

Regina Public Schools

10-Year Renewal Plan:

French Immersion Program Study

March 4, 2008

Objective:

To assess the benefits and limitations of establishing both dual track and single track French Immersion programs for Kindergarten to Grade 8 students in Regina Public Schools as part of the 10-Year Renewal Plan.

Background:

Regina Public Schools has conducted two previous French Immersion studies in the past 15 years. The two reports were received by the Board in March 1992 and May 1999.

The March 1992 review made recommendations regarding the following:

- French Immersion program boundaries
- School Organization
 - Issues with Grades 1/2 and 2/3 splits
 - Enhancing a bilingual atmosphere
- Information to parents
 - A process for providing complete information to parents regarding both French Immersion and regular programs
- Personnel
 - Greater emphasis is placed on bilingualism in placement of professional staff and administrators.

The May 1999 review made recommendations regarding the following:

- Creation of a single track (French Centre) to enhance learning experiences for students
- Enhanced promotion of French Immersion programs
- At least one administrator in a French Immersion school be bilingual
- Enhance professional development opportunities for French Immersion teachers.

The current study was undertaken by *Evaluation Plus*, led by Wally Lazurak. The consulting firm was directed to:

- Review current research pertaining to the efficacy of single track (French Centres) and dual track elementary French Immersion programs; and
- Describe parent perceptions regarding the research findings.

Process:

- *Evaluation Plus* conducted a review of the current research regarding single track and dual track French Immersion schools, with an emphasis on the quality indicators identified in the *Ten Year Renewal Plan*.
- *Evaluation Plus* also conducted telephone surveys of 90 randomly selected parents of students currently enrolled in French Immersion programs. The number of parents selected were based on the number of students enrolled in each French Immersion program.

Research Findings:

- Research from the past six years have found that successful language programs demonstrate the following characteristics:
 - Positive district support
 - Positive principal support
 - Competent, enthusiastic teachers
 - Positive community support
 - Sufficient instructional time
 - Clear and relevant curricular expectations
 - Students engage in interactive learning
 - Quality learning resources
 - Well-articulated programs
 - Professional development
 - Communications, promotion and marketing
 - Student access, support and recognition
 - Assessment, achievement and certification
 - Suitable facilities and equipment
 - Financial support.
- Key benefits to French Immersion education include the following:
 - Enhanced literacy through additive bilingualism
 - Strengthened English language skills
 - Mental flexibility, creative thinking and sensitivity
 - Metalinguistic awareness
 - Communication, cultural and economic opportunities.
- Advantages of single track (French Centre) schools include:
 - A more natural setting for communicating in French
 - More exposure to French within the school environment
 - More opportunity to use French
 - Enhanced French language proficiency
 - Enhanced learning results
 - More bilingual staff.
- Challenges of single track French Immersion (French Centre) schools include:
 - Transportation
 - Parental Involvement.
- Advantages of dual track French Immersion schools include:
 - Sharing of expertise
 - Parental involvement
 - Learning from diversity
 - Ease of transferability
 - Greater range of English language resources
 - Multi-cultural awareness and understanding.

- Challenges of dual track French Immersion schools include:
 - Few opportunities to use French outside the classroom
 - Management of programs with different language needs.

Parent Responses:

- On average, 60.6% of parents interviewed rated the advantages of single track schools as either important or very important.
- On average, 59.5% of parents interviewed rated the challenges of single track schools as either important or very important.
- On average, 78.0% of parents interviewed rated the advantages of dual track schools as either important or very important.
- On average, 46.7% of parents interviewed rated the challenges of dual track schools as either important or very important.
- Parents provided other advantages and challenges to both single track and dual track schools, with a wide range of responses.
- Parents supporting single track schools cited reasons including, but not limited to:
 - More subjects or courses would be taught in French
 - French would be used in more communication situations
 - More cultural activities would be undertaken in French.
- Parents supporting dual track schools cited reasons including, but not limited to:
 - Parents more easily involved
 - Ability to transfer child from one program to the other in the same school
 - Appreciation of two languages and cultures in one schools—a better reflection of society in general
 - Local school is dual track therefore, more easily accessible.

Recommendations:

Pending the decisions to be made March 11, 2008:

- The Regina Public School Division offer both dual track and single track (French Centre) French Immersion elementary programs as part of the 10-Year Renewal Plan in accordance with the Elementary Program Delivery Model, with between 200 to 400 French Immersion students per program.
- The Regina Public School Division conduct a two year study of student achievement including both French and English language proficiency comparing single track (French Centre) and dual track schools beginning with the 2008-2009 school year.

Appendix:

1. French Immersion Program Study Research Findings and Parent Survey Results

Appendix 1

**French Immersion Program Study:
Research Findings and Parent Survey Results**

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Introduction

Regina Public Schools conducted a study to determine the benefits and limitations of establishing both dual-track and single-track French Immersion programs for Kindergarten to Grade 8.

This study included a review of current research relating to the operation of single and dual track elementary French Immersion programs and a survey of the views of parents of students in the French Immersion program.

This report presents a summary of research related to French immersion and the district-level results of the parent survey.

Study Questions

Research Findings

The following questions were addressed in the review of research:

- What is French immersion?
- What are the features of French immersion?
- What are the advantages of single-track, immersion centres?
- What are the disadvantages of single-track, immersion centres?
- What are the advantages of dual-track schools?
- What are the disadvantages of dual-track schools?
- What are possible criteria for selecting new sites for French immersion?
- What are the characteristics of successful French immersion programs?
- What are the benefits of French immersion education?

Parent Survey

The following questions were asked in the parent survey:

1. How important are the benefits of French immersion education to parents?
2. How important are the advantages of single-track schools or immersion centres to parents?
 - A more natural setting for communicating in French
 - More exposure to French within the school environment
 - More opportunity to use French
 - Enhanced French language proficiency
 - Enhanced learning results
 - More bilingual staff
3. How important are the challenges of single-track schools or immersion centres to parents?
 - Transportation
 - Parental Involvement
4. How important are the advantages of dual-track schools to parents?
 - Sharing of expertise among teachers with diverse expertise
 - Parental involvement as more parents may be from the local community
 - Learning from diversity

- Immersion students have access to a greater range of English language resources
 - Development of multi-cultural awareness and understanding
5. How important are the challenges of dual-track schools to parents?
 - Fewer opportunities to use French outside the classroom
 - Management of programs with different language needs
 6. What recommendations would parents make to Regina Public Schools to improve the French immersion program?

Part I Summary of Research

Definition of French Immersion

French immersion is a program in which French is taught as a subject and is used as the language of instruction to teach other subjects in French such as mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, health and selected optional courses. French immersion begins in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 4 or grade 7 depending on a school district's priorities and available staffing. French immersion programs that begin in kindergarten or grade 1 are called early French immersion programs. French immersion programs that begin in grade 4 are called middle French Immersion programs and French immersion programs that begin in grades 6 or 7 are called late French immersion programs.

Early total immersion, with 100% of the instructional time in French, in grades 1, 2 and 3 is the most popular immersion program in Canada followed by late immersion and then by middle immersion. After three years or so, early total immersion reduces the instructional time to 80% per week for the next three years and continues with about 50% of the instructional time in French at the secondary school level.

A partial immersion program offers instruction in French for about 50% of the instructional time and instruction in English for 50% of the instructional time, beginning in kindergarten or grade one and continuing for the duration of the program.

Features of French Immersion

Johnson and Swain (1997) identify the following features:

- Language Two (L2) is the main or a major medium of instruction. Learners study L2 to both learn the L2 and to become proficient in it and to learn other subjects through L2
- The immersion L2 curriculum parallels the local Language One (L1) curriculum. This ensures that immersion learners do not lose out on anything that is important in mainstream education.
- Overt psychological and other support exists for L1, both from parents and the school. Immersion is not intended to devalue or threaten a learner's first language. This is not likely when learner's L1 is the majority language of the country.
- The program aims for additive bilingualism. It is designed to add to and strengthen a learner's language repertoire and to be able to use the language at a deeper cognitive level for the learning of serious subject-matter at school.
- Exposure to the L2 is largely confined to the classroom. "That is, learners taking immersion program generally do not live in an area where their immersion L2 is spoken widely as a language of the community, though it may feature in the national media." (chapter 2).
- Learners generally enter with similar (and limited) levels of L2 proficiency. "In Canada, for example, a French immersion class would tend to consist of learners who do not have French as the language of the home."

- The teachers are bilingual. Teachers are either native speakers of the majority language and highly fluent in the immersion language or native speakers of the immersion language and fluent in the majority language.

The variable features include:

- grade at which a program is introduced
- amount of time devoted to the immersion language in comparison with the majority language of the school
- status of the immersion language: e.g., French enjoys high status in Canada

Three factors characterize this type of education:

- Time factor. Immersion offers more time overall in French than is made available when French is taught as a school subject.
- Intensity factor. Immersion students learn more than the French language; they also learn to use French to learn other subject areas: e.g. Math, science
- Exposure factor. Students receive a great deal of exposure to French from a native or highly fluent speaker. After an initial 'silent period', students build up their capacity for interaction.

Organization of French Immersion

French immersion programs are organized into single track, immersion schools, and dual track schools:

- A single-track school, also called an immersion school, is a school that offers only the French immersion program. Administrative, teaching and support staff are fluent in French and English. French is the primary language of administration and communication with students and teachers. French is the language used for offering support services.
- A dual-track school offers both a French immersion and English program within the same building and is led by a single school administration. Some members of the administrative and support staff may possess fluency in both French and English. Some support services may be provided in French.

Advantages of Single-track, Immersion Centres

Research studies over more than 30 years have shown that single-track immersion schools offer the following advantages:

- A more natural setting for communicating in French
- More exposure to French within the school environment
- More opportunity to use French
- Better French language proficiency
- Better learning results
- More bilingual staff
- More resources in French

A more natural setting for communicating in French

- Often more teachers and support staff can communicate in French.

More exposure to French within the school environment

- Students are exposed to French through the use of bulletin boards, announcements, sports, songs, displays, assemblies, cultural/musical performances and contact with support staff.

More opportunity to use French

- French is used in all aspects of the school day.
- Students have more opportunity to use French outside of the classroom, in the hallway, on the playground and through communications with school administration and support staff.

Better French language proficiency

- Hana Fryscikovi (2000) found that the French language proficiency of pupils from immersion centers is generally better than those from dual track schools, which is highly probable due to the amount of exposure to French in the wider school environment.

Better learning results

- A report published in 1983 entitled *French Immersion Programmes in Manitoba: An Evaluation of Grades 6 and 9. Final Report* found that the early total immersion program in an immersion setting produces the best learning results and that teachers and principals expressed belief that the total immersion setting was more conducive to achieving the French immersion program objectives.
- Lapkin, S., Andrew, C.M., Harley, B., Swain, M., & Kamin, J. (OISE) (1981) in a study entitled *The Immersion Centre and the Dual-track School: A study of the relationship between school environment and achievement in an early total French immersion program* compared Grade 5 immersion students in the Carleton Board of Education in single-track and dual-track schools. Achievement tests of French, English and other subjects were given to Grade 5 students in both settings, and questionnaires given to students, teachers, and principals. The results show superior achievement in immersion-centre students in both French and English skills. Single-track immersion students scored significantly higher than dual track students on the following tests: Test de rendement en français (French output), Test de compréhension auditive (listening comprehension) and Test de compréhension de l'écrit (reading comprehension). However, there was no significant difference on the Test de mots à trouver (words to find). Furthermore, single track immersion students scored a little better than the dual track students in some of the English skills assessed by the Canadian Tests of Basic Skills.
- Genesee, Morin & Allister (1974) examined the proficiency of grade 7 students in a late immersion program and found that students in the immersion centres had achieved higher levels of proficiency than students in dual-track schools on tests on French listening comprehension, speaking, reading and language arts. This study was conducted in the students' first year of the late immersion program.
- Genesee (1987) contends that immersion centres are more effective centres for French language learning. Genesee (1987) writes: "Immersion centers provide a more enriched French language setting in that virtually all communication in the school takes place in French. In dual-track schools, all communication in immersion classrooms and to

immersion students in the hallways is in French, at least insofar as communication between adults and the students is concerned, while communication outside the immersion classroom is usually in English. Thus, it would probably be expected that the French proficiency of immersion students attending immersion centers would be higher than that of students attending dual-track schools.” (p51.) Genesee also suggests that immersion centres may be easier to administer as dual-track schools require two sets of teachers, one for immersion and one for the regular program and two sets of school books, library books and curricula at all grade levels

Positive school environment

- Lapkin et al (1981) found that from examining questionnaires administered to staff members of both programs, that the higher achievement in French listening and reading comprehension by the single track students were more closely associated with factors in the school environment such as receptive use of French, more experienced teachers, more satisfied with available resources and slightly more favorable staff attitudes toward the immersion program.

More bilingual staff

- Bilingual staff such as principals, teacher-librarians and administrative support staff increase the opportunity for students to use French outside the classroom

More resources in French

- French immersion centres allow for the consolidation of French language learning resources, including the library collection, in fewer schools.

Challenges of Single-track, Immersion Centres

The single-track immersion schools present the following challenges:

- Transportation
- Parental Involvement

Transportation

- Some students may need travel from their neighbourhood to a French immersion centre which may be more centrally located.

Parental Involvement

- A special effort may need to be made to involve parents if the immersion centre is not in their community.

Advantages of Dual-track, Immersion schools

The advantages of dual-track, immersion schools include sharing of expertise and parental involvement.

Sharing of expertise

- Teachers of both programs may benefit from sharing expertise.

Parental involvement

- Parental involvement may be easier if the dual-track school is in the parents' neighbourhood.

Challenges of Dual-track schools

The challenges of dual-track schools include:

- Few opportunities to use French outside the classroom
- Management of programs with different language needs
- Unilingual support staff
- Perceived threat of immersion program

Few opportunities to use French outside the classroom

- Immersion students' exposure to the second language may be limited to the classroom.
- Immersion students generally speak French less frequently outside the classroom.
- With both English and French in the same school, it becomes more challenging to use French in assemblies and hallways.

Management of programs with different language needs

- School administrators must manage two distinct full-scale programs in one building.

Unilingual support staff

- Dual-track schools often have more unilingual English-speaking support staff, with fewer possibilities for students and teachers to use French outside the classroom setting.

Perceived Threat of immersion program

- In some school, unilingual regular program staff may feel threatened by the immersion program.
- Teachers, students and parents may fear the displacement or disappearance of the regular program.
- The regular program may seem "second best".

Criteria for Selecting New Sites for French immersion

The selection of new sites for French immersion programs should be based on several considerations:

- community support - commitment to enroll in the program;
- availability of space – new, vacant, under-used;
- accessibility to safe transportation routes;
- availability of suitable gymnasium, library and school grounds to support program;
- location of elementary, junior high and senior high school sites within short distances of one another;
- equitable distribution across the district;
- organizational model: immersion school, immersion centre, dual track;
- costs of program and facilities; and
- availability of qualified staff to provide instruction in a sufficient number of subjects in French.

Characteristics of Successful French Immersion programs

Research and program reviews conducted by Evaluation Plus Inc. during the last six years have found that successful language programs demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. Positive District Support

The school district endorses the importance of learning French. Its language policy states its commitment to the learning of languages. The district defines programming conditions (e.g., student eligibility, equitable access, instructional time), provides sufficient funding and hires competent teachers. The district encourages lifelong professional development and promotes the language programs.

2. Positive Principal Support

The school principal hires and assigns competent teachers and schedules sufficient time for the French immersion program. The principal plays a leadership role in the administration and promotion of the programs, allocates an appropriate budget and supports the teachers.

3. Competent, Enthusiastic Teachers

The teachers possess at least an Advanced level of competency in French. The teachers are knowledgeable about second language acquisition and appropriate second language teaching and learning strategies. The teachers understand how to effectively integrate technology into their instruction. They teach effectively, arranging a variety of interactive learning activities for students. They are competent in the content areas if they are teaching subjects other than French language arts, and participate in professional development activities.

4. Positive Community Support

Parents understand and support the French immersion program. The business community and the community at large support French second language learning as part of a world-class education. The teachers in the school support French language learning.

5. Sufficient Instructional Time

Immersion programs provide at least 75% of the instructional time in the French language at the elementary school level, 60% of the instructional time in the French language at the middle school level and at least 50% of the instructional time in the French language at the senior high school level. Following these guidelines, students would receive over 7,000 hours of instruction from Grades 1 to 12.

6. Clear and relevant curricular expectations

The curricular expectations are easy to understand and help students to develop a meaningful level of language proficiency and cultural understanding in the target language. In immersion, students learn effectively a variety of required and optional courses through the medium of the target language.

7. *Students engage in interactive learning*

Students learn the French language in situations that are as close as possible to real communication. They develop an understanding of the target language system and subsystems (phonological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic) by using the French language in authentic contexts. They develop communication skills through games, skits, simulations and dramatizations. Students make contact with speakers of the target language through structured interviews, writing letters or e-mail messages and meeting residents who speak the target language in the community.

Students are motivated through age-appropriate, enjoyable learning activities, many involving pair- or small-group work. Most activities have a strong focus on communication and student interaction. The language teachers use strategies that include opportunities for extensive practice.

French language students use information and communication technologies and other media to increase access to communication in the target language with both native and non-native speakers in Canada and in other countries.

8. *Quality learning resources*

Sufficient and appropriate classroom and library resources are available to support the target language programs. Learning resources are appropriate for the students' interest and language level. Resources include dictionaries, novels, newspapers, magazines and books for personal interest, videos, cassettes, computer software, CD-ROMS, films, music and television programs.

9. *Well-articulated programs*

Students experience a similar learning program at a given instructional level in schools across the division. Program expectations, instructional time, instructional and assessment practices and learning resources are similar at each grade level.

Smooth and logical transitions occur between elementary, middle and high school levels. Program expectations in middle school build on knowledge and skills acquired at the elementary school level and program expectations at the high school level build on knowledge and skills acquired at the middle school level.

Elementary, middle and high the target language teachers and school administrators work together to develop programs that build on previous learning in the second language and content areas.

In the immersion program, the target language arts and English language arts teachers undertake joint planning to eliminate needless repetition of skills already taught in one language, to maximize the possibilities of language transfer and to reduce interferences between the two languages.

10. Professional Development

The teachers access a variety of second language professional development activities. The teachers belong to a language education professional organization and subscribe to one or two professional journals dealing specifically with the teaching of French as a second language. School administrators encourage and support lifelong professional development.

11. Communication, Promotion and Marketing

The school shares learning outcomes and program expectations with parents at conferences held at the beginning of the school year. The school invites parents of elementary students to participate in language learning events. The school newsletter reports regularly on events and achievements in the target language program. The school provides new parents with a parent package of information on the French immersion program. The school has developed successful partnerships with families, the community, and business.

The division and schools promote the benefits of learning the French language and other second languages. The promotion highlights job opportunities, research results and study and exchange opportunities. The immersion and regular target language programs are promoted through information packages for parents and students, open houses, information evenings, brochures, district Web site, school displays, student clubs, Internet e-mail pals, field trips, student exchanges and posters. The French language is visible in the school through the use of signs, bulletin boards, displays, school concerts, extra-curricular activities and school announcements.

12. Student Access, Support and Recognition

The French language programs are available to all students, including gifted students and students with special needs. Immersion programs are located in all areas of the city to provide equitable student access. Students who have special needs receive appropriate assistance. Students are recognized for their achievement through certificates, awards, bursaries and other incentives.

13. Assessment, Achievement and Certification

The school implements an assessment system that diagnoses needs at the entry point, provides feedback on progress and certifies achievement at the end of the program. The school has a clear system for placing students in classes of appropriate levels. The school uses language portfolio assessment to help students record and reflect on their language learning. Students demonstrate a high level of achievement in language learning.

14. Suitable Facilities and Equipment

The school provides appropriate classroom space and equipment for language learning. Students have access to computers in the classroom as well as in a computer lab.

15. Financial Support

Sufficient funds are available to purchase learning resources, student assessment materials and to fund professional development needs, cultural activities and student and staff recognition.

Benefits of French Immersion Education

This summary provides an overview of the key benefits of French immersion education. These benefits include:

- enhanced literacy through additive bilingualism
- strengthened English language skills
- mental flexibility, creative thinking and sensitivity
- metalinguistic awareness
- communication, cultural and economic opportunities.

Enhanced Literacy through Additive Bilingualism

In Canada, French second language education, especially French immersion, provides students with the opportunity to become literate, to develop the ability to comprehend, communicate, read and write in two languages, English and French. Students add an L2 to their linguistic repertoire at no cost to their L1 competence – additive bilingualism.

The research studies cited in this review report that:

- The French language skills of students in French immersion programs are superior to those of students in core French and to those of students in partial immersion programs (Swain, 1974).
- Partial immersion students take longer to develop French language skills and may have more difficulty than full immersion students in learning subjects taught in French (Bialystok, 2001).
- Early total immersion students outperformed middle immersion students in all measures of speaking and writing (Swain, 1996).
- Students in early total immersion programs approached native-like performance in French at about 11 years of age in receptive language skills (listening and reading) and developed a functional use of French in the productive skills of speaking and writing (Genesee, 1987).
- Students in French immersion develop better receptive skills in French than expressive skills (Cummins, 2001).
- Late French immersion (LFI) students performed as well or better than early French immersion students in situations where the LFI students experienced a recent intensive exposure to French (Lapkin et al, 1983; Genesee, 1987).
- Intensity of second language exposure may be as important as cumulative exposure (Genesee, 1987). Early immersion students who take more courses at the secondary level achieve better test scores (Turnbull et al, 1998). Progress in French tapers off when the intensive exposure to French ends (Lapkin et al, 1983).
- Students can learn content areas in French. French immersion students learn as much mathematics, science and social studies in French as student learn in English in the regular English program (Swain, 1974, 1996).
- The frequent use of French between teachers and students improves student performance in French (Lapkin et al, 1983). Students in immersion centres demonstrated better French listening and reading comprehension skills than students in ‘dual-track’ schools. In immersion centres, French is more frequently used in activities outside the classroom (Lapkin et al, 1983; Genesee, 1987).
- Intensive French program students achieved oral results comparable to those of grade 9, grade 10, and even grade 11 students in regular Core French classes (MacFarlane, 2005).

Students in intensive French programs are able to sustain a conversation, with some spontaneity, on topics related to their level of cognitive development and interests (Netten and Germain, 2004).

- Secondary school French immersion students in Alberta and Northwest Territories obtained a B (intermediate level) or better for the skills assessed in French on Public Service Commission of Canada French second language tests (Public Service Commission of Canada, 2003, 2005). The B (intermediate level) is a common requirement for bilingual positions within the Public Service.

Strengthened English language skills

The research studies cited in this review report that:

- Early total immersion children perform better on English languages skills by the end of elementary school than students in regular programs (Baker, 2006).
- Students in an early total French immersion program experience a temporary lag in English reading, spelling and punctuation. After the introduction of formal instruction in English language arts, these students quickly catch up to their regular program peers in English reading skills (Swain, 1974). By the end of grade 6, early immersion students' literacy test scores in English reading and writing were distinctly better than their peers in English language programs. (Turnbull, Hart and Lapkin, 2001, 2003).
- The introduction of reading in French in early French immersion programs prior to the introduction of reading in English appears to foster rapid transfer of reading skills from French to English (Swain, 1974).
- French immersion students with 80% of their instruction in French, including mathematics, scored higher on an English language standardized mathematic test than did the students who received 50% of their instruction in French. Those students who received their mathematics instruction in French were able to use this knowledge in English.
- Canadian 15-year-olds enrolled in immersion programs performed at a higher level in English reading than non-immersion students on the 2000 Program for International Student Assessment (Statistics Canada, 2004).
- In a New Brunswick study, the student populations of French immersion and English programs shared more similarities than differences in socioeconomic backgrounds. Variables such as parental involvement in their children's education and beliefs and perceptions about the immersion program should be examined to explain the 25% advantage for French immersion program students over English program students in Mathematics and English language arts (Dicks, 2001).
- Languages are interdependent. Skills developed through the second language (L2) are available for learning and using the first language (L1) and skills developed through L1 are available for learning and using L2 (Cummins, 2000). An underlying cognitive/academic proficiency, common across languages although the surface features of languages may differ, facilitates the transfer of cognitive/academic or literacy-related skills from one language to another.
- Students in intensive French from a wide range of ability levels in grade 5 or 6 scored higher on provincial English language assessments, science and mathematics than students who had not participated in the program (Netten and Germain, 2004).
- The impact of learning a second language has been mostly positive on first language skills in all studies reviewed (Bournot-Trites and Tellowitz, 2002).

Mental Flexibility, Creative Thinking and Sensitivity

The research studies cited in this review report that:

- Balanced bilingual children with equivalent proficiency in two languages showed cognitive advantages over monolingual children. Balanced bilinguals performed better than monolinguals on tasks that required mental manipulation and reorganization of visual patterns (Peal and Lambert, 1962).
- Bilinguals performed better on verbal and non-verbal intelligence measures and verbal originality (Cummins and Gulutsan, 1974).
- Bilinguals performed better than monolinguals on divergent thinking scales which encouraged learners to provide a variety of answers to a question (Cummins, 1975, 1977).
- Bilinguals demonstrated communicative sensitivity by being aware of which language to use in each situation and were able to monitor the appropriateness of language use (Baker, 2000).
- Bilinguals corrected their errors faster than monolinguals (Ben-Zeeb, 1977).

Metalinguistic Awareness

The research studies cited in this review report that:

- Bilingual children are better able to analyze their knowledge of language. They see words printed in two separate ways and learn that there are at least two ways of saying the same thing. They develop an earlier understanding of the symbolic representation of words (Baker, 2001).
- Bilingual children appeared to have a superior understanding of the nature of the relation between words and their meaning, the arbitrariness of names and the possibility of being able to change names for known objects (Bialystok, 2001).
- Bilingual children were better able to focus on meaning, on taking into account only relevant features when there is distractive information (Bialystok, 2001).
- These children understood the boundaries of words and the relationship between word meaning and sentence meaning (Bialystok, 2001).

Threshold Level and Cognitive Benefits

The research studies cited in this review report that:

- Children must have sufficient proficiency in one language at a level appropriate for children their age to function effectively in an instructional setting and to have access to the abstract concepts (Bialystok, 2001).
- To benefit fully from the positive cognitive consequences of second language learning, students must attain a certain level of language competence, called a threshold level (Cummins, 2001).
- To define this threshold level, it is important to take into account the children's stage of cognitive development, the academic demands of different stages of schooling, the amount of time that is spent through the second language (L2) and the type of cognitive operations that must be expressed through L2. A student who is 12 years old and approaching the formal operational stage will need to develop a higher threshold than a student who is six years old at the concrete operational stage (Cummins, 2001).
- The early French immersion program, with intensive exposure to French in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2, allows students to develop a sufficient level of French language proficiency to benefit optimally from interaction in a French language school environment

and to develop their English first language (L1) skills. The early immersion programs in French allow children to learn the L2 skills necessary to cope with more cognitive demands in later years (Cummins, 2001).

- Intensive exposure to L2 is likely to result in high levels of L2 competence at no cost to L1 competence in situations where the L1 language is reinforced and promoted in the family and community outside of school.
- Partial immersion students take longer to develop French language skills and may have more difficulty than full immersion students in learning subjects taught in French (Bialystok, 2001). Early partial immersion students may lag behind comparable regular program students in mathematics and science when these subjects are taught in the second language. Early partial immersion students may not possess sufficient proficiency in the second language to take mathematics and science in the early years of immersion. Their second language skills need to be sufficiently developed to work successfully with the curriculum in the second language (Baker, 2006).

Neurolinguistic Theory of Bilingualism

The neurolinguistic theory of bilingualism highlights some of the following points:

- Bilingual individuals understand each language directly, organize their mental representations according to the meaning of each language, and have the ability to adopt two perspectives (Paradis, 2004).
- Bilingual individuals possess two language subsystems which are connected to a single common conceptual system (Paradis, 2004).
- Each language subsystem has a grammar and a set of lexical meanings for words in each language. Each language is differentially connected to the common conceptual system which is language independent (Paradis, 2004).
- Language acquisition helps to reshape the composition of existing concepts and helps to form new concepts (Paradis, 2004).

Communication, Cultural and Economic Opportunities

French second language education offers other benefits:

- Learning French allows students to communicate with a wide variety of people whether traveling in Canada or internationally, to develop respect for different cultures, to access two worlds of experience and to access a wider range of national and international jobs.
- The Public Service of Canada has 165, 679 positions, 39.2% of which are bilingual positions. (Public Service Commission Statistical Information Site, Data Files 2004-2005).

Part II Parent School Survey Results at District Level

Description of Study Sample

A total of 97 parents of students enrolled in the French immersion program were selected at random to be interviewed by telephone:

School	FI Enrolments K-8	No. of Parents to be Interviewed	Response Rate	Percentage Response Rate
Connaught	135	10	9	90%
Hawrylak	160	10	10	100%
Massey	271	17	16	94.1%
Mironuck	331	21	20	95.2%
Wascana	55	4	4	100%
Wilfred Walker	233	15	15	100%
Campbell Collegiate	193	16	12	75.0%
Thom Collegiate	63	4	4	100%
	1441	97	90	92.8%

Sample: Approximately 10% of approximately 1,000 parents)

Parent telephone interviews were conducted from Thursday, February 7 to Friday, February 22 by the Evaluation Plus Inc. team located in Edmonton. Each interview took between 10 and 15 minutes. The parents had access to the interview questions and a research summary prior to the interview.

A total of 90 parents were interviewed for a response rate of 92.8%.

Benefits of French Immersion Education

Parents indicated the following level of importance to each of the identified benefits of French immersion education:

1. A total of 81 out of 90 respondents (90%) considered enhanced literacy through additive bilingualism to be an important or very important benefit of French immersion education.
2. A total of 67 out of 90 respondents (74.5%) considered strengthened English language skills to be an important or very important benefit of French immersion education.
3. A total of 76 out of 90 respondents (84.4%) considered mental flexibility, creative thinking and sensitivity to be an important or very important benefit of French immersion education.
4. A total of 84 out of 90 respondents (90%) considered communication and cultural opportunities to be important or very important benefits of French immersion education.
5. A total of 81 out of 90 respondents (90%) considered economic opportunities to be important or very important benefits of French immersion education.

The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Importance of Specific Benefits of French Immersion Education

Benefits	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	No Response	Total
Enhanced literacy through additive bilingualism	1 1.1%	6 6.7%	30 33.3%	51 56.7%	2 2.2%	90 100%
Strengthened English language skills	9 10%	12 13.3%	25 27.8%	42 46.7%	2 2.2%	90 100%
Mental flexibility, creative thinking and sensitivity	2 2.2%	10 11.1%	27 30.0%	49 54.4%	2 2.2%	90 100%
Communication and cultural opportunities	1 1.1%	4 4.4%	28 31.1%	56 62.2%	1 1.1%	90 100%
Economic opportunities		8 8.9%	32 35.6%	49 54.4%	1 1.1%	90 100%

Responding parents identified other benefits of French immersion education:

1. French immersion makes travel more enriching.
2. The pupil-teacher ratio is smaller.
3. French immersion prepares students for a changing world.
4. French immersion offers a more challenging curriculum.
5. French immersion helps students to become independent learners.
6. Students learn to appreciate languages and cultures.
7. Being bilingual helps children to learn a third language.
8. French immersion helps children to develop different perspectives on other cultures and respect for people.

Advantages of Single-track (French Centre) Schools

Parents indicated the following level of importance to each of the identified advantages of single-track (French Centre) schools:

1. A total of 40 out of 90 respondents (44.89%) considered a more natural setting for communicating in French to be an important or very important advantage of single-track (French centre) schools.
2. A total of 48 out of 90 respondents (53.3%) considered more exposure to French within the school environment to be an important or very important advantage of single-track (French centre) schools.
3. A total of 52 out of 90 respondents (57.7%) considered more opportunity to use French to be an important or very important advantage of single-track (French centre) schools.
4. A total of 64 out of 90 respondents (71.1%) considered enhanced French language proficiency to be an important or very important advantage of single-track (French centre) schools.
5. A total of 59 out of 90 respondents (65.6%) considered enhanced learning results to be an important or very important advantage of single-track (French centre) schools.
6. A total of 54 out of 90 respondents (60.2%) considered more bilingual staff to be an important or very important advantage of single-track (French centre) schools.

The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Importance of Advantages of Single-track (French Centre) Schools

Advantage	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	No Response	Total
A more natural setting for communicating in French	20 22.2%	28 31.1%	28 31.1%	12 13.7%	2 2.2%	90 100%
More exposure to French within the school environment	7 7.8%	32 35.6%	29 32.2%	19 21.1%	3 3.3%	90 100%
More opportunity to use French	7 7.8%	28 31.2%	30 33.3%	22 24.4%	3 3.3%	90 100%
Enhanced French language proficiency	9 10.0%	14 15.6%	38 42.2%	26 28.9%	3 3.3%	90 100%
Enhanced learning results	11 12.2%	15 16.8%	34 37.8%	25 27.8%	5 5.6%	90 100%
More bilingual staff	11 12.2%	22 24.6%	32 35.8%	22 24.4%	3 3.3%	90 100%

Responding parents identified other advantages of single-track (French Centre) schools:

1. More subjects or courses would be taught in French.
2. French would be used in more communication situations.
3. Students may feel more comfortable speaking in French in the hallways.
4. More French resources may be available.
5. More cultural activities would be undertaken in French.
6. French language learning would be more concentrated in a single-track model.

Challenges of Single-track (French Centre) Schools

Parents indicated the following level of importance to each of the identified challenges of single-track (French Centre) schools:

1. A total of 55 out of 90 respondents (61.1%) considered transportation to be an important or very important challenge of single-track (French centre) schools.
2. A total of 52 out of 90 respondents (57.8%) considered parental involvement to be an important or very important challenge of single-track (French centre) schools.

The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Importance of Challenges of Single-track (French Centre) Schools

Challenges	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	No Response	Total
Transportation	20 22.2%	9 10.0%	16 17.8%	39 43.3%	6 6.7%	90 100%
Parental involvement	17 18.9%	15 16.7%	24 26.7%	28 31.1%	6 6.7%	90 100%

Responding parents identified other challenges of single-track (French Centre) schools:

1. Small enrolments may result in fewer opportunities for involvement in varied activities.
2. Socialization with English-speaking children may be lacking.
3. Some parents indicated that they do not think they could help their child taking French immersion in a single-track school, therefore limiting parental involvement.
4. Children would have to change schools if they need to transfer into the English program. It would mean that children of the same family may need to be in different schools. Often, two parents work and therefore parental participation in two schools becomes more complex. There is a need to make the parents comfortable with the school.
5. A single-track immersion schools might be viewed as an “elitist” school.
6. Children may not receive the needed support in English.
7. A single track immersion (French Centre) school does not reflect our bilingual society.
8. A single-track immersion centre may not prepare students for the dual-track environment at the high school level.
9. Single-track schools tend to segregate children from the community. Segregation of children in such programs from K to Grade 8 is not a desirable practice.
10. English language development in single-track schools is a concern. Some parents think that students may be left behind in English.
11. Many parents do not feel well equipped to help their children in French.
12. Unilingual parents may find it more difficult to volunteer and may feel that there is no place for English parents.
13. It is important to ensure that students are sufficiently fluent in English in science and math skills which are important for the post-secondary levels.
14. There may be fewer opportunities for extra-curricular activities such as music.
15. Some parents are more interested in their children learning a second language than in becoming more deeply immersed in French.

Advantages of Dual-track Schools

Parents indicated the following level of importance to each of the identified advantages of dual-track schools:

1. A total of 65 out of 90 respondents (72.2%) considered sharing of expertise among teachers with diverse expertise to be an important or very important advantage of dual-track schools.
2. A total of 71 out of 90 respondents (78.9%) considered parental involvement as more parents may be from the local community to be an important or very important advantage of dual-track schools.
3. A total of 73 out of 90 respondents (81.1%) considered learning from diversity to be an important or very important advantage of dual-track schools.

4. A total of 68 out of 90 respondents (75.6%) considered immersion students having access to a greater range of English language resources to be an important or very important advantage of dual-track schools.
5. A total of 74 out of 90 respondents (82.2%) considered development of multi-cultural awareness and understanding to be an important or very important advantage of dual-track schools.

The results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 Importance of Advantages of Dual-track Schools

Advantage	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	No Response	Total
Sharing of expertise among teachers with diverse expertise	8 8.9%	15 16.7%	39 43.3%	26 28.9%	2 2.2%	90 100%
Parental involvement as more parents may be from the local community	8 8.9%	10 11.1%	38 42.2%	33 36.7%	1 1.1%	90 100%
Learning from diversity	6 6.7%	9 10%	31 34.4%	42 46.7%	2 2.2%	90 100%
Immersion students have access to a greater range of English language resources.	4 4.4%	16 17.8%	35 38.9%	33 36.7%	2 2.2%	90 100%
Development of multi-cultural awareness and understanding	7 7.8%	7 7.8%	31 34.4%	43 47.8%	2 2.2%	90 100%

Responding parents identified other advantages of dual-track schools:

1. The dual-track school has a higher student enrolment, therefore providing more opportunities for varied activities and meeting both English and French language needs.
2. Parents can be more easily involved.
3. Students receive better preparation for high school.
4. It would be possible to transfer a child from the immersion program to the English program without changing schools. The possibility of being able to change to the English program within the same schools is the most frequently mentioned advantage by responding parents. They have a desire to keep children of the same family together in the same school at the elementary level.
5. A dual-track school helps children appreciate the two languages and cultures. Parental involvement is easier in a dual-track school. The integration of two programs leads to the students of each program to have more interaction with each other.
6. The dual-track school addresses the needs of parents who want to enhance their children's education.
7. It is beneficial to work together to develop both English and French language skills.
8. Students are able to form friendships within the school with students from both the English program and French immersion program.

9. Students can more readily receive help if they are struggling.
10. Students would be exposed to a greater variety of English program teachers.
11. The school may be closer to the local community and therefore require less travel.
12. More learning assistance is available in a dual-track school as there is a wider range of teacher expertise.
13. English language development may be stronger in dual-track schools.
14. Students may be exposed to a more diverse population.
15. Parents can be more easily involved and speak in English.
16. The dual-track school presents a higher comfort level for non-French-speaking families.
17. A dual-track school is more reflective of the community. There would be a better balance between English and French development.
18. A dual-track school also offers more social opportunities for friends and more possibility to become involved in sports teams.
19. A dual-track school helps children to better understand how the use of English and French can coexist in the country.
20. The dual-track school produces highly competent students and addresses the needs of parents who wish to enhance education of their children.

Challenges of Dual-track Schools

Parents indicated the following level of importance to each of the identified challenges of dual-track schools:

1. A total of 42 out of 90 respondents (46.7%) considered fewer opportunities to use French outside the classroom to be an important or very important challenge of dual-track schools.
2. A total of 42 out of 90 respondents (46.7%) considered management of programs with different language needs to be an important or very important challenge of single-track (French centre) schools.

The results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5 Importance of Challenges of Dual-track Schools

Challenges	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	No Response	Total
Fewer opportunities to use French outside the classroom	20 22.2%	23 25.6%	28 31.1%	14 15.6%	3 3.3%	90 100%
Management of programs with different language needs	23 25.6%	22 24.4%	28 31.1%	14 15.6%	3 3.3%	90 100%

Responding parents identified other challenges of dual-track schools:

1. Dual-track schools may not offer a full curriculum in French.
2. Some parents indicated that sometimes there is discrimination between French immersion and English language students.
3. It is difficult to use French in school assemblies.
4. There is a need for more choirs and clubs in French.
5. Too much English is spoken in the classroom and hallways.
6. A supportive administration is needed for both programs.
7. Principals may not be bilingual in dual-track schools.
8. Finding qualified teachers and funding are challenges for both English and French immersion programs.

Parent Comments

Parents made the following comments to improve the French immersion program:

Policy

- Establish division standards for the administration of French immersion programs.

Program Model

- Continue to offer and improve the dual-track system.
- Introduce middle immersion which begins in grades 3 or 4, allowing language arts ability to be confirmed before starting an immersion program.
- Provide parents with the choice of single-track and dual-track schools.

Assistance for Parents

- Provide resources, assistance and courses for parents so that parents could better assist their children.
- Provide more parental resources to assist children with their homework.
- Organize French classes for parents so they can better assist their children.
- Offer remedial/tutorial classes for parents so they can assist and monitor their children in their homework.

Staffing

- Recruit and hire teachers with high level French language skills and teaching skills.
- Recruit and hire more bilingual staff such as school librarians and teaching staff who can teach such subjects as music in French.
- Hire more male French teachers.
- Hire skilled French teachers who can teach math.
- Require all French immersion schools to have bilingual principals.
- Hire intern teachers who are bilingual.

Learning Assistance

- Provide more learning assistance for students needing help in French immersion.

- Build an outreach component in the French immersion program to help students.
- Offer more one-on-one attention to students.

Transportation

- Ensure good transportation.
- Keep the French immersion programs close to where people live.
- Make transportation more easily available.
- Expand busing so that the French immersion program is more easily accessible to more students.

Promotion

- Promote more awareness and understanding of what French immersion is.
- Make French immersion available for everyone
- Organize career days to show children where French is needed in employment situations.
- Present positive and negatives aspects of French immersion in information materials and sessions.

Partnerships

- Partner with businesses which require bilingual employees.

Class Size

- Keep classes small
- Ensure smaller class sizes in lower grades.

English Language Instruction

- Introduce more English earlier, for example, in grades 1 and 2

Extra-curricular Activities

- Encourage students to participate in bilingual work programs in the summer
- Implement more activities with the French community in Saskatchewan.
- Provide opportunities for students to travel to major French centres in Quebec and in France.

Instruction

- Encourage high quality instruction in French immersion.
- Offer French instruction in other classes, such as physical education and music.

Student Retention

- Investigate drop-out rate in French immersion.

English Language Instruction

- Focus on developing English language skills.

Assessment

- Assess the results of the French immersion program.

Learning Resources

- Identify and purchase more French resources.
- Provide more learning resources in French for schools.
- Increase size of French language resources in libraries

Facilities and Equipment

- Provide better facilities and technology such as more computers in schools.
- Provide more computer technology and more software in French.

Professional Development

- Provide more professional development in French.

Homework

- Provide more homework, for example, in mathematics.

French Community

- Increase school's involvement in the region's French community.
- Provide more cultural and arts opportunities in French.

Visibility and Use of French

- Have more display boards in French and more French language announcements in school.
- Encourage teachers to use more French in the classroom.
- Encourage more extra-curricular activities in French.
- Encourage more use of French in the classroom
- Encourage the use of French language resources outside the classroom such as French television, French movies, French cultural activities and reading in French.
- Provide more linkages with other immersion schools.
- Introduce more integration between French and English
- Have students make announcements in French.
- Expose classes of same grade to French.

Additional Comments

Use of English

- Some French immersion teachers use too much English in the classroom.
- Children speak English on the playground and view French immersion as school work. Students are not motivated to watch French television and to read in French.

Quality of French

- There is a discrepancy between high school French and university-level French.

Quality of Instruction

- Some parents expressed concern about the quality of instruction in some classes.
- For a few parents, students' mathematic skills do not seem to be at the desired standard.

Parental involvement

- Parental involvement is a matter of attitude and motivation.
- Parents feel more at ease in a dual-track school.
- It is challenging for parents to assist their children with homework in French immersion.
- It is a struggle for a family to participate in events in different schools. The school division needs to think of the family.

General

- Transportation and parental involvement are challenges in both single-track and dual-track schools.

Principals

- Principals should be able to communicate in French.

Learning Resources

- French immersion teachers lack learning resources.
- There is a need for more school accountability as children are not coming home with textbooks.
-
- Some parents indicated that their children would not be in French immersion if they were not in a dual-track program.

French Community and Cultural Activities

- There is a need to become more involved with the local French community, for example, traveling to Gravelbourg and interacting with the local francophone school in Regina. There is a need for more French cultural activities such as plays.

Single-track Schools

- The single-track model may be more efficient for developing communication skills in French.

Leadership

- Leadership is important in addressing the needs of two different programs and ensuring the duality and equality of treatment of two languages.

Satisfaction with Program

- The program has worked well.
- Many parents indicated that both they and their children are happy with the dual-track system.
- French immersion is functioning well.
- Both children are doing well in French immersion.
- French immersion has been a good experience.
- French immersion is sustainable and successful and the needs of students are being met.
- Many parents are satisfied with the program. They value dual-track schools.
- Many parents are happy with the French immersion program and the balance between French and English.

- Some parents emphasize the need for a strong English language program to function in this society. For some, the dual-track school mirrors the bilingual nature of Canada. If more exposure to French is needed, there is French summer camps and trips to Quebec.
- Several parents indicated that French immersion is wonderful and that it should be enhanced as a dual-track program.

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Appendix 1A

Letter to Parents



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E-mail: evaluate@shaw.ca

11116 36 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6J 0C3

February 6, 2008

Dear Parents of French Immersion Students:

Regina Public Schools has undertaken a study to determine the benefits and limitations of establishing both dual-track and single-track French Immersion programs for students in Kindergarten to Grade 8.

This study will involve a review of current research relating to the operation of single and dual track elementary French Immersion programs and a survey of the views of parents of students in the French Immersion program.

The Regina Public Schools would like to obtain your opinion about both dual-track and single-track French Immersion programs.

Your name has been selected at random for a telephone interview to respond to the questions in the attached survey. A short summary of research is also enclosed for your information.

In order to save time, Evaluation Plus Inc. requested that Regina Public Schools distribute the survey and short research summary to parents. A member of the Evaluation Plus Inc. team will begin calling parents beginning the afternoon of Friday, February 8.

No one except the Evaluation Plus Inc. team contracted to conduct this study will see your answers. The information will be reported on an overall district basis. No individuals will be identified.

Thank you for your assistance with this study.

Sincerely,

Wally Lazaruk

Wally Lazaruk
President
Evaluation Plus Inc.

Appendix 1B Parent French Immersion Study Survey

Regina Public Schools: Parent French Immersion Survey

Dear Parents of French Immersion Students:

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Thank you for your assistance with this study.

Sincerely,

Wally Lazaruk

Wally Lazaruk
Evaluation Plus Inc.

Appendix 1B Parent Survey

A. General

1. Please indicate the school in which your child(ren) take(s) French immersion?

School: _____

2. How many years have your children have been in the French immersion program?

Child # 1 _____ years

Child # 2 _____ years

Child # 3 _____ years

3. What grades in French immersion are your children currently taking?

Please check ☒ appropriate grade for each child.

Program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Child #1												
Child #2												
Child #3												

B. Benefits of French Immersion Education

4. How important to you are the following benefits of your child(ren) taking French immersion education?

Check ☒ the appropriate column next to each suggested reason.

Benefits	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Enhanced literacy through additive bilingualism				
Strengthened English language skills				
Mental flexibility, creative thinking and sensitivity				
Communication and cultural opportunities				
Economic opportunities				
Other, please specify:				

C. Advantages of Single-Track (French Centre) Schools

Research studies have shown that single-track immersion schools (French Centre) offer the following advantages:

- A more natural setting for communicating in French
- More exposure to French within the school environment
- More opportunity to use French
- Enhanced French language proficiency
- Enhanced learning results
- More bilingual staff

5. How important are these advantages for you? Please check ☐ the appropriate column next to each type of information.

Advantage	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
A more natural setting for communicating in French				
More exposure to French within the school environment				
More opportunity to use French				
Enhanced French language proficiency				
Enhanced learning results				
More bilingual staff				
Other, please specify:				

What are other advantages of single track immersion (French Centre) schools?

D. Challenges of Single-Track (French Centre) Schools

The single-track immersion schools present the following challenges:

- Transportation
- Parental involvement

6. How important are these challenges for you? Please check ✓ the appropriate column next to each type of information.

Challenges	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Transportation				
Parental involvement				
Other, please specify:				

What are other challenges of single track immersion (French Centre) schools?

E. Advantages of Dual-Track Schools

The advantages of dual-track, immersion schools include:

- Sharing of expertise among teachers with diverse expertise
- Parental involvement as more parents may be from the local community
- Learning from diversity
- Immersion students have access to a greater range of English language resources
- Development of multi-cultural awareness and understanding

7. How important are these advantages for you? Please check ✓ the appropriate column next to each type of information.

Advantage	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Sharing of expertise among teachers with diverse expertise				
Parental involvement as more parents may be from the local community				
Learning from diversity				
Immersion students have access to a greater range of English language resources.				
Development of multi-cultural awareness and understanding				
Other, please specify:				

What are other advantages of dual-track schools?

F. Challenges of Dual-Track Schools

The challenges of dual-track schools include:

- Fewer opportunities to use French outside the classroom
- Management of programs with different language needs

8. How important are these challenges for you? Please check ✓ the appropriate column next to each type of information.

Challenges	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Fewer opportunities to use French outside the classroom				
Management of programs with different language needs				
Other, please specify:				

What are other challenges of dual-track schools?

G. Recommendations

1. What recommendations would you make to Regina Public Schools to improve the French immersion program?

2. Other comments:

Appendix 1C Summary of Research

Board of Education of the Regina School Division No.4 of Saskatchewan

French Immersion Study Summary of Research about Single-Track and Dual- Track Schools

Prepared by:

Evaluation PLUS
INC.

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Telephone: (780) 432-7070
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February 6, 2008

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Introduction

This summary of research about single-track and dual-track schools addresses the following questions:

- What are single-track (immersion centre) and dual-track schools?
- What are the advantages of single-track immersion centres?
- What are the challenges of single-track, immersion centres?
- What are the advantages of dual-track schools?
- What the challenges of dual-track schools?

What are single-track (immersion centre) and dual-track schools?

- A single-track school, also called an immersion centre, is a school that offers only the French immersion program. Administrative, teaching and support staff are fluent in French and English. French is the primary language of administration and communication with students and teachers. French is the language used for offering support services.
- A dual-track school offers both a French immersion and English program within the same building and is led by a single school administration. Some members of the administrative and support staff may possess fluency in both French and English. Some support services may be provided in French.

What are the advantages of single-track immersion centres?

Research studies over more than 30 years have shown that single-track immersion schools offer the following advantages:

- A more natural setting for communicating in French
- More exposure to French within the school environment
- More opportunity to use French
- Enhanced French language proficiency
- Enhanced learning results
- More bilingual staff

A more natural setting for communicating in French

- Often more teachers and support staff can communicate in French.

More exposure to French within the school environment

- Students are exposed to French through the use of bulletin boards, announcements, sports, songs, displays, assemblies, cultural/musical performances and contact with support staff.

More opportunity to use French

- French is used in all aspects of the school day.
- Students have more opportunity to use French outside of the classroom, in the hallway, on the playground and through communications with school administration and support staff.

Enhanced learning results

- Lapkin, S., Andrew, C.M., Harley, B., Swain, M., & Kamin, J. (OISE) (1981) compared Grade 5 immersion students in the Carleton Board of Education in single-track and dual-track schools. The results in these schools showed superior achievement in immersion-centre students in both French and English skills. The higher achievement in French listening and reading comprehension by the single track students were more closely associated with factors in the school environment such as receptive use of French, more experienced teachers, more satisfied with available resources and slightly more favorable staff attitudes toward the immersion program.
- Genesee, Morin & Allister (1974) examined the proficiency of grade 7 students in a late immersion program and found that students in the immersion centres had achieved higher levels of proficiency than students in dual-track schools on tests on French listening comprehension, speaking, reading and language arts. This study was conducted in the students' first year of the late immersion program.

More bilingual staff

- Bilingual staff such as principals, teacher-librarians and administrative support staff increase the opportunity for students to use French outside the classroom

More resources in French

- French immersion centres allow for the consolidation of French language learning resources, including the library collection, in fewer schools.

What are the challenges of single-track, immersion centres?

The single-track immersion schools present the following challenges:

- Transportation
- Parental Involvement

Transportation

- Some students may need travel from their neighbourhood to a French immersion centre which may be more centrally located.

Parental Involvement

- A special effort may need to be made to involve parents if the immersion centre is not in their community.

What are the advantages of dual-track schools?

The advantages of dual-track, immersion schools include sharing of expertise and parental involvement.

Sharing of expertise

- Teachers of both programs may benefit from sharing expertise.

Parental involvement

- Parental involvement may be easier if the dual-track school is in the parents' neighbourhood.

Learning from diversity

- Students can benefit from exposure to both French immersion and English programs.

Ease of Transferability

- Students who transfer to the English language program may not need to change schools.

Greater range of English language resources

- French immersion students could have access to a greater range of English language resources

Multi-cultural awareness and understanding

- Students in both programs can develop multi-cultural awareness and understanding in a bilingual setting.

What the challenges of dual-track schools?

The challenges of dual-track schools include:

- Few opportunities to use French outside the classroom
- Management of programs with different language needs

Few opportunities to use French outside the classroom

- Immersion students' exposure to the second language may be limited to the classroom.
- Immersion students generally speak French less frequently outside the classroom.
- With both English and French programs in the same school, it becomes more challenging to use French in assemblies and hallways.

Management of programs with different language needs

- School administrators must manage two distinct full-scale programs in one building.

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