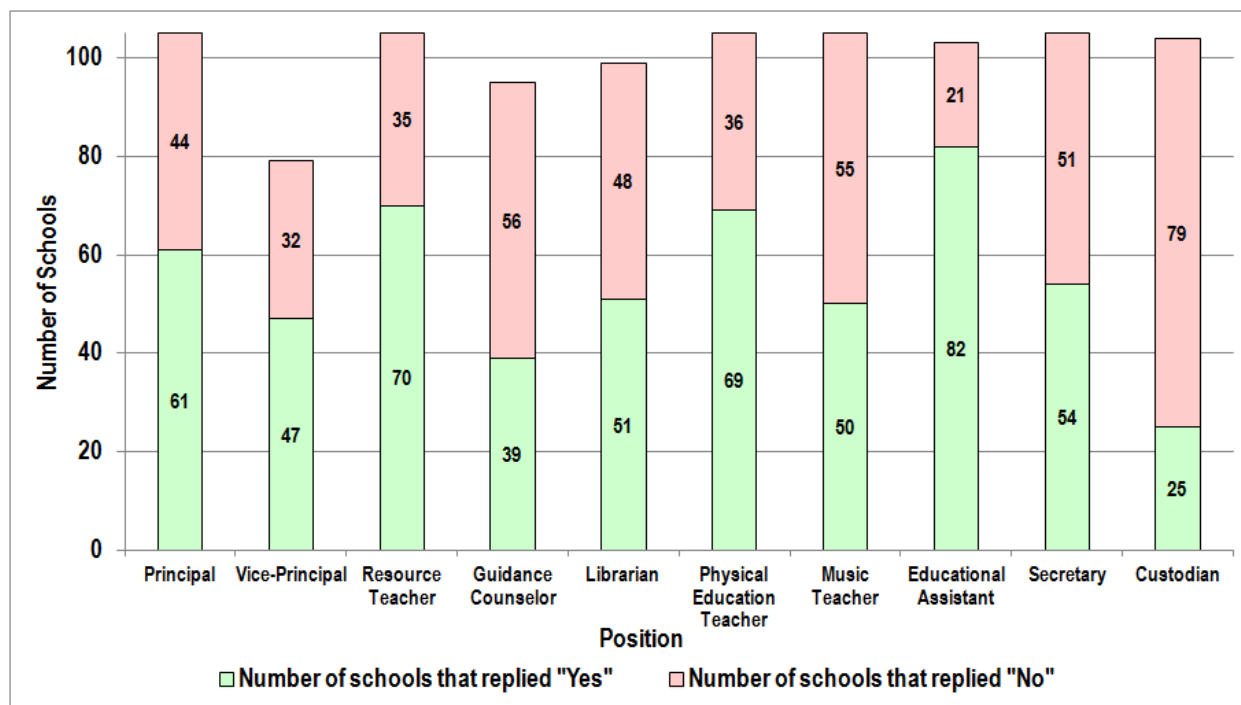
* **Please note that Chart 6 assumes one staff person per position for all positions except Educational Assistant where a school may have more than one. Also, it is important to note that not all schools have a Vice-Principal.**

The data reveals that across all schools offering the French Immersion Program, the following positions have over 50% bilingual (English/French) staff: Educational Assistant (80%), Resource Teacher (67%), Physical Education Teacher (67%),Vice-Principal (59%) [based solely on schools having a Vice-principal], Principal (58%), Secretary (52%), Librarian (51%). However, the following positions have less than half of their respective school staff as bilingual: Music Teacher (48%), Guidance Counsellor (41%), Custodian (24%).

A first analysis of Chart 6 seems to indicate that the number of positions with a satisfactory proportion (over 50%) of bilingual staff is high. However, when comparing the proportion of bilingual staff by position between single track schools and dual track schools, as analysed in Charts 6-A and 6-B, a different portrait is revealed.

Actual numbers for the 2013-2014 school year indicate that there was a total of 105 schools offering the French Immersion Program of which 37 were single track and 68 dual track. Responses in Charts 6-A and 6-B have been separated into single and dual track schools respectively.

Chart 6-A: Bilingual (English/French) staff in **single track schools** by position, school year 2013-2014
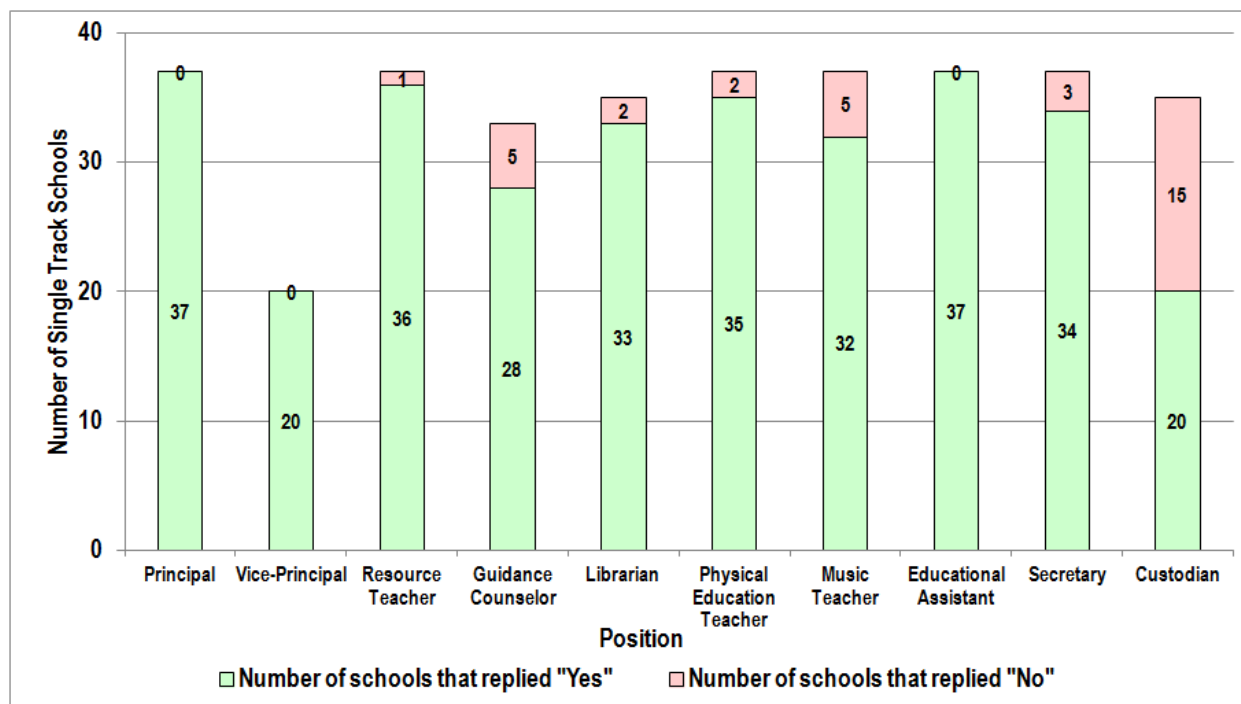

 * **Please note that Chart 6-A assumes one staff person per position for all positions except Educational Assistant where a school may have more than one. Also, it is important to note that not all schools have a Vice-Principal.**

The data from Chart 6-A demonstrates that across all 37 French Immersion **single track schools** the positions of Principal, Vice-Principal and Educational Assistant were identified as being completely bilingual. The positions of Resource Teacher, Librarian, Physical Education Teacher and Secretary were identified by 1 to 3 single track French Immersion schools as not having bilingual personnel.

Furthermore, Guidance Counselor and Music teacher positions were identified by 5 single track French Immersion schools as not having bilingual staff thus possibly indicating some challenges in hiring in these positions. The role of Custodian was the only position that had a low percentage of bilingual personnel even in single track French Immersion schools; possibly reflecting hiring challenges or a lesser interest in having a Custodian as a bilingual staff member.

In summary, there is a very high number of French Immersion single-track schools reporting that their staff is bilingual in all positions except for custodial staff.

Chart 6-B: Bilingual (English/French) staff in **dual track schools** by position, school year 2013-2014*
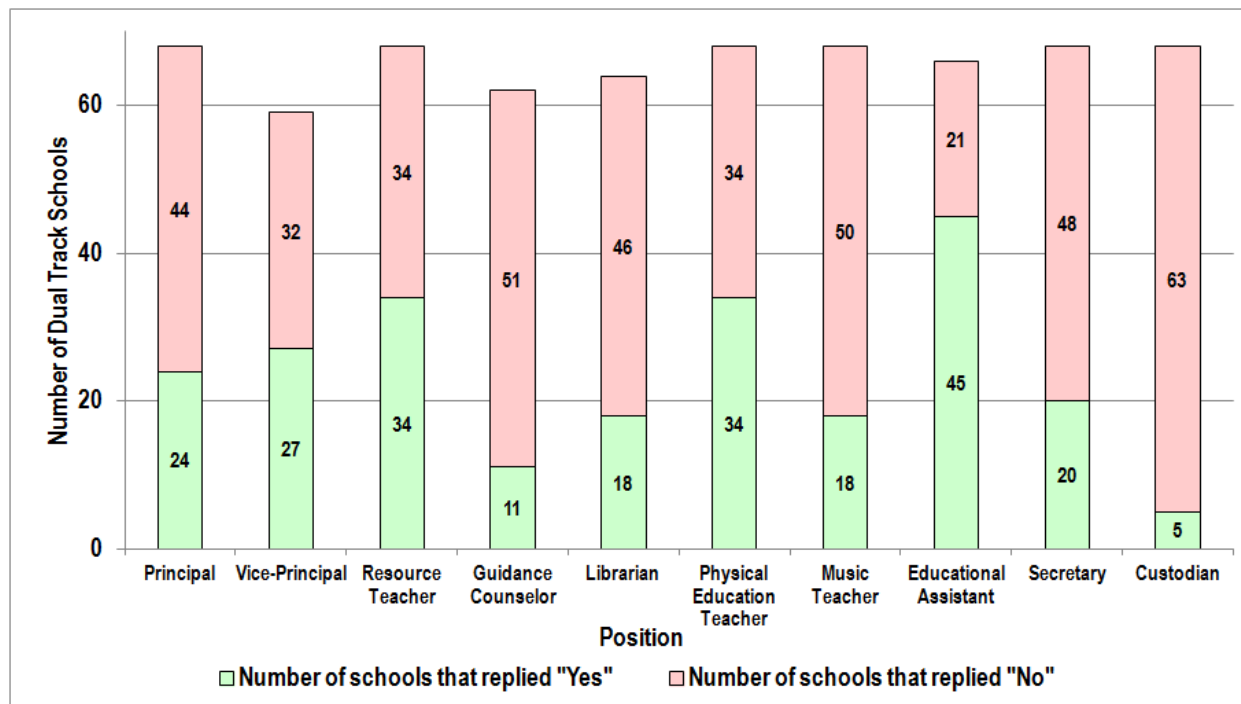

* Please note that Chart 6-B assumes one staff person per position for all positions except Educational Assistant where a school may have more than one. Also, it is important to note that not all schools have a Vice-Principal.

Chart 6-B immediately reveals that a smaller percentage of staff in the 68 **dual track schools** is bilingual. The data demonstrates that only three positions had more than 50% of their staff as bilingual: Resource Teacher (51%), Physical Education Teacher (51%), and Educational Assistant (69%). The remaining seven positions have less than half of their respective schools' staff as bilingual; Vice-Principal (46%) [based solely on schools with a Vice-Principal], Principal (36%), Secretary (30%), Librarian (29%), Music Teacher (28%), Guidance Counselor (19%), Custodian (7%).

Considering that the percentage of bilingual personnel by staff position in dual track schools is less than 50% in 7 of the 10 position groupings, increasing the number and percentage of bilingual personnel by staff position in dual-track schools would increase student exposure to the French language and contribute to the creation of a richer French Immersion setting.

A Linguistically Rich School Environment

A rich linguistic environment is vital to language acquisition and requires a certain public visibility of the French language both inside and outside of the school. Students learn the French language by being immersed in that language, and; this can be accomplished in part through the creation of a strong French Immersion setting.

The subsequent three questions were asked to determine the overall visibility and use of the French language inside and outside schools. These questions were included as a means of confirming the areas that require additional attention in order to create a basis for which schools can continue to improve their French environment.

Chart 7 reveals the schools' perception regarding the presence of French signage in various areas of the school.

Chart 7: Number of schools reporting to have French signage by School Area
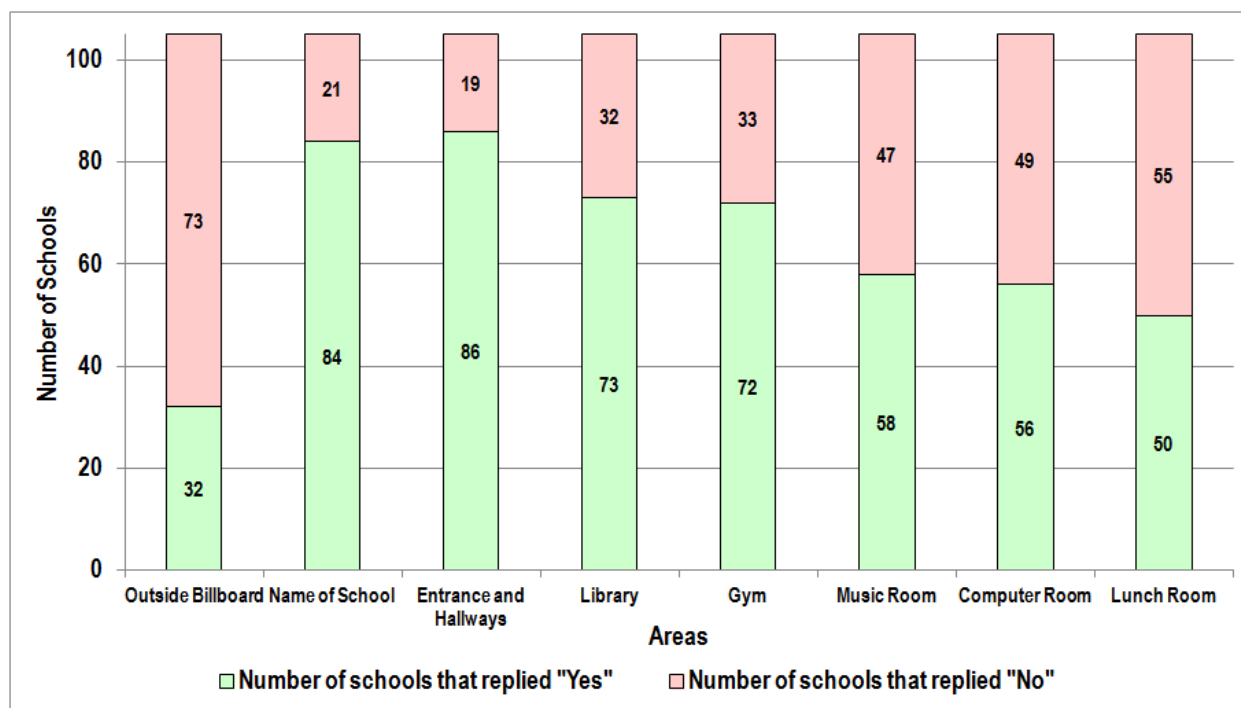
Across all schools offering the French Immersion Program, the data reveals that a fairly low percentage of schools have French signage in the following areas: *Outside Billboard* (31%), *Lunch Room* (48%), *Computer Room* (53%), and *Music Room* (55%), while a fairly high percentage of schools have French signage in these areas: *Name of school* (80%), *Entrance and Hallways* (82%), *Library* (70%) and *Gym* (69%).

Given these results, it is evident that a number of school areas require more French-language visibility to firmly establish a rich French environment.

Chart 8 presents the schools' perception in respect to the amount of French usage by students during non-instructional time. The scale used for this estimation included the following choices: *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often,* and *Always*, indicating the percentage of schools in each category of French usage, by school area. For the purpose of this analysis, the indicator of success has been identified as the sum of *Often* and *Always*.

Chart 8: The amount of French usage by students during non-instructional time showing the percentage of schools in each category of French usage, by school area.
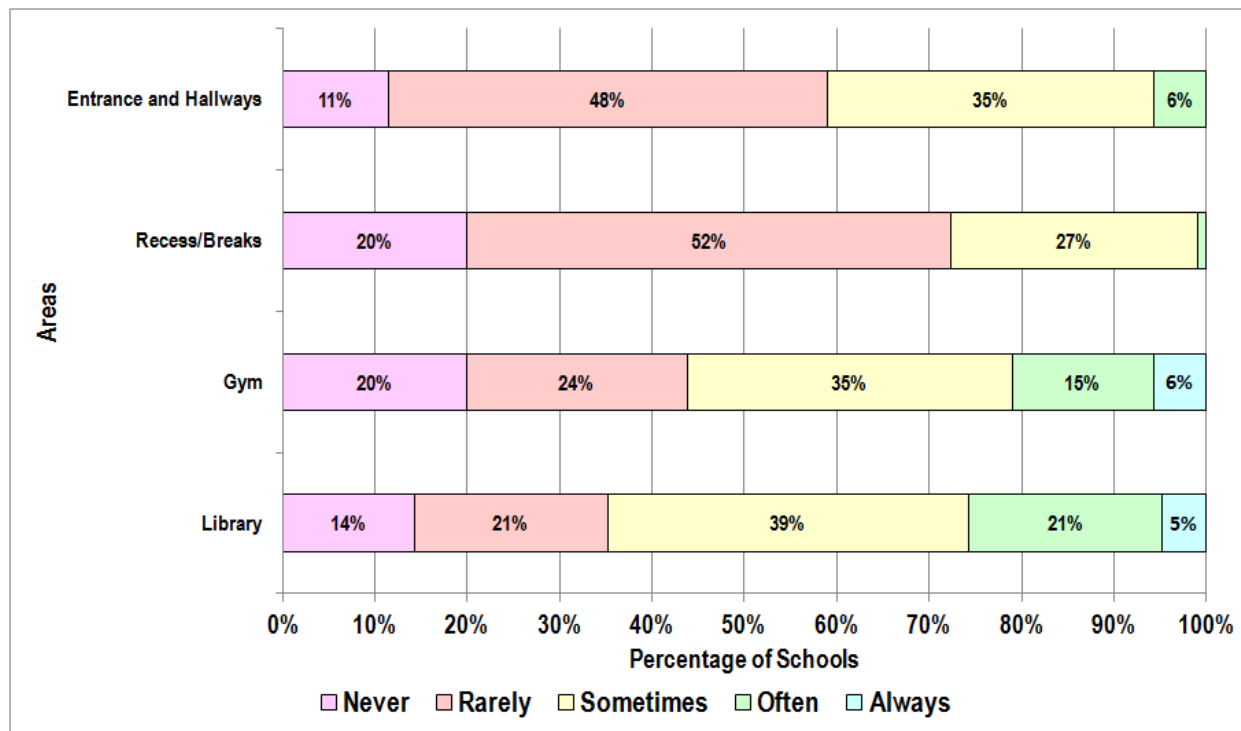
The data reveals that very few schools report students speaking French during non-instructional time in all areas: *Library* (26%), *Gym* (21%), *Entrance and Hallways* (6%) and *Recess/Breaks* (1%). Taking this into account, all four identified school areas require additional attention in order to increase the level of usage of French among students, which is conducive to creating a more intensive French setting.

Chart 9 reveals the schools' perception regarding the frequency of French presence/usage in certain school areas or school situations. The scale used for this estimation included the following choices: *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often,* and *Always*, indicating the percentage of schools in each category of French usage, by school activity or school area. For the purpose of this analysis, the indicator of success has been identified as the sum of *Often* and *Always*.

Please note that in appendix 5 of the Administrator's Guide a specific example relating to goal setting was provided on how to address this particular issue.

Chart 9: The presence of French in certain school areas or situations, showing the percentage of schools in each category related to the degree of French presence, by school area / situation
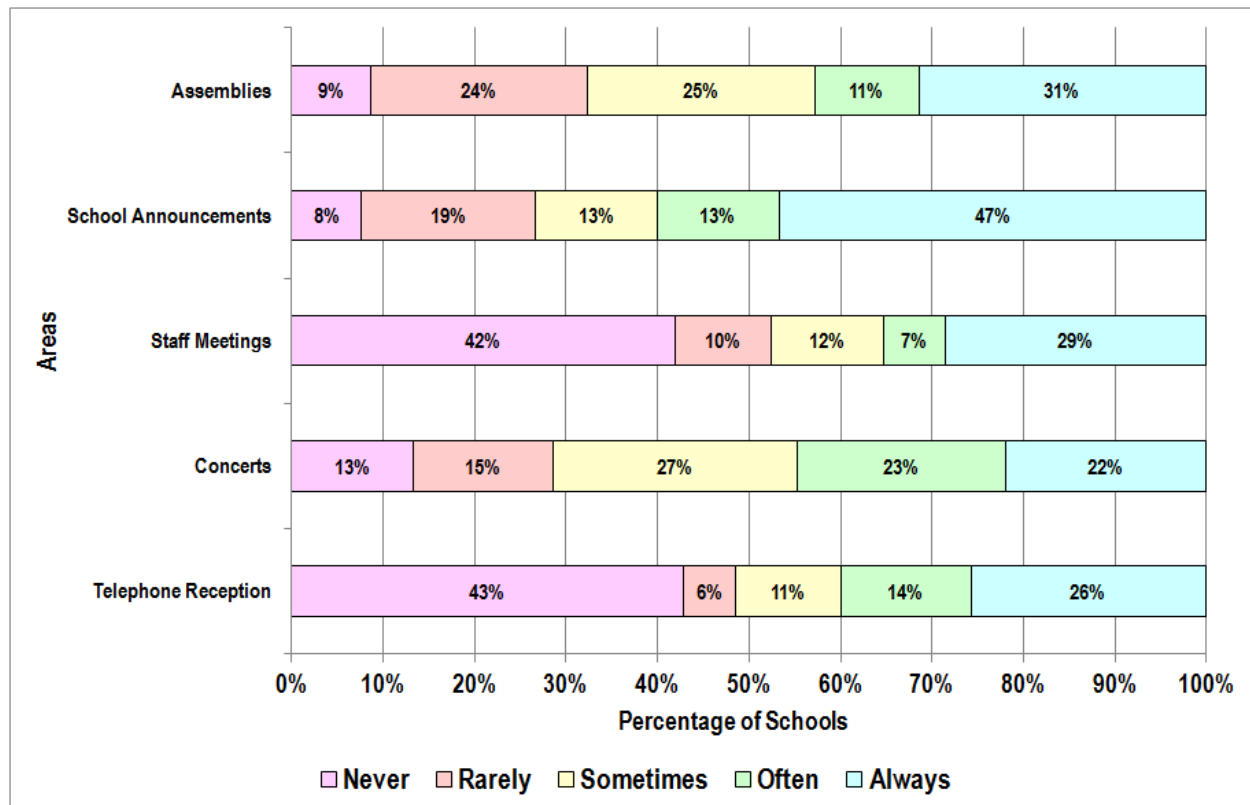
The data reveals that the presence of French is less than 50% in all identified areas or situations except one: *School Announcements* (60%), *Concerts* (45%), *Assemblies* (42%), *Telephone Reception* (40%), and *Staff Meetings* (36%). Taking this into account, all five identified school areas or situations require additional attention in order to increase the level of usage or presence of French, which is conducive to creating a more intensive French setting.

As previously stated, a French Immersion setting requires a certain public visibility of French inside and outside the school and includes educators, parents, and all other stakeholders. Therefore, at various school and school division meetings, the French Immersion Program should become part of the agenda.

Charts 10 and 11 were included to ascertain the degree to which the French Immersion Program is discussed and to what extent it is valued and fully included in various meetings at the school and divisional levels.

Chart 10 reveals the schools' perception regarding the frequency that the French Immersion Program is mentioned as a discussion point during certain school meetings. The scale used for this estimation included the following choices *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often,* and *Always* indicating the percentage of schools in each category, by type of school meeting. For the purpose of this analysis, the indicator of success has been identified as the sum of *Often* and *Always.*

Chart 10: Frequency the French Immersion Program was a discussion point in school meetings, showing the percentage of **schools** in each category related to the degree of the mention of the French Immersion Program, by type of **school meeting**
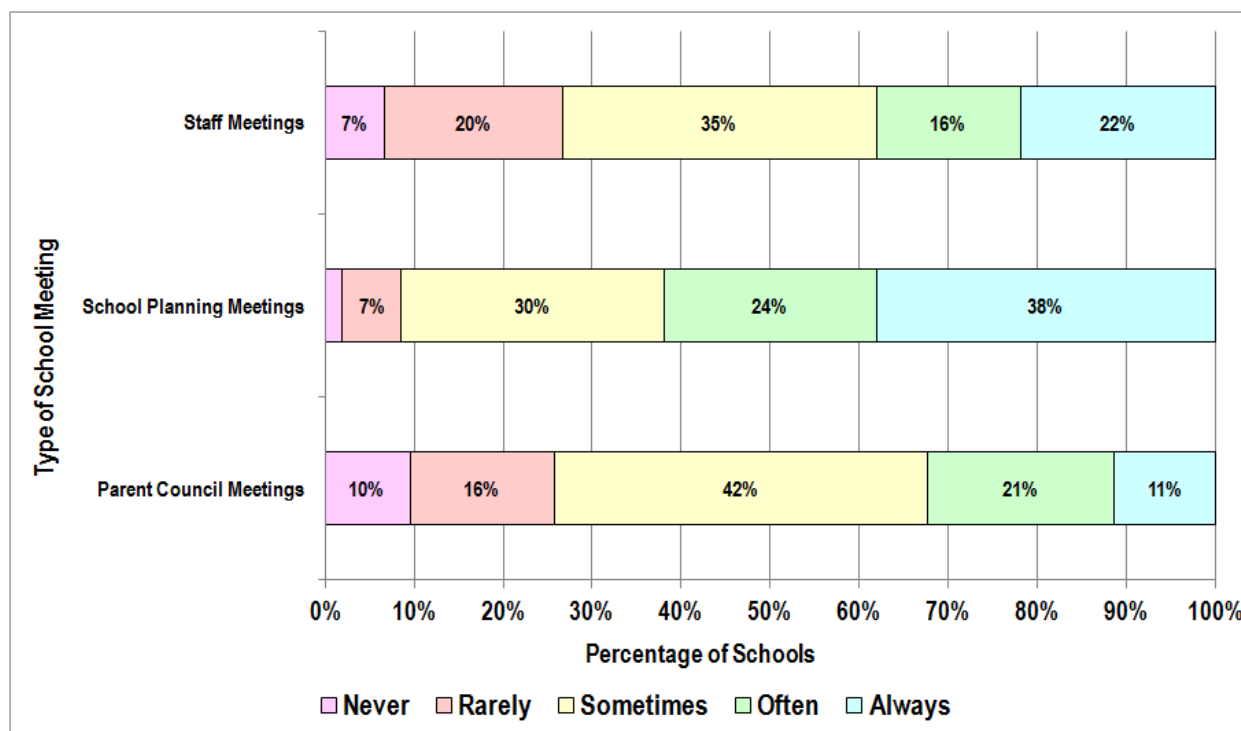
The data reveals that 62% of schools discussed the French Immersion Program in *School Planning Meetings*, as compared to 38% in *Staff Meetings* and 32% in *Parent Council Meetings*. As a result, all three identified types of school meetings require additional attention in order to increase the level of visibility of the French Immersion Program, which is conducive in creating a more intensive French setting.

Similarly, at the school division level, Chart 11 reveals the school divisions' perception regarding the frequency that the French Immersion Program is discussed during various divisional meetings. The scale used for this estimation included the following choices *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often,* and *Always*, indicating the percentage of school divisions in each category, by type of divisional meeting. For the purpose of this analysis, the indicator of success has been identified as the sum of *Often* and *Always.*
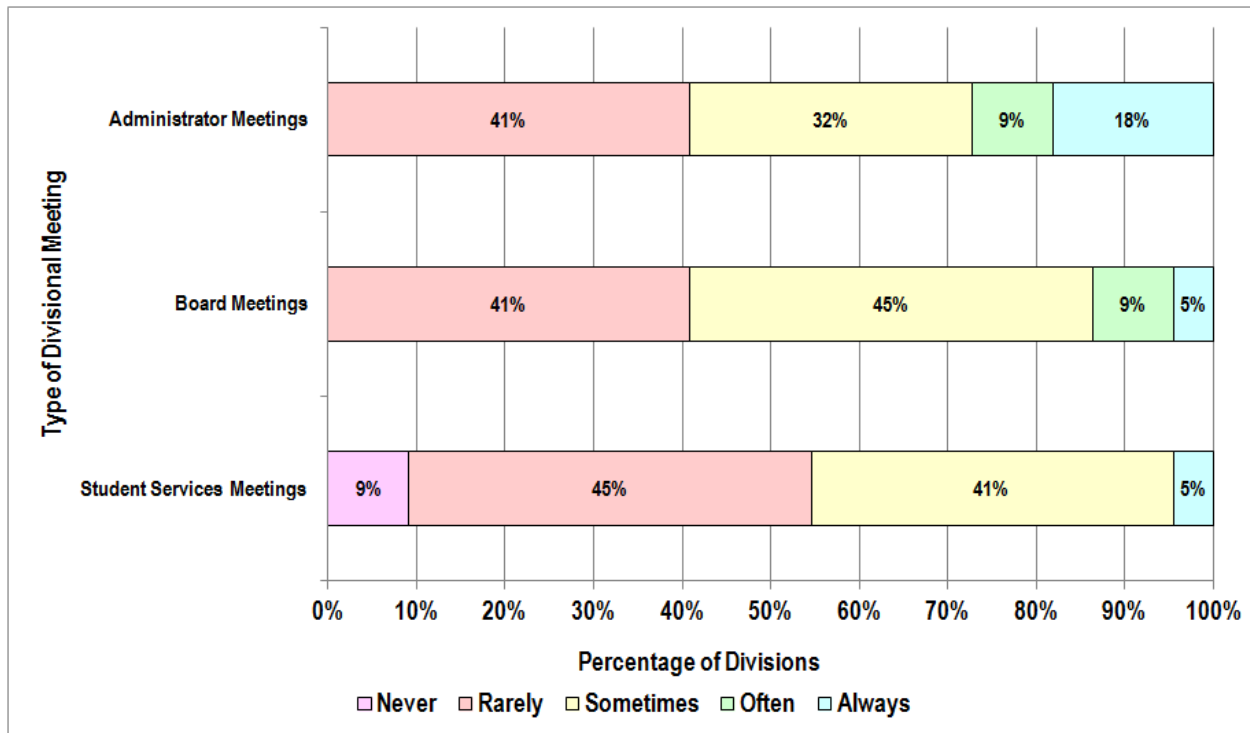
Chart 11: Frequency the French Immersion Program was a discussion point in meetings, showing the percentage of **school divisions** in each category related to the degree of the mention of the French Immersion Program, by type of **divisional meeting**

The data reveals that at the school division level, the discussion of the French Immersion Program is fairly low in all three types of meetings: *Administrator Meetings* (27%), *Board Meetings* (14%) and *Student Services Meetings* (5%). Taking this into account, all three identified types of school division meetings require additional attention in order to increase the level of visibility and address the needs of the French Immersion Program.

Inclusion and Appropriate Support for All Students

The success of the French Immersion Program requires that schools and school divisions provide adequate support services to all students. Students with special needs as well as those who are designated English as an Additional Language (EAL) have the same entitlement to be in the French Immersion Program as in any other Program in any public or funded independent school in Manitoba. Generally, such students will do as well in the French Immersion Program as they would do in any other Program provided they receive the appropriate supports. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members and the changing demographics of Canadian society. It is important to acknowledge that over the last 10 years, Manitoba has welcomed a large number of immigrants. Many of these newcomers have chosen to enrol their children in the French Immersion Program, thus increasing the need for additional support in classrooms.

Presently, the Department has no hard data as to the number of special needs and EAL students in the French Immersion Program. The subsequent two questions were included to ascertain the total student population requiring additional supports by grade level and to determine where across the province these students are found.

Chart 12 reveals the schools' responses regarding the number of EAL students enrolled in the French Immersion Program by grade level, while Chart 13 indicates the number of special needs students.

Chart 12: Number of English as an Additional Language (EAL) students in the French Immersion Program, by Grade Level
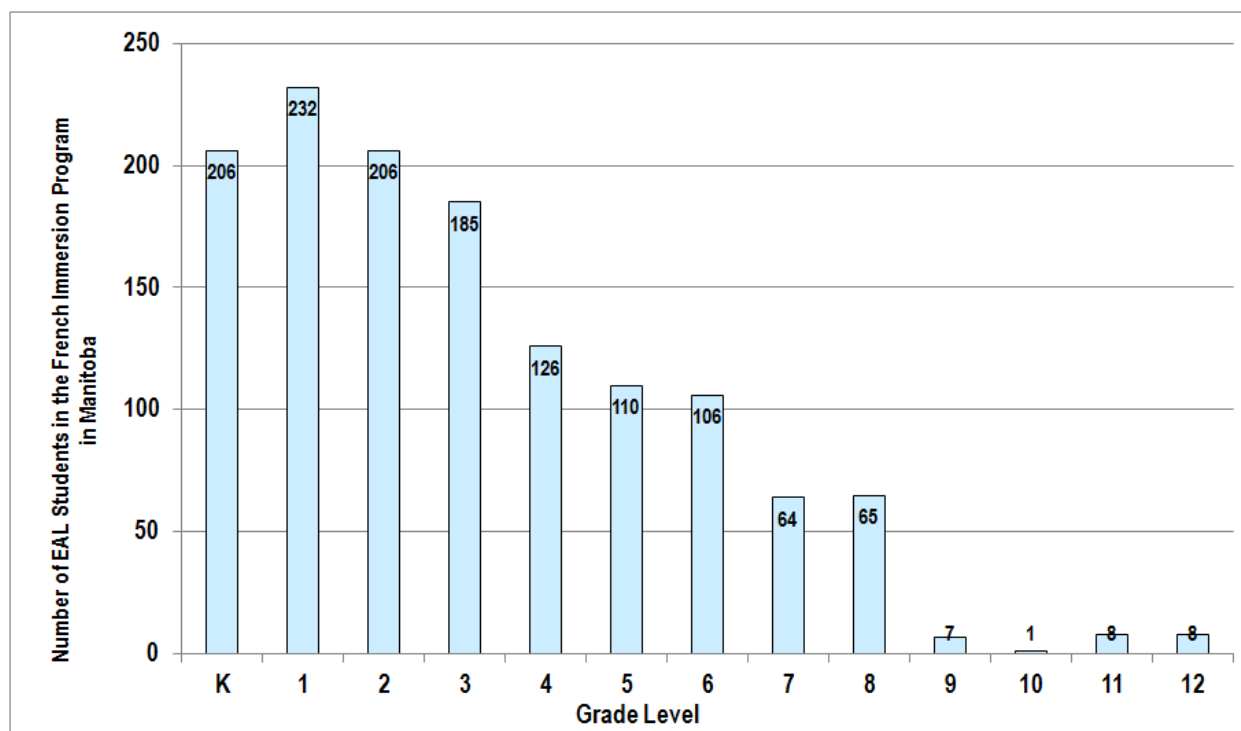
The data reveals that the largest numbers of EAL students are in Grades K-3 (829 students), followed by Grades 4-8 (471 students), while Grades 9-12 has smaller numbers (24 students). In total, this represents 1,324 students or 6% of Manitoba's total French Immersion enrolment. This data further emphasizes that a fully implemented French Immersion Program requires appropriate staff and supports for these newcomers so as to retain them in the French Immersion Program. Due to the decreasing numbers of EAL students from K to 12, it would be interesting to explore the various reasons for the reduction in the numbers of EAL students in later grades.

Chart 13: Number of Special Needs Students (funded or non-funded, but diagnosed) in the French Immersion Program, by Grade Level
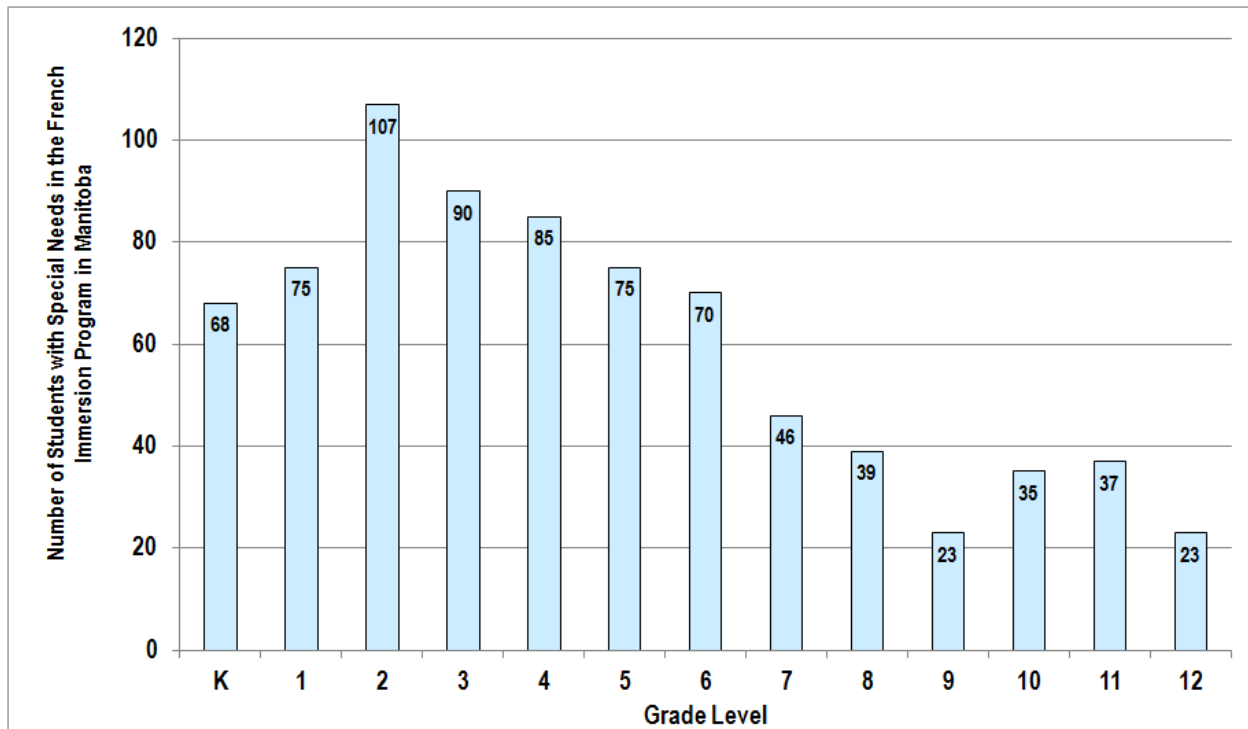
The data reveals that the largest numbers of special needs students in the French Immersion Program are in Grades K-6 with 570 students and an additional 203 in Grades 7-12. In total, this represents 773 students or 3.5% of the total French Immersion population. This data further emphasizes that a fully implemented French Immersion Program requires appropriate staff and supports for special needs students so as to retain them in the French Immersion Program. Due to the decreasing numbers of special needs students from K-12, it would be interesting to explore the various reasons behind the reduction in the numbers of special needs students in later grades.

Reflection on Creating a French Immersion Setting in Schools

Upon completion of Section 1 of the questionnaire, schools were asked to reflect on the extent to which they successfully created a French Immersion setting that:

- supports students in the development of their linguistic competencies
- validates students' French Immersion experience
- encourages students to become plurilingual members of society

This reflection included identifying successes achieved and challenges encountered in the creation of the French Immersion setting in their schools and are presented in Charts 14 and 15.

Schools were then asked to make an overall self-assessment with respect to creating a French Immersion setting. Hence, Chart 16 represents the schools' perspective regarding their degree of success in the creation of such a setting in their school.

Chart 14 presents the main factors identified as successes in creating a French Immersion setting, and shows the number of responses by factor.

Chart 14: Successes in the Creation of a French Immersion Setting Showing Frequency of Responses, by Success
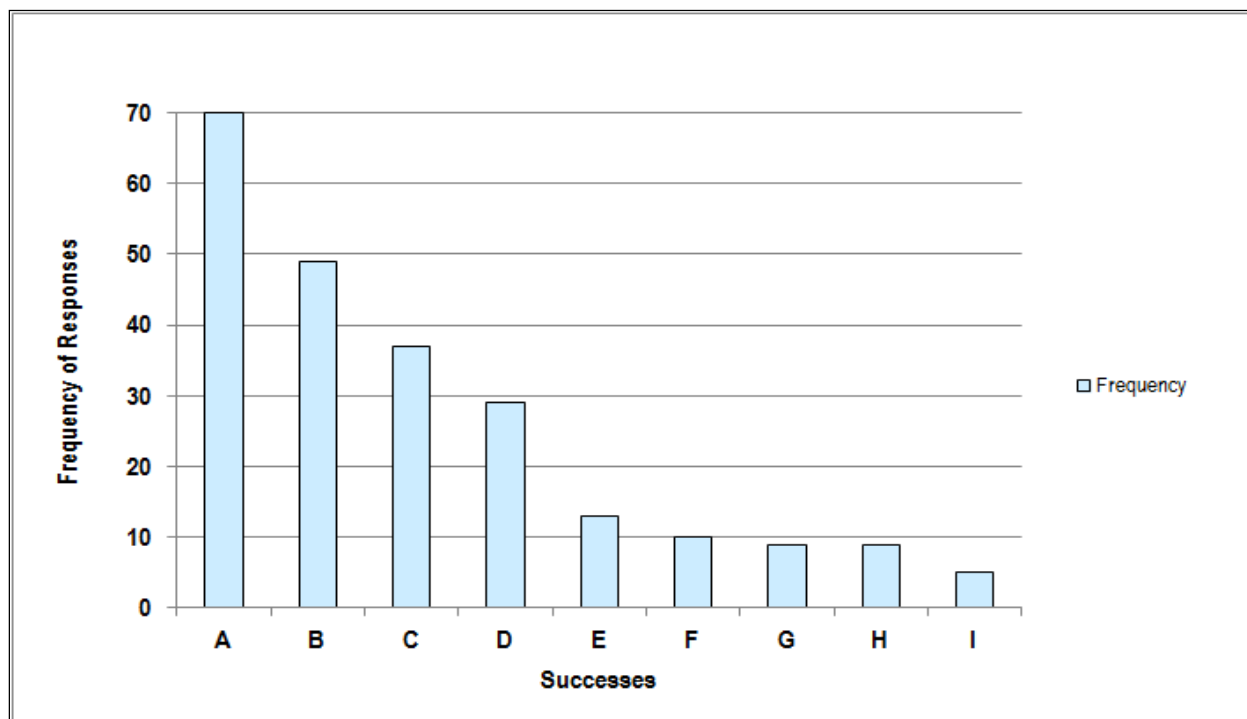
A - Presence of the French language in various school activities (cultural, partnerships, school based and extracurricular activities).

B - Visibility of French language in the school. (French posters, student work, announcements, assemblies, signage, website, instructional materials, Library resources, French computer keyboards)

C - Committed teachers that strive to speak French at all times, encouraging students to do the same.

D - Support staff speaks French

E - Staff collaboration

F - Students developing pride and confidence in their French language competencies

G - Incentive programs to speak French (inside and outside the classroom)

H - Supportive division (policies and guidelines regarding the French Immersion Program)

I - Seniors Years are able to offer enough credits for Province of Manitoba French Immersion Program Diploma

The data indicates that schools perceive their two main successes to be in the area of the *Presence of French in various school activities* (A – 70 responses) as well as the *Visibility of French in the school* (B – 49 responses). These successes address the creation of a supportive environment as well as a rich and varied French context for the development of students' linguistic competencies.

The *Presence of French in various school activities* has been identified as the main success. However, the data in Charts 8 and 9 reveal that very few students speak French during non-instructional time and that the presence of French is limited in various areas in the school. This discrepancy may be explained by several notions. Perhaps the examples provided in the successes primarily address structured activities and not activities that take place during non-instructional time. Also impacting this reality could be the differences at various grade levels and regional contexts. Additionally, the presence of French may be understood in varying degrees by the educational staff throughout schools. The presence of French in

various school activities needs to include students' usage of French in non-instructional time, which is an integral part of creating a setting.

The second success indicated is *Visibility of French in the school* (B – 49 responses). This success also addresses the creation of a supportive environment as well as a rich and varied French context for the development of students' linguistic competencies.

Other successes identified by fewer schools are that *Teachers* (C– 37 responses) and *Support staff* (D – 29 responses) *strive to speak French at all times*, thus modeling and encouraging students to do the same. The remaining successes in the chart should be taken into consideration and reflected upon as they are applicable to each school and divisional context.

Chart 15 presents the main factors identified by schools as challenges in creating a French Immersion setting, and shows the number of responses by factor.

Chart 15: Challenges in Creating a French Immersion Setting showing Frequency of Responses and the Cumulative Percentages
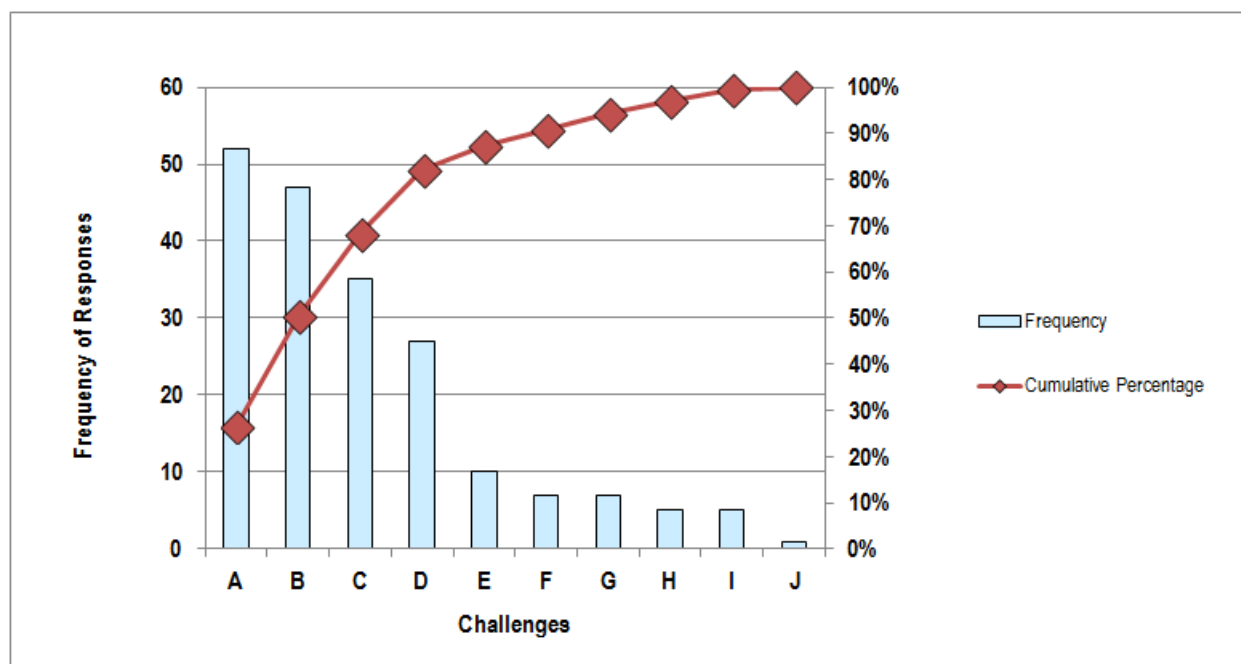
A - Lack of qualified bilingual staff (including teaching staff, support staff, substitute teachers)

B - Providing a linguistically rich French environment in a dual track setting while creating whole school community and belonging

C - Maintaining student interest and motivation to speak French

D - Educational resources are limited and more costly

E - Most enrichment / extracurricular activities are offered in English

F - Distance limits participation in French activities outside of school

G - Lack of understanding and/or support of the French Immersion Program by parents/community

H - Limited number of courses in French

I - Scheduling of the Seniors Years French and English courses in order to avoid timetabling conflicts

J - Lack of a common understanding of the French Immersion Program among staff

The challenges identified by the schools are presented in the Pareto chart above. The Pareto Principle states that by addressing the factors that cause 80% of the challenges, strategies developed may become more focussed and resources may be allocated more effectively. As a result, most if not all of

the remaining 20% of the challenges may also improve. The analysis of this data, focuses on the challenges that need the most attention, those that represent a cumulative value of 80%.

One can infer from the data that schools perceive their main challenges to be the *Lack of qualified bilingual staff* (A ‑ 52 responses) and *Providing a linguistically rich French environment in a dual track setting* (B – 47 responses).

Since schools and school divisions have little to do with the initial training of staff, their responsibility is to provide appropriate professional learning opportunities both linguistic and pedagogical in nature. Due to the fact that not all responding schools were dual track, the second challenge, *Providing a linguistically rich French environment in a dual track setting,* becomes more concerning when the data is broken down further. Such an analysis reveals that 47 of the 68 (almost 70%) dual track schools identified this factor as an issue. In reference to *Provision of a linguistically French environment in a dual track setting*, an effort should be made towards a common understanding among all school personnel of the goals of the French Immersion Program in order to create a favorable linguistic environment conducive to the success of both French Immersion and Français (English Program) students.

Maintaining students' interest and motivation to speak French (C – 35 responses) is another common challenge identified by schools; reiterating the importance of creating a favorable French Immersion setting and the concerted effort it takes by all staff to make this happen.

With respect to the availability of appropriate French resources (D – 27 responses), schools are encouraged to take full advantage of the resources available through the *Direction des ressources éducatives françaises* (DREF), the Department's French-language instructional materials branch. Schools and school divisions should develop different means of promoting the DREF's collection to teachers, in particular those who were not trained at the Faculty of Education of *l'Université de Saint-Boniface*.

The remaining 20% of challenges (E – J) in the chart should be taken into consideration and reflected upon by each school and school division according to their context.

The following chart indicates the extent to which schools perceived their level of success in creating a French Immersion setting in their school.

Chart 16: Percentage of schools indicating their level of success with respect to creating a French Immersion setting in their school
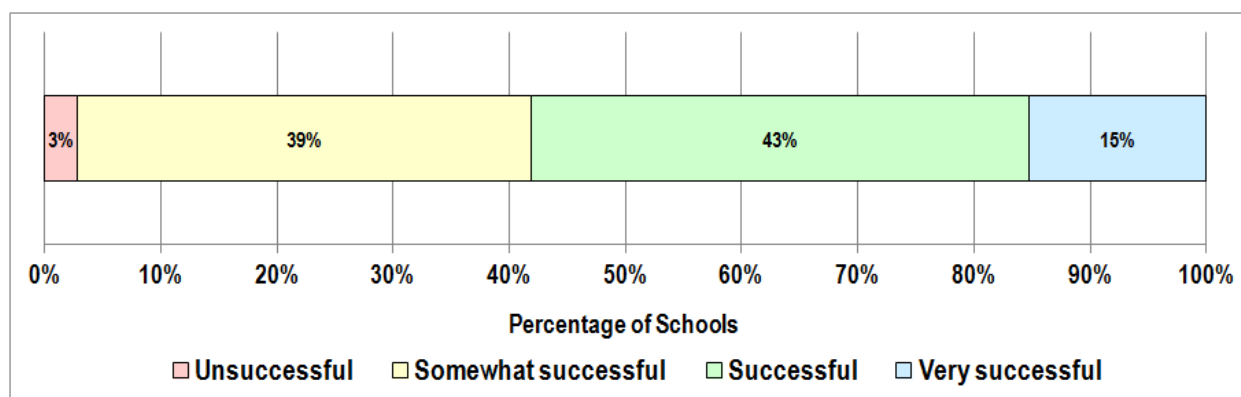
The data reveals that of the 105 schools, 58% perceived themselves as being either *Very successful* or *Successful* in creating a French Immersion setting, while 42% indicated they were either *Somewhat successful* or *Unsuccessful*. Although many schools feel they are providing a French Immersion setting for their students, it is nevertheless concerning that 3% of schools view themselves as being *Unsuccessful* and 39% as being *Somewhat successful*.

Given that the setting is the primary condition to ensure success for all students, a more concerted effort needs to be made to improve the French Immersion setting in most schools in Manitoba. Schools and schools divisions are encouraged to examine and evaluate the setting created in their schools and ask themselves whether or not all the necessary elements are in place to set the stage for student success.

A successful French Immersion setting would include all the necessary supports that encourage students to speak French throughout the school and that encourage continuous language development. These supports include having coherent policies and guidelines at both the school division and school levels as well as committed leaders that implement these policies and guidelines that provide a sense of direction and establish the importance of the setting as a prominent element of a French Immersion school. These supports further include a fully bilingual teaching and support staff that communicate in French, nurture students' language acquisition, thus encouraging student engagement and motivation, helping them develops pride and confidence in their French language competencies. The principal indicator of a successful French Immersion setting would then be that students are mainly speaking French in all areas of the school and that all necessary supports to encourage this are in place.

Section 2

Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience

Section 2 provides data regarding the validation of students' linguistic and educational experience in the French Immersion Program.

It is necessary that the immersion setting values and encourages students' experience by focusing on their pathway to becoming plurilingual. To build confidence, students need to strengthen their language proficiency in French through social, academic and cultural contexts, thus validating their linguistic experience.

Students therefore require multiple opportunities to use and reuse their language skills in a variety of different contexts in order to:

- develop their language competencies
- develop confidence
- become engaged learners
- validate their experience of language learning

While completing Section 2, schools and school divisions were asked to provide examples of opportunities inside and outside the classroom, enriching the French environment and academic learning for students.

Focus on Language Acquisition

An Immersion language program is first and foremost a language program where a school Program is delivered through a particular language of instruction.

After 40 years of French Immersion in Manitoba, students enrolled in the Program perform academically as well as their peers in other school Programs. However, it is evident that students need to develop their linguistic competencies in French more actively through all subject areas.

Therefore, all French Immersion teachers are responsible for the development of the French linguistic competencies of students while also delivering the content of curriculum in each subject area.

The subsequent two questions were included to ascertain if teachers are aware of and follow through on the dual task of teaching aspects of language, while teaching content, by focusing on strategies that strive to attain the expected outcomes in the French Immersion Program.

Charts 17 and 18 represent the schools' perspective regarding a focus on language acquisition.

Chart 17: Percentage of French Immersion schools where aspects of language are specifically taught by teachers while teaching course content
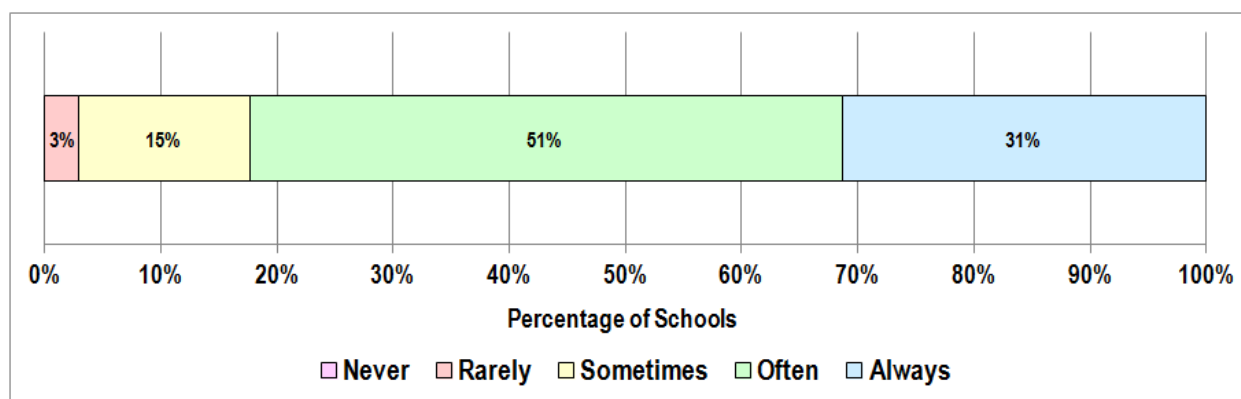
The data indicates that 82% of the 102 responding schools are *Often* or *Always* incorporating the teaching of language skills in course content while 18% indicate *Rarely* or *Never*.

At first glance, this data seems encouraging, however only 31% of schools indicated that their teachers *Always* focus on language acquisition in all subject areas. Given that the primary goal of the French Immersion Program is language development through content instruction, this should occur more consistently throughout all grade levels. Canadian research in French Immersion suggests that teachers believe they are attending to language development simply because French is the language of instruction. This idea that students are picking up all aspects of language by osmosis has proven to be false and a more systematic focus on language is necessary in order to improve students' language proficiency.

To address this need, a common understanding of pedagogical and assessment practices across the province is required. Educators from K-12 should be encouraged to participate in professional learning in relation to second language methodology and the integration of language in subject areas as well as assessment practices and tools that support this work.

Chart 18: Percentage of French Immersion schools where teachers, through the development of students' linguistic competencies, focus on attaining specific outcomes to validate students' French Immersion experience, by outcome
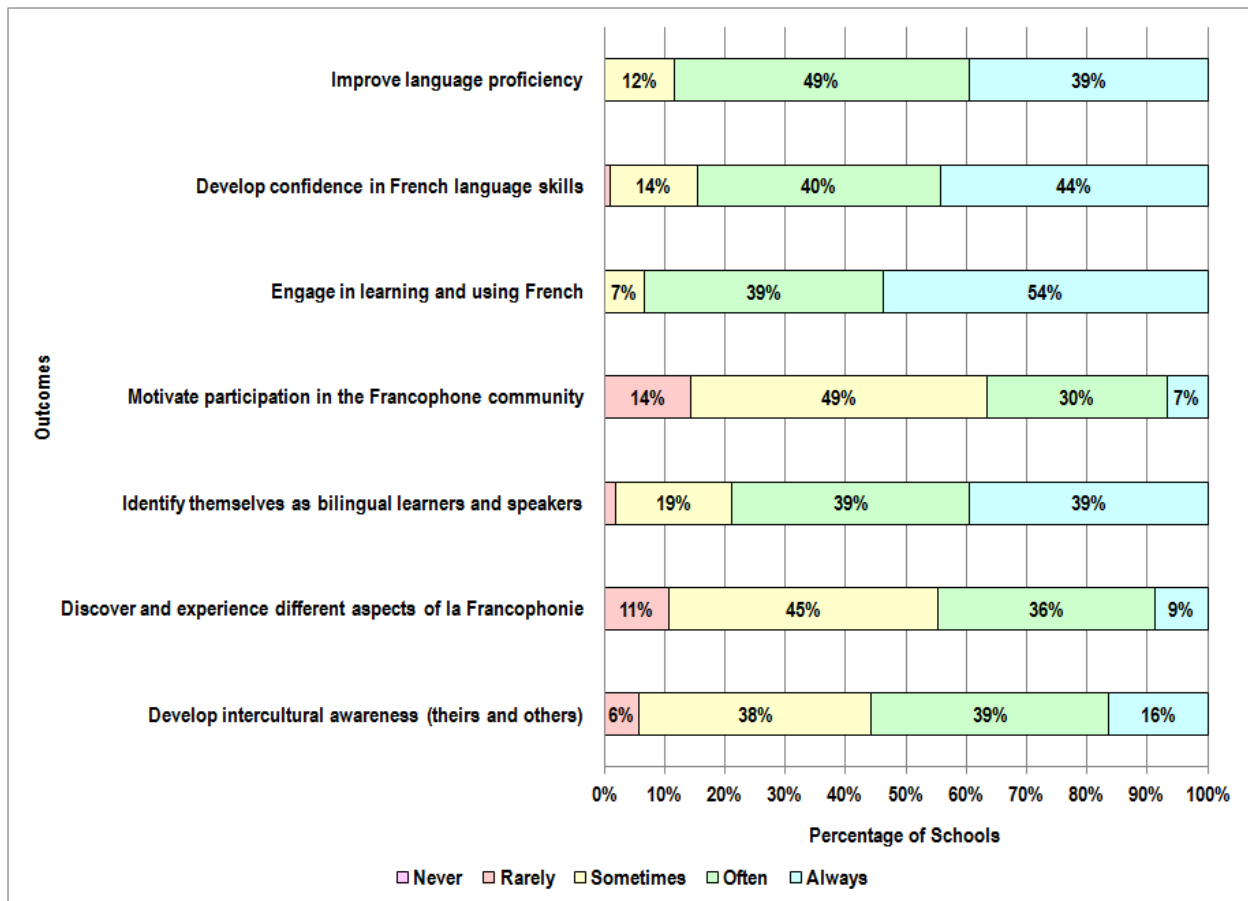
For the purpose of this analysis, the indicator of success has been identified as the sum of *Often* and *Always.* The data indicates that schools are more successful when outcomes pertain to the classroom context as the following 4 outcomes demonstrate a frequency of *Often* and *Always* greater than or equal to 75%: *Engage in learning and using French* (93%), *Improve language proficiency* (88%), *Develop confidence in French language skills* (84%), and *Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers* (78%).

However, the subsequent 3 outcomes which relate to the French cultural context, demonstrate a frequency of *Often and Always* less than or equal to 55%: *Develop intercultural awareness [theirs and others]* (55%), *Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie (45%), Motivate participation in the Francophone community* (37%).

This information suggests that teachers require additional support in the form of professional learning where strategies and resources could be shared in order to increase success in these three outcomes.

Enriched School Environment

A rich linguistic environment is vital to language acquisition. Students need to be immersed in the French language which needs to be encouraged in all aspects of school life as well as outside the school walls.

Accordingly, school and/or classroom activities provide students with the continuous opportunity to authentically and purposefully use their French language competencies in the context of everyday life. These activities should positively impact students' appreciation of languages and specifically enrich their linguistic experience; thus developing and nurturing their plurilingual identity.

The subsequent two questions were included to ascertain to what extent students are provided with academic, cultural, social, citizenship and transition activities that focus on the Program expected outcomes. Charts 19 and 20 present the frequency that schools' and school divisions' offered activities in these categories to enrich students' French Immersion experience.

Chart 19: Percentage of **schools** offering **school and/or classroom** activities that enriched the students' French Immersion experience in 2013-2014, by frequency grouping and by categories (types of activity)
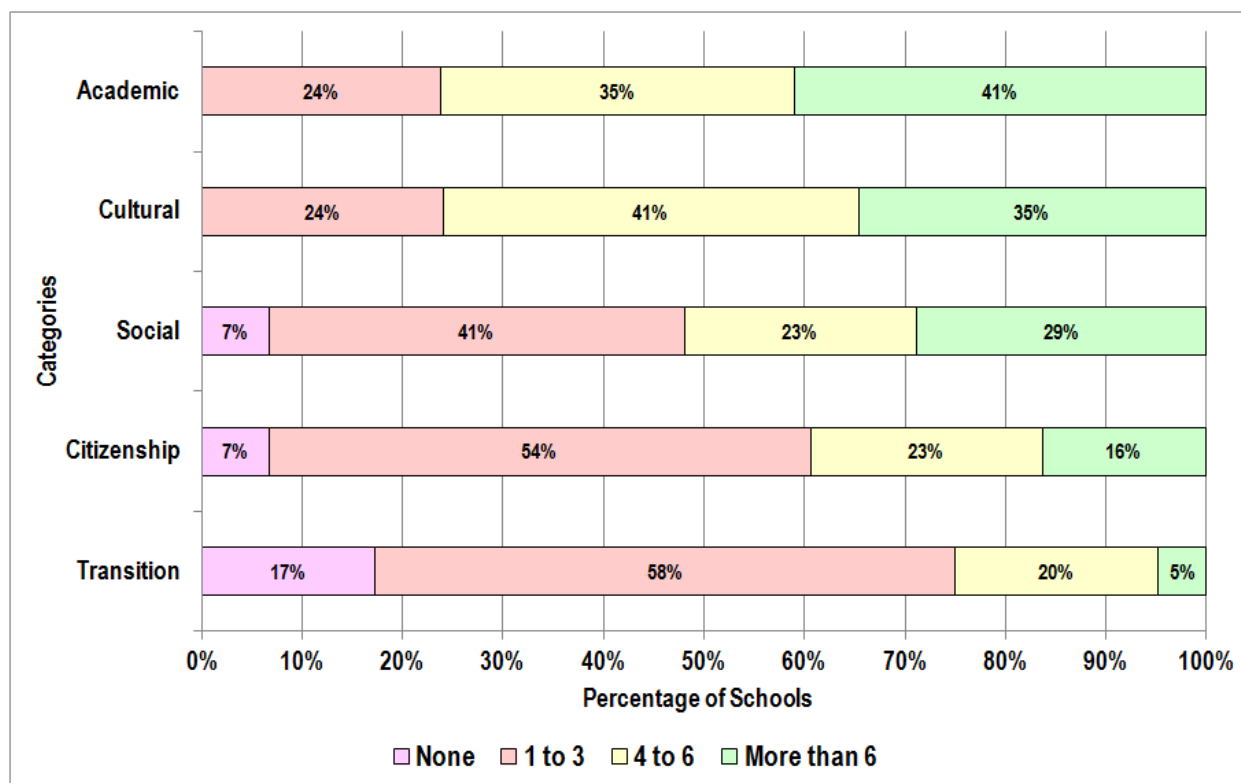
The data demonstrates that 76% of schools offer academic and cultural activities between *4 to more than 6* times per year. However, social, citizenship, and transition activities are less frequently offered and schools tend to provide such activities between *0* and *3 times* per year. Activities in these three categories are crucial in validating students' linguistic and educational experience.

Notably, social activities play an important part in second language acquisition by establishing an authentic context in which students practice and purposefully use their linguistic competencies to communicate. Citizenship activities also enable students to connect with the surrounding community and offer them an opportunity to develop their identity as plurilingual members of society. Furthermore, transition activities invite students to reflect upon continuing their education in French,

thus encouraging them to embrace the next steps on their pathway of language acquisition and global citizenship. Yet, 49% to 75% of schools seldom offer these types of activities throughout the year.

A greater awareness of the importance of having a balance amid the 5 categories is necessary. It is through Professional Learning Communities, staff meetings, and other similar contexts that such dialogues can occur in order to create a common understanding among educators.

Chart 20: Percentage of **school divisions** offering activities that enriched the students' French Immersion experience in 2013-2014 by frequency grouping and by categories (types of activity)
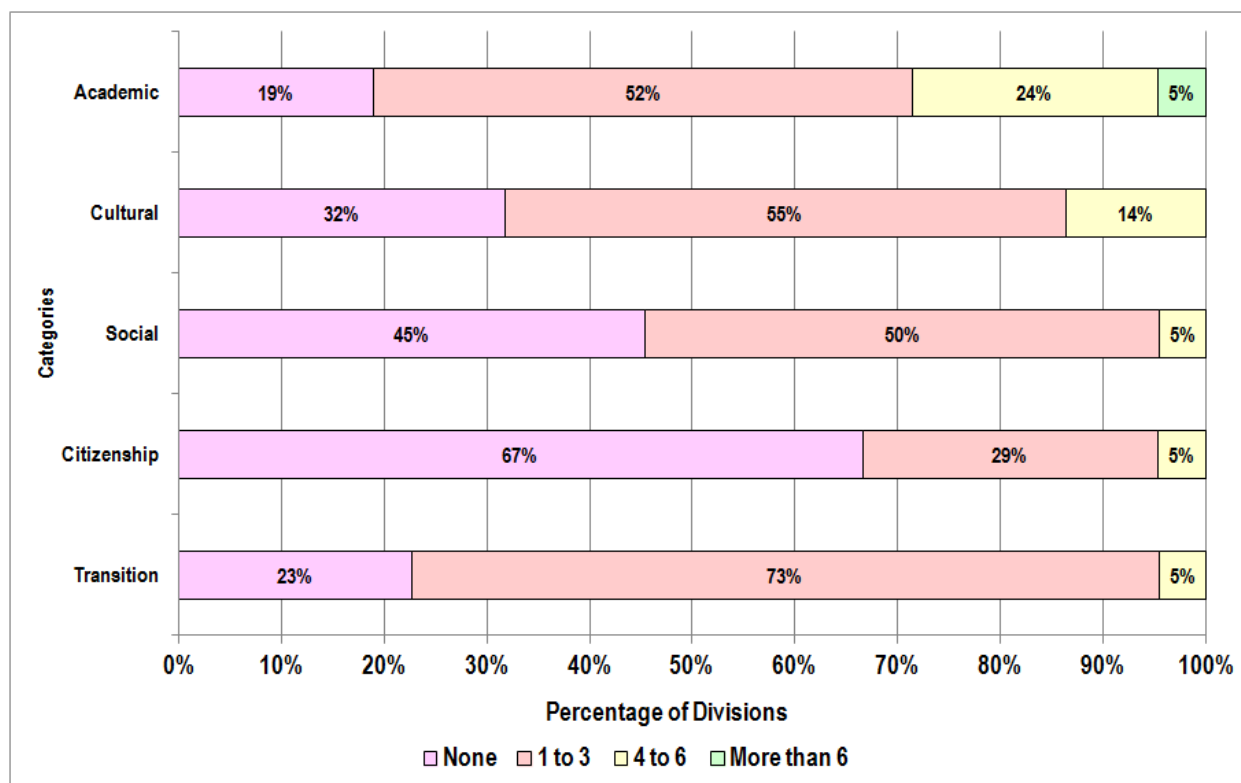
The data demonstrates that school divisions offer academic (81%), transition (78%), cultural (69%) and social (55%) activities between *1* to *6* times per year; whereas 33% offer citizenship activities at the same frequency. It is understandable that school divisions offer fewer activities, and the data suggests that they have kept a balance regarding the types of activities provided to students by mainly offering 1 to 3 activities per category per year.

Nevertheless, citizenship and social activities are seldom offered to students. Opportunities such as these at the divisional level would enable students to use their skills and be validated in other contexts thus enriching their experience.

Impact on Student Learning

Respondents were asked to consider the impact that the activities in each of the aforementioned categories: **Academic, Cultural, Social, Citizenship, and Transition** had on validating students' linguistic experience. The following information entails 2 questions specific to the 5 categories stated above: one in relation to the academic learning and the other in reference to the remaining four categories, cultural, social, citizenship, and transition.

The Divisional Questionnaire had a third question pertaining to the impact of enrichment activities on the seven student Program outcomes.

Charts 21, 22 and 23 present the **academic** activities offered to students at the **school level.** Schools identified a particular academic activity which, according to them, contributed the most to achieving the targeted outcome and were not necessarily expected to identify an activity for all 7 outcomes. The data in the charts has been sorted into three grade groupings; Early Years (EY), Middle Years (MY), and Senior Years (SY). It portrays information corresponding to the frequency of activities offered in subject areas as well as the type of activities/practices used to achieve the outcomes.

Chart 24 presents the **cultural**, **social**, **citizenship**, and **transition** activities offered at the **school level**.

Chart 25 presents enrichment activities offered at the **divisional level** to support the seven Program outcomes.

Chart 21: Frequency of academic activity by subject area and type of activity/practice by outcome - **Early Years**

Outcome	Subject Area								Type of Activity/Practice								
	Français	Maths	Sc. de la nature	Sc. humaines	Éd. artistique	Éd. physique	Other	Total	Oral communication / public speaking	Reading / Writing	Presenters / facilitators	Leadership	Multi-media	Projects	Field trips / exchanges	School wide activities	Varied examples
Improve language proficiency	35	1	1		2		3	42	30	4	3	1			1		3
Develop confidence in French Language skills	31	1	1	1			3	37	19	7	1	7	1				2
Engage in learning and using French	27		2	1	5	1	3	39	5	5	6	4	4	8			7
Motivate participation in the francophone community	24			12	2	1	2	41			6			1	31		3
Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers	21	1	1	2	5		12	42	15	4	1	5		2	3	11	1
Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie	20			8	4		4	36			10		1		19		6
Develop intercultural awareness (theirs and others)	8			14	7	1	4	34		1	4		3	14	4	7	1
Total	166	3	5	38	25	3	31	271	69	21	31	17	9	25	58	18	23

The data, as per the Early Years **subject areas**, reveals that most activities occurred in the *Français* course (166 of 271 activities) while few were highlighted in other subject areas with the exception of *Sciences humaines* (38) and *Éducation artistique* (25).

Chart 21 further indicates that most of the **outcomes** were mainly achieved through activities in the *Français* course, and that three of the seven outcomes tend to be addressed most frequently in Early Years: *Improve language proficiency*, *Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers*, and *Motivate participation in the Francophone community*. Furthermore, the outcome *Developing intercultural awareness* had the fewest number of activities reported and was mainly achieved in the *Sciences humaines* course.

The **activities and practices** of *Oral communication/public speaking* and *Field trips/exchanges* occurred most frequently in order to achieve all outcomes for Early Years students and primarily addressed the outcomes *Improve language proficiency* and *Motivate participation in the Francophone community*.

Chart 22: Frequency of academic activity by subject area and type of activity/practice by outcome - **Middle Years**

Outcome	Subject Area								Type of Activity/Practice								
	Français	Maths	Sc. de la nature	Sc. humaines	Éd. artistique	Éd. physique	Other	Total	Oral communication / public speaking	Reading / Writing	Presenters / facilitators	Leadership	Multi-media	Projects	Field trips / exchanges	School wide activities	Varied examples
Improve language proficiency	48	1	1		3		2	55	44	5	3	1					2
Develop confidence in French Language skills	48	1	2	4			2	57	41	5		6	3	1			1
Engage in learning and using French	32		3	3	6	2	4	50	9	5	4	4	4	9	5		10
Motivate participation in the francophone community	25			13	1	1	8	48			4			1	39		4
Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers	30		1	2	7		9	49	21	4	1	5		3	4	11	
Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie	23		1	11	5		6	46			8		1	4	30		3
Develop intercultural awareness (theirs and others)	9			15	5		7	36	1	1	4		3	14	8	5	
Total	215	2	8	48	27	3	38	341	116	20	24	16	11	32	86	16	20

The data, as per the Middle Years **subject areas**, reveals that most activities occurred in the *Français* course (215 of 341 activities) while few were highlighted in other subject areas with the exception of *Sciences humaines* (48) and *Éducation artistique* (27).

Chart 22 further indicates that most of the **outcomes** were mainly achieved through activities in the *Français* course, and that two of the seven outcomes tend to be addressed most frequently in Middle Years: *Improve language proficiency*, and *Develop confidence in French language skills*. Furthermore, the outcome *Developing intercultural awareness* had the fewest number of activities reported and was mainly achieved in the *Sciences humaines* course.

The **activities and practices** of *Oral communication/public speaking* and *Field trips/exchanges* occurred most frequently in order to achieve all outcomes for Middle Years students and primarily addressed the outcomes *Improve language proficiency, Develop confidence in French language skills* and *Motivate participation in the Francophone community*.

Chart 23: Frequency of academic activity by subject area and type of activity/practice by outcome - **Senior Years**

Outcome	Subject Area								Type of Activity/Practice								
	Français	Maths	Sc. de la nature	Sc. humaines	Éd. artistique	Éd. physique	Other	Total	Oral communication / public speaking	Reading / Writing	Presenters / facilitators	Leadership	Multi-media	Projects	Field trips / exchanges	School wide activities	Varied examples
Improve language proficiency	18			1				19	16	2							1
Develop confidence in French Language skills	14		1	1	4		2	22	18			1		2	1		
Engage in learning and using French	14	1	1	3	3		4	26	9		2	2		4	6		3
Motivate participation in the francophone community	9			1	1		6	17			4		1	1	9		2
Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers	10			1			6	17	8	2		1		4	1	1	
Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie	9			4	3		4	20			1		2	5	10		2
Develop intercultural awareness (theirs and others)	9			8	1		3	21			2			12	5		2
Total	83	1	2	19	12	0	25	142	51	4	9	4	3	28	32	1	10

The data, as per the Senior Years **subject areas**, reveals that most activities occurred in the *Français* course (83 of 142 activities) while few were highlighted in other subject areas with the exception of *Sciences humaines* (19) and *Éducation artistique* (12).

Chart 23 further indicates that most of the **outcomes** were mainly achieved through activities in the *Français* course, and that two of the seven outcomes tend to be addressed most frequently in Senior Years: *Engage in learning and using French* and *Develop confidence in French language skills*. Furthermore, the outcomes *Motivating participation in the francophone community* and *Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers* had the fewest number of activities reported.

The **activities and practices** of *Oral communication/public speaking*, *Field trips/exchanges* and *Projects* occurred most frequently in order to achieve all outcomes for Senior Years students, and primarily addressed the outcomes *Improve language proficiency*, *Developing confidence in French Language skills, Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie, and Develop intercultural awareness*. Upon compilation of the data, it has been noted that a limited variety of activities are being offered at the Senior Years in order to achieve Program outcomes.

While the previous three charts have provided a portrait of Early, Middle, and Senior Years, the data has been further analyzed including all grade groupings from K-12.

The data reveals that, at all grade levels (K-12), *Improving language proficiency*, *Developing confidence in French language skills* and *Identifying themselves as bilingual language learners and speakers* are mainly met through *Concours d'art oratoire*. Although this is a relevant and valuable activity, it is offered once a year and does not address the continuous development of language as well as the constant need to build confidence in students. Hence, a variety of activities should be offered to students in order to foster their development as second language learners throughout the school year.

The activity Festival du Voyageur has also been commonly identified in Grades K-12 as a means to *Motivate participation in the francophone community* and *Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie.* In addition, the outcome *Developing intercultural awareness (theirs and others)* was achieved through various activities that mainly related to Aboriginal culture, and *Engaged in learning and using French* was targeted through a range of activities*.*

Offering an equal distribution and variety amongst the 7 outcomes and in all subject areas is crucial in providing students with an enriched school environment. A common understanding between educators regarding the outcomes, their impact on student validation, and the means in which they can be addressed could be achieved through professional learning.

Chart 24 presents **Cultural, Social, Citizenship, and Transition** activities offered to students at the **school level** which contributed, according to them, the most to achieving the targeted outcome. Schools identified a particular activity in these categories and were not expected to identify an activity for all 7 outcomes. The data in the chart below provides information with respect to the frequency of activities offered in each category in relation to the 7 outcomes and has been sorted into three areas: classroom based, school based, and community based.

Chart 24: Frequency of Cultural, Social, Citizenship, and Transition activities by outcome, at the school level

Category	Area	Outcomes								
		Improve language proficiency	Develop confidence in French language skills	Engage in learning and using French	Motivate participation in the francophone community	Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers	Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie	Develop intercultural awareness (theirs and others)	Total per area within category	
Cultural	Classroom based: (eg. French music, theatre, literature, authors, etc.)	10	2	12	3	6	19	16	68	347
	School based: (eg. Festival Théâtre Jeunesse, radio scolaire, semaine de la Francophonie, etc.)	13	13	18	6	4	6	12	72	
	Community based: (eg. Guest speakers/ performers, field trips within the French community, etc.)	17	6	16	67	19	61	21	207	
Social	Classroom based: (eg. Cross-grade partnerships, French Language Monitor, French pen pals, etc.)	8	10	13	2	9		1	43	136
	School based: (eg. Student-led assemblies, clubs, ralliments, etc.)	13	22	17	1	25	2	5	85	
	Community based: (eg. Journée par Excellence, Élan, etc.)	1		2	1	1	1	2	8	
Citizenship	Classroom based: (eg.cultural awareness/social justice projects, motivational system for speaking French, etc.)	2					1		3	85
	School based: (eg. Trips/student exchange, peer tutoring, Conseil Jeunesse Provincial, etc.)	7	9	14	15	5	8	17	75	
	Community based: (eg. Volunteering within the French community, etc.)	2	1		4				7	
Transition	Partnerships/collaborations (eg. Transition visits, Excel workshops, Semaine par Excellence – USB, etc.)	2		7		6	1		16	32
	Presentations/conversations (eg. French for Life presentation – CPF, etc.)		1		1	10	3		15	
	Courses / Workshops (eg. Career course, etc.)					1			1	
Total per outcome		75	64	100	100	86	102	74		

The data reveals that the majority of activities offered to students are found in the **category** of cultural activities, and are most often community-based. The categories of *Transition* and *Citizenship* have very few activities and may not be fully addressed in schools at this time.

The data also indicates that most **outcomes** are being addressed through a variety of activities (74 to 102 activities), with the exception of *Develop confidence in French language skills*. This lack of activities that support student confidence with regards to their French competencies needs to be addressed as it is an integral part of the vision as well as one of the main student expected outcomes identified in the French Immersion Program.

Further analysis of the **types of activities** shows that a variety of activities are offered to students in order to achieve the outcomes. Nonetheless, it is important to examine the validity and frequency of these activities to determine whether or not they are truly supporting student achievement and development. In addition, when reviewing the frequency of activities in all the categories, fewer are taking place in the classroom while school-based activities occur more frequently in most categories. Similarly, limited activities in the categories of *Citizenship* and *Transition* have been identified; this may be due to a lack of understanding regarding the integration of such activities and their impact on validating students' bilingual experience.

It is apparent that more work is required in this area so as to offer a variety of activities with an equal distribution amongst the 5 categories in order to achieve the 7 outcomes. Schools should work towards a better understanding of each category, and reflect on the type of activities offered that directly target the outcomes in order to guide students on their pathway of becoming proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens.

Chart 25 presents **enrichment** activities offered to students at the **school division level**. School divisions identified a particular activity which, according to them, contributed the most to achieving the targeted outcome and were not expected to identify an activity for all 7 outcomes. The data in Chart 25 provides information with respect to the frequency of activities offered and has been sorted by outcomes, type of activity as well as into the three grade groupings; Early Years, Middle Years, and Senior Years. It should be noted that 8 of the 22 school divisions did not respond. This may suggest that these school divisions have not offered enrichment activities to students.

Chart 25: Divisional activities for students by outcome and grade groupings

Outcomes	Divisional activities for students		EY	MY	SY
Improve language proficiency (13/22 divisions responded)	Divisional events	Concours d'art oratoire (5)	x	x	x
		Divisional debates (2)		x	x
		Improvisation (1)		x	
	Workshops/presentations/ trips for students	Excel workshops (2)		x	x
		Beyond Grade 12 Now (1)		x	x
	Support for teachers/schools	Touchstones training and implementation (1)		x	
	Assessment	Oral language assessments (DELF) (1)		x	x
Develop confidence in French language skills (14/22 divisions responded)	Divisional events	Concours d'arts oratoire (4)	x	x	x
	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Post secondary presentations (1)			x
		Beyond Grade 12 (1)			x
		Participation in EXCELS (1)			x
		Semaine par excellence (3)			x
	Support for students	Odyssey Program - French Language Monitor (1)	x	x	
	Assessment	ACPI student self-assessments, follow up after assessments, in-servicing with teachers (1)		x	x
Engage in learning and using French (14/22 divisions responded)	Divisional events	Concours d'art oratoire (3)	x	x	x
		Divisional debates (2)	x	x	x
		Arts in the Park (Bi-Annual Event) (1)	x	x	x
		Arts Camp (1)		x	
		The Integrated Arts Program (French Artists in classrooms hosted by division) (1)	x	x	
		cultural overnight org by school for all FI students (1)	x	x	
	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Semaine par excellence (3)		x	x
	Support for students	French language assistant (1)	x	x	
		Kindergarten bags (1)	x		
	Assessment	DELF (1)			x
Motivate participation in the francophone community (12/22 divisions responded)	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Beyond Grade 12 Now (1)			x
		Support SEVEC, travel to Quebec (1)		x	x
		Semaine par excellence (1)			x
Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers (9/22 divisions responded)	Divisional events	Concours d'art oratoire (1)		x	
		Divisional debates (1)		x	x
	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Semaine par excellence (2)			x
		Beyond Grade 12 Now (1)			x
Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie (12/22 divisions responded)	Divisional events	French Immersion celebration day (1)	x	x	
	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Voyages échanges (2)		x	x
Develop intercultural awareness (theirs/others) (9/22 divisions responded)	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Voyages/exchanges (2)			x
		AAA content and activities (1)	x	x	x
		Hosted sessions on digital learning projects for students to connect with others from around the world using technology (1)		x	x

Overall, there are few activities offered to students by the 14 responding school divisions.

Data pertaining to the outcomes and types of activities indicates that C*oncours d'art oratoire* is the main activity offered in order to address the following outcomes: *Engage in learning and using French*, *Improve language proficiency*, and *Develop confidence in French language skills*. From the examples reported, some school divisions are attempting to provide activities in innovative ways to help support student development.

The overall data reveals that activities mainly target Middle and Senior Years. At the Early Years, the limited number of activities offered mostly targets the outcome *Engage in learning and using French*.

Valuing and Encouraging the Learning of Languages

The learning of languages is valuable for today's global citizen and the French Immersion Program provides students with the opportunity to learn and grow in both official languages, thus becoming plurilingual.

To build confidence in French and take responsibility for learning and living in both languages, students need to be engaged in their language learning experience. It is important for them to have a personal connection to these languages and to see these languages as being relevant to their lives.

For this to happen, students need to become conscious of their choices when speaking and living in two or more languages. This language learning experience needs to be validated and nurtured by family, peers, and the school community. Students' personal growth as language learners also needs to be recognized and celebrated by everyone in their immediate environment in order for them to feel validated for having chosen this path.

The first question in this section was included to ascertain the strategies schools use to guide students to develop their language competencies in order to identify themselves as plurilingual learners and live as plurilingual members of society, today and in the future. As parents play a crucial role in validating their children's language experience, the second question was included to determine the extent to which schools guide and support parents in their role.

Chart 26 examines the strategies used by schools to guide students in developing their language competencies, while Chart 27 explores the support given to parents in validating their children's linguistic experience.

Chart 26: Strategies by which schools guide **students** to develop their language competencies in order to identify themselves as plurilingual learners, by percentage of schools
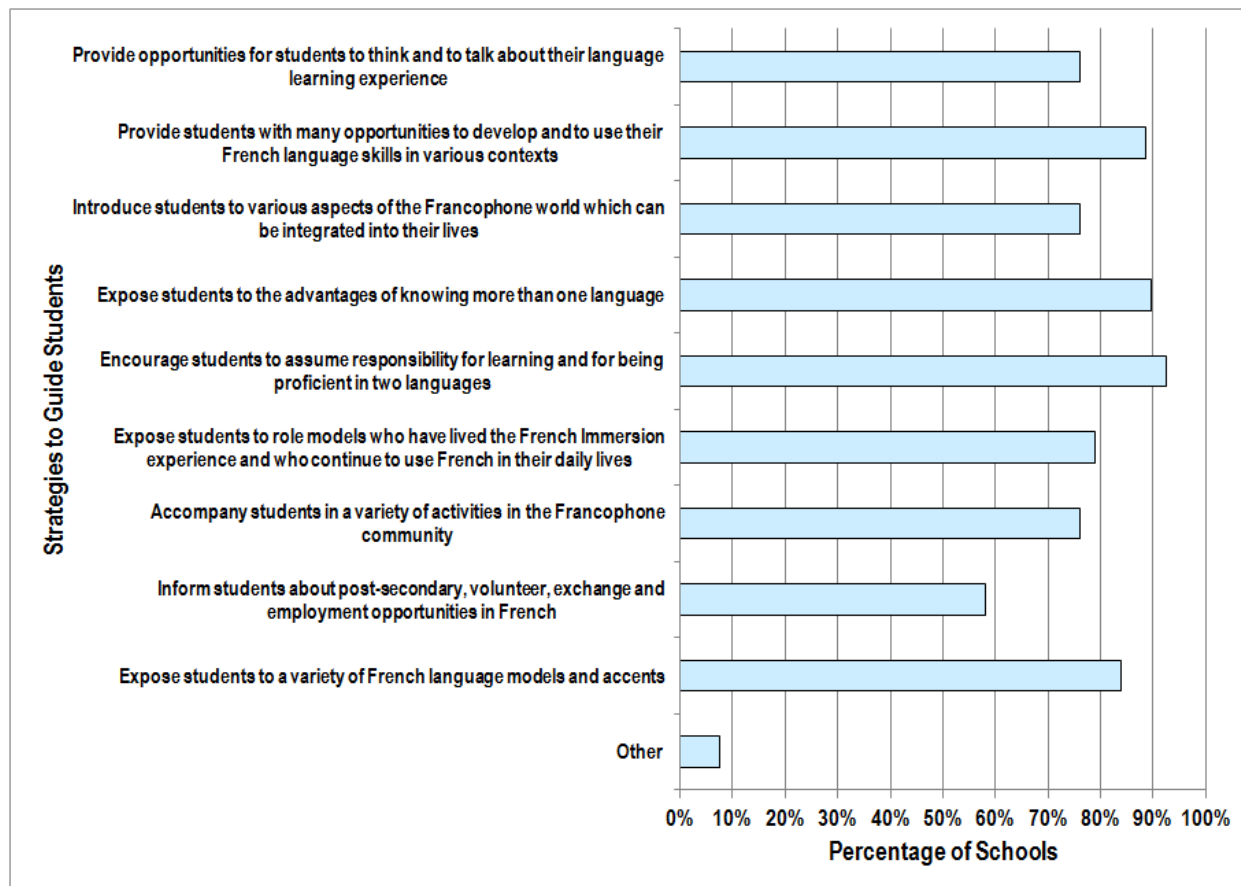
The data shows that 70% to 85% of schools guided students through 8 of the 9 strategies, while only 58% of schools informed students about post-secondary, volunteer, exchange and employment opportunities in French.

Overall, the information presented in the chart suggests that schools are mainly guiding students in relation to what students are experiencing at the moment. Opportunities in French that go beyond the classroom as well as Grade 12 need to be shared on a continual basis with students in order for them to see the relevance of learning and living in French today, and in the future.

Chart 27: Strategies by which schools guide **parents** to support and to validate their children's linguistic experiences, by frequency of response
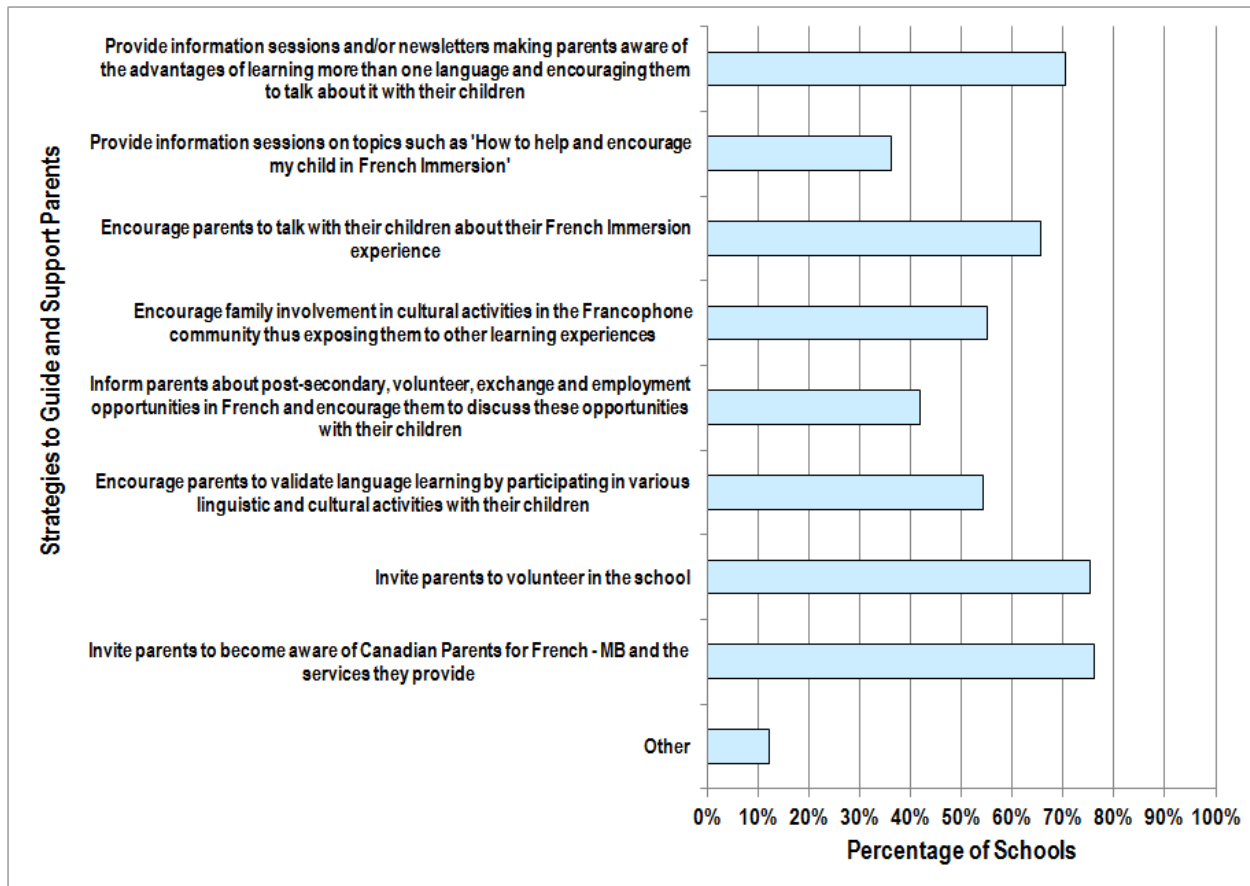
The data reveals that fewer schools provide guidance and support to parents in comparison to students as seen in Chart 26. In fact, the two strategies that were the least present were *Informing parents about post-secondary, volunteer, exchange and employment opportunities in French* (42%) and *Providing information sessions* (36%). Notably, such sessions are vital in order to bring parents together and address some concerns or issues related to the French Immersion Program. Parents must remain valued partners in education, and schools need to nurture this partnership for the benefit of students and the school community.

Parental involvement is a crucial piece in student validation and the development of a personal connection to languages. Furthermore, support given to parents has a strong impact on students' linguistic experience beyond their school years as well as their retention in the French Immersion Program.

Reflection on the Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience

Upon completion of Section 2 of the questionnaire, schools were asked to reflect on the extent to which they successfully validated students' linguistic and educational experience in order to:

- support students in the development of their linguistic competencies
- build students' confidence in their French language skills
- validate students' French Immersion experience
- encourage students to become plurilingual members of society

This reflection included identifying successes achieved and challenges encountered in the validation of students' linguistic and educational experience in their school and are subsequently presented in Charts 28 and 29.

Schools were then asked to make an overall self-assessment with respect to the validation of students' linguistic and educational experience. Hence, Chart 30 represents the schools' perception regarding their degree of success in validating students' linguistic and educational experience.

Chart 28 presents the main factors identified as successes in validating students' linguistic and educational experience, and demonstrates the number of responses by factor.

Chart 28: Successes in validating students' linguistic and educational experience, showing frequency of responses
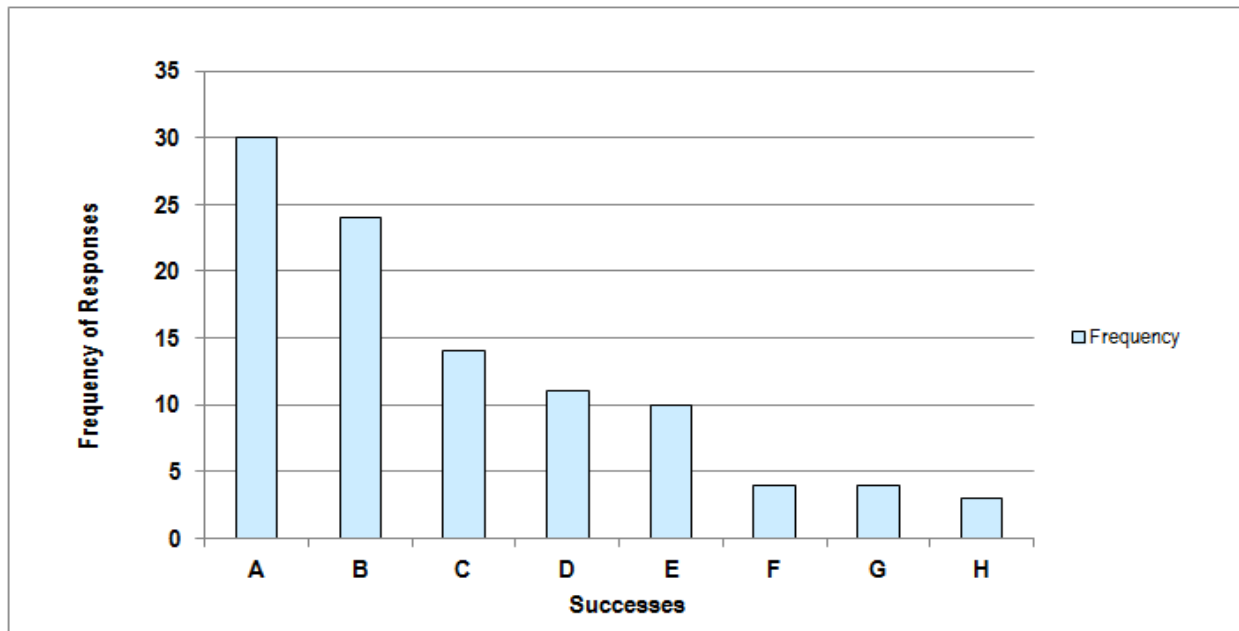
A - Students are more confident to speak French outside of school

B - Praise students by highlighting their achievements through monthly assemblies, newsletters, Province of Manitoba French Immersion Diploma, certificates, community events

C - Collaboration between students

D - Students are provided opportunities to reflect on their language proficiency (metacognition)

E - Offering a rich variety of academic activities to develop their linguistic competencies and enrich content learning

F - Students continue in Senior Years in FI, enrolment and retention is stable or growing

G - Some teachers were students in the FI Program

H - Offering a rich variety of cultural, social, citizenship and transition activities to develop their linguistic competencies

The data indicates that schools perceive their two main successes to be in the area of *Student confidence while speaking French outside of school* (A – 30 responses) as well as *Praising students by highlighting their achievements through various school activities* (B – 24 responses). The importance of highlighting student achievement in the school not only validates their language learning experience but also nourishes students' confidence in speaking French both in and outside of the school.

In addition, *Collaboration between students* (C – 14 responses), whether it be among peers or students of different grade levels, provides an authentic and purposeful context in which students communicate in French, act as mentors, develop their confidence and feel validated while using the French language. Furthermore, *Providing students with opportunities to reflect on their language proficiency* (D – 11 responses) fosters engagement in learning and using French while developing their identity as bilingual learners and speakers.

Other identified successes such as *Offering a rich variety of French academic activities* (E) as well as *Offering a rich variety cultural, social, citizenship and transition activities* (H) are essential in developing students' linguistic competencies and their identity as plurilingual members of society, today and in the future.

Chart 29 presents the main factors identified as challenges in validating students' linguistic and educational experience, and demonstrates the number of responses by factor.

Chart 29: Challenges in validating students' linguistic and educational experience, showing frequency of responses and the cumulative percentages
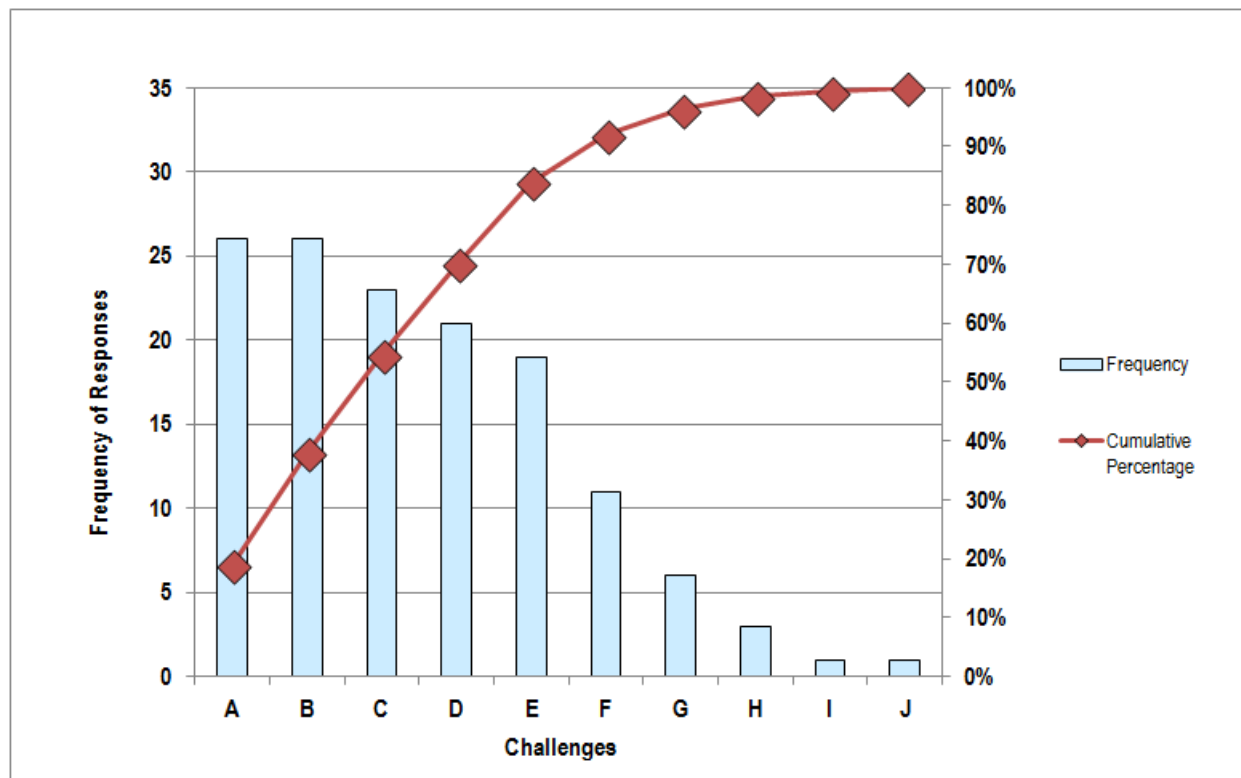
A - Finding bilingual experiences and cultural activities outside the school in order to provide interactions in French

B - Dual track setting creating a predominantly English environment

C - Distance and cost limit access to French resources/activities

D - Developing student motivation, confidence and building their identity.

E - Lack of parental understanding, involvement and support

F - Finding bilingual support staff (substitute, Educational Assistant, etc.)

G - Optional courses not offered in French due to small student body

H - Limited support for struggling students

I - Lack of methodology (Language and Content) regarding the dual task of FI teachers

J - Students may be influenced by those who do not value French

The challenges identified by the schools are presented in the Pareto chart above. The Pareto Principle states that by addressing the factors that cause 80% of the challenges, strategies developed may become more focussed and resources may be allocated more effectively. As a result, most if not all of the remaining 20% of the challenges may also improve. The analysis of the data focuses on the challenges that need the most attention, those that represent a cumulative value of 80%.

The data reveals that schools perceive their main challenges to be in *Finding bilingual experiences and cultural activities* (A – 26 responses) as well as the *Dual track setting* (B – 26 responses). Linked to the first mentioned challenge is the *Distance and cost limiting access to these activities* (C – 23 responses).

The factor regarding *Finding bilingual experiences and cultural activities* (A) could be addressed by initially sourcing local activities and experiences in French. If such activities are unavailable in French, schools could develop school-based activities, and could further contemplate collaborating with adjoining schools or school divisions in the attempt to offer additional activities and experiences.

Nonetheless, this challenge seems to be somewhat contradictory, given that schools provided a wealth of activities in the previous subsection Impact on Student Learning where the majority of activities lend themselves to cultural activities. There seems to be a perception in the field that cultural activities and other activities that support academic learning are only readily found in Winnipeg and surrounding areas. Although this may be true, it is essential that educators develop a common understanding regarding the integration of culture into the daily lives of students as a means of enriching the academic and linguistic learning through all subject areas as well as classroom, school, and community activities.

In addition, discussions with respect to the categories of social, citizenship and transition must also take place, as there is little evidence in the data suggesting a clear understanding of the types of activities or approaches that could be used to support student language proficiency. It is of the utmost importance that educators focus continually on the seven outcomes so that every activity offered to students, whether in an academic or a non-academic setting, directly targets specific outcomes related to student success in the program objectives.

The challenge of a *Dual track setting* (B) was also reported in Section 1 when creating a French Immersion environment as well as in Section 2 with regards to validating students' linguistic and educational experience. This reoccurrence only further reinforces that more work needs to be done in order to create a linguistically rich learning environment in dual track schools.

An effort should be made to create a common understanding of the goals of the French Immersion Program as well as the Français course (English Program) among all school personnel in order to offer students appropriate French activities that will target languages learning objectives in both Programs.

The challenge regarding *Developing student motivation, confidence and building their identity* (D – 21 responses) proves to be somewhat contradictory to what has been previously identified as a success. Student confidence has been described as being a success for some while a challenge for others. This discrepancy confirms the importance of ensuring that activities offered to students target the seven learning outcomes in the five categories (academic, cultural, social, citizenship and transition) that were addressed in the subsection Impact on Student Learning. In addition, it is important for teachers and students to identify the indicators of success for each outcome and to continually focus on achieving them.

Schools are encouraged to develop strategies that reflect the local community and school culture in order to work collaboratively with parents. The remaining challenges in the chart should be addressed by each school and school division according to their context.

The following chart indicates the extent to which schools perceived their level of success regarding validating students' linguistic and educational experience.

Chart 30: Percentage of schools indicating their level of success with respect to validating students' linguistic and educational experience
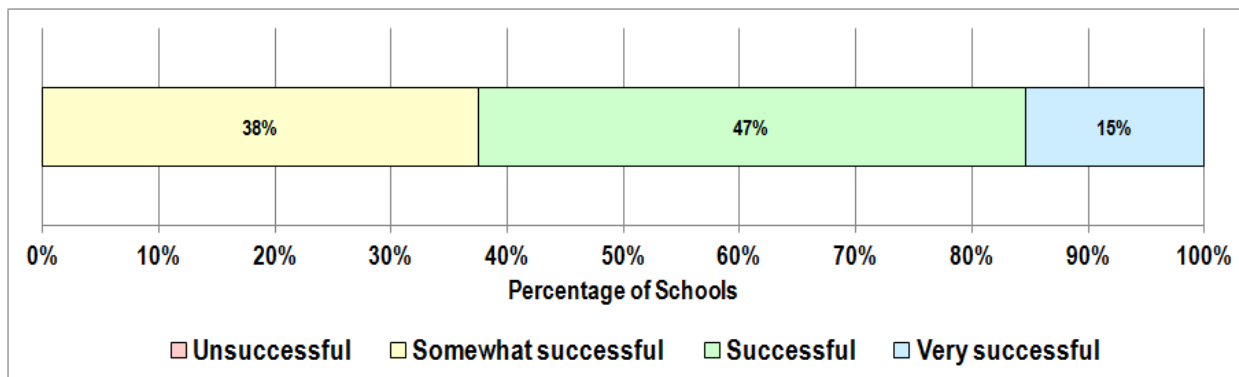
The data reveals that of the 104 responding schools, 62% perceived themselves as being *Successful* or *Very successful* in validating students' linguistic and educational experience, and 38% indicated they were *Somewhat successful*.

Although many schools feel they are validating their students' linguistic and educational experience, it is nevertheless clear that a fairly high percentage of schools do not believe they are sufficiently supporting students on their pathway to becoming plurilingual by developing confidence and language proficiency.

A focus on language acquisition and an understanding of methodology that supports the development of language proficiency in all subject areas are key factors for student success in the French Immersion Program. It is clear from the data presented in Section 2 that more emphasis should be placed on professional learning and conversations in schools and school divisions in order to appropriately validate students' linguistic and educational experience.

A clear and common understanding among educators on how to enrich academic and linguistic learning for students by means of classroom, school, and community activities is essential. It is through discussions relating to the categories of academic, cultural, social, citizenship, and transition, that educators will clearly comprehend which activities or approaches could be used in these various contexts that also support the development of student language proficiency.

Section 3

Educational Staff and Professional Learning

Section 3 provides data regarding the hiring and professional learning of educational staff in the French Immersion Program.

As immersion schools continue to provide a quality education for students by meeting Program goals, they also have the responsibility to create and to nurture an environment that ensures that the staff in the French Immersion Program is supported when hired and throughout their career.

Schools and school divisions were asked to provide examples of activities that support recruitment, retention, and professional learning of staff which contributes to the delivery of a strong French Immersion Program.

Recruitment and Retention of Staff

The sustainability of the French Immersion Program relies on the recruitment and retention of staff as well as succession planning in order to maintain stability and promote growth in the Program. Selecting and retaining a team of staff members that have the necessary skills, knowledge and vision to support student learning and decision making in a French Immersion environment is vital to the Program's overall success.

The subsequent 15 questions were included to ascertain the challenges faced by schools and school divisions with regards to hiring potential teachers and administrators, the commonalities with regards to the verification of the key competencies of potential candidates during the hiring process as well as the supports in place in order to ensure retention of staff.

In reference to hiring potential personnel, Chart 31 indicates schools' responses regarding the type of positions which pose a challenge, while Chart 32 examines the type of challenges being encountered.

Chart 31: Frequency of French Immersion schools indicating that the hiring of qualified French Immersion personnel posed a challenge by type of position
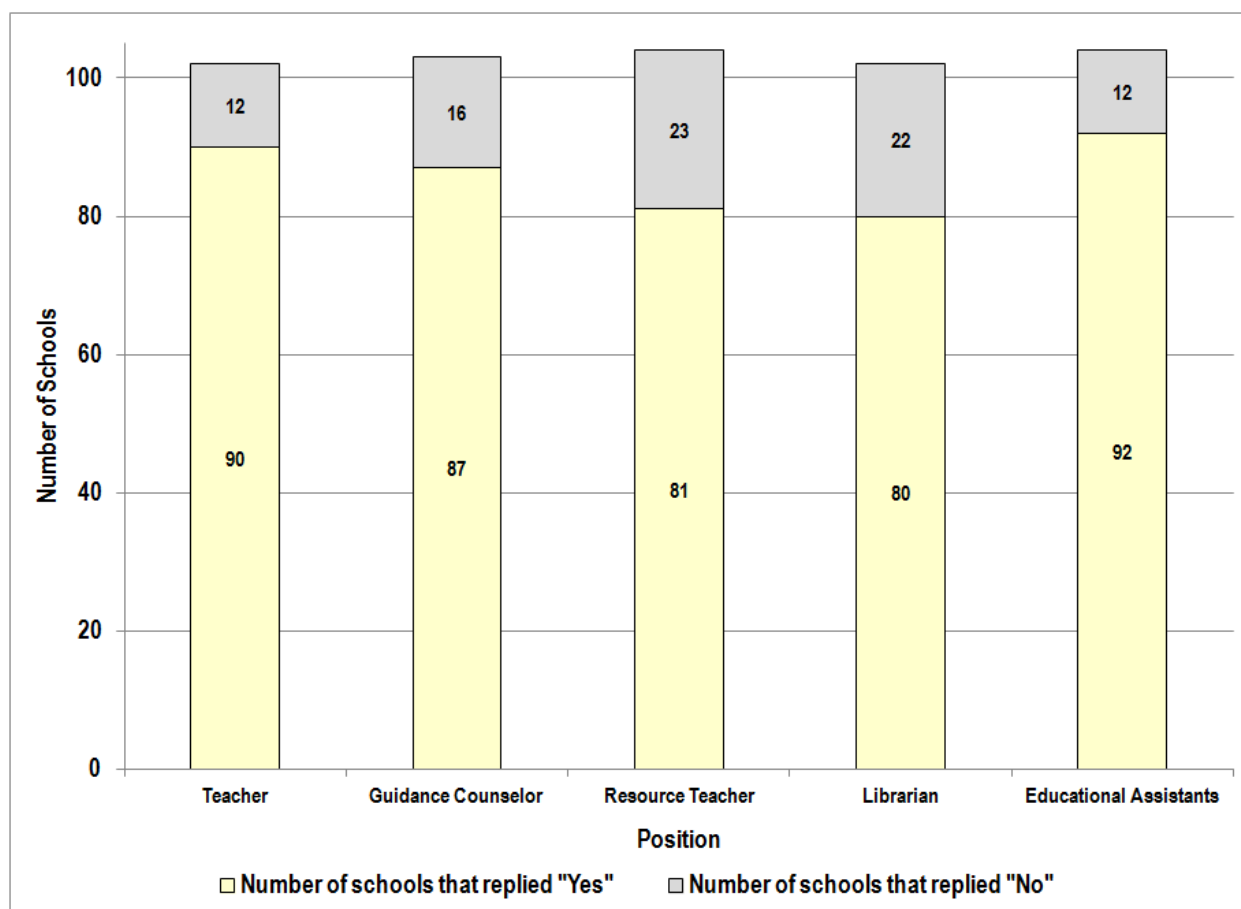
The data indicates that 80 or more of the 105 French Immersion schools encounter challenges in hiring qualified staff for all positions. This issue must be placed at the forefront and be addressed through productive dialogue and collaboration amongst various stakeholders.

Chart 32 depicts the responses that were provided as optional comments to explain the challenges encountered when hiring French Immersion personnel.

Chart 32: Challenges in hiring qualified French Immersion personnel, by type of challenge and frequency of responses
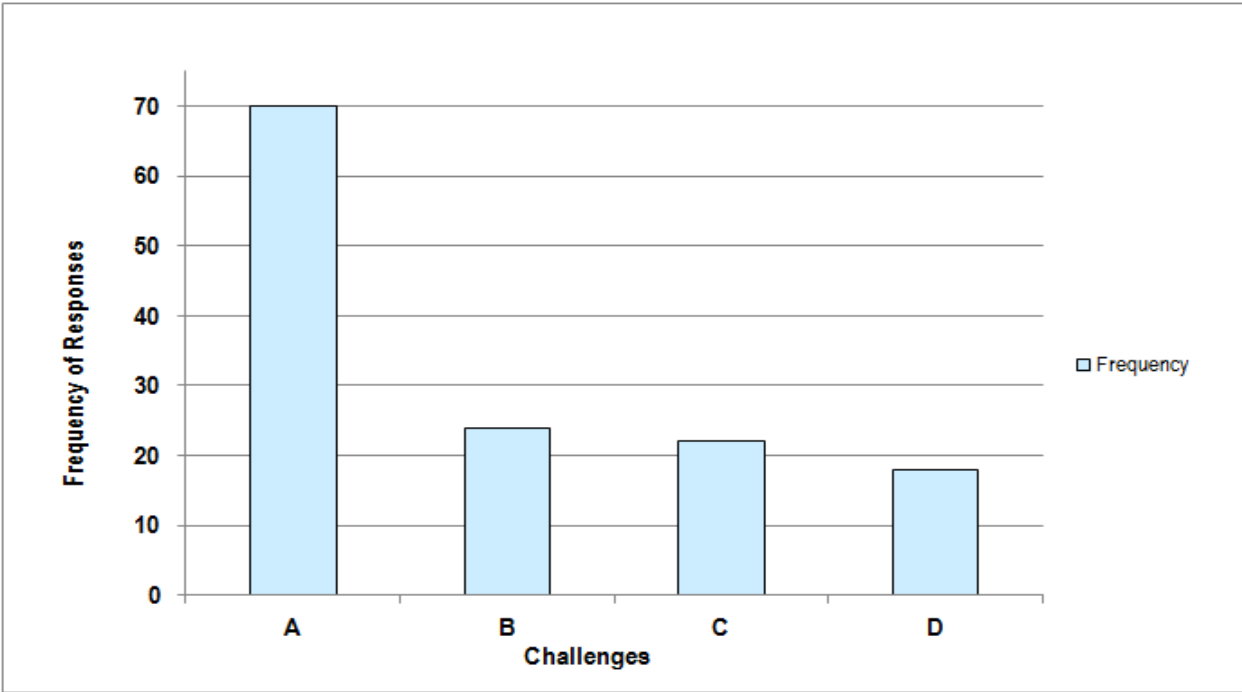
A - Limited number of qualified applicants

B - Rural divisions struggle to find bilingual employees

C - Hiring bilingual and trained educational assistants

D - Bilingual specialist personnel are particularly difficult to find (Resource, Counselling, Physical Education, Music, Library)

From the data presented, it is evident that the main challenge experienced by 70 schools (approximately 2/3 of schools) is the *Limited number of qualified applicants* (A). This corroborates anecdotal evidence from the field that there is a real challenge in finding and hiring qualified teaching personnel.

The other identified challenges, more specifically, *Rural divisions struggle to find bilingual employees* (B – 24 responses), the *Hiring of bilingual and trained educational assistants* (C – 22 responses) as well as *Hiring bilingual specialists* (D – 18 responses) simply emphasizes the fact that there is a limited number of qualified applicants.

Further analysis of the above data reveals that the four identified challenges are linked by the difficulty of finding and hiring bilingual staff. As a result, the frequency of school responses regarding the main challenge, *Limited number of qualified applicants* (A), increases dramatically.

Subsequent to the challenges reported in Chart 32, Chart 33 shows school divisions' responses regarding a divisional recruitment plan, while Chart 34 addresses the participation of school divisions in teacher recruitment fairs.

Chart 33: Percentage of **school divisions** having a divisional recruitment plan or policy regarding the hiring of French Immersion personnel
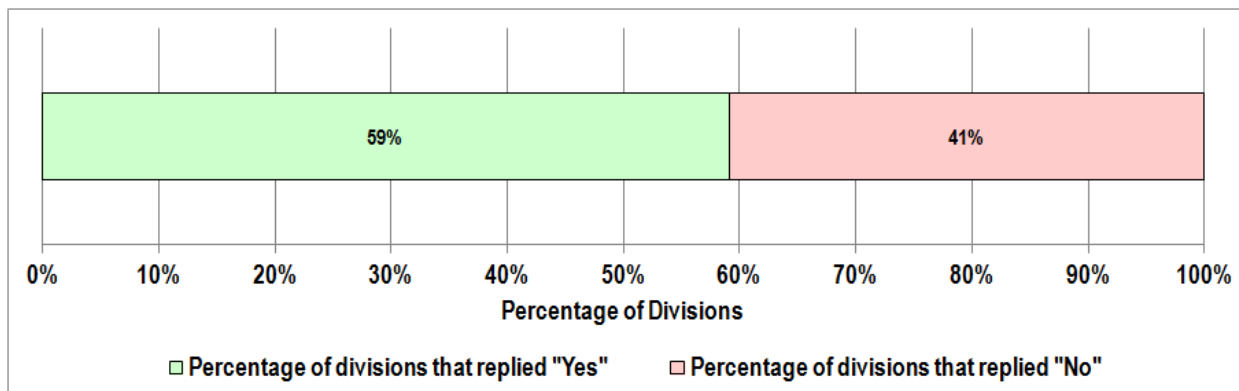
The data reveals that despite the limited number of qualified applicants, as per Chart 32, 41% of school divisions do not have a divisional recruitment plan or policy.

A divisional recruitment plan remains a crucial piece in maintaining stability in the French Immersion Program. Long-term planning as well as retention of personnel should also be infused into a plan in order to ensure the delivery of a strong Program.

Chart 34: Percentage of **school divisions** participating in teacher recruitment fairs
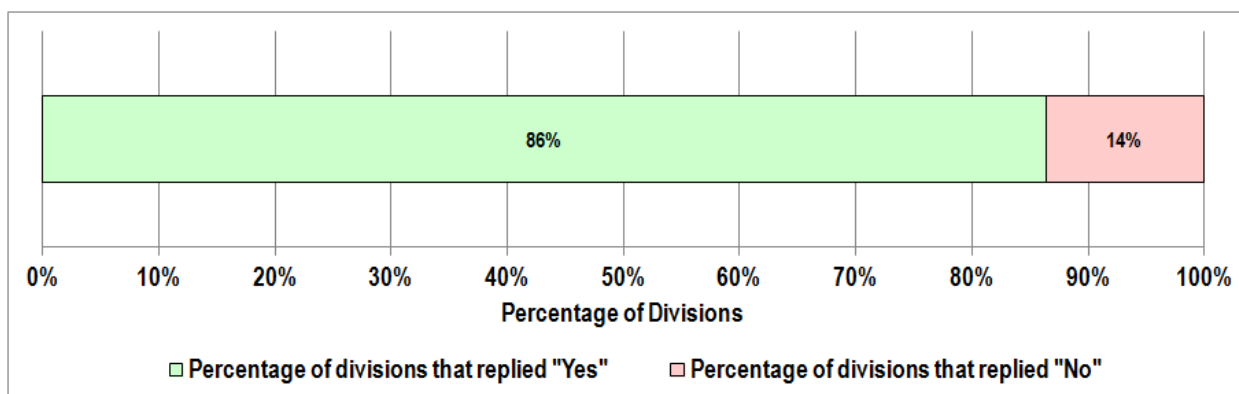
The data reveals that 86% of school divisions participate in teacher recruitment fairs.

School divisions put a lot of effort in attending such recruitment fairs. However, data in Chart 32 regarding the challenge of *Limited number of qualified applicants* (A) puts into question the effectiveness of such fairs and the need for them to evolve. Today's technology forces leaders to rethink their recruitment plan in order to reach as many potential candidates as possible. It is evident that school divisions can no longer depend solely on recruitment fairs to provide satisfactory results regarding possible candidates.

Chart 35: Number of French Immersion Senior Years schools indicating challenges with regards to hiring by subject area
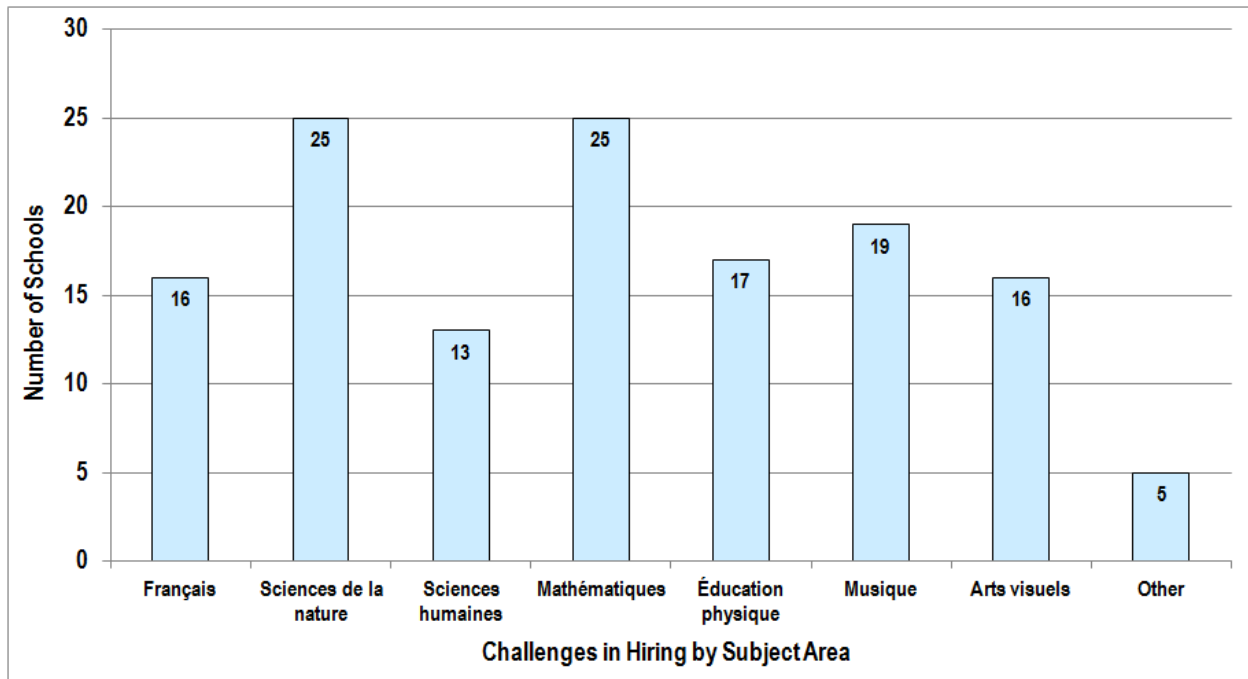
The data reveals that 25 of 29 (86.2%) schools offering Grades 9-12 courses indicated that the hiring for the subject areas of *Sciences de la nature* and *Mathématiques* poses the greatest challenge, and between 13 (44.8%) and 19 (65.5%) of schools reported that they also encountered challenges in hiring in the five other specialty areas.

Chart 36 depicts the responses provided as optional comments in relation to the challenges in hiring Senior Years French Immersion teachers.

Chart 36: Senior Years French Immersion schools reporting a particular challenge in hiring, by challenge
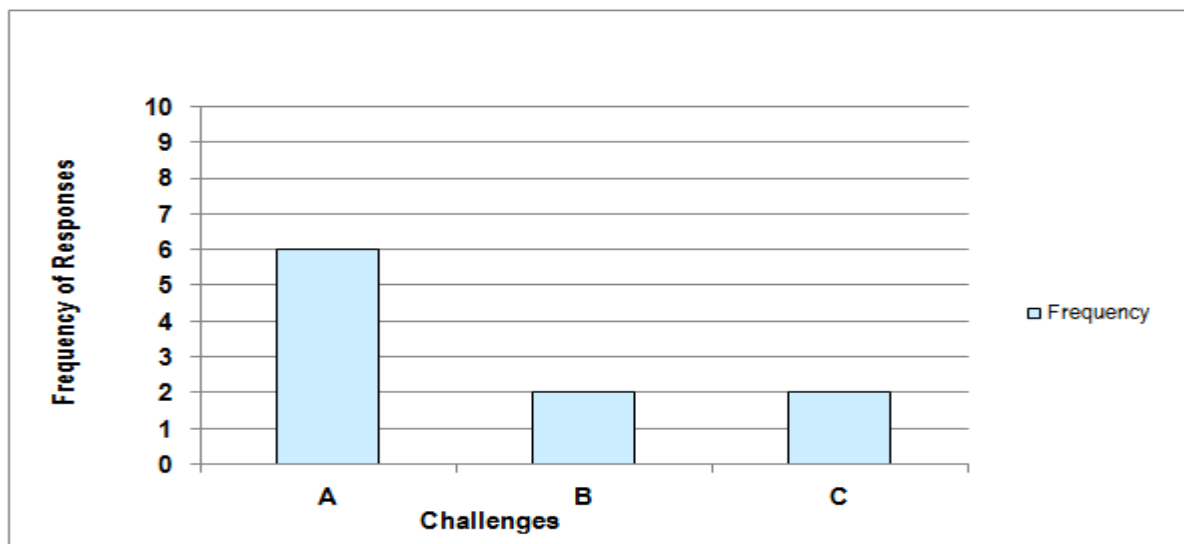
A - Difficulty finding specialists in Senior Years

B - Difficulty finding teachers with appropriate language competencies as well as content knowledge for academically demanding Senior Years courses

C - Fewer teachers due to low student enrolments in Senior Years in rural/northern schools limiting the number and choice of courses offered in French

The data reveals that 6 of the 10 responding schools indicated that Senior Years specialists were difficult to find (A). This information reiterates the challenge of having a *Limited number of qualified applicants* as reported in Chart 32.

In a similar vein, two schools mentioned that it was *Difficult finding teachers with appropriate language competencies as well as content knowledge for academically demanding Senior Years courses* (B).

The remaining two of the 10 responding schools also presented a corollary to the two other challenges by stating that there are *Fewer teachers due to low student enrolments in Senior Years in rural/northern schools limiting the number and choice of courses offered in French* (C). This low enrolment plays a large part in teacher workload, the number of courses offered, and is one of the contributing factors affecting the number of teacher applications in these locations.

It is thus evident that there exists a connection between all three hiring challenges identified.

Charts 37 and 38 indicate schools' and school divisions' responses regarding languages used during the interview process, while Charts 39 and 40 examine responses in respect to verification of applicants' competencies.

Chart 37: Number of French Immersion **schools** indicating the language(s) used when interviewing potential French Immersion teachers
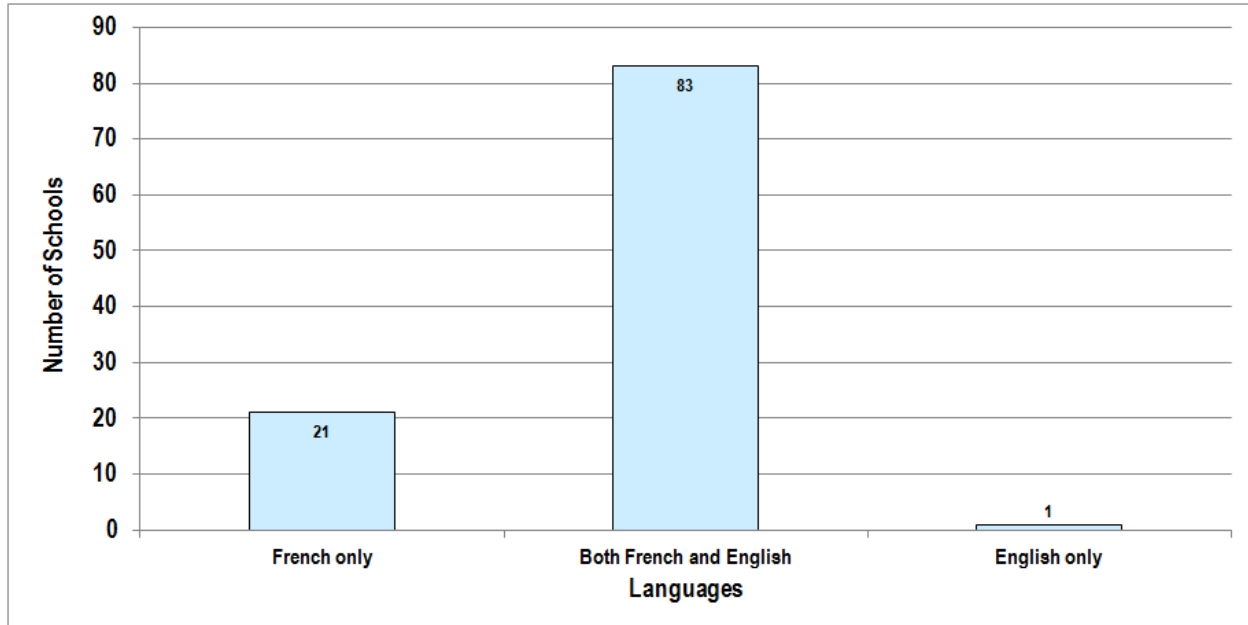
The data indicates that 83 of the 105 (79%) French Immersion schools interview their potential French Immersion teachers in both French and English; while 21 of the 105 (20%) schools interview in French only and 1 school in English only.

It is evident that schools are aware that French Immersion teachers serve as models for students and should have an excellent command of the language in which they will be teaching. Therefore, when considering new staff, a candidate's oral language proficiency in French should be assessed.

Chart 38: Number of **school divisions** indicating the language(s) used when interviewing potential candidates for administrative positions in a French Immersion school
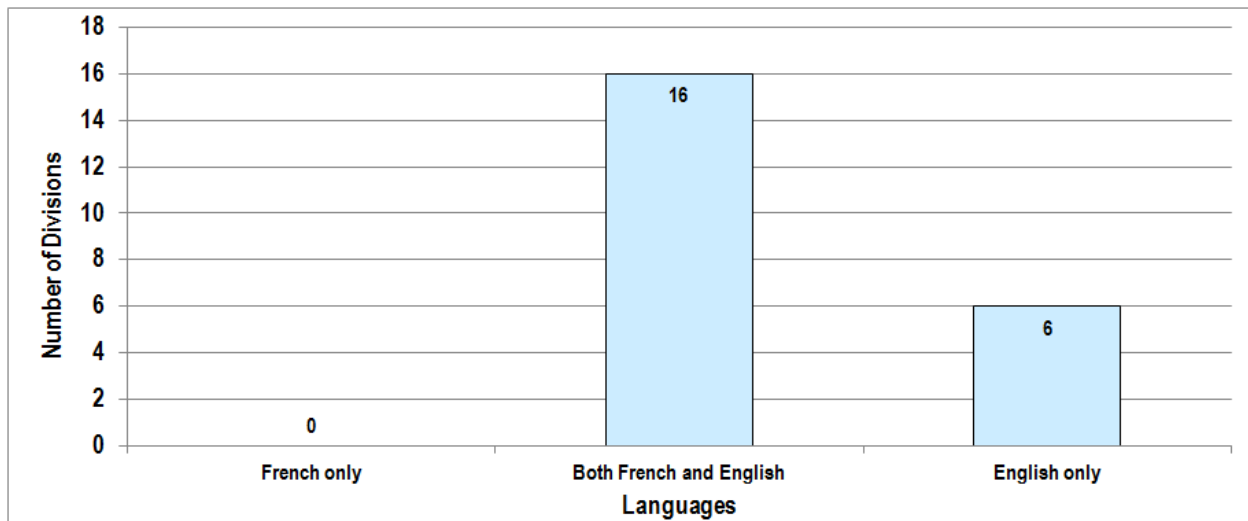
The data reveals that 16 of the 22 (72.7%) school divisions offering the French Immersion Program interview their potential candidates for administrative positions in both French and English, while 6 of the 22 (27.3%) school divisions interview in English only.

The information presented above is in part reassuring but also concerning. All potential candidates should be interviewed in both languages for they too will be serving as models for students and teachers but also as leaders of a language Program. This in turn enhances the French setting in the school as well as a sense of community.

Chart 39: Number of French Immersion **schools** verifying key competencies when hiring potential French Immersion teachers, by competency
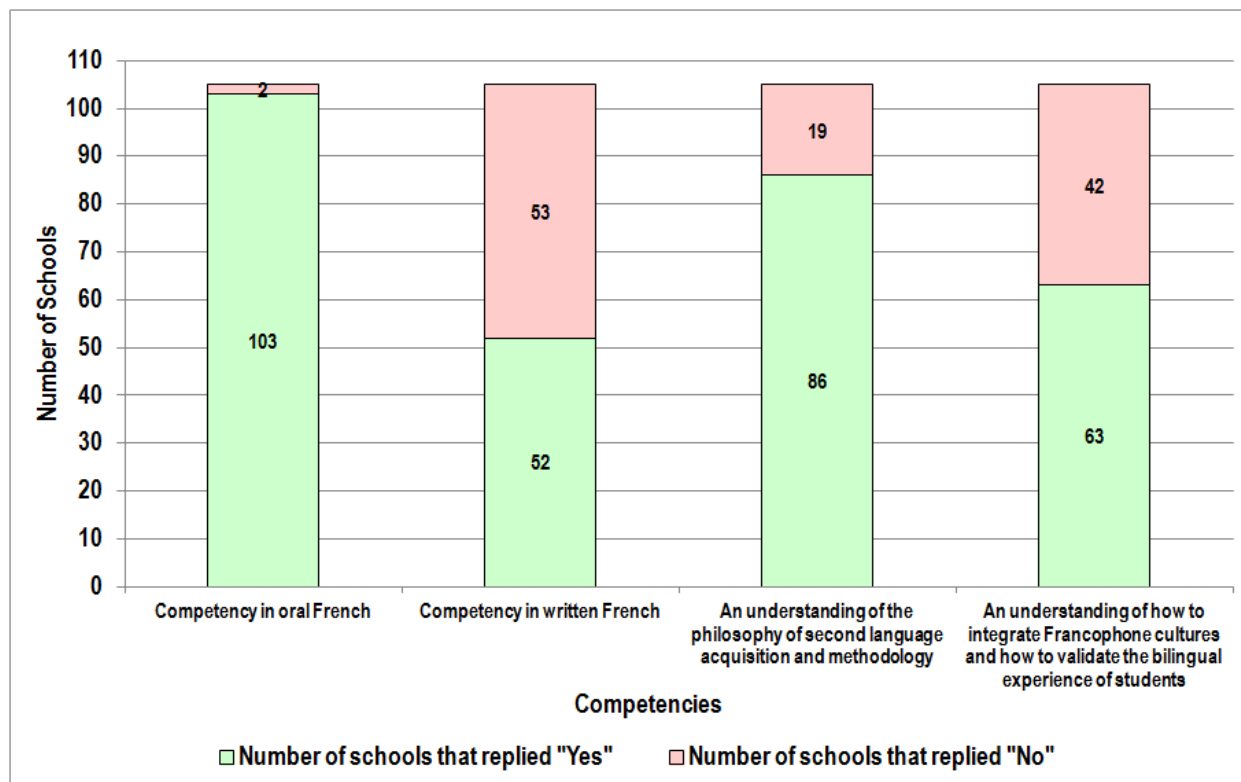
The data revealed for each competency is as follows:

Competency in oral French was verified by 103 of 105 (98.1%) of French Immersion schools. Although the majority of schools verify competency in oral French language, it is nevertheless worrisome that it is not requested by all schools. When considering new personnel, one must take into account that French Immersion teachers serve as models for students and should have an excellent command of the language in which they will be teaching. Assuming that the interviewers are unilingual, another bilingual administrator or lead teacher could become part of the interview process and assess the oral proficiency of candidates.

Competency in written French was verified by 52 of 105 (49.5%) of French Immersion schools. Results regarding the verification for competency in written French are somewhat disconcerting. One cannot assume that proficiency in French oral language is transferable to one's written language, thus a teacher could be proficient in one area but not the other. We should be reminded that French Immersion teachers serve as models for students and that the learning of a language is attained through different forms (oral and written).

An understanding of the philosophy of second language acquisition and methodology was verified by 86 of 105 (81.9%) of French Immersion schools. Even though a considerable number of schools verify for an understanding of the philosophy and methodology of second language acquisition, it is necessary to contemplate the following two elements when considering new personnel: not all teachers proficient in French have the teaching methods that will allow them to be effective in the French Immersion classroom, and not all teachers have the French skills required to be effective French Immersion teachers.

An understanding of how to integrate francophone cultures and validate students' bilingual experience was verified by 63 of 105 (60%) of French Immersion schools. Information in upcoming Section 4 of this provincial report affirms a significant loss of student population as French Immersion students move through the school system, from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Yet, not all schools verify for the understanding of validating students' linguistic experience, a crucial piece which impacts retention. Chart 19 of this report also maintains that schools offer numerous cultural activities to enrich the school environment. But yet, surprisingly, 40% of schools do not verify for an understanding of how to integrate francophone cultures.

Having stated the above, it is essential to verify the 4 key competencies when hiring teachers in order to provide a quality language program which in turn supports students' linguistic and educational experience. If the hiring of teachers with all of the required competencies proves difficult, school divisions need to ensure that once hired, teachers gain the required skills by attending various types of professional learning. School administrators are thus responsible in ensuring the follow up with all teachers needing this ongoing professional learning.

Chart 40: Number of **school divisions** verifying for six key competencies when hiring potential French Immersion administrators, by competency
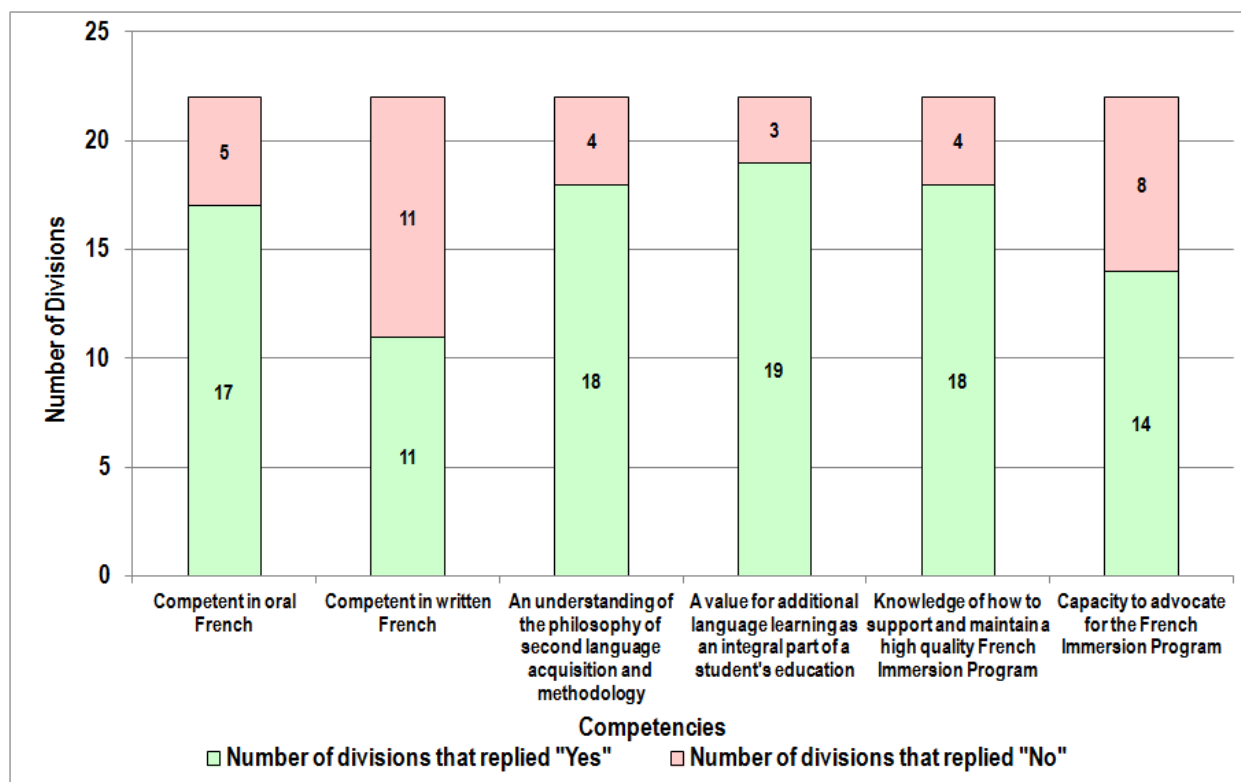

The data indicates that generally all six competencies are verified by most of the 22 school divisions when interviewing potential administrators with the exception of written French. Hence, written competencies in French should be verified due to administrators serving as models for students as well as teachers. Furthermore, another area that might require additional focus is the capacity to advocate for the French Immersion Program especially in a dual track setting.

When schools administrators possess the knowledge and skills of the six key competencies listed above, they are better equipped to provide leadership in the school community, support teachers regarding methodology and current teaching practices while encouraging the development of students' linguistic competencies as well as their identity as plurilingual members of society.

Charts 41 and 42 indicate schools' and school divisions' responses regarding the support they provide to newly hired French Immersion teachers, while Chart 43 is in respect to school administrators. Such supports are essential for the integration of new teachers in classrooms and could increase the probability of retaining these teachers.

Chart 41: Supports in place for newly hired French Immersion **teachers** as identified by the 105 French Immersion **schools,** showing frequency of responses
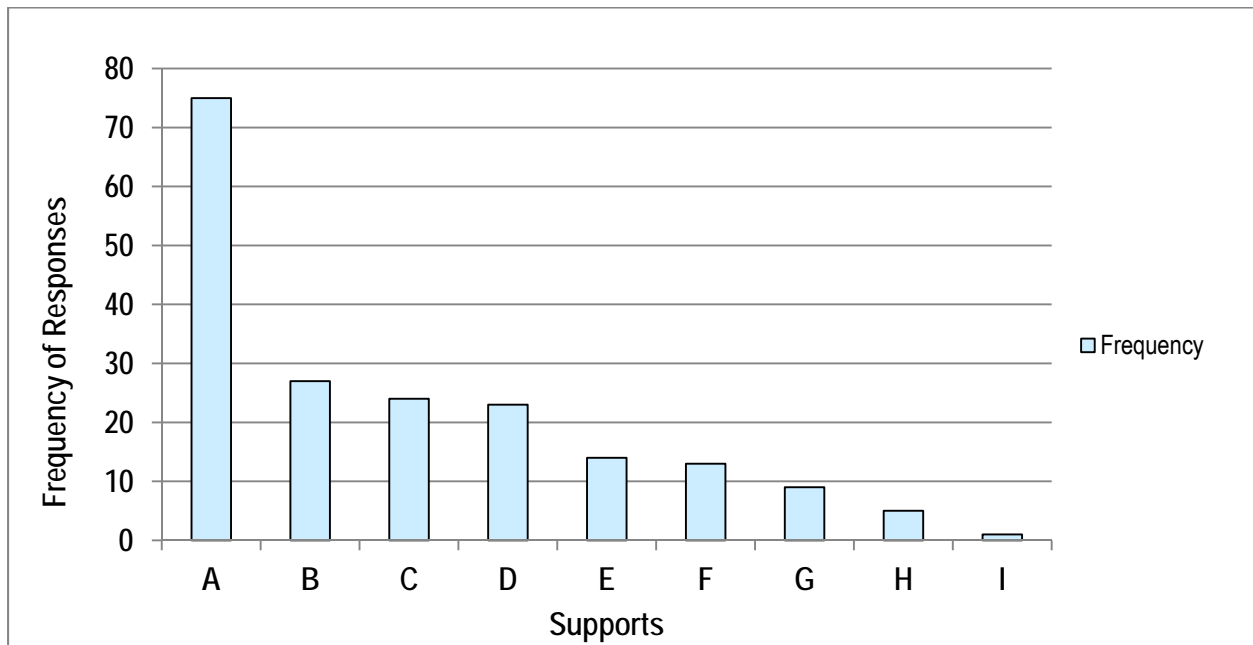
A - Mentorship/buddy system/school partners

B - New teacher workshops

C - Support from the divisional language consultant

D - Support from administrators and resource teachers

E - Grade level meetings/French Immersion team meetings

F - Opportunities to observe, network, collaborate

G - French Language courses

H - Instructional coach/Team leader/Department head

I - Training for assessing oral competencies (DELF)

The data indicates that the most common support offered is mentorship (A – 75 responses) while the remaining supports have much lower number of responses. Supporting new teachers to the profession enables them to be successful in the classroom, fosters a sense of belonging in the school, and contributes to their retention. School administrators are thus responsible for ensuring that a variety of professional learning opportunities are in place, however data indicates that there exists a limited variety in the type of supports offered at the school level for new teachers. Although mentorship is the easiest support to organize, the results are difficult to predict as they are a function of two individuals buying into it. Unless there is a formal process in place at the school, this model is very inconsistent in terms of the results it produces. A well established mentorship program should not limit itself to a teacher's first year in the profession, but rather encompass specific goals and strategies where scaffolding occurs in order to guide and respond to the needs of new teachers. In this respect, teacher retention could be addressed.

Chart 42: Supports in place for newly hired French Immersion **teachers** as identified by the 22 **school divisions** offering the French Immersion Program, showing frequency of responses
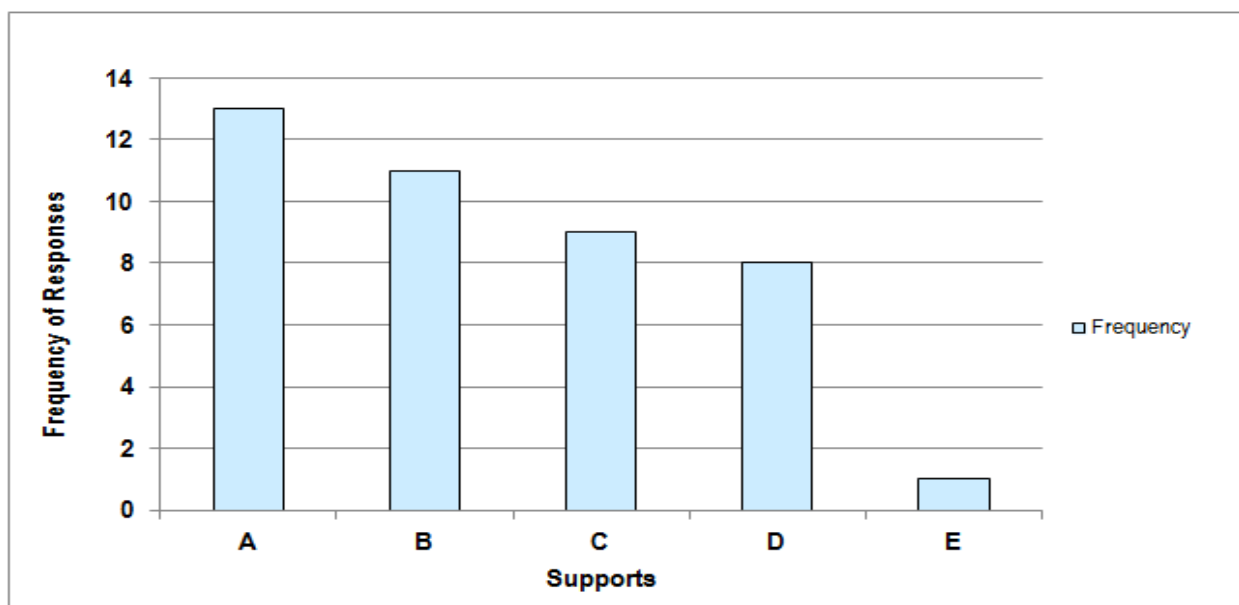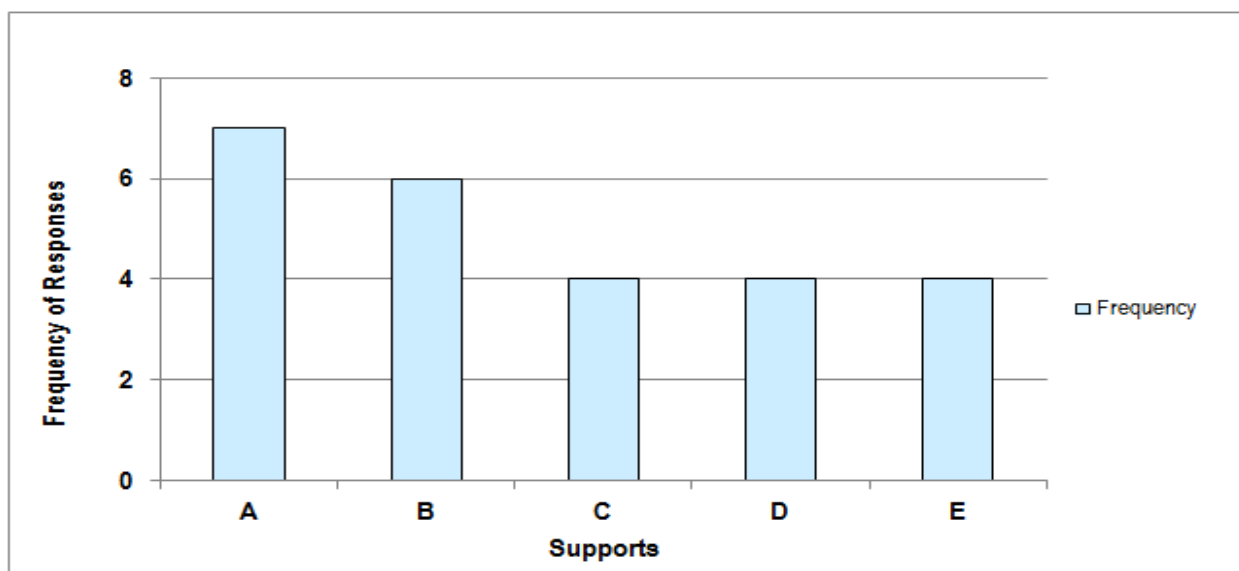

A - Mentorship
B - Access to professional leaning opportunities
C - Support of the divisional language consultant/coordinator
D - Divisional orientation for new teachers
E - One-to-one meetings with administrators

The data reveals that the supports most commonly offered by school divisions are mentorship (A – 13 responses) and a variety of professional learning opportunities such as language classes, methodology, assessment and networking (B – 11 responses). It has also been revealed that school divisions offer support through a divisional language consultant where observation of classes with debriefing and suggestions, dedicated professional learning time, lesson modelling and co-teaching opportunities were offered (C – 9 responses). However, not all school divisions have the resources to offer the support of a divisional language consultant/coordinator. In addition, school divisions offered a divisional orientation session which did not necessarily have a specific French Immersion component (D – 8 responses).

The above data seems to indicate that school divisions offer some support for newly hired French Immersion teachers. Schools and school divisions need to share this responsibility and recognize that the French Immersion Program has specific needs that differ from the English Program. Although some professional learning does occur at the divisional level, in most instances a French Immersion component is lacking and the specific needs of new French Immersion teachers are not entirely being addressed.

Chart 43: Supports in place for newly hired French Immersion **administrators** as identified by the 22 **school divisions** offering the French Immersion Program, showing frequency of responses

A - French administrator meetings/study groups/council/new administrators' groups

B - French Immersion consultant

C - Support from superintendents

D - Mentorship

E - Support for personal professional learning

The data reveals that school divisions offer support through *French administrator meetings or groups* (A – 7 responses), and some divisions have a *Divisional language consultant* in place (B – 6 responses), while the three remaining supports (C – E) were each mentioned 4 times by the responding school divisions.

Charts 44 and 45 indicate school divisions' responses regarding the offering of a leadership program.

Chart 44: Percentage of **school divisions** offering a leadership program
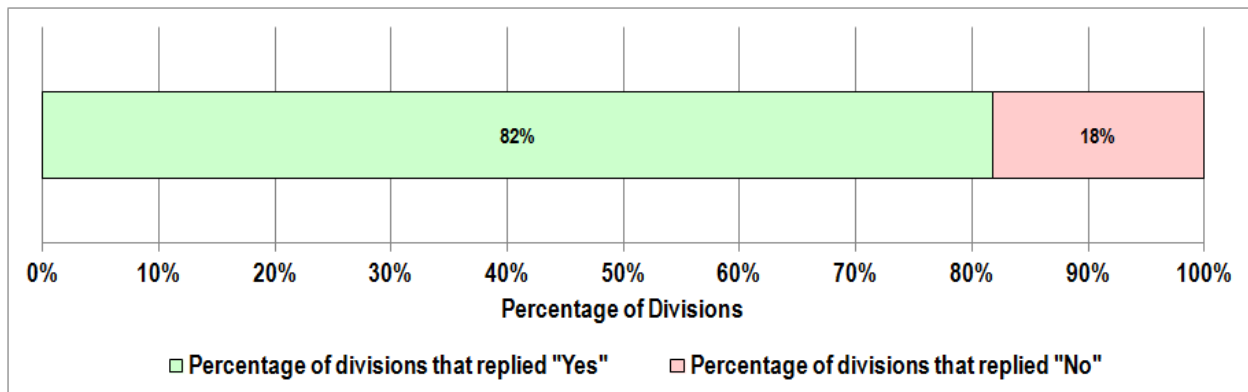
The data indicates that 82% of school divisions offering the French Immersion Program provide a leadership program for their teachers who are considering positions as school administrators. However, based on Chart 45 below, none of these leadership programs have a French Immersion component.

Chart 45: Percentage of the divisional leadership programs that have a French Immersion component
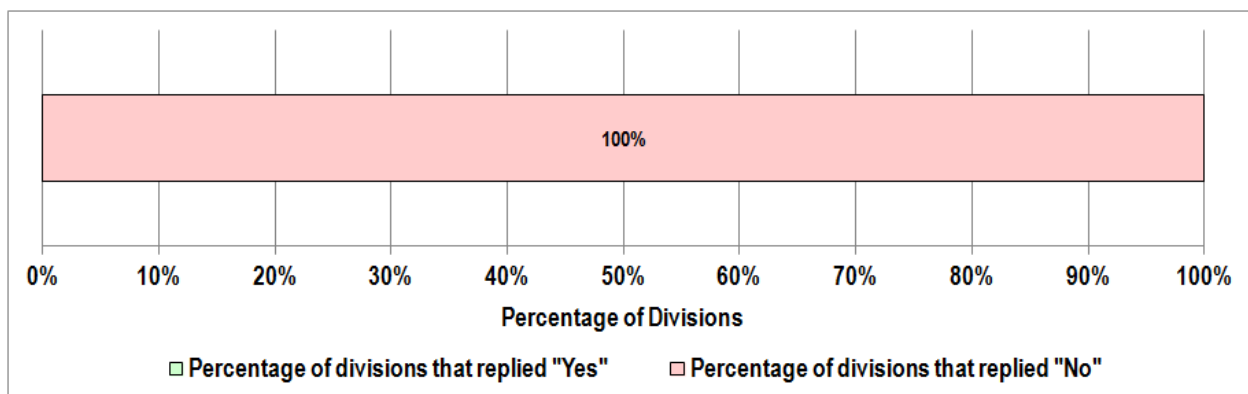
Given the information from the chart above, it is quite concerning that none of the school divisions provide a French Immersion component in their leadership program.

Professional Learning

All educators, teachers and administrators, need to be aware of research, issues and innovations related to their respective roles and responsibilities towards the French Immersion Program. Teachers need to stay informed of research in the area of second language acquisition and pedagogical resources that are available. One must recognize the importance for French Immersion teachers to have access to professional learning opportunities that meet their needs as educators in a French Immersion Program.

Since French Immersion teachers are in limited supply, many new teachers are hired without necessarily having acquired all the competencies mentioned previously. Given this situation, professional learning opportunities become paramount in ensuring that teachers gain the skills required.

The subsequent 4 questions were included to ascertain schools' priorities regarding French Immersion professional learning by looking at grade groupings as well as the type of professional learning opportunities sought by teachers.

Chart 46 indicates the schools' responses regarding educational staff members, while Charts 47 and 48 examine responses in respect to teachers.

Chart 46: Number of educational staff members (other than classroom teachers) that have participated in professional learning opportunities related to French Immersion in the 2013-2014 school year, by position
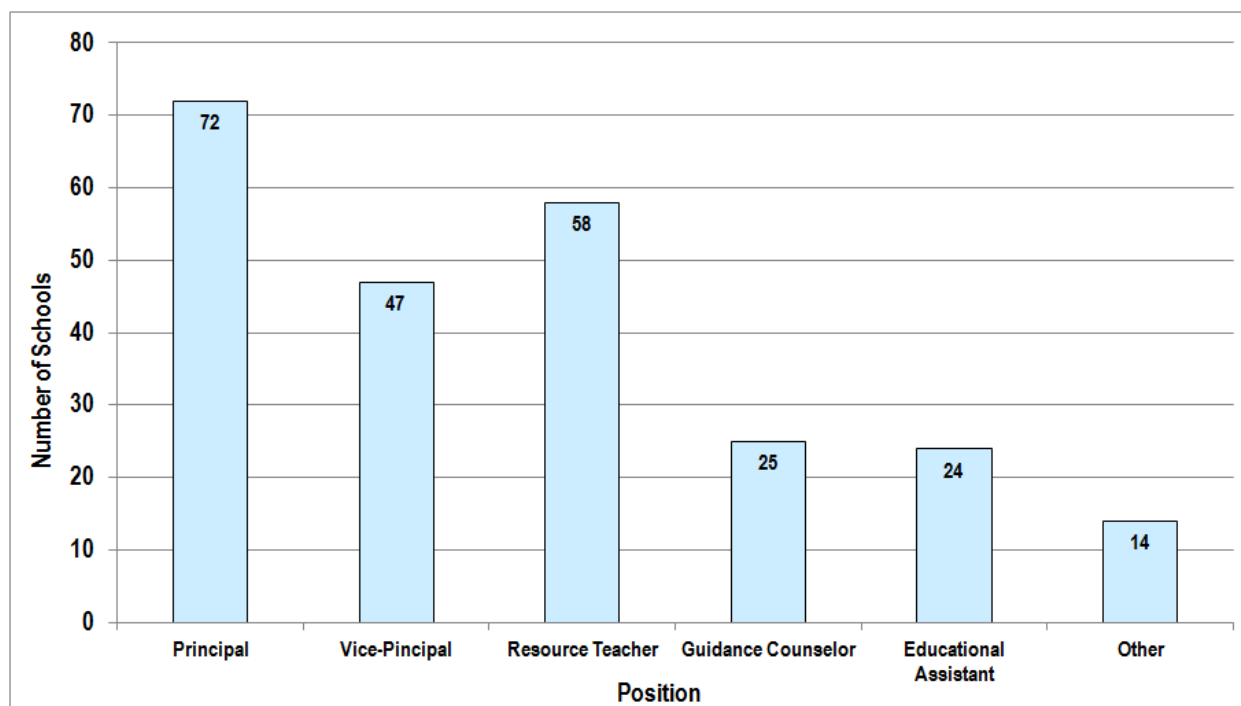
When considering data from Chart 46, it is important to note that personnel in schools may vary due to the fact that not all schools have a vice-principal and the number of educational assistants widely depends on students' needs.

The data indicates that the majority of school principals, 72 of the 105 (68.6%), and some resource teachers, 58 of the 105 (55.2%), participated in some type of professional learning opportunity related to the French Immersion Program. Although the majority of school principals took part in professional learning, it is nevertheless surprising that 31.4% of administrators did not attend a learning opportunity related to the French Immersion Program.

Apart from the positions of principal and resource teacher, very few other non teaching staff had any professional learning related to the French Immersion Program. It is essential that all educational staff participate in professional learning opportunities related to French Immersion in order to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to offer, support and maintain a high-quality program.

Chart 47: Number of French Immersion teachers having participated in professional learning activities offered in French in the 2013-2014 school year, by type of professional learning activity (as reported by the school)
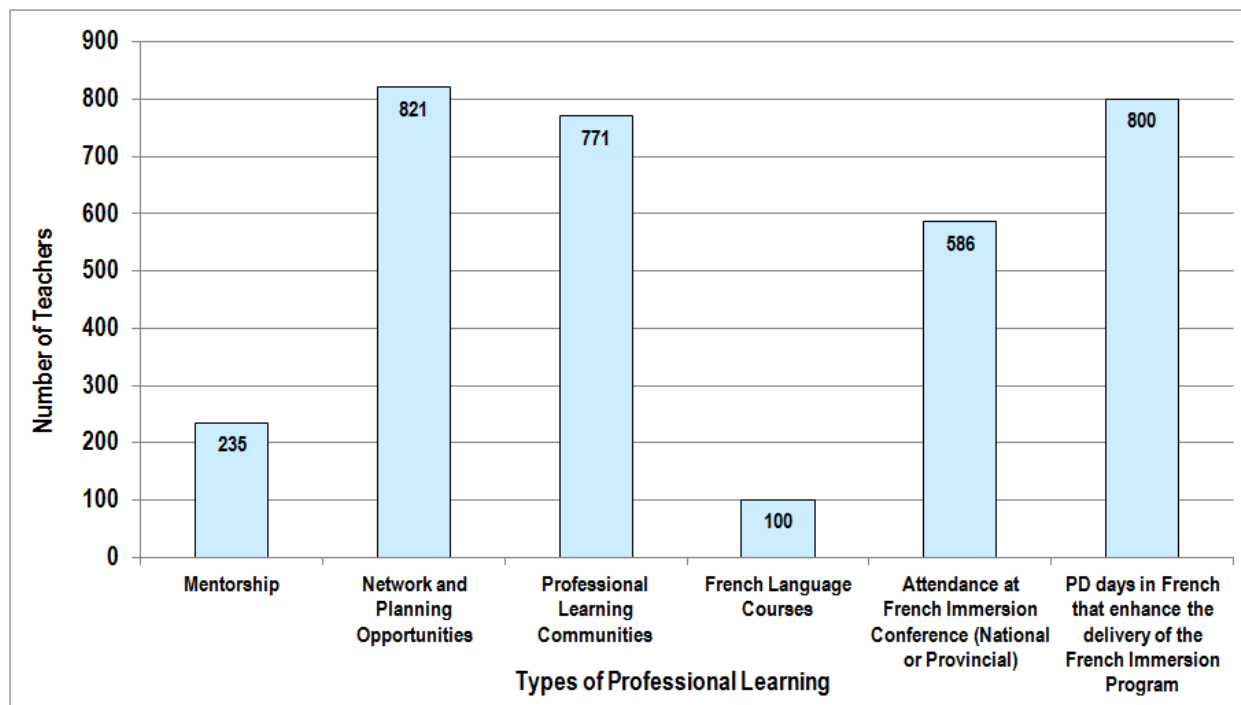
The data reveals that the most common types of professional learning activities attended by the teachers are *Network and planning* (821 responses), *Professional development days in French that enhance the delivery of the French Immersion Program* (800 responses), and *Professional learning communities* (771 responses).

In addition, many teachers (586 responses) participated in *French Immersion conferences.* Other professional learning activities identified by fewer schools are *Mentorship* (235 responses) and *French language courses* (100 responses). This is the second time that mentorship has been mentioned. The data from Chart 41 also identified *Mentorship* as the main support offered to new teachers. In reference to *French language courses,* there may be an increase in teacher participation in these types of courses in the future given that French Immersion schools maintain that hiring qualified staff poses a challenge due to the difficulty in finding teachers with appropriate language competencies and content knowledge as reported in Charts 31, 32 and 36 of this report.

Chart 48: Percentage of French Immersion teachers who participated in professional learning activities related to the French Immersion Program in the 2013-2014 school year, by grade levels
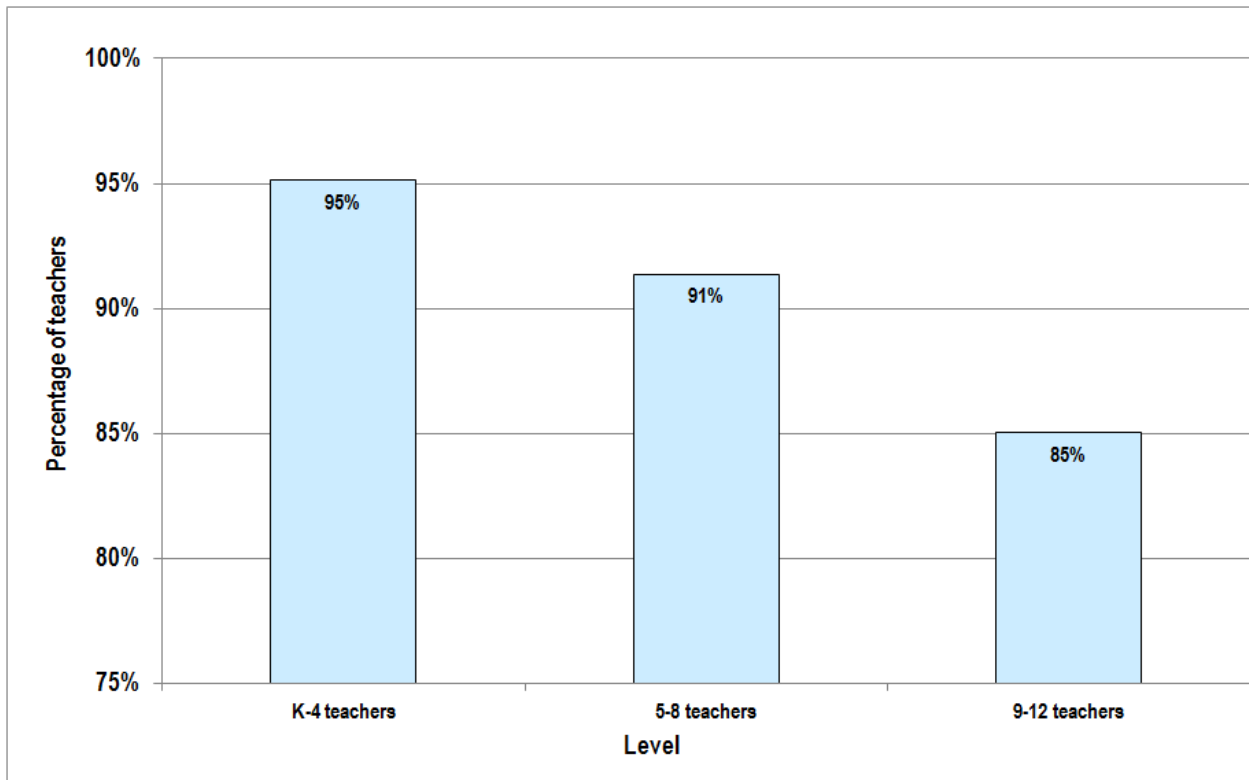
The data indicates that there is a high percentage of K to 4 (95%) and 5 to 8 (91%) teachers that participated in professional learning activities related to the French Immersion Program, and that there was a slight drop in the percentage (85%) among Senior Years teachers.

Chart 49 reveals schools' responses in respect to the type of professional learning opportunities. Please note that there are proportionately fewer Senior Years schools than Early and Middle Years French Immersion schools.

Chart 49: French Immersion professional learning priorities of schools, by frequency of responses and grade groupings
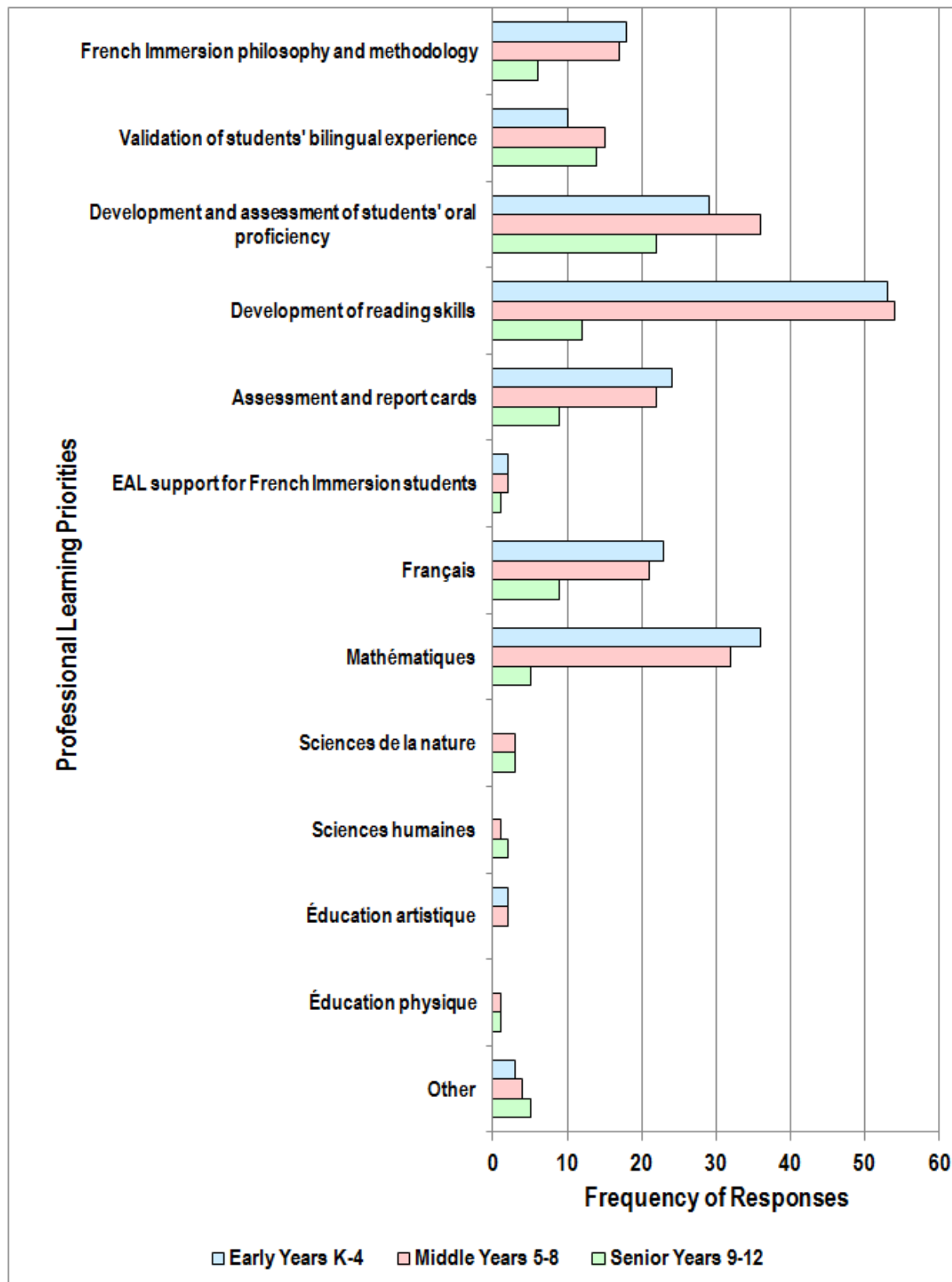
The data reveals that the seven main professional learning priorities are as follows: *Development of reading skills* (119 responses), *Development and assessment of students' oral proficiency* (87 responses), *Mathématiques* (73 responses), *Assessment and report cards* (55 responses), *Français* (53 responses), *French Immersion philosophy and methodology* (41 responses), and *Validation of students' bilingual experience* (39 responses).

Upon further analysis, the following chart illustrates the ranking of professional learning priorities by grade groupings. It should be noted that there are fewer Senior Years schools resulting in fewer responses.

Rank	Early Years (EY)	Middle Years (MY)	Senior Years (SY)
1	Development of reading skills (53 responses)	Development of reading skills (54 responses)	Development and assessment of students' oral proficiency (22 responses)
2	Mathématiques (36 responses)	Development and assessment of students' oral proficiency (36 responses)	Validation of students' bilingual experience (14 responses)
3	Development and assessment of students' oral proficiency (29 responses)	Mathématiques (32 responses)	Development of reading skills (12 responses)
4	Assessment and report cards (24 responses)	Assessment and report cards (22 responses)	Assessment and report cards (9 responses)
5	Français (23 responses)	Français (21 responses)	Français (9 responses)
6	French Immersion philosophy and methodology (18 responses)	French Immersion philosophy and methodology (17 responses)	French Immersion philosophy and methodology (6 responses)
7	Validation of students' bilingual experience (10 responses)	Validation of students' bilingual experience (15 responses)	Mathématiques and other (5 responses)

This analysis shows that the ranking of professional learning priorities is similar in Early and Middle Years, and differs slightly at the Senior Years. Early, Middle and Senior Years have all identified *Development of reading skills* as well as the *Development and assessment of students' oral proficiency* in their first three priorities, while *Mathématiques* seems to be more of a priority in the Early and Middle Years. In addition, *Validation of students' bilingual experience* is reported as being the second priority in the Senior Years but ranks seventh in the Early and Middle Years. A focus on validating students should occur throughout their plurilingual experience and must not be limited to the Senior Years, since validating students linguistic experience nurtures the development of their identity, influences retention, and enhances the sense of community inside and outside school. Truly understanding one's own identity is developed with guidance and through time, and should commence as early as Kindergarten.

Reflection on Educational Staff and Professional Learning

Upon completion of Section 3 of the questionnaire, schools were asked to reflect on the extent to which they successfully supported their educational staff and offered appropriate professional learning opportunities that enabled them to:

- support students in the development of their linguistic competencies
- validate students' French Immersion experience
- encourage students to become plurilingual members of society

This reflection included identifying successes achieved and challenges encountered while empowering their educational staff in delivering a strong French Immersion Program and are subsequently presented in Charts 50 and 51.

Schools were then asked to make an overall school self-assessment with respect to educational staff and professional learning. Hence, Chart 52 represents the schools' perspective regarding their degree of success in the hiring and supporting of staff.

Chart 50 presents the main factors identified as successes in hiring and supporting educational staff, by factor and frequency of responses.

Chart 50: Successes in hiring and supporting educational staff, by factor and frequency of responses
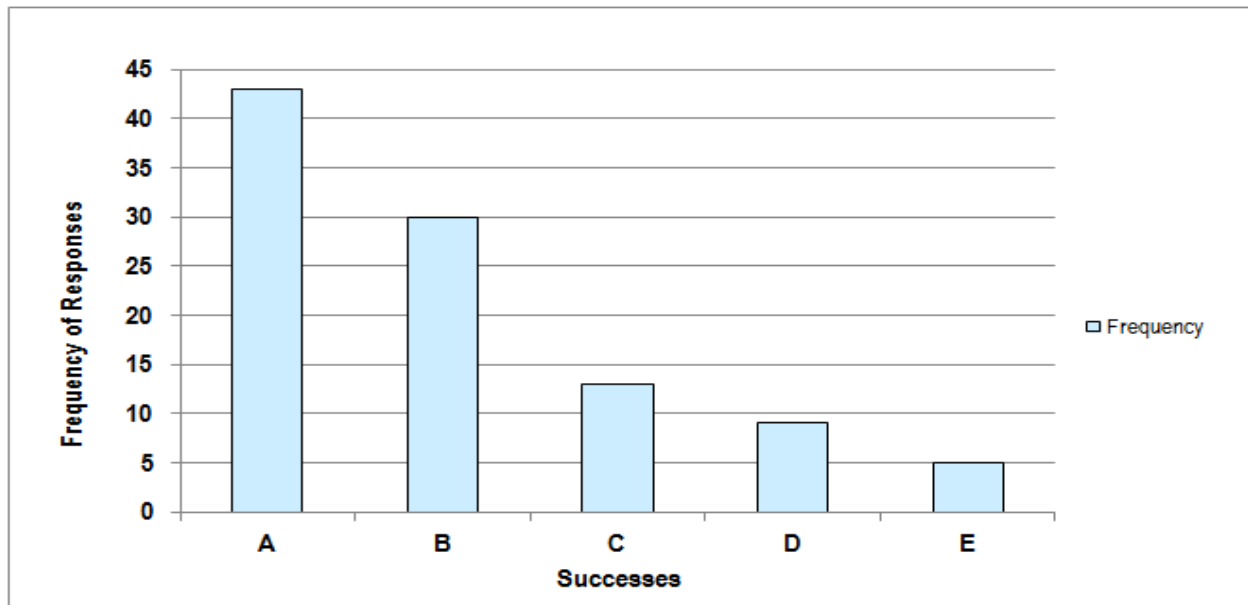
A - Professional collaboration between teachers at the school and school division level

B - Professional learning offered to all teachers that support the development of student's linguistic competencies

C - Very supportive and collaborative staff

D - Administration attends job fairs in early February in order to start the hiring process

E - Support teachers in the teaching and assessment of literacy and numeracy

The data indicates that schools perceive their two main successes to be in the area of *Professional collaboration* (A – 43 responses) as well as *Professional learning* (B – 30 responses). While 1 success pertains to the hiring process (D), 4 of the 5 successes identified relate to professional learning opportunities (A, B, C, and E). Nine schools reported attending *Job fairs in early February* (D); however, this may simply be considered a strategy rather than a success as the effectiveness of such fairs is questionable, as per Chart 34. Upon observation of the reported successes, they all reflect strategies implemented by schools; however revealing the outcomes of these strategies may have been more pertinent.

Chart 51 presents the main factors identified as challenges in hiring and supporting educational staff, by factor and frequency of responses.

Chart 51: Challenges in hiring and supporting educational staff, by frequency of responses and cumulative percentages
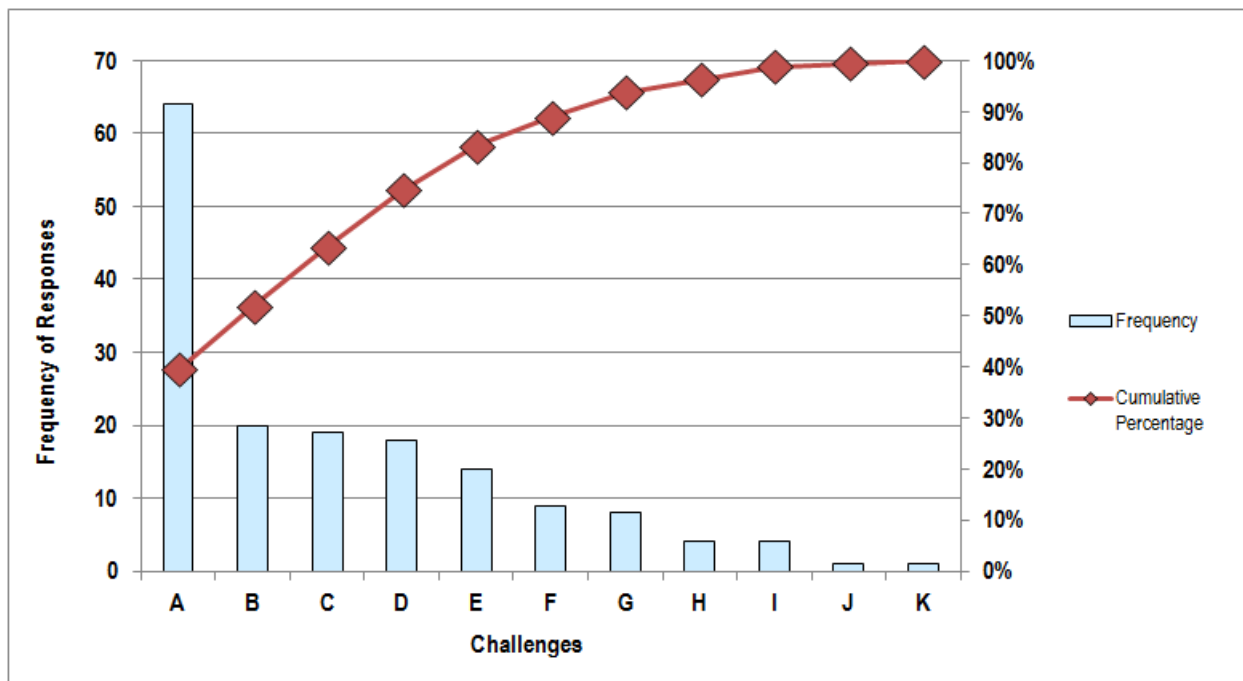
A - Limited pool of qualified candidates

B - Distance in rural/northern communities (recruiting, time/cost of professional learning).

C - Inconsistent professional learning offered to teachers in French

D - Lack of French linguistic competency of staff

E - High staff turnover limits stability and continuity

F - Difficulty finding French speaking educational assistants and substitute teachers

G - Faculty of education students are unprepared for today's French Immersion Program

H - Lack of appropriate French teaching resources

I - Lack of opportunity to meet as a French Immersion team in schools

J - Staff defer to English when speaking to staff or students

K - Ensuring the administration in French Immersion schools are knowledgeable and have experience in the French Immersion Program

The challenges identified by the schools are presented in the Pareto chart above. The Pareto Principle states that by addressing the factors that cause 80% of the challenges, strategies developed may become more focussed and resources may be allocated more effectively. As a result, most if not all of the remaining 20% of the challenges may also improve. The analysis of this data focuses on the challenges that need the most attention, those that represent a cumulative value of 80%.

The data reveals that schools perceive their main challenge to be a *Limited pool of qualified candidates* (A – 64 responses). This reality is only exacerbated in rural and northern communities in regards to hiring and retaining staff and further confirms the anecdotal evidence from the field. It is evident that this challenge affects the quality of and accessibility to the French Immersion Program. The remaining 20% of challenges (B – K) should be addressed by each school and school division according to their context.

According to the data, schools are faced with more challenges than successes, as they reported 11 challenges regarding educational staff and professional learning compared to 5 successes that were presented in Chart 50.

The following chart indicates the extent to which schools perceived their level of success regarding recruitment and professional learning of staff to ensure the delivery of a strong French Immersion Program.

Chart 52: Percentage of schools indicating their level of success in empowering their educational staff to deliver a strong French Immersion Program
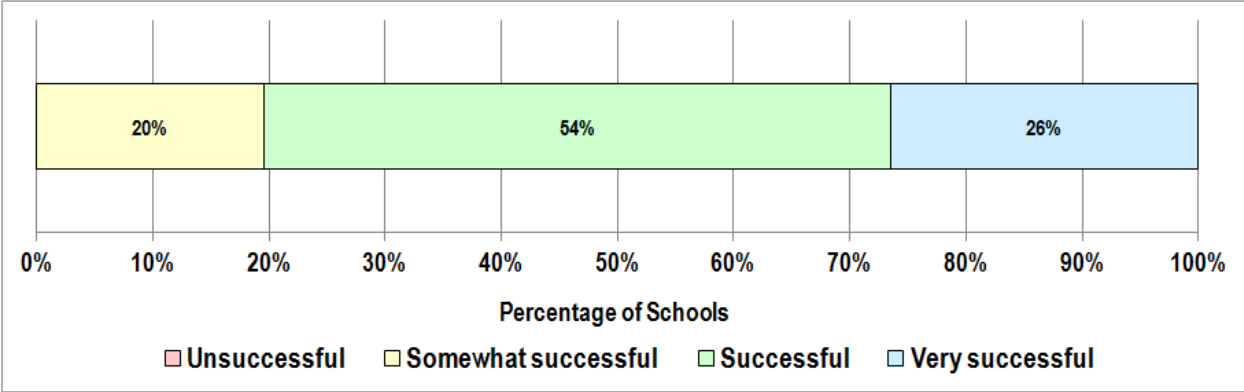
The data reveals that of the 102 responding schools, 80% perceive themselves as either being *Very successful* (26%) or *Successful* (54%) in empowering their educational staff in delivering a strong program, whereas 20% indicated they were *Somewhat successful*. These findings seem encouraging, but are nonetheless contradictory to other data presented in this section. As there are only a few successes highlighted in the data, the 80% success rate is questionable since it seems entirely linked to providing teachers with professional learning opportunities. Given that there is a limited pool of qualified candidates, schools and school divisions could be attributing their success to effective collaboration with current staff. It is evident that further work is required in order to support, recruit, and retain qualified educators thus contributing to the delivery of a strong French Immersion Program.

Section 4
Student Enrolment Trends

Section 4 provides data regarding student enrolment trends in the French Immersion Program.

In today's global world, increased plurilingualism among students is an important issue. Recruitment and retention of French Immersion students are vital to the success of this Program and are key indicators of its full implementation. A firm commitment to provide the best possible learning conditions for students will contribute to the quality of the French Immersion Program, thus long-term growth.

Schools and school divisions were asked to provide information on how they monitor enrolments and enrolment trends at all levels, as well as addressing related issues to ensure Program stability, such as supporting struggling learners, promotion, entry points, transition and public visibility.

To provide a more comprehensive profile of the implementation of the French Immersion Program across Manitoba, previously collected enrolment statistics for the 2013-14 school year as well as enrolment trends over an 11 year period are first presented in this section. The analysis of the questionnaire responses follows.

Provincial Enrolment Statistics

The following provincial statistics provide a portrait of enrolment and enrolment trends for the French Immersion Program for the 2013-2014 school year as well as an overview of an 11 year period from 2003-2004 to 2013-2014. These statistics are presented in the same format as the individual school and divisional statistics included in the Administrator's Guide. Additional charts, showing enrolment data by school division, have also been included.

Current Year Observations:

Chart A

Chart A — Manitoba Enrolments by Gender, 2013-2014, French Immersion Program
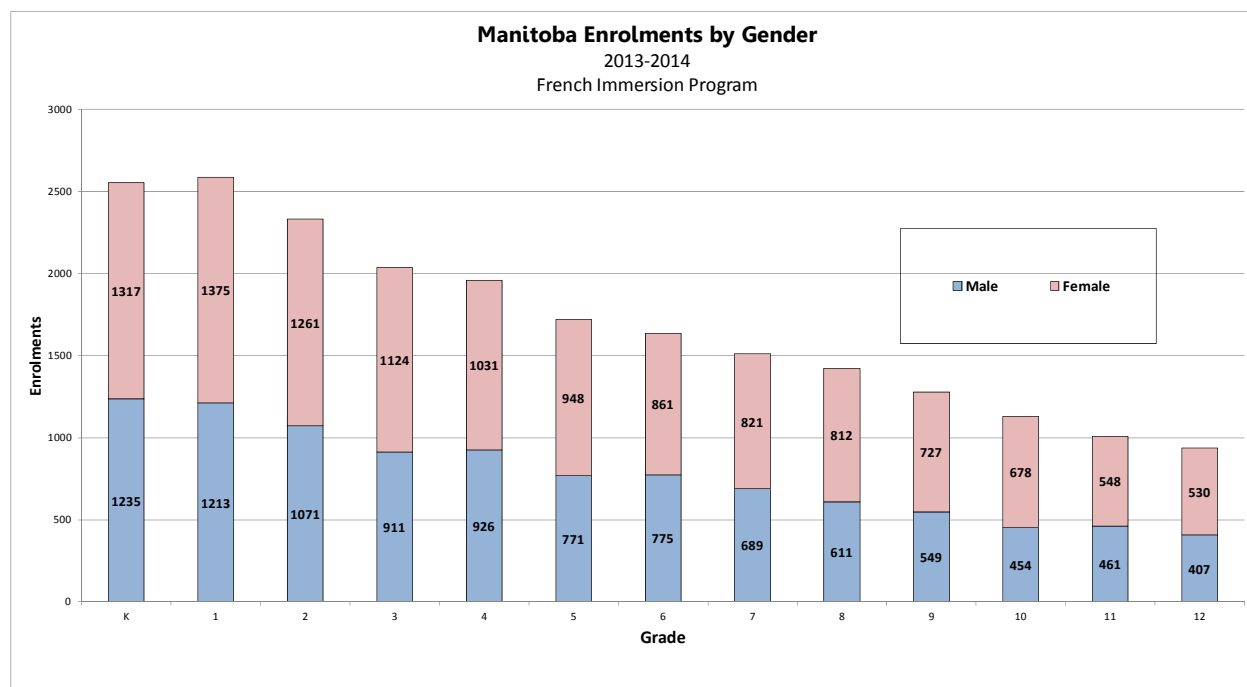
- Chart A shows that the number of students enrolled per grade diminishes as the grade level increases. This is very different from the distribution of Manitoba's total public school enrolments by grade where there is a relatively equal number of students at each grade level.

- Furthermore, Chart A demonstrates that the distribution of French Immersion enrolments by grade and gender shows the predominance of females over males at each grade level. This is very different from the distribution of Manitoba's total public school enrolments by grade and gender where there are more males than females at each grade level.

Other Key Current Year Observations:

- Excluding Pre-Kindergarten and Special Education enrolments, Manitoba's 2013-2014 total public school enrolment was 178,217 students. Thus, the French Immersion Program represented 12.4 % of Manitoba's total public school enrolment.

- In 2013-2014, of the 22,106 students in 105 schools, 11,277 students (or 51%) were enrolled in 37 single track French Immersion schools, while 10,829 students (or 49%) were enrolled in 68 dual track French Immersion schools. Although there are fewer single track French Immersion schools, these schools have a greater number of enrolments than the dual track schools.

- With respect to the above 22,106 French Immersion students, the vast majority of them, 21,674 or 98% entered the Program in Kindergarten or Grade 1, while 134 students (or 0.6%) started in Grade 4 and 298 students (or 1.4%) entered in Grade 7. This shows that if a student misses the opportunity of starting the French Immersion Program in Kindergarten or Grade 1, there are few opportunities to enter the Program in midstream.

- Also, 17,074 (77.2%) of the 22,106 French Immersion students were from the metropolitan Winnipeg region, 4,002 students (18.1%) were from rural school divisions, and 1,030 students (4.7%) were from northern school divisions. Comparatively, the overall public school population had 94,055 students (54.3%) from metropolitan Winnipeg, 62,690 students (36.2%) from rural divisions and 16,470 students (9.5%) from northern school divisions. This data clearly shows that the French Immersion Program in Manitoba is largely an urban phenomenon.

- To provide more details on the regional breakdown of French Immersion enrolments, Chart B below shows the distribution of French Immersion enrolments by school division in school year 2013-2014. The six (6) urban school divisions have the largest groupings of French Immersion students from 19.5% in the Louis Riel School Division to 6.6% in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division. The next four (4) school divisions: Seine River (5.5%), Brandon (3.3%), Sunrise (3.2%), and Lord Selkirk (2.0%) are either school divisions close to Winnipeg, or urban centres outside of Winnipeg. The remaining school divisions are either "rural" or "northern".

Chart B

French Immersion Enrolments by School Division
as a % of total Manitoba French Immersion Enrolment
2013-2014
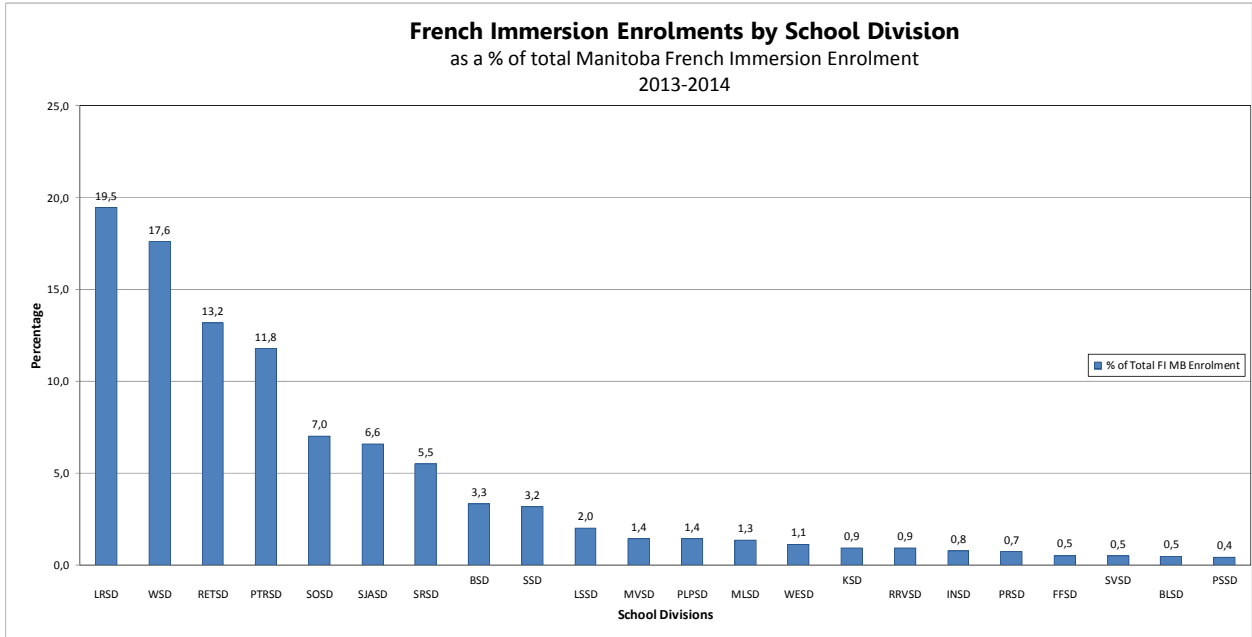
- Another interesting statistic is the concentration of French Immersion enrolments within each school division; that is, the proportion of French Immersion enrolments as a percentage of each school division's total public school Kindergarten to Grade 12 enrolment (i.e. excluding Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten as well as Special Education enrolments). Chart C below presents the "concentration" data for each school division offering the French Immersion Program. Louis Riel School division (30.0%) and Seine River School Division (29.8%) have the largest concentrations of French Immersion students within their school division boundaries. It is interesting to note that the Winnipeg School Division which had the second largest grouping of French Immersion students provincially (3,890 students or 17.6% of total French Immersion enrolments) had the tenth (10th) largest concentration of French Immersion students within its boundaries at 11.7%.

Chart C

Concentration of French Immersion Enrolments within each School Division
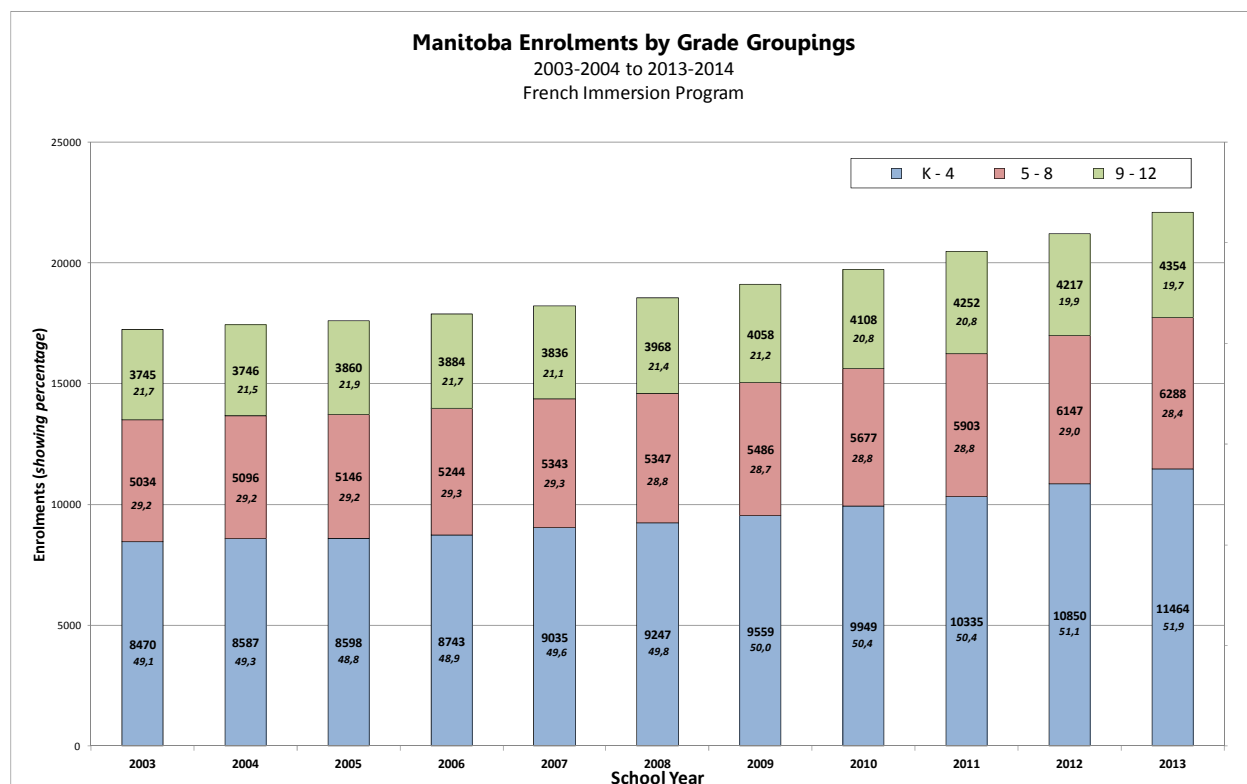2013-2014
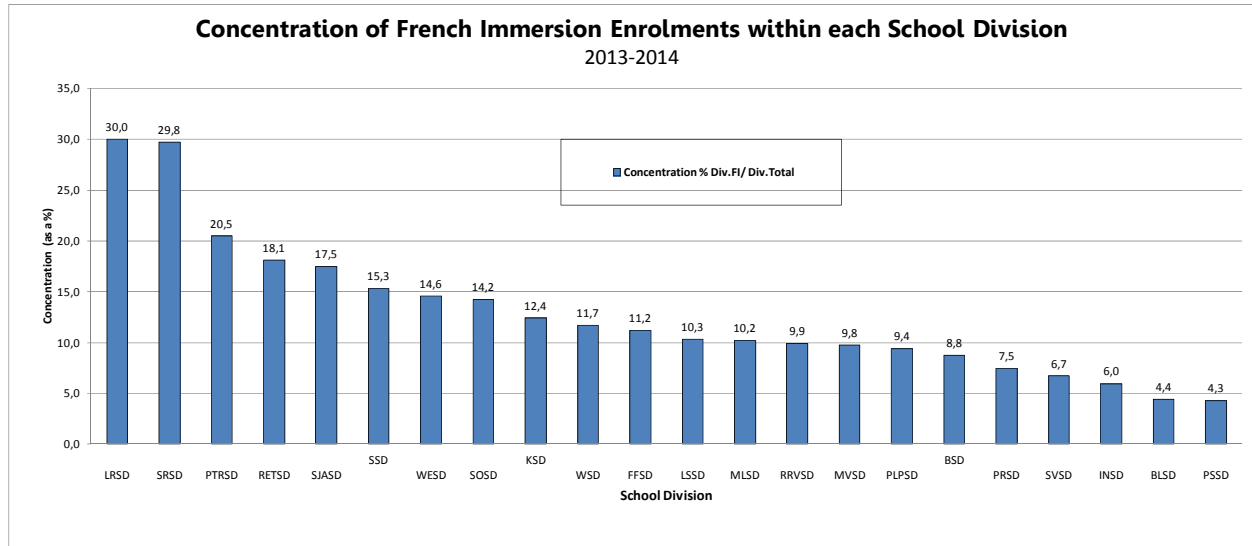
Historical Data – Observations over Time

Chart D presents French Immersion enrolment by grade, as well as the number of French Immersion schools, for the school years 2003-2004 to 2013-2014. Over this period, Manitoba's total French Immersion enrolment increased from 17,249 to 22,106, a difference of 4,677 students representing a percentage increase of 26.8%.

Number of students in the French Immersion Program
By school year and grade (excluding Special Education)
Manitoba (public schools only)
School Years 2003-2004 to 2013-2014

School Years	No. of Schools	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
								GRADE							
2003-2004	97	1820	1816	1730	1615	1489	1327	1240	1271	1196	1078	924	880	863	17 249
2004-2005	97	1912	1840	1681	1621	1533	1417	1253	1217	1209	1049	979	880	838	17 429
2005-2006	97	1903	1939	1686	1552	1518	1455	1320	1228	1143	1124	956	921	859	17 604
2006-2007	97	1956	1924	1803	1594	1466	1414	1376	1301	1153	1070	1037	914	863	17 871
2007-2008	98	1963	2008	1835	1715	1514	1413	1337	1356	1237	1057	1012	931	836	18 214
2008-2009	99	1969	2011	1890	1742	1635	1436	1339	1301	1271	1149	952	935	932	18 562
2009-2010	101	2094	2054	1935	1793	1683	1548	1366	1309	1263	1178	1068	865	947	19 103
2010-2011	102	2192	2186	1972	1854	1745	1612	1476	1320	1269	1133	1103	999	873	19 734
2011-2012	103	2297	2249	2129	1887	1773	1637	1524	1449	1293	1174	1049	1043	986	20 490
2012-2013	104	2466	2419	2142	2020	1803	1696	1579	1476	1396	1174	1074	980	989	21 214
2013-2014	105	2552	2588	2332	2035	1957	1719	1636	1510	1423	1276	1132	1009	937	22 106

School Year 2013-2014 detailed analysis comparing French Immersion enrolments to total English Program enrolments (excl. Français Pgm. enrolments):

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
MB - Total enrolment	13306	13642	13217	12769	12874	12891	12993	13115	13308	14174	14321	14238	17369	178 217
minus : MB - Fran. + Imm. Pgms.	535	535	501	426	428	449	406	457	394	354	350	318	336	5 489
equals: MB - English Pgm. enrol.	12771	13107	12716	12343	12446	12442	12587	12658	12914	13820	13971	13920	17033	172 728

	K-4	5-8	9-12	K-12
FI :	11464	6288	4354	22 106
% FI Total :	51,9	28,4	19,7	100,0
(2013-14) MB Total :	65808	52307	60102	178 217
% :	17,4	12,0	7,2	12,4

Chart E

Manitoba Enrolments by Grade Groupings
2003-2004 to 2013-2014
French Immersion Program

- Chart E above presents the distribution of French Immersion enrolments by grade groupings (Early Years K-4, Middle Years 5-8, and Senior Years 9-12) by school year for the 2003-2004 to 2013-2014 school year period, the chart clearly shows that as French Immersion enrolments increased over time, the distribution in percentage terms for the 3 grade groupings have remained relatively the same, showing small increase in each grade grouping.

- Chart F below presents essentially the same data, except the French Immersion enrolment by school year is broken down by gender instead of grade groupings. It also shows the progression over time of the percentage or proportion of French Immersion students as compared to the total provincial public school K-12 population.

- From Chart F we clearly see that this proportion showed an important increase from 9.3% to 12.4% during this period.

- Female enrolments have also been greater than that of their male counterparts for each school year over the period and represent approximately 55% of total French Immersion enrolments.

Chart F

Manitoba Enrolments by Gender
also Showing French Immersion as a % of Total Enrolments
2003-2004 to 2013-2014
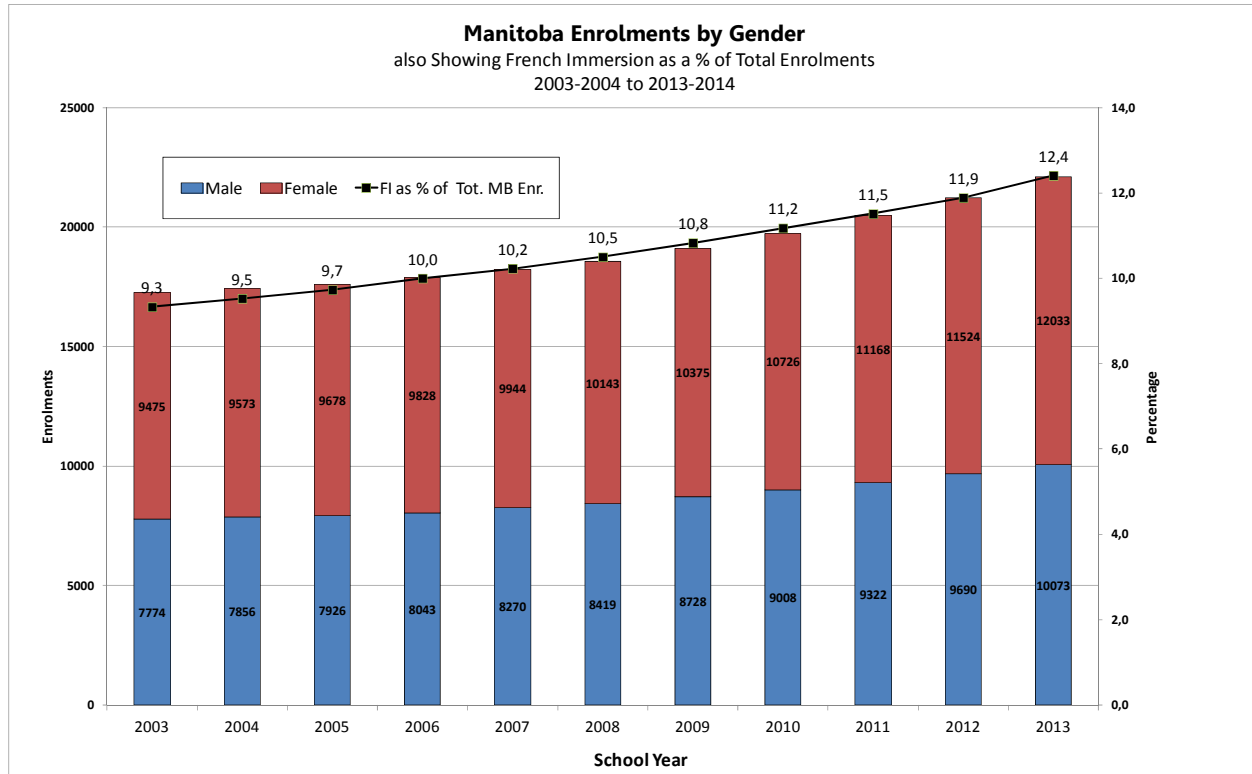
- Chart G below presents data on the change in French Immersion enrolments by school division over the last five (5) school years. The school divisions showing the largest increases in absolute numbers are all urban school divisions. Louis Riel School Division and Winnipeg School Division showed the largest increases with 732 and 615 students respectively.

- During this 5 year period, three (3) school divisions experienced losses in French Immersion enrolments: Kelsey (-6), Flin Flon (-8) and Mystery Lake (-51). Mystery Lake's large loss was due to the DSFM's opening of a *Français* school in Thompson (École La Voie du Nord) in September 2009.

Chart G

Change in French Immersion Enrolment by School Division over 5 years
2008-2009 to 2013-2014
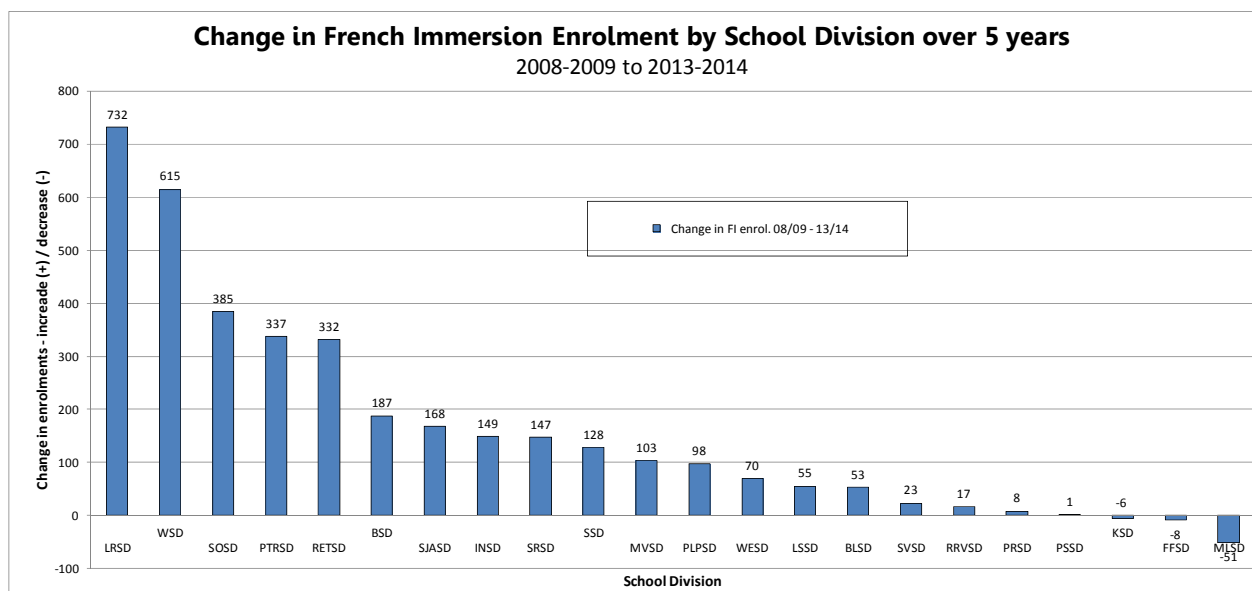
- Chart H below presents the percentage change in French Immersion enrolments by school division over the last 5 school years. The two (2) school divisions showing the largest percentage increases from 2008-2009 to 2013-2014 are Interlake School Division and Border Land School Division which have each experienced relatively "new" development in their respective French Immersion programs. Because they both had lower, initial enrolment values, their respective percentage increases are inflated.

- It is noteworthy that school divisions with more established French Immersion programs such as: Louis Riel, River East Transcona and Seine River are showing increases of over 10%: 20.5%, 13.7% and 12.9% respectively.

Chart H

% Change in French Immersion Enrolment by School Division over 5 years
2008-2009 to 2013-2014
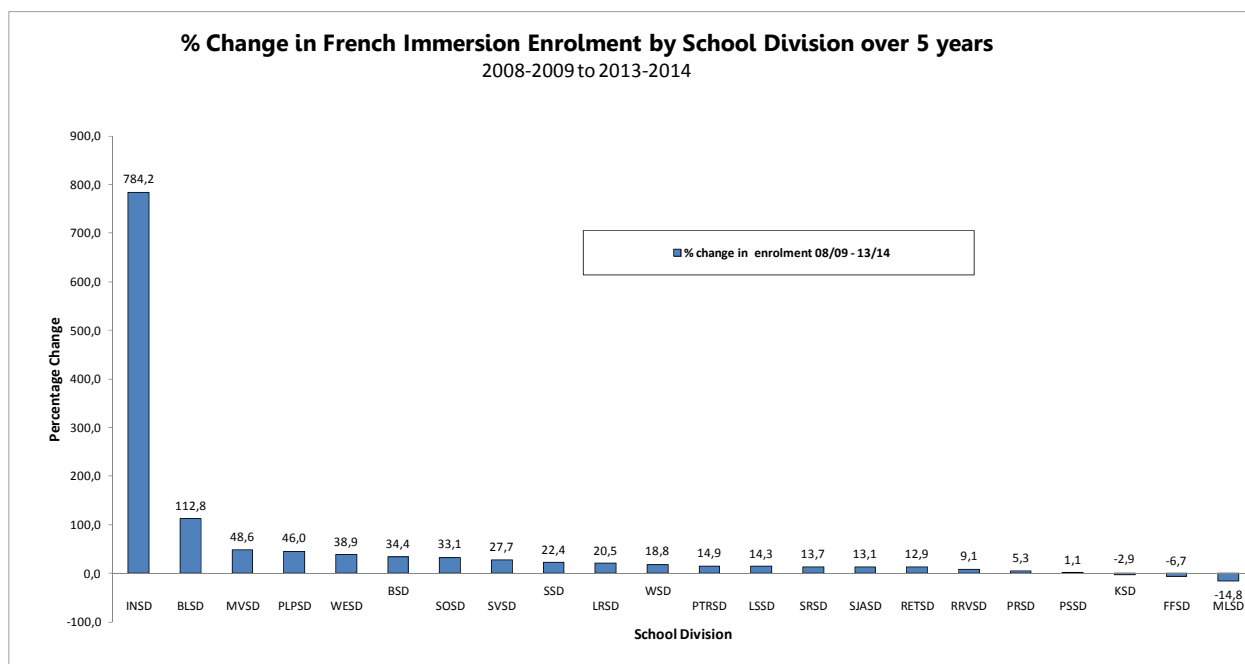
Chart I

French Immersion Enrolment as a Percentage of Manitoba Total Public School Population by Grade
School years 2003-2004 versus 2013-2014

Grade	2003-2004 (%)	2013-2014 (%)	Difference
K	14.8	19.2	4.4
1	14.2	19.0	4.8
2	13.0	17.6	4.6
3	11.7	15.9	4.2
4	10.6	15.2	4.6
5	9.5	13.3	3.8
6	8.8	12.6	3.8
7	8.7	11.5	2.8
8	8.2	10.7	2.5
9	7.1	9.0	1.9
10	6.3	7.9	1.6
11	6.2	7.1	0.9
12	5.1	5.4	0.3

- The summary table above presents French Immersion Program enrolments by grade as a percentage of Manitoba's total public school population (excluding pre-kindergarten and special education), school year 2003-2004 as compared to school year 2013-2014. The data shows that at all grade levels French Immersion enrolments as a proportion of total public school enrolments are increasing. However, as the grade levels go up, the increase in the proportion diminishes. The data also shows that at all grade levels, French Immersion enrolments have been growing at a rate greater than that of public school enrolments overall.

- Despite increases in French Immersion enrolments, the data from Charts A and I, which show decreasing French Immersion enrolments by grade in absolute numbers and decreasing percentages of French Immersion enrolments as a percentage of the total public school population by grade, suggest a retention problem with French Immersion enrolments which requires further analysis.

- Chart J below shows two (2) Kindergarten cohorts: the first starting in school year 1996-1997 and finishing (or graduating) in school year 2008-2009; the second, starting in school year 2001-2002 and finishing (or graduating) in school year 2013-2014. The chart demonstrates the enrolment level of the cohort in each grade over each school year as the students advanced through the French Immersion Program.

Chart J

Retention of French Immersion Students by Cohort and by Grade, showing percentage of students remaining in grade 12, Manitoba, Kindergarten Cohorts for 1996-2009 and 2001-2014
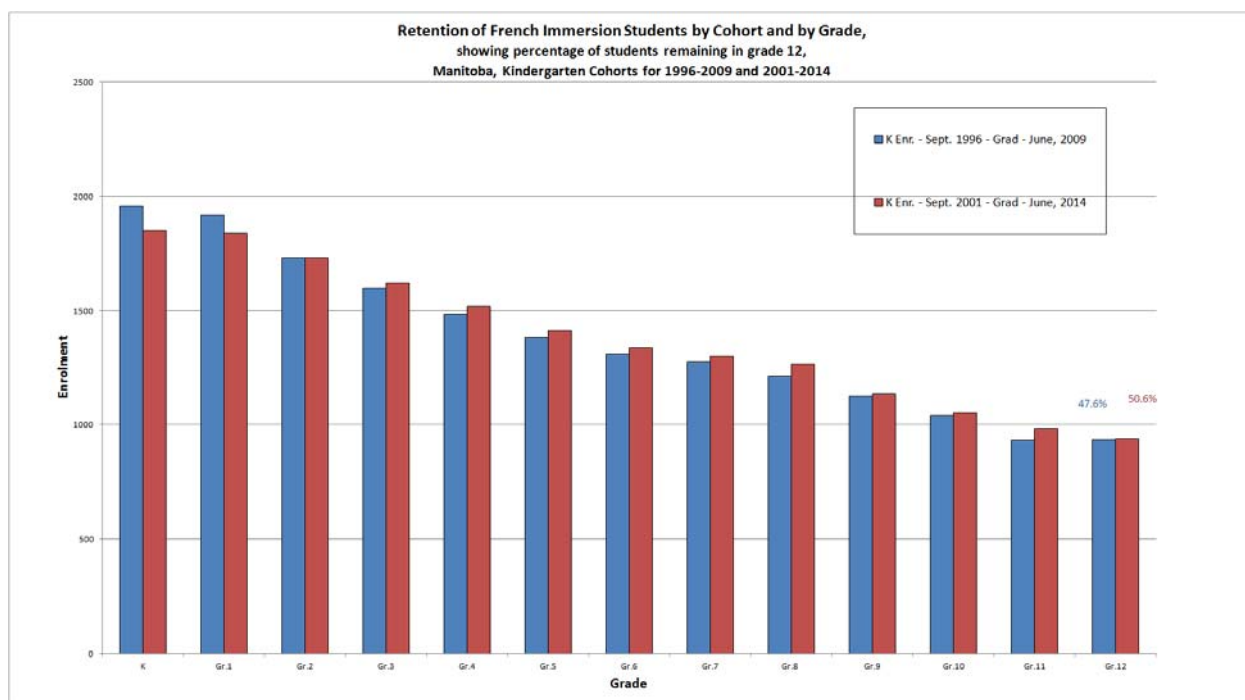
- This table reveals that there were 1,958 French Immersion students who started in Kindergarten in 1996-1997, but only 932 (or 47.6%) were enrolled in Grade 12 thirteen years later in 2008-2009 despite new enrolments in Grades 4 and 7. Similarly, there were 1,851 French Immersion students who enrolled in Kindergarten in 2001-2002, but only 937 (or 50.6%) were enrolled in 2013-2014 thirteen years later despite new enrolments in Grades 4 and 7.

- Briefly, the data reveals that the French Immersion Program loses approximately half of its students as they move from grade to grade through the school system until completion in Grade 12, and this, despite new students entering the French Immersion Program in Grade 4 and in Grade 7.

- Chart K below examines the retention/attrition issue by grade intervals over a 5 year period and over a 10 year period from school years 2003-2004 to 2013-2014. The data reveals that, apart from small enrolment increases between Kindergarten and Grade 1, there is a continuous loss of students from Grades 1 to 12, with a small improvement when comparing the 5 year to the 10 year moving average data. The largest losses occur between Grades 8-9, 9-10 and 10-11.

Chart K

Manitoba Retention Data by Grade Intervals
2003-2004 to 2013-2014
French Immersion Program

|	K - 1	1 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 4	4 - 5	5 - 6	6 - 7	7 - 8	8 - 9	9 - 10	10 - 11	11 - 12
5 Year Average	4,3%	-3,7%	-4,7%	-3,6%	-4,9%	-4,4%	-3,0%	-3,1%	-8,6%	-6,6%	-6,7%	-1,7%
10 Year Average	3,0%	-5,2%	-5,3%	-4,5%	-5,0%	-5,1%	-2,4%	-4,4%	-8,4%	-7,4%	-6,7%	-3,1%
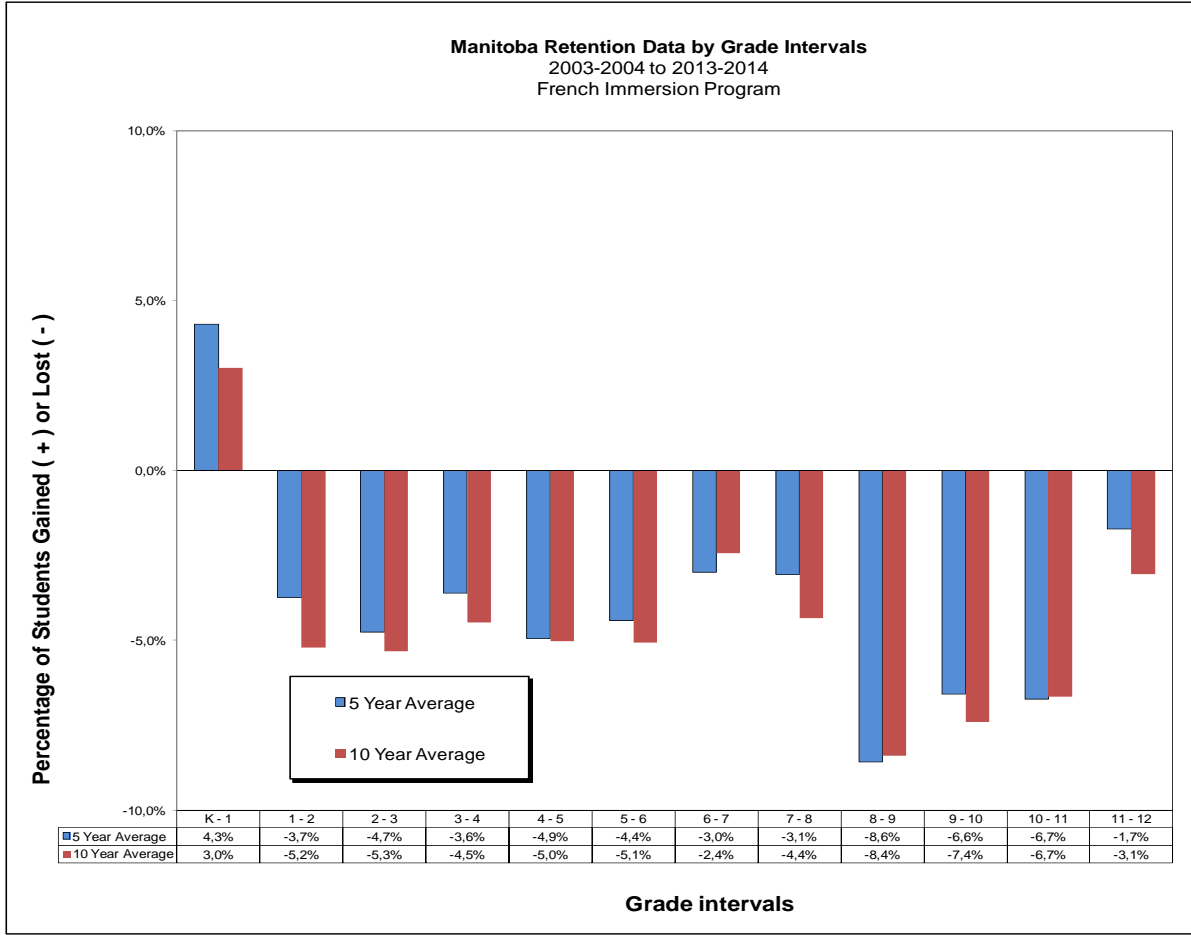
Conclusions:

- French Immersion Program enrolments are growing at a rate greater than that of the overall K to 12 public school population. However, the French Immersion Program is losing nearly half of its Kindergarten students by the time they reach Grade 12. This phenomenon requires further investigation in the field.

- The predominance of female enrolments over male enrolments at all grade levels, especially after Grade 8, in the French Immersion Program may also be interesting to study in greater detail.

- The predominance of dual track French Immersion schools representing nearly half of total French Immersion enrolments given the issues related to the full implementation of the French Immersion Program may also be the subject of continued conversations.

The following information presents data regarding student enrolment trends that was gathered through the questionnaires.

The subsequent 12 questions were included to ascertain: the possibility of overcrowding in Manitoba French Immersion schools due to increased enrolments, the effectiveness of the current entry points into the French Immersion Program, the commonalities among schools and school divisions with respect to the promotion of the French Immersion Program, and the main reasons for attrition by grade level.

Chart 53 presents the school divisions' perspective regarding overcrowding in their schools.

Chart 53: Percentage of **school divisions** experiencing overcrowding in their French Immersion schools
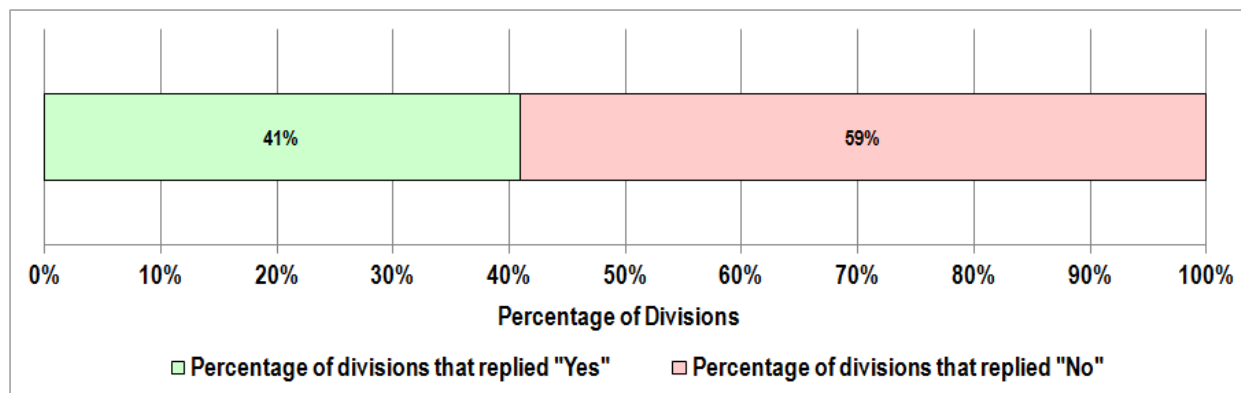

The data indicates that 41% of school divisions are experiencing overcrowding in their French Immersion schools. As stated in the provincial enrolment data presented previously in this section, student enrolment in the French Immersion Program continues to increase in all areas of the province; confirming the viability and success of the Program. However, the lack of space in offering the Program leaves school divisions with the challenge of reorganizing their schools in order to meet the needs of the community.

Visibility and Communication

Charts 54 and 56 examine the schools' responses regarding activities that value and promote the Program and influence student enrolment trends, while Charts 55 and 57 explore responses with respect to school divisions.

Chart 54: Percentage of **schools** that organize activities to recruit and retain students in the French Immersion Program
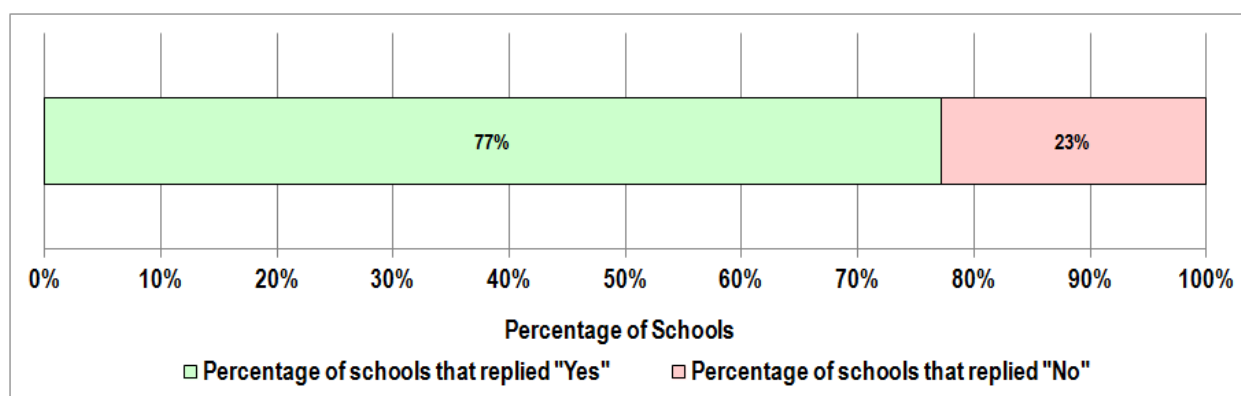
The data reveals that 77% of the 105 schools organize activities to recruit and retain students in the French Immersion Program and promote the Program by communicating various types of information to parents and the community, whereas 23% of schools are not involved in such activities. Future dialogue in school divisions is needed regarding the value of promoting the French Immersion Program as a means of recruiting, retaining, validating students' linguistic and educational experience, building the school community, and establishing a greater understanding of the Program.

Chart 55: Percentage of **school divisions** that organize activities at the divisional level to recruit and retain students in the French Immersion Program
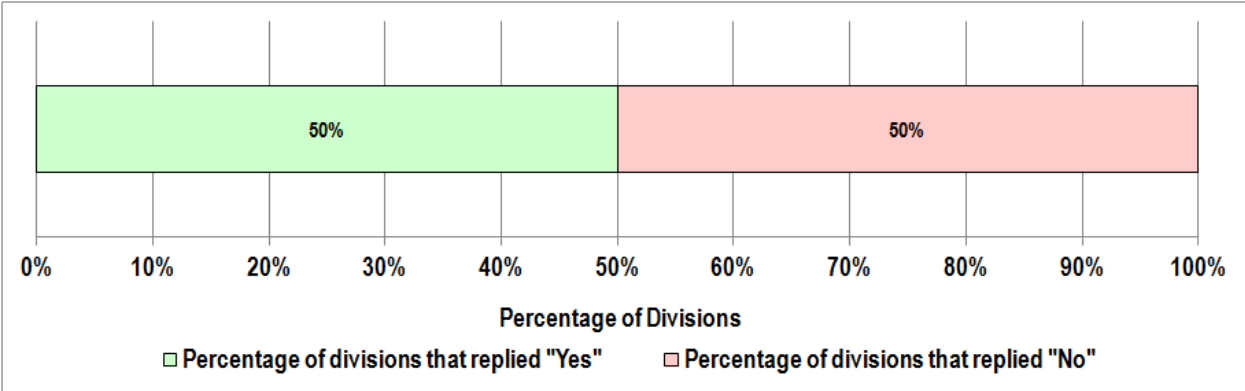
The data reveals that 50% of the 22 school divisions organize activities to promote the French Immersion Program. Undoubtedly promotion is vital to recruitment and retention of students, and impacts the success of the Program. Therefore dialogue amongst stakeholders regarding the value of the learning of languages as part of today's global world as well as its implications on divisional planning is necessary.

Chart 56 reflects the schools' responses regarding promotional activities offered that value, and thus promote, the French Immersion Program and influence student enrolment trends. Schools were asked to identify a maximum of 5 activities along with the grade grouping as well as the target audience.

Chart 56: Activities organized by **schools** to promote the French Immersion Program in the 2013-2014 school year

When considering data from Chart 56, an activity can target more than one audience, resulting in the total number of activities being less than the totals reflected under target audience.

Promotion of the French Immersion Program (Schools)															
Activities	**Target audience**														
	Students			**Parents of new students**			**Parents of existing students**			**Community**			**Newcomers to Canada**		
	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY
Information sessions/discussion groups (93) Information evenings, open house, welcome day, PAC, café français, etc.	6	15	4	51	20	7	19	13	3	9	6	2	3		
Enrichment activities (82) French cultural day, festivals, culturama, olympiques, arts, guest speakers, performers, divisional rally, divisional debate, cultural trips, student exchange, semaine de la francophonie, radio, etc.	34	52	25				17	23	3	9	10	4			
Transition initiatives (47) School visit, presentations, incoming student activities, pathway planning, tour of USB, CPF activities (French for life), etc.		29	6	1	6	1		4		1	4				
Showcasing student achievement (29) Celebration of learning days, assemblies/announcements-student-led, spectacle, school band, Remembrance Day ceremony-student-led, portfolio, art display, etc.	10	11	1	2	1		17	16		6	5		1	1	
Promotional material (22) Posters, newspaper articles, brochure, divisional and school newsletters, video, website, local media, CPF, etc.	1	3	1	11	2	1	6	3	2	6	1	2	2		
Supports for students (12) Kinderstart/3 year old clinic, French Immersion Support Lead Teacher, new courses, better course selection, homework club, summer camp, etc.	4	4	1	2			5	4	1	2	1				
Community building (12) Community BBQ, Soirée familiale, movie night, weekend outing, literacy evenings, Halloween soirée, etc.	8	5	1				10	8		3	2				
Subtotal	63	119	39	67	29	9	74	71	9	36	29	8	6	1	0
Total	221			105			154			73			7		

Chart 56 reveals that the two primary promotional activities offered by schools are *Information sessions/discussion groups* (93 activities) and *Enrichment activities* (82 activities), while the least frequently offered are *Supports for students* (12 activities) and *Community building* (12 activities).

In addition, most activities were geared towards *Students* (221 activities) as well as *Parents of existing students* (154 activities), while few activities targeted *Newcomers to Canada* (7 activities). Data further indicates that the majority of activities pertain to Early Years (246 activities) and Middle Years (249 activities), while fewer activities are offered at the Senior Years (65 activities).

Information sessions mainly involved Kindergarten information evenings as a means of promotion. These types of information sessions should be more varied in nature and take place more frequently at the Middle and Senior Years levels in order to retain students as they advance through the Program.

Due to the French Immersion Program being somewhat unfamiliar to immigrant families and the fact that EAL students now represent 6% of Manitoba's total French Immersion enrolment, as per Chart 12, it is clear that additional activities are required in order to promote a full understanding and appreciation of the Program. It is evident that *Newcomers* require support in all areas and more specifically, student supports are required to successfully transition into the Program. Yet, no reported activities targeted specifically *Newcomers*.

As for *Enrichment activities,* they were dealt with in great detail in Section 2, but in that section the target audience was not considered. Chart 56 reveals that *Enrichment activities* mainly target students at all levels by engaging them in French cultural and linguistic activities. These activities also provide an opportunity for parents and the community to validate students' language learning experiences in an "out-of-classroom" context and help to promote the French Immersion Program.

Furthermore, *Transition initiatives* are vital in supporting parents and newcomers and should not be limited to Middle Years students. *Transition activities* between school levels, from Early to Middle Years, Middle to Senior Years, and Senior Years to Postsecondary, are crucial as they reduce student anxiety, provide continuity in students' linguistic and educational experience, involve parents in their child's education, and impact student retention.

As per Section 2, highlighting student achievement was listed as one of the main successes, yet *Showcasing student achievement* is one of the least organized activities in the Senior Years. Although these activities occur at the K to 8 levels, it is essential that they continue at the Senior Years for validation of students' success plays an important part in their retention in the French Immersion Program. Meanwhile, it also provides students with encouragement in pursuing their language learning experience beyond school grounds and helps to develop their identity as plurilingual members of society; today and in the future.

Even though *Community building* is reported as having the least activities, it is without a doubt an essential element in sustaining enrolment. Activities which contribute to retention mainly target students and existing parents; however, in order to increase recruitment, new parents and newcomers should also be included. *Community building* activities could complement information sessions offered as they would target a wider range of audiences. Therefore, integrating some elements of *Community building* in *Information sessions/discussion groups* should be considered.

Moreover, data also indicated that the use of *Promotional material*, although limited, targets all audiences, especially parents.

Chart 57 reflects school divisions' responses regarding promotional activities offered that value, and thus promote the French Immersion Program and influence student enrolment trends. School divisions

were asked to identify a maximum of 5 activities along with the grade grouping as well as the target audience.

Chart 57: Activities organized by **school divisions** to promote the French Immersion Program in the 2013-2014 school year

When considering data from Chart 57, an activity can target more than one audience, resulting in the total number of activities being less than the totals reflected under target audience.
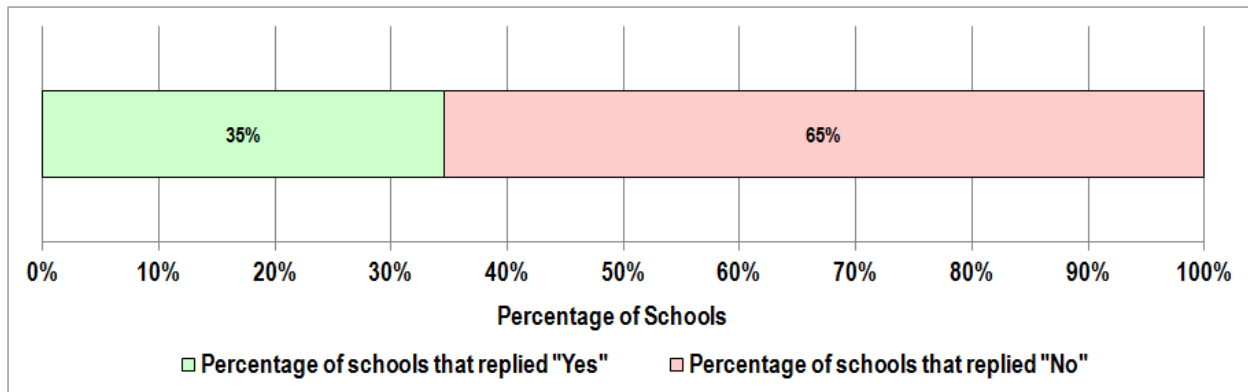
Promotion of the French Immersion Program (School Divisions)															
Activities	**Target audience**														
	Students			**Parents of new students**			**Parents of existing students**			**Community**			**Newcomers to Canada**		
	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY	EY	MY	SY
Information sessions (13) French Immersion information night, keynote presentations at these sessions (DELF, exchange programs etc.), consortium event.	1			9	1		2	3	1				1	1	
Promotional material (9) Brochures, welcome to Kindergarten package, Kindergarten information sheet, local paper advertising, website, etc.				4						3	3	3			
Enrichment activities (7) French Immersion Cultural day, Ralliements, Semaine par excellence, Hockey Academy, 3&4 years old fairs, débats divisionnaires, etc.	2	3	5	1		1	1	1	1	1	1				
Transition initiatives (2) School visits by Grade 12 students to Grade 8, other school visits.		2													
Subtotal	3	5	5	14	1	1	3	4	2	4	4	3	1	1	0
Total	13			16			9			11			2		

In comparison to Chart 56, the data reveals that very few promotional activities are taking place at the divisional level. The promotional activity most often offered by school divisions is *Information sessions* (13 activities), while the least frequently offered is *Transition initiatives* (2).

The activities reported were mainly geared towards *Parents of new students* (16 activities) as well as *Students* (13) through enrichment activities, while few activities were offered to *Newcomers to Canada* (2). Furthermore, the greater part of activities pertains to Early Years (25), while fewer activities are offered at the Middle Years (15) and Senior Years levels (11).

Chart 58 indicates the schools' responses regarding entry points while Chart 59 examines the schools' perspective with respect to challenges incurred at different entry points.

Chart 58: Percentage of **schools** allowing students to enter the French Immersion Program at grade levels other than the three official entry points (i.e. K-1, Grade 4 and Grade 7)

The data indicates that 35% of the 104 responding schools allow students to enter the French Immersion Program at other grade levels while 65% only allow entry into the Program at one of the official entry points.

Despite the fact that there are three official entry points (K-1, Grade 4, and Grade 7), through local decision making, some schools are allowing students to enter the French Immersion Program at various grade levels. This confirms comments from the field that there is a demand by parents who either missed the K-1 or Grade 4 entry points or have immigrated to Canada and wish that their children start at a different entry point.

Chart 59: Percentage of **schools** indicating if the current entry points (i.e. K-1, Grade 4 and Grades 7) into the French Immersion Program create a challenge for their school
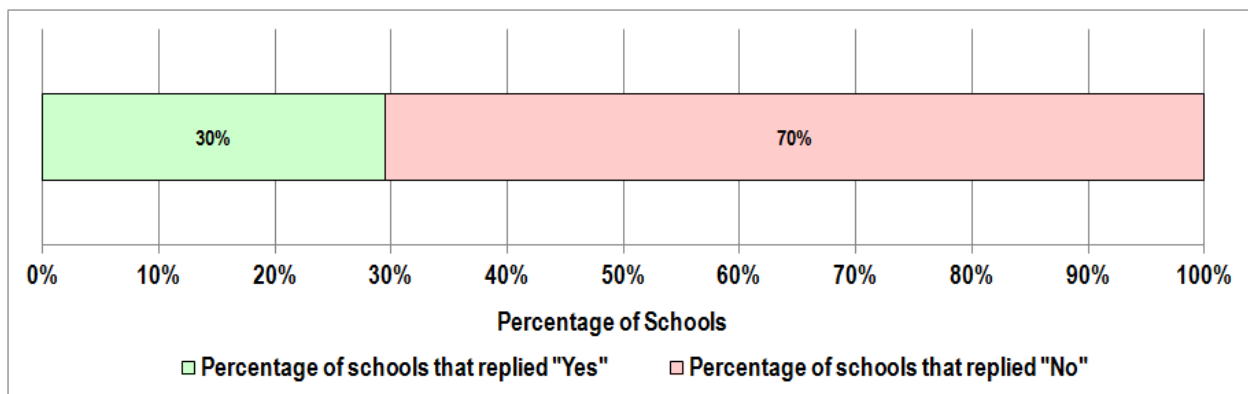

The data indicates that 70% of the 105 French Immersion schools reported that the three current entry points into the French Immersion Program did not present a challenge for their school. Schools that answered "Yes" to the above question were then asked to explain the reason behind their response. The responding schools reported that the current entry points created a challenge when parents wanted their child to start at a different grade level than the current provincial entry points and when adapted supports were unavailable. It is possible that some of the challenges encountered by schools could also stem from limited knowledge on how to support EAL students, hence professional learning geared towards strategies that respond to students' needs is necessary.

Enrolment and Retention of Students

Retention of students greatly affects the viability and success of the French Immersion Program. Knowing the factors that influence attrition and how to address them is essential to maintain enrolment.

Chart 60 examines the number of students that left the French Immersion Program and their main reason for leaving.

Chart 60: Attrition by grade and reason - Number of students by grade level that left the French Immersion Program in the 2013-2014 school year, also indicating the main reason for leaving
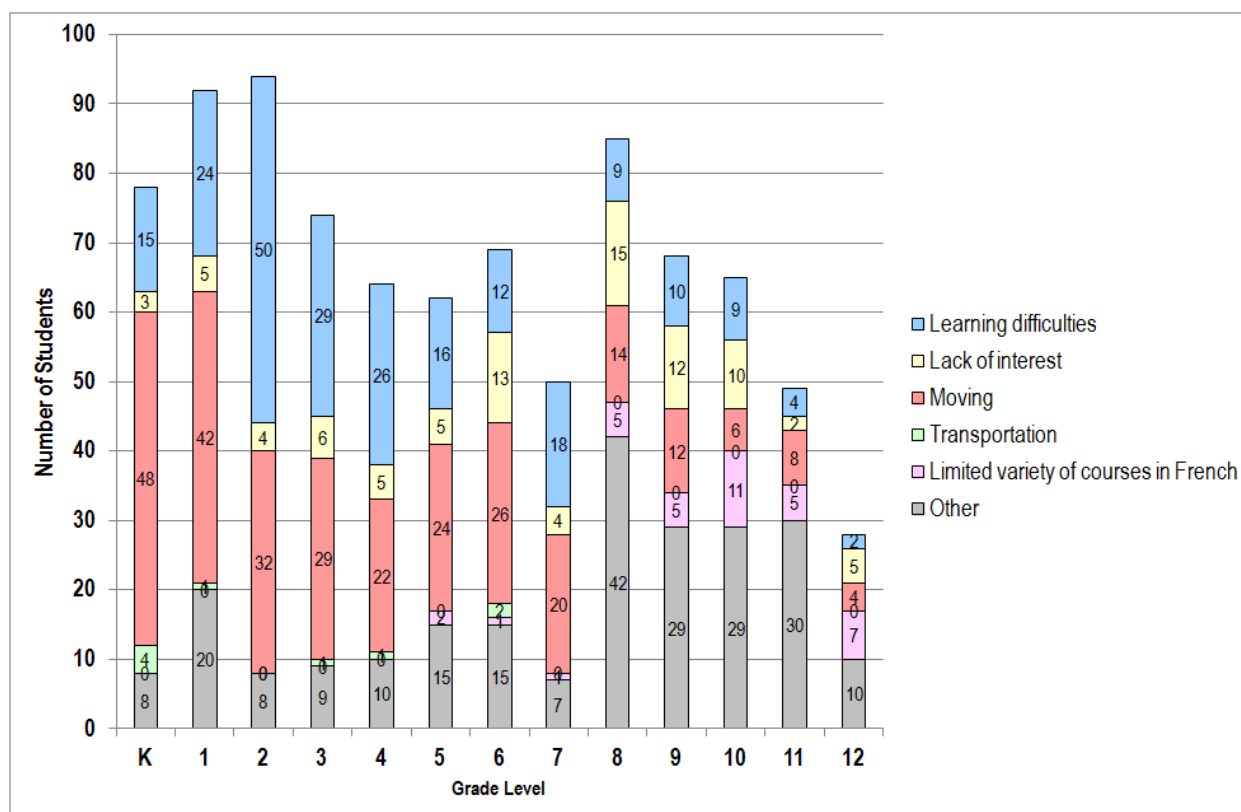
As per Chart 60, the two main reasons for leaving the French Immersion Program from Kindergarten to Grade 7 are *Moving* and *Learning difficulties*. The data reveals that students withdraw from the Program especially in Grades 2, 3, and 4 due to *Learning difficulties*. *Lack of interest* and *Transportation* issues also account for student loss from the Program but not in consistently high numbers across Grades K to 7.

Once students have *Moved*, it is difficult to keep records of the Program they have chosen. This reason for attrition is not necessarily alarming as students may simply choose the French Immersion Program in another school or school division. However, attrition caused by *Learning difficulties* is concerning and requires schools to question current practice. It is vital that discussions regarding learning difficulties and second language acquisition occur with parents before they consider removing their child from the Program, and that appropriate supports are established to meet the child's needs.

Schools need to ensure that staff is well informed on the research with respect to students with learning difficulties and second language acquisition. A common understanding amongst educators must also be in place regarding appropriate supports for these students to achieve success throughout their K to 12 immersion experience.

The data further indicates the reasons for leaving the French Immersion Program, from Grades 8 to 12, were varied, however the main reason for leaving is *Other.* This accounts for a loss of 42 students in Grade 8, 29-30 in Grades 9 to 11, and 10 in Grade 12.

Chart 61 presents the *Other* reasons identified for student attrition.

Chart 61: Reasons students left the French Immersion Program in 2013-2014 indicated under the grouping *Other*, by frequency of responses
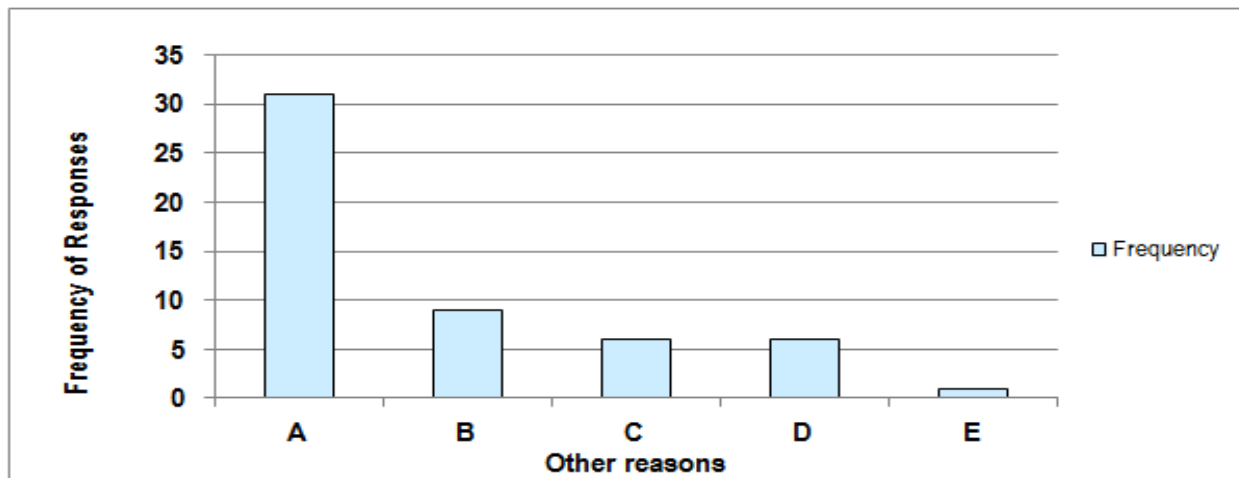

A - Choose another school system or Program (independent school, DSFM, vocational, homeschooling)
B - Relationships (follow peers, difficult relationships)
C - Parent perceptions of language education (worried about English skills and grades, French competencies were sufficient)
D - Distance from French Immersion School
E - Moving out of town, transient

The data reveals that 31 responses (A − 58.5%) indicated students were leaving the French Immersion Program in order to *Choose another school system or Program*. The 22 remaining responses identified (B − E) 4 other reasons for leaving. Although the data reflects responses from K to 12, *Other* reasons are mostly prevalent in the Senior Years.

With respect to students leaving the French Immersion Program, the following chart refers to the percentage of schools that have a procedure in place.

Chart 62: Percentage of schools that have a procedure in place when students want to leave the French Immersion Program
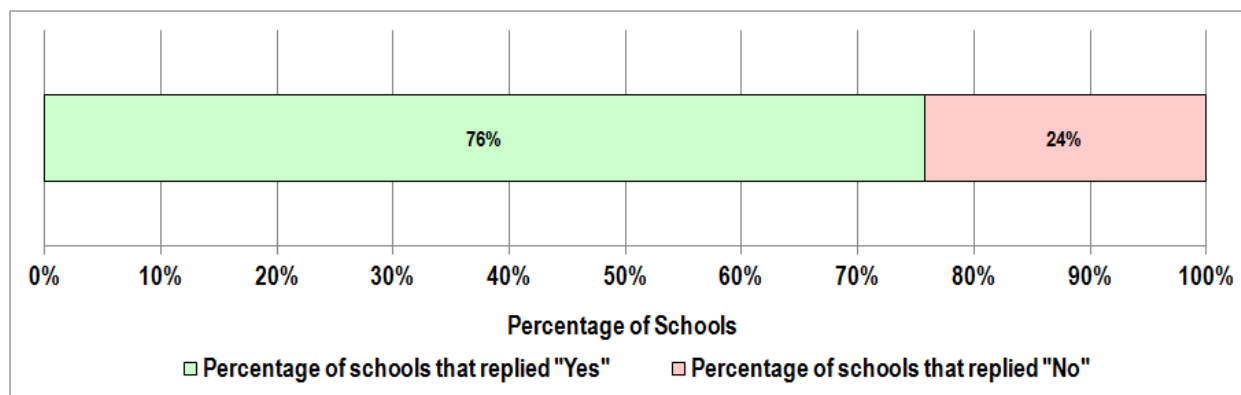

The data suggests that 78 of the 103 responding schools (76%) have a procedure in place when a student considers leaving the Program.

It is important that a procedure be in place in all schools whereby communication, especially through dialogue, occurs with students and parents to establish ongoing appropriate supports, and assure retention in the Program. Conversations with parents could also address the myth that "transferring a student to the English Program will remediate the problem".

In the Senior Years, the attraction of other Programs may pose a challenge to retention. Creative solutions to scheduling should be considered in order for students to simultaneously take part in the French Immersion Program and other offerings in high school. Nonetheless, it is essential that students and parents be reminded of the advantages offered by an immersion education in today's society.

Chart 63: Frequency of French Immersion schools providing child care services, by type of service offered
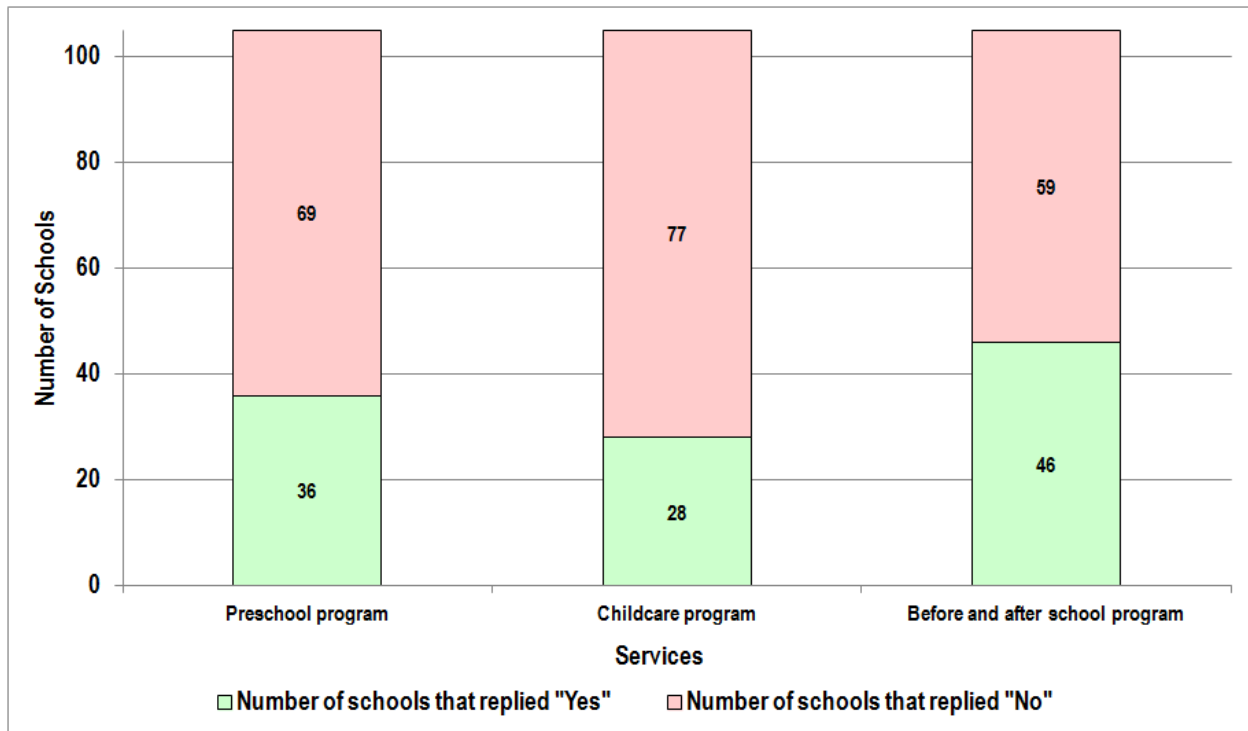
The data indicates that less than 45% of French Immersion schools offer a variety of child care services. These types of services are attractive from a parental perspective and providing them may influence recruitment and retention of students.

Chart 64: Intensity of French by type of child care service
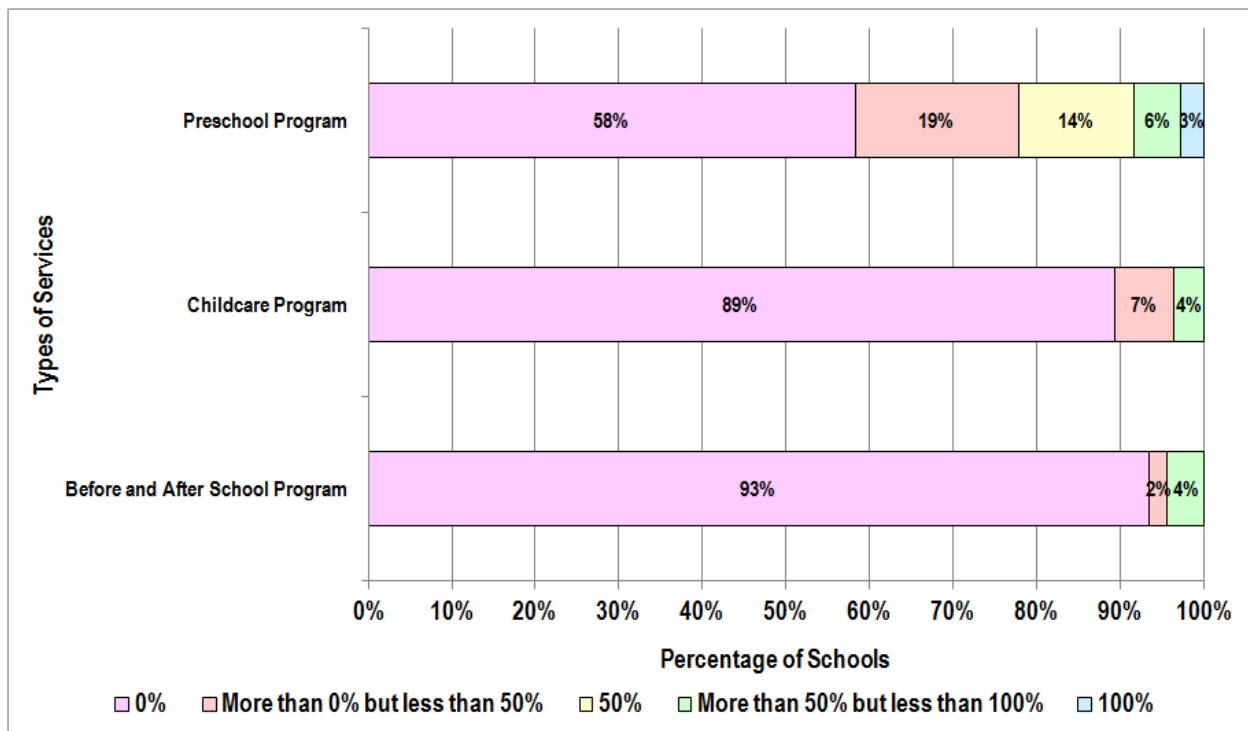
Based on the data in Chart 64, it is apparent that if some type of child-centred service or program is offered in a French Immersion school, it is mainly in English. However, other anecdotal evidences indicate that some parents are starting to demonstrate interest in having bilingual child-care services.

Reflection on Student Enrolment Trends

Upon completion of Section 4 of the questionnaire, schools were asked to reflect on the extent to which they have successfully ensured program stability through the recruitment and retention of French Immersion students by having students and their parents understand that:

- the value of developing one's linguistic and intercultural competencies fosters cognitive and personal growth
- being bilingual or plurilingual is a viable option in today's society
- the school guides and supports students' learning throughout their French Immersion experience

This reflection included identifying successes achieved and challenges encountered while contributing to the recruitment and retention of French Immersion students and are subsequently presented in Charts 65 and 66.

Schools were then asked to complete an overall school self-assessment with respect to student enrolment trends. Hence, Chart 67 represents the schools' perspective regarding their degree of success in addressing issues of recruitment and retention which in turn ensures Program stability.

Chart 65 presents the main factors identified as successes regarding student enrolment trends, and demonstrates the number of responses by factor.

Chart 65: Successes in insuring Program stability through maintaining or increasing student enrolment, showing frequency of responses
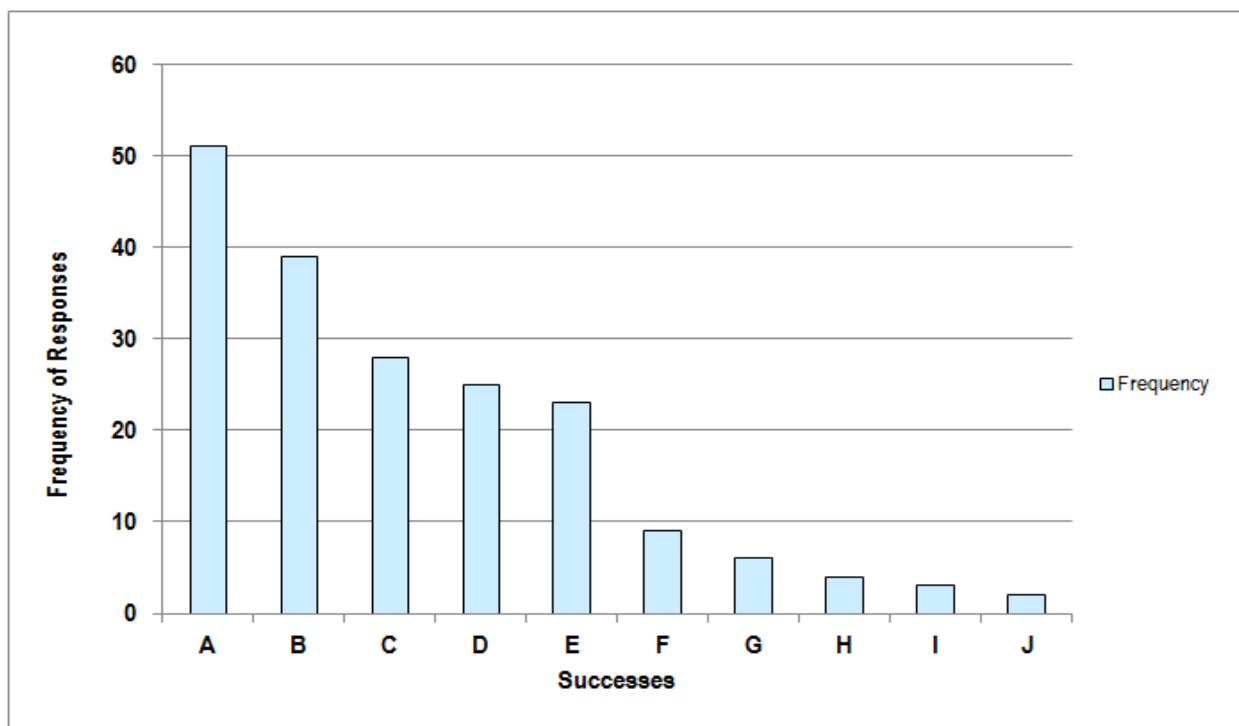
A - Student enrolment is stable or increasing

B - Community involvement/relationship with parents

C - Provide a rich French Learning Environment

D - Offer appropriate support to students due to quality of staff

E - Promotion

F - Offer a sufficient number of French Immersion credits

G - Possibility for enrolment of out of catchment students

H - Daycare, after school program

I - Former students are now parents

J - Student success in French communication skills

The data indicates that schools perceive one of their two main successes to be in the area of a *Stable or increasing student enrolment* (A – 51 responses). Identifying the reasons behind this success could lead to further support or replication of the elements required to maintain or increase student population in schools, thus ensuring Program stability.

The second main success, *Community involvement/relationship with parents* (B – 39 responses), is a key factor in ensuring the success of school initiatives. This involvement lends itself to promoting, establishing and supporting the French Immersion Program, as well as parental validation of students. In return, this form of validation contributes to improving student achievement and attitudes towards learning and living in a second language.

Although the next three successes *Provide a rich French learning environment* (C – 28 responses), *Offering appropriate support to students due to quality of staff* (D – 25 responses) and *Promotion* (E – 23 responses) have fewer responses, they remain important factors to consider in order to maintain

or increase student enrolments. Hence, Program quality and stability contribute to the overall credibility of the French Immersion Program, making it a viable choice for parents and students.

For many northern and rural schools, the ability to *Offer a sufficient number of French credits* (F) enables students to graduate with a Province of Manitoba French Immersion Diploma, a significant success that has been realized through innovative approaches such as *Collabaunord*.

The *Possibility for enrolment of out of catchment students* (G) allows for continued instruction in the Immersion Program at the Senior Years level where credits are more readily available in French and also helps to maintain local French Immersion enrolment from K to 12. These enrolments can further increase when schools offer *Daycare and after school programs* (H) as extra supports for parents.

Moreover, the credibility of the Program is further reinforced as *Former French Immersion students* (I) who have become new parents enrol their children in the Program. These parents understand the value and relevance of French in their lives and wish the same thing for their children.

The least identified success, *Student success in French communication skills* (J), plays an integral part in guiding and engaging students on their pathway to becoming plurilingual. This particular factor is vital to retention and should be considered by all schools as a key element in successfully retaining students in the French Immersion Program.

Chart 66 presents the main factors identified as challenges regarding student enrolment trends, and demonstrates the number of responses by factor.

Chart 66: Challenges in insuring Program stability through maintaining or increasing student enrolment showing frequency of responses and cumulative percentages
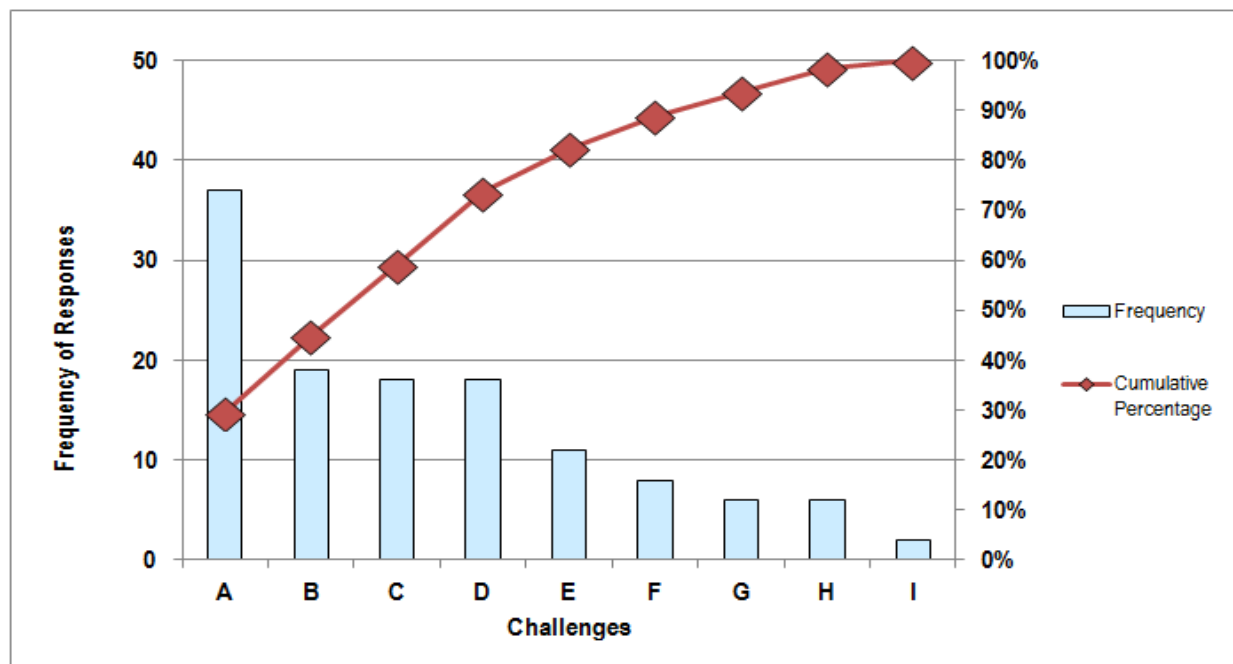
A - Different perceptions about language learning (myths)

B - Switching to specialized Program (Senior Years)

C - Limited resources to support struggling students

D - School unable to offer more courses in French

E - School division's transportation not always available for French Immersion

F - Limited space and resources

G - No preschool or before and after school program

H - Transient student population

I - Accepting students at any grade level other than provincial entry points

The challenges identified by the schools are presented in the Pareto chart above. The Pareto Principle states that by addressing the factors that cause 80% of the challenges, strategies developed may become more focussed and resources may be allocated more effectively. As a result, most if not all of the remaining 20% of the challenges may also improve. In analyzing this data, the focus was on the challenges that need the most attention, those that represent a cumulative value of 80%.

The data reveals the challenge most commonly mentioned by schools is *Different perceptions about language learning (myths)* (A – 37 responses). This suggests that Program outcomes as well as myths need to be clearly communicated to parents through various means in order to ensure a common understanding with respect to their perceptions and expectations.

The next three challenges identified and almost equally represented, are French Immersion students *Switching to a more specialized Program in Senior Years* (B – 19 responses), *Limited resources to support struggling students* (C – 18 responses) and the *School is unable to offer more courses in French* (D – 18 responses).

In reference to *Switching to a more specialized Program in Senior Years*, most Senior Years schools offer two or more competing programs such as Technological/Vocational or International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement Programs. French Immersion Program students are very interested in these Programs. Therefore, in order to support students who wish to pursue various options, creative timetabling could allow these students to continue taking certain academic courses in French.

Notably, the challenge of having *Limited resources to support struggling students* (C) and that a *School is unable to offer more courses in French* (D) will require dialogue among educators at the school division level and even between school divisions in order to provide students with a full French Immersion learning experience.

Furthermore, school are also faced with challenges regarding *Transportation issues* (E), *Limited space and resources* (F), and *Accepting students at any grade level other than the provincial entry points* (I). Understanding the factors causing these challenges lends itself to reassessment and improvement, thus growth in French Immersion enrolments.

The remaining challenges should be taken into consideration and reflected upon as they could be applicable to each school and divisional context.

The following chart indicates the extent to which schools perceived their level of success regarding student enrolment trends.

Chart 67: Percentage of schools indicating their level of success with respect to successfully ensuring Program stability through student enrolment in the French Immersion Program
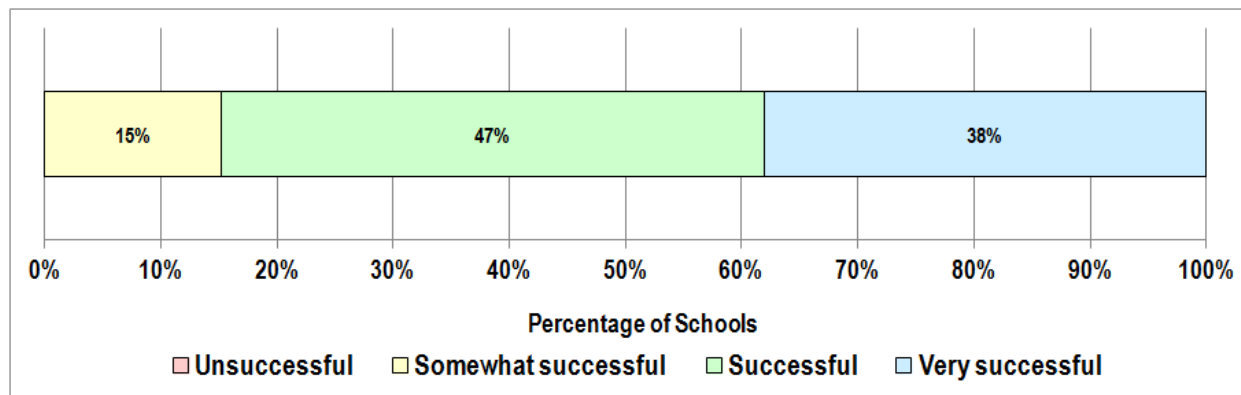
The data reveals that of the 105 schools, 85% perceived themselves as being *Very successful* or *Successful* while 15% indicated being *Somewhat successful* in ensuring Program stability through maintaining student enrolment.

This perception is justifiable due to schools considering their own individual context and student enrolment numbers along with their established initiatives. Although many schools are achieving success in student enrolment trends, the overall provincial data portrays a very different picture for 50% of students leave the Program as they progress from K to 12. These variances in perceptions could be attributed to the fact that attrition of students appears differently at the Early, Middle and Senior Years levels as well as in rural, northern and urban contexts.

By considering that every school context represents one piece of the divisional picture, full comprehension of student enrolment trends can start to occur and an accurate account of the overall picture, which includes recruitment and retention, can now be assessed. This assessment could be based on the following questions: What are the different needs in the Early, Middle and Senior Years

contexts? Which grade groupings require more focus regarding recruitment strategies? Which grade groupings require more focus regarding retention strategies? To what degree are retention strategies being studied and to what extent are they successful? How do transition points contribute to enrolment trends? By what means does our local context influence retention? To what extent are enrolment trends being discussed at the division level? Do current strategies address high attrition numbers at particular grade levels?

It is only with a full understanding of divisional enrolment trends that school divisions will be able to determine actions to ensure student retention from K to 12 and to closely monitor retention rates. If these questions were considered in a more divisional context, rather than by individual school context, the lens with which successes are perceived would most likely be different.

Final Reflection

As a final reflection, schools were asked to review their successes and challenges from each section and, based on their professional judgement, indicate the extent to which they thought their school had successfully established a French Immersion Program that valued and encouraged students' experience in becoming proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens.

Perceptions of Students Experience

Charts 68 and 69 provide data from the five questions used to establish the degree of student success in the French Immersion Program. The scale used for this reflection included the following choices: *None*, *Some*, *Many*, *Most*, *All* or *Unsure* (Chart 69 only).

Chart 68: School perception of student success in the French Immersion Program, by percentage of schools and by outcome
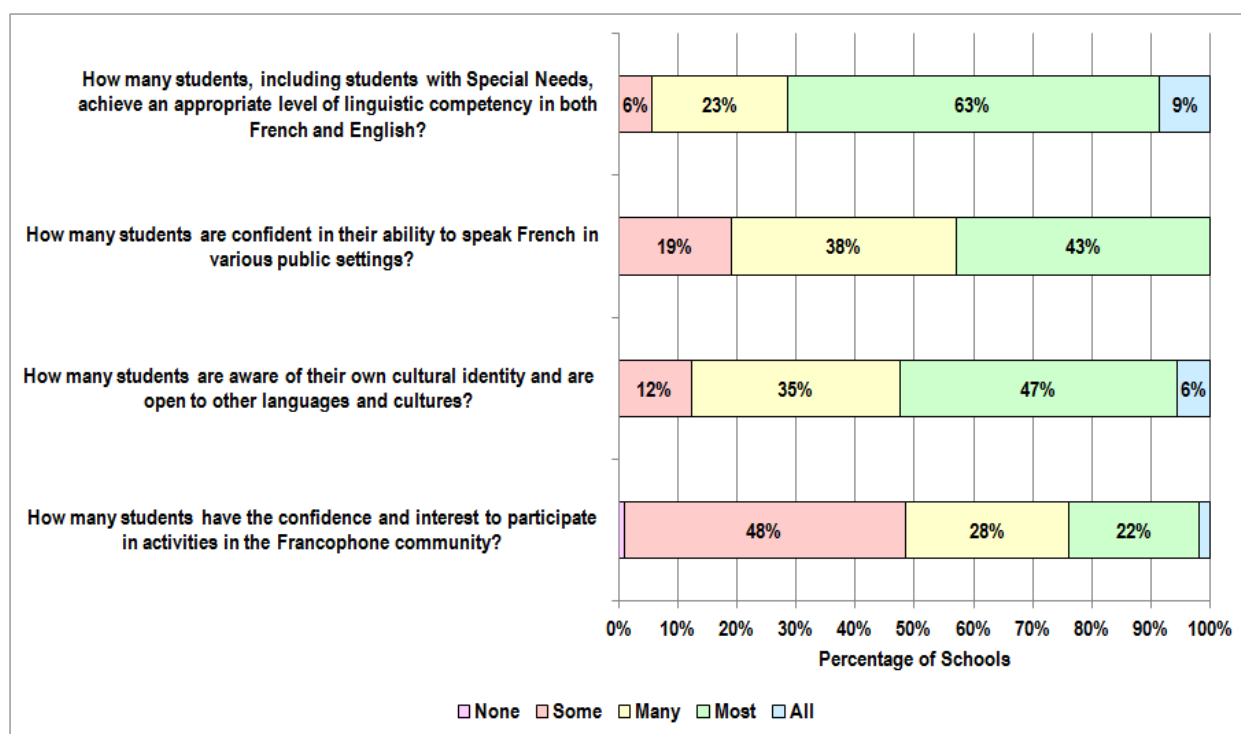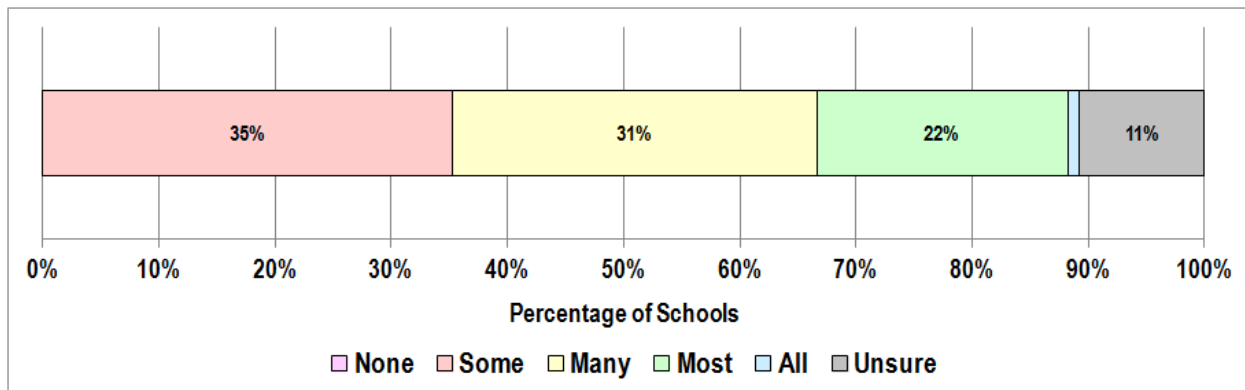
Chart 69: School perception of students who valued the learning of languages as a key to global citizenship and who saw themselves as lifelong language learners overall, by percentage of schools

In this analysis, the indicator of success has been identified as the sum of *All* and *Most*.

The data in Chart 68 reveals that of the 105 French Immersion schools, 72% perceive that they were successful in having their students achieve an appropriate level of linguistic competency in both French and English; 53%, maintain that their students are aware of their own cultural identity and are open to other languages and cultures; 43%, feel that their students are confident in their ability to speak French in various public settings; 24%, perceive that their students have the confidence and interest in to participate in French activities organized in the Francophone community. The data in Chart 69 reveals that of the 102 responding schools, 23% perceive that they were successful in making their students value the learning of languages as a key to global citizenship and see themselves as lifelong language learners.

These perceptions of student success are consistent with the data presented in each of the four key areas of the questionnaire, further confirming and validating the coherence of this data. In order to improve these results, it is important to understand the interrelation between these outcomes and to give them continual focus and attention. Particular attention should be paid to **ongoing language development** in all content areas to improve language proficiency for all students as they move from K-12, and to **developing student identity**, **engagement**, and **confidence** in order for students to see the relevance of French in their lives and wish to continue to use and learn French today as well as in the future.

Further success in **developing language proficiency** can be attained by ensuring student exposure to a rich linguistic environment throughout the day and by providing more opportunities for students to speak in authentic and meaningful ways in all curricular areas. The key areas to focus on to bring about this improvement are: second language methodology which equips teachers to integrate language teaching into content more explicitly while using corrective feedback and assessments tools that specifically assess language competencies. This approach would ensure a continual focus on language development in all subject areas thus improving student language proficiency and supporting better understanding of content while building student **confidence**.

Student identity is constructed by exploring different perspectives throughout curriculum. This exploration allows students to look at the world in different ways, develops their openness towards others, stimulates their curiosity in learning about cultures as well as cultural perspectives, and helps them to engage in different ways in their interactions with others. It is by developing students' willingness and openness to explore various world perspectives that their identity evolves and they

discover who they are. Within the French Immersion Program, this happens in the French language. Therefore, it is also important to support students in the development of their identity as French learners and speakers and in their understanding of how the languages they speak play a role in their lives and in shaping their identity. This part of their identity evolves through varied social, cultural and academic interactions in French as well as through significant use of the language in curricular areas thus further developing their **language proficiency** and **engagement**. In addition, leading students in conversations about their linguistic and educational experience in the French Immersion Program guides and supports them in developing an awareness of the impact that the French language has on their learning, on their **evolving identity** and on **their place in society as plurilingual citizens**.

Student confidence is an area that also requires attention. Students need to be given as many opportunities as possible to activate their French language in various academic, social and cultural contexts. Providing students with such opportunities to interact with various French speakers and exposing them to different dialects and accents gives them a purpose for speaking French, develops their **identity** as French speakers and prepares them for **sustaining their bilingualism**. Students also need to have opportunities to discuss the challenges or discomfort they may feel when they are communicating in various situations and to discuss what strategies they can use to improve their level of comfort and confidence. Guiding students to go from the language learned in school to living the language by creating these types of interactions not only supports further **language development** but is **key to building their confidence, engagement and plurilingual identity**.

As schools and school divisions work to improve these results, student success will be determined by how successfully key initiatives are targeted so that the outcomes are consistently and intentionally being attended to every day inside and outside the classroom.

Next Steps

Upon completion of the questionnaire and its components (reflection on successes, challenges and self-assessment), schools were required:

- to set expected outcomes to further enhance the linguistic and educational experience for their French Immersion students
- to outline an action plan comprised of up to five initiatives based on the identified outcomes
- to identify under which of the four key areas (*Creating a French Immersion Setting, Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience, Educational Staff and Professional Learning,* or *Student Enrolment Trends*) the outcome and actions fell.

In Chart 70, school initiatives are presented according to the four identified key areas for the full implementation of the French Immersion Program.

Chart 70: Number of school initiatives by key area
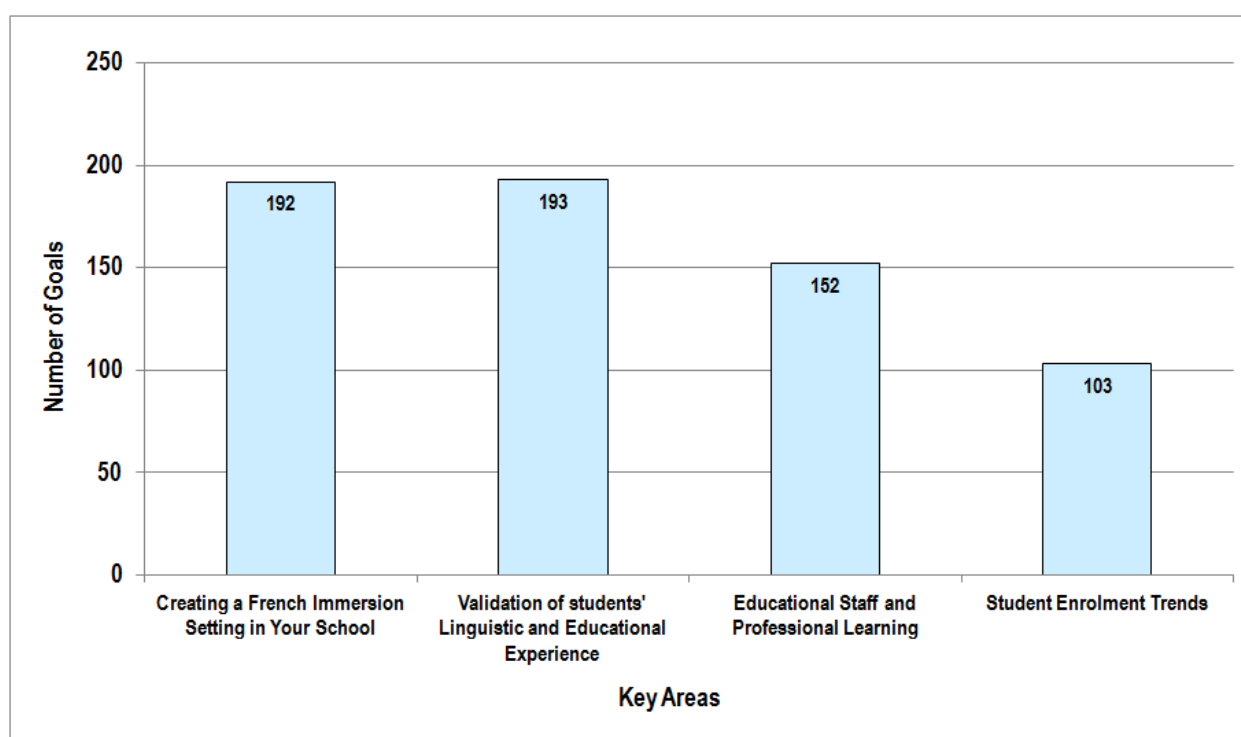
When considering data from Chart 70, one must be aware that schools could select more than one key area per initiative.

The data reveals that the largest number of initiatives are found in the key areas of *Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience* (193 responses) and *Creation of a French Immersion setting* (192 responses). As observed throughout the four sections of the questionnaire, the creation of a setting that is conducive to learning the French language and culture further enhances the validation of students' linguistic and educational experiences. Notably, this recurring observation suggests that improvement in one key area will positively affect other areas.

Although the next two key areas *Educational Staff and Professional Learning* (152) and *Student Enrolment Trends* (103) have fewer initiatives, they are vital to the full implementation of the French Immersion Program as all four key areas are interrelated.

Next Steps (French Immersion Schools)

The following table summarizes the key initiatives proposed by schools which are organized according to the four key areas of the questionnaire. The raw data found in the chart above was further analyzed and categorized into the key area that most accurately reflected the initiative. This explains the differences in the number of initiatives in each key area between Chart 70 above and the table below. The common thread linking these initiatives is the commitment to ensure a more cohesive and unified approach to the delivery of the French Immersion Program. The focus being to create environments and conditions that allow students to acquire the language competencies to communicate in French with confidence, as well as the attitudes and behaviours to appreciate plurilingualism as a 21st century reality.

Section 1 – Creating a French Immersion Setting (48 initiatives)

Linguistically Rich Environment (36)
- Increase visibility of French language in schools (assemblies in French, school newspaper having articles in French, make all announcements bilingual, display student work, bilingual bulletin boards, etc.)
- Increase French signage around schools
- Encourage staff members to speak French at all times
- Encourage students to speak French during non instructional time
- Create a French Immersion area in a dual track school

Exposure to the French Language (10)
- Increase the percentage of French Language instruction time
- Increase the number of French Immersion credits offered in Senior Years
- Survey students' interest to determine optional courses to be offered

Educational Staff (1)
- Increase bilingual staff in all positions

Inclusion and Appropriate Support for All (1)
- Create inclusive classrooms for all learners

Section 2 - Validation of Students Linguistic and Educational Experience (149 initiatives)

Impact on Student Learning (105)

- **Improve students' numeracy skills (5)**
  - Use a variety of tools to assess students' mathematical skills
  - Encourage the use of different strategies and tools to engage students
  - Encourage students to communicate their mathematical thinking
  - Use data to drive teaching and set goals in developing number sense skills for students

- **Improve students' reading and writing skills in French (42)**
  - Use a wide variety of tools to assess student reading levels and analyze data
  - Use a variety of strategies to support students in their reading abilities (Reading Apprenticeship, Daily 5, Individualized literacy programs, Phonological awareness, *Club de lecture*, Stop, Drop and Read in French, Guided reading, Cross-grade buddy reading, etc.)
  - Use a variety of strategies to support students in their writing abilities (Journal writing, Writing corrector, etc.)
  - Increase French vocabulary base of K-3 students before commencing formal reading in French
  - Ensure accessibility to a wide variety of French texts at each level
  - Implement a cross-curricular reading and writing continuum
  - Offer Parent literacy sessions to provide strategies and supports for families to support their learners
  - Increase teacher and educational assistants participation in Professional Learning Communities(PLC) and professional development sessions (*La lecture - un processus en construction*, balanced literacy instruction, assessment, etc.)

- **Improve students' French oral language (58)**
  - Increase usage of French during instructional and non-instructional time (cross-grade activities, Touchstones, etc.)
  - Expose students to a variety of French language models and accents (French monitor, Experience Canada – Student Exchange Program, etc.)
  - Increase student vocabulary, oral proficiency and confidence to speak French in academic and social contexts
  - Engage students in discussion around French language acquisition

Section 2 - Validation of Students Linguistic and Educational Experience (149 initiatives)

- o Develop students' intrinsic motivation to speak French (have students set personal goals for language use)
- o Use a wide variety of tools to assess student oral competencies and analyze data
- o Identify clear learning benchmarks so students can be tracked for French language proficiency
- o Use of French speaking incentive system

Enriched School Environment (37)

- Build a French community in the school (cross-grade activities, etc.)
- Provide a variety of cultural experiences to complement students' language learning and extent their intercultural knowledge (classes networking with French students in other communities through Skype, *expression de la semaine*, Immersion language camp, French language cinema, SEVEC exchange, etc.)
- Expose FI students to French language opportunities available (Explore Program, Post-secondary education, etc.)
- Develop and improve citizenship awareness in students

Valuing and Encouraging the Learning of Languages (7)

- Encourage student leadership by supporting a sense of belonging (involvement in the planning of school activities)
- Provide opportunities for students to identify themselves as bilingual citizens (invite community members, former students, grand-parents to share their experiences; expose students to a variety of French language models and accents, etc.)
- Encourage students to volunteer in the francophone community
- Encourage students to reflect and talk about their progress and engagement (student survey, student self-assessment, goal setting, reflective portfolio, etc.)

Section 3 – Educational Staff and Professional Learning (49 initiatives)

Building Teacher Capacity (40)

- Meet regularly to discuss topics specific to French Immersion (vision, *French Immersion in Manitoba: A Handbook for School Leaders*, PD opportunities, availability of cultural experiences, etc.)
- Establish networking opportunities through: French divisional coordinator, PLC, mentorship, etc.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to attend PD sessions pertaining to French Immersion (literacy, numeracy, methodology, assessment practices, language acquisition, etc.)
- Encourage and support ongoing development of language skills

Hiring (9)

- Recruit and retain qualified teachers who speak fluently and are knowledgeable in current methodology
- Attend provincial and out of province recruitment fairs
- Recruit bilingual personnel through universities
- Focus on early advertisement and recruitment

Section 4 – Student Enrolment Trends (17 initiatives)

Entry Points and Transition (11)

- Monitor students' attrition and retention in the French Immersion Program
- Increase promotion of the French Immersion Program at feeder schools
- Review timetabling at the high school to provide more flexibility for students
- Establish a procedure for students considering leaving the Program

Section 4 – Student Enrolment Trends (17 initiatives)

Visibility and Communication (5)

- Promote the French Immersion Program through open houses, parent information sessions, divisional and school websites, newsletters etc.
- Discuss with students and parents the value of developing one's linguistic and intercultural competencies and that being plurilingual is a viable option in today's society
- Invite parents to participate in organized French cultural school events
- Increase family participation in the Francophone community
- Maintain or establish relationship with Canadian Parents for French Manitoba

**Expanding French Immersion Program (1)**

- Discuss with Senior administration
- Survey parents to ascertain interest in expanding the French Immersion Program
- Hold parent information sessions

Divisions' Self-Assessment – Full Implementation of the French Immersion Program

After having analysed the data from their 2013-2014 Divisional Profile, which contained all of the responses from the School Questionnaire and Divisional Questionnaire, school divisions were asked to indicate how successfully they had implemented the French Immersion Program.

The following chart indicates the extent to which schools perceived their level of success in implementing a French Immersion Program that values and encourages students' experience in becoming proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens.

Chart 71: Percentage of **school divisions** indicating their level of success in implementing the French Immersion Program
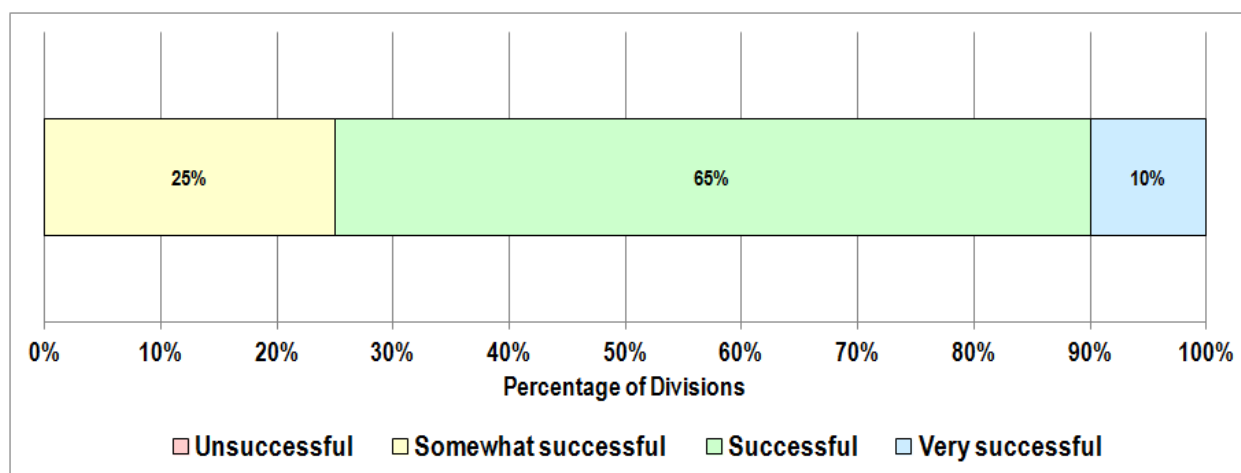
The bar chart reveals that 75% perceived themselves as being *Successful* or *Very successful* and 25% indicated that they were *Somewhat successful*.

In response to their schools' responses to the *School Questionnaire*, school divisions have identified many successes and challenges in the four identified key areas. However, certain challenges influence the degree of success achieved in each key area and a deeper analysis of the data or further inquiry at the school division level may be required to improve the level of success. School divisions can then determine their priorities in order to enhance the plurilingual and educational experience for students.

In the key area of *Creating a French Immersion Setting*, school divisions felt that there was an appropriate level of French instructional time offered to students from K to 12 with some exceptions at the Senior Years due to the difficulty of providing optional courses in the French language, particularly in rural and remote areas. Almost all school divisions indicated that they had difficulty providing and maintaining a truly French Immersion environment in a dual track setting. Challenges include signage, an insufficient number of bilingual personnel, and English being the main language of communication spoken by students and teachers during non-instructional time and during school wide announcements and events. It was noted that these challenges were found to be less of an issue in single track schools. This poses a concern as 68 of the 105 French Immersion schools in 2013-2014 were dual track. One cannot forget that the setting created in a French Immersion school is the primary condition for student success and needs to be continually attended to by all personnel.

In *Validating Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience*, school divisions indicated that schools experienced success in focusing on language acquisition while teaching content as well as providing students with a variety of class and school based linguistically rich learning opportunities. School divisions also identified certain challenges in this key area: providing enrichment opportunities beyond the

classroom, motivating student participation in the Francophone community, and informing students and parents regarding post-secondary opportunities. To deepen this analysis, one must question the extent to which students are achieving the seven Program outcomes. These seven outcomes are crucial to student engagement and motivation as they support and nurture students' identity as plurilingual learners and speakers as well as their academic success. It is suggested that the meaning of validating students' linguistic and educational experience needs to be further discussed, understood and analysed amongst all educators, as this key area is an essential element in all Manitoba classrooms impacting student learning, motivation and retention.

In the key area of *Educational Staff and Professional Learning*, school divisions further regard themselves as being successful in empowering their educational staff in fully implementing the French Immersion Program. Supports for new teachers through mentorship are in place, consultants or lead teachers have been hired and various professional learning opportunities are being offered. However, school divisions still indicated that teachers continue to reiterate a lack of professional learning related to the French Immersion Program. The specific needs of immersion teachers, their role as second language teachers, and the goal of the Program need to be taken into consideration when offering professional learning. Creating learning networks amongst immersion teachers and administrators as well as collaborations with other school divisions regarding professional learning or issues pertinent to French Immersion are essential in strengthening knowledge and understanding of second language instruction and pedagogy within school divisions.

Despite the efforts in attending recruitment fairs, school divisions continue to experience challenges in hiring French Immersion personnel due to a limited number of qualified applicants. The lack of potential candidates, who possess both language skills and second language methodology, has an impact within the four key areas required for the full implementation of the French Immersion Program. A renewed divisional recruitment plan, comprised of long-term planning as well as retention of personnel, becomes a crucial piece in maintaining stability within the Program and ensuring its full implementation.

In the key area of *Student Enrolment Trends*, the vast majority of school divisions felt that they were experiencing success as French Immersion enrolments are increasing across the province. School divisions who have indicated challenges mentioned that attrition during transition years, lack of options at the Senior Years level, and student learning difficulties were factors influencing retention.

Since overall enrolments are increasing across the province, all schools and school divisions may not be noticing retention issues especially at the Middle and Senior Years. These increased enrolments often mask the challenges of student retention as there is a loss of approximately half of the French Immersion students as they move through the school system. It is important for school division leaders to consider the complete picture of enrolment trends including recruitment and retention for an accurate portrait to be generated. Through a full understanding of divisional trends, school divisions will be able to determine actions to be taken to improve student retention from K to 12.

Improving student success and **increasing student retention** in the French Immersion Program can only be ensured through strong leadership that considers the vision of the Program and implements initiatives in the four key areas that focus on the program outcomes. This can be achieved through fostering **language development in all content areas** to improve language proficiency for all students as they move from K-12. It is through ongoing conversations and assessments of language acquisition that students will gain a better understanding of their language competencies as well as be provided with opportunities for continual improvement inside and outside the classroom. This can also be achieved through **developing student identity**, **engagement**, and **confidence** in order for students to see the relevance of French in their lives and wish to continue to use and learn French today as well as in the future. Fostering student engagement will impact student confidence in communicating in French in real and meaningful ways and empower them to use the language in their daily lives for academic, social, and cultural endeavours and

support students in the development of their plurilingual identity. With a leadership that fully values language learning and guides the whole school community, students will be able to become proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens.