

Report of the  
French Second Language Commission

**A Comprehensive Review of French Second Language  
Programs and Services Within the Anglophone Sector of  
the New Brunswick Department of Education**

Submitted to  
Honourable Kelly Lamrock, Minister of Education  
February 18, 2008

Commissioners:  
Dr. James Croll  
Mrs. Patricia Lee

## Table of Contents

List of Tables	3
Executive Summary	6
Preface	16
Part One: The Introduction	17
The Mandate	17
The Background	18
The Consultation Sources	19
Part Two: The Issues – An Overview	21
French Second Language Enrolments	22
Availability of Qualified Teachers	24
Teacher In-Service	28
Teacher Guides, Curriculum and teaching Materials	29
Numbers of French Second language Programs	30
Part Three: The Programs	32
The Core program	32
a) anecdotal evaluation	32
b) quantitative evaluation	34
Early French Immersion	38
Late French Immersion	45
Streaming and Student Achievement	49
Intensive French	64
a) Quantitative Review	64
b) Qualitative Review	69
Part Four: Financial Evaluation	73
Part Five: Recommendations	77
Notes Concerning Recommendations	83
Conclusions	98

## List of Tables

<b>TABLE 1:</b> Showing FSL Immersion Enrolments and Total FSL Enrolments as a Percentage of Total School Enrolments in Selected Provinces	23
<b>TABLE 2:</b> Correlation Between Late FSL Immersion and Total Grade 1 Enrolments in New Brunswick between 2001 and 2006 - 7	23
<b>TABLE 3:</b> Correlation between Early FSL Immersion and Total Grade 1 Enrolments 1996 – 2007	24
<b>TABLE 4:</b> Core Program Oral Proficiency Assessment Results	35
<b>TABLE 5:</b> Core Attainment Results 2000-1 to 2006-7	36
<b>TABLE 6:</b> Showing Average Declines in FSL Early Immersion Registrations from Grade 1 to Grade 5, Between September 1997 and September 2006	41
<b>TABLE 7:</b> The Percent of Decline in FSL Early Immersion Between Grades 1 Through 5 for 2006.	42
<b>TABLE 8:</b> Showing Early Immersion Registrations by Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 for 2004-5 Through 2006-7	42
<b>TABLE 9:</b> 1999 – 2006, Enrolment Numbers for Grades 1 and 2 in Early Immersion	44
<b>Table 10:</b> Early Immersion Program Oral Proficiency Assessment Results	44
<b>TABLE 11:</b> Showing Declines in FSL Late Immersion Registrations from Grade 9 to Grade 12, Between September 2004 and September 2006	46
<b>TABLE 12:</b> Comparing FSL Early and Late Immersion Registrations for Grades 9 Through 12 Between September 2004 and 2006	46
<b>TABLE 13:</b> Late Immersion Program Oral proficiency Assessment Results	47
<b>TABLE 14:</b> Comparison of Early and Late Immersion Registrations: 1997 – 2006	49

TABLE 15: Students with Exceptionalities by Program	52
TABLE 16: Students with Exceptionalities Provincially by Grade	53
TABLE 17: 2005 Grade 2 Enrolments of Exceptional Children in French Immersion and English Core Programs	53
TABLE 18: 2006-7, Grade 2, Provincial reading Assessment – French Immersion Descriptive Statistics (Percentage)	54
TABLE 19: 2006-7, Grade 2, Provincial Reading Assessment – English Core – Descriptive Statistics (Percentage)	55
TABLE 20: 2005 Grade 4 Enrolments of Exceptional Children in French Immersion and English Core Programs	56
TABLE 21: 2006-7, Grade 4, Provincial Reading Assessment – English Core – Descriptive Statistics (Percentage)	57
TABLE 22: 2006-7, Grade 4, Provincial Reading Assessment – French Immersion – Descriptive Statistics (Percentage)	58
TABLE 23: 2006-7, Grade 5, Mathematics Provincial Assessment – English Core – Descriptive Statistics	59
TABLE 24: 2006-7, Grade 5 Mathematics Provincial Assessment – French Immersion –	59
TABLE 25: 2006-7, Grade 5 Provincial Assessment – English Core and French Immersion – Univariate Analysis of Variance	60
TABLE 26: Total Percentage Distribution of Grades in 2006-7 Grade 5 Mathematics Provincial Assessment	61
TABLE 27: Distribution of Grades 50% and Over in 2006-7 Grade 5 Mathematics Provincial Assessment	61

TABLE 28: Average Grades for English Core and French Immersion Programs on the 2006-7 Grade 5 Mathematics Proficiency Assessments	61
TABLE 29: 2006-7 Grade 8 Mathematics Provincial Assessment – English Core, Early Immersion, and Late Immersion – Oneway ANOVA	62
TABLE 30: Multiple Comparisons (Scheffé) Between English Core, Early Immersions and Late Immersion Results on the 2006-7 Grade 8 Provincial Assessment	63
TABLE 31: Intensive French Pilot Programs 2002 – 2006 Paired t-Test of Oral Pre-Test and Post-Test Results	64
TABLE 32: Rating Scale and Descriptors Developed by Netten and Germain to Assess Intensive French Results	65
TABLE 33: Paired t-Tests of Oral Pre and Post-Test Results for 2002 Through 2006	66
TABLE 34: Oneway ANOVA and Graphic of All Intensive French Pilot Data by School	67
TABLE 35: French Immersion Enrolments by Program for Grades 1 through 8	75
TABLE 36: French Second Language Enrolments by Program for Grades 9 through 12	75
TABLE 37: Early Immersion Incremental Costs for 2009 Graduates, Grades 1 – 12, 1995 – 2007 in 2007 Dollars	75
TABLE 38: Comparative incremental Costs Summary of French Second Language Programs using 2006 – 2007 Enrolment Data and 2007 – 2008 Dollars	76

## Executive Summary

### **The Purpose:**

*“The Commissioner(s) will be mandated to conduct a comprehensive assessment of FSL programming and services and to engage educators and interested stakeholders in an assessment of the current models of FSL instruction within the Anglophone sector. The Commissioner(s) will provide recommendations to the Minister on identifying the best way forward to improving student achievement levels while at the same time addressing and/or eliminating any associated negative impacts on the overall system, as identified above (e.g. streaming/art/music/physical education).”<sup>1</sup>*

### **The Consultation Sources:**

The Commission visited and met with the senior administrators in each of the nine school districts within the province. The Superintendent, the Director of Educational, the principal French Second Language Coordinator/Specialist were each involved in one hour, one-on-one consultations. In addition to the interviews within each school district, the Commission requested and received an extensive written submission which was in response to questions addressing district-wide issues. Each school district arranged for further one-on-one interviews with individual teachers who represented cross-sections of the FSL programs within each district. During the visits to various school districts, the Commissioners visited with teachers in their classrooms and observed classes being taught in which different and/or pilot programs/teaching methods were used.

Because of their particular, specific roles in teacher-training (including Second Language training), the Commission met with personnel of l' Université de Moncton and the University of New Brunswick. Also, the Commissioners met and consulted with the Dean of Faculty of the Atlantic Baptist University and with Drs. Joan Netten and Claude Germain concerning the Intensive French Second Language Program and spent further time concerning program planning with Dr. Netten.

Nearly 1,800 teachers provided feed-back to the Commission through the internet service provided by the New Brunswick Teachers' Association. This

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<sup>1</sup> “French as a Second Language: A Review of programming and Services in New Brunswick”. Terms of Reference, Department of Education, New Brunswick, July 3, 2007, p.8.

exceptional response to the Commission's request for assistance by way of teachers' input was a tribute to the N.B.T.A.'s commitment to the objectives of this inquiry.

A web site, developed by The Department of Education, designed specifically for parents, members of various stake-holding organizations and students was made available between early August and the end of October. During this time and following the closure of the site, approximately 450 parents and involved stake-holders responded, providing their reactions to the questions posed and their written reactions to the terms and mandates of the Commission.

In the course of the Commissioners' travels to various school districts throughout the province, the New Brunswick Teachers' Association arranged late afternoon "focus group" meetings in order that the Commission could meet and listen to groups of teachers who represented their individual districts and various FSL programs which they taught.

The Commission also met with members of two District Education Councils, a broad spectrum of current FSL students, the entire board of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association, a number of one-on-one consultations with key members of the staff and management of The New Brunswick Department of Education, the New Brunswick Advisory Council on Youth, the New Brunswick Ombudsman, the Canadian and New Brunswick Commissioners of Official Languages, The French Second Language Council of the NBTA, the Chair of the Premier's Advisory Council on the Status of the Disabled, the New Brunswick Business Council, New Brunswick Association for Community Living, Chambers of Commerce and Canadian Parents for French.

Seven out of nine of the District Education Councils of New Brunswick as well as the New Brunswick Federation of Home and School Associations submitted written reports to the Commission. Individual members of one school district and over 100 school principals provided written evaluations of the current FSL programs and suggestions for change.

Written submissions were also solicited from such New Brunswick organizations as the Autism Society, Blind and Rubella Association, Learning Disability Association, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Association, the Education Critic for the Official Opposition, The Second Language Research Institute of Canada, and The University of New Brunswick Learning Centre.

## Identified Program Issues:

### Core program

**Of the 4063 students who entered into the Core Program in 1994, only .689 percent attained the provincial minimum goal of Intermediate Proficiency by the spring of 2007!**

### Early Immersion program

Of the 1,469 students who entered into an Early Immersion program in 1995, **only 234 or 15.93% persisted to achieve the Program Goal of Advanced or above.**<sup>1</sup> Using the 2005-6 data as a basis of comparison (without the inflated 2006-7 numbers)<sup>2</sup>, of the 391 Grade 12 students who presented themselves, 137 attained the goal of Advanced or higher, which represents **9.33% of the students who initially enrolled in Early French Immersion in 1995.**

When the same data are used to re-calculate the program efficacy in terms of revising the Early Immersion Program Goal downwards to Intermediate Plus or above (the same level which is currently in place for the Late Immersion Program<sup>3</sup>) **84.6% achieved this goal but this is only 22.5% of those who entered the Early Immersion Program in 1995.**

### Late Immersion Program

In the 2006-07 academic year, within the Grade 12 Anglophone population of New Brunswick, there were 602 Late Immersion students who presented themselves for assessment. Of these students, 275 or 45.6% successfully attained the goal of Intermediate Plus or above. **When viewed according to the number of Late Immersion students who initially registered into this program (1,535<sup>4</sup>), 17.92 % attained the goal of Intermediate Plus proficiency or above.**

Employing the same means to test the efficacy of the Late Immersion program by revising the Late Immersion program goal downward one level to that of **Intermediate proficiency, 94.6% of students tested achieved this goal, which is 570<sup>5</sup> students or 35.33% of all students who entered a Late Immersion program.**

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<sup>1</sup> the attainment goals are those set out on the Department of Education's Policy Statement 309  
<sup>2</sup>ibid

<sup>3</sup>Department of Education, "Briefing Note: Grade 12 FSL oral interviews 2006-2007", July 6, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Education and School District records (obtained October, 2007)

<sup>5</sup> Department of education, "Briefing Note: Grade 12 FSL oral interviews 2006-2007, July 6, 2007.



### Program Sustainability:

In light of the declining program registrations, declining over-all student populations, declining persistence data and the increasingly high attrition rates within the Early Immersion program, **by 2012 nearly 80% of the immersion classes within New Brunswick at the Grade 9 level and above will have to be combined Early and Late Immersion.** The latter statement is based upon the Department of Education's Policy Statement 309, which stipulates the minimum enrolment requirements for immersion programs. <sup>1</sup>

### Streaming:

**Over 93% (93.2%) of children with S.E.P.s are in the Core program.**

**Comparing test results on their respective tests: the average Grade 2 Provincial Reading Attainment level of the English Core students (mean = 69.29) is higher than that of the French Immersion students (mean = 68.23).** The criteria by which these results have been reported by the Department of Education,<sup>2</sup> employing proportions of students of each program attaining achievement levels on each program's test, has led to the misconception that the French Immersion Program has produced superior results.

On average: i) **the English Core program has produced better results in terms of attainment average** and ii) **a greater number of students who have attained the Provincial Achievement Level!**

Despite the differences in average Literary Assessment results on their respective tests which have been produced in Grade 4, **the students in the English Core program produced a superior proportion of grades which "met or exceeded the appropriate achievement level in reading".**<sup>3</sup>

### Intensive French:

**Comparing the 6 years of Pilot data, the averages increased from the pre-test of 11.69 to the post-test of 14.07, a significant difference ( $p \leq .000$ ).** This means that, on average, in 5 months, students in Intensive French moved from the classification of "Novice Low" through "Novice Medium", "Novice High" to"

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<sup>1</sup> New Brunswick Department of Education, "Policy Statement 309", Policy #7, October 25, 2001, p.4

<sup>2</sup> "Of the 3930 second grade students registered in the English program, 72 % met or exceeded the appropriate achievement level in reading, an increase of 1>0% from 2006." "Of the 1407 second graders registered in the French Immersion program, 79% met or exceeded the appropriate achievement level in reading, an increase of 5% from 2006."

<sup>3</sup> "Of the 4267 fourth graders registered in the English program, 69.5% met or exceeded the appropriate achievement level in reading..." - "Briefing Note: Assessment Results", Department of Education, 2007

**Basic Low**” or, in terms of proficiency, from “*Isolated words or memorized expressions. Essentially, no ability to communicate*” to “*Ability to use simple sentences (Subject + V + Complement). Can maintain a very simple conversation with some spontaneity.*”

Financial Feasibility:

Table A: Comparative Incremental Costs<sup>1,2</sup> Summary of French Second Language Programs  
Using 2006-2007 Enrolment Data and 2007 – 2008 Dollars

<u>Program</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Students</u>	<u>Incremental Cost Per Student</u>	<u>Total 2006 -2007 Incremental Cost</u>	<u>Cost Per Goal Attainment<sup>a</sup></u>
Core	73.3%	\$193.	\$10,294,427.	\$367,358.11
Early Immersion	19.0%	\$356.	\$5,394,824.	\$19,671.28 <sup>b</sup>
Late Immersion	7.7%	\$347.	\$3,111,757. <sup>c</sup>	\$11,315.48
Total	100%		\$18,801,008.	

<sup>a</sup> total incremental cost of program (grades 1 through 12) for 1 year, divided by number of students reaching goal

<sup>b</sup> \$19,671.28 based upon Sept. 1995 – June 2007 (see Table 37) actual registrations

<sup>c</sup> includes five years of Core French prior to Late Immersion program.

The total incremental cost for the 2006-2007 French Second Language programs in the Anglophone schools (in 2007-2008 dollars) was nearly \$19 million dollars (\$18,801,008).

Early French Immersion, with 19% of the students in French Second Language programs, costs over 28.5% (28.69%) of the total FSL budget. On the other hand, the Core program, with over 71% of the students in FSL, costs 54.75 % of the total FSL budget. The cost of the Late French Immersion program, with 7.7% of the FSL students, constitutes 16.6 % of the annual FSL budget. This cost includes the 5 years of Core French (\$984,300) prior to Late Immersion.

**Recommendations:**

**Recommendation #1:**

That all French Second Language programming for Anglophone New Brunswick children begins at Grade 5 with Intensive French.

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<sup>1</sup> “incremental cost” refers to the \$193 investment in the Core program plus the investment costs associated with the Early and Late immersion programs.

<sup>3</sup> includes teacher salaries, supply days, school secretary wages and replacement costs, benefits, pension, professional development and school office supplies. Does not include additional text books and resource costs.

**Recommendation #1a**

that all teachers of Intensive French receive appropriate training before placement in IF classrooms.

**Recommendation #1b**

that the Grade 5 teachers who are to receive Intensive French training must be reimbursed for their time and the costs associated with related training be absorbed by the Department of Education.

**Recommendation #1c**

that all Grade 5 classes in Intensive French have an absolute minimum of 270 hours in French instruction. Following, or sometimes preceding the intensive period, another 45 hours of instruction during the intensive year, making a total of 315 hours in French during the academic year.

**Recommendation #1d**

that principals receive in-service preparation in the structural fundamental components of Intensive French in order that they can provide supervision and assistance.

**Recommendation #1e**

that Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – Education Act) be amended to reflect the addition of the compulsory aspects of the Intensive French program.

**Recommendation #2:**

That Late Immersion, beginning in Grade 6, be adopted as the sole French Immersion program for Anglophone students in New Brunswick.

**Recommendation #2a**

that after grade 10, students who have chosen to study through Late Immersion, will not be required to study their Science and Mathematics courses in French and that schools shall have the option of offering Science and Mathematics courses for Late Immersion students in either French or English between grades 6 through 10.

**Recommendation #2b**

that, except under exceptional circumstances, all students who choose to enrol in the French Immersion program shall continue their program through Grade 12.

**Recommendation #2c**

that all students, upon reaching Grade 12 in the Late Immersion program, participate in the Oral Interview and receive an assessment of their level of achievement as described in the New Brunswick Second Language Proficiency Scale.

**Recommendation #2d**

that Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – Education Act) be amended to eliminate the references to, and conditions pertaining to, the Early French Immersion program.

**Recommendation #3:**

That an Enriched Core Program continue to be developed as a follow-up of Grade 5 Intensive Immersion. This program will commence in Grade 6.

**Recommendation #3a**

that the Enriched English Core program be an extension of the Intensive French program commenced in Grade 5.

**Recommendation #3b**

whereas the current English Core program will be replaced with the Enriched Core program, the current English Core will be phased out as the Grade 5 teachers are trained in Intensive French methodology.

**Recommendation #3c**

that all teachers of the Enriched English Core program receive the necessary training before placement in Enriched Core classrooms

**Recommendation #3d**

that those teachers trained for the Enriched English Core program must be reimbursed for the costs associated with their professional training.

**Recommendation #3e**

that, for all Anglophone students who elected to enter the Enriched English Core program shall continue from Grade 6 through Grade 12.

**Recommendation #3f**

that, at every grade level in the Enriched English Core Program, an evaluation of each student's French achievement/proficiency shall be carried out and the resulting grade shall be recorded as a part of the student's annual report/transcript.

**Recommendation #3g**

that the Intensive French curriculum be extended through to Grade 12 within the Enriched English Core program.

**Recommendation #3h**

that Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – Education Act) be altered to reflect the various parts which pertain to the changes resulting from replacing the present Core program with an Enriched English Core Program.

**Recommendation #4:**

That all other existing French Second Language programs in New Brunswick schools be “grandfathered” out, commencing with the introduction of the two French Second Language programs recommended by this report.

**Recommendation #5:**

That annually, a careful, comprehensive province-wide review of all of the Anglophone secondary school course offerings in the French language be carried out in order to ensure that sufficient and suitable courses are offered into which both French Immersion and Enriched Core students may choose to enrol.

**Recommendation #6:**

That all curricular materials, classroom texts and teaching guides which are destined for FSL and English classroom use be made available in French at the same time that they are available in English.

**Recommendation #7:**

That comprehensive formative and summative evaluations shall be carried out as an integral, on-going part of each of the FSL programs provided by the New Brunswick Department of Education.

**Recommendation #8:**

That an interim coordinator, responsible to the current French Immersion/Spanish Specialist, be appointed to work on a full-time basis in order to oversee, manage and coordinate all aspects of the introduction of the Intensive French program and, with the exception of the current “Late Immersion program”, supervise the phasing out of the current French Immersion programs.

**Recommendation #9:**

That a second French Second Language Specialist be added to the Department, to work in concert with the current Specialist, dividing the responsibilities entailed in managing the two FSL programs, managing the development and implementation of curricula revisions, resolving curricular issues and working with the districts to ensure adherence to Provincial Policy and Standards throughout the province.

**Recommendation #10:**

That a sufficient number of Methods and Resource teachers with the necessary background training in French language acquisition in each school district be trained and available to work with all children, with and without special needs, in conjunction with the French Second Language teachers.

**Recommendation #11:**

That all Grade 5 Intensive French classrooms have the flexibility to increase the minimum number of teaching hours to accommodate those children who experience difficulties in developing their second language proficiency.

**Recommendation #12:**

That every child, regardless of perceived capability, be equally encouraged to continue their education from Grade 5 onwards in the Late Immersion program.

**Recommendation #12a**

that measures be taken to ensure that the Department of Education's student data base acquires the capability to track the program registrations of those individual students who are working with S.E.P.s

**Recommendation #13:**

That an on-going series of relevant, Professional In-service Development courses addressing the teaching/learning needs of Special Needs Children in the FSL classroom, be developed and made mandatory for every teacher involved in French Second language classes.

**Recommendation #14:**

That the Department of Education must undertake a review of university courses being included in the pre-training of teachers destined to teach in French Second Language programs.

**Recommendation #15:**

That the language goal required for teachers employed to teach French as a Second Language should be set at the Superior Level, as defined by the New Brunswick Second Language Proficiency Scale.

**Recommendation #16:**

That the goals for oral language attainment for the proposed Enriched Core program (Intermediate) and the Late Immersion program (Intermediate Plus), as set out in Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – New Brunswick Education Act), and stated in the “Certificate of French Immersion” be retained as currently stipulated for the English Core program and Late Immersion program in Policy 309 and become the only criteria recognized for attainment. It is concomitantly recommended that these goals shall be increased as the revised program results warrant.

**Recommendation #17:**

That parents must be clearly and correctly informed of the second language employment criteria for hiring purposes within both the Provincial and Federal governments.

**Recommendation #18:**

That the “target of ensuring that 70% of all high school graduates will function effectively in speaking their second official language” will continue to be the goal of French Second Language acquisition throughout New Brunswick.

**Recommendation #18a:**

that there must be a common, province-wide definitional statement and understanding of the goal to “function effectively” as presented in “When Kids Come First”.

## PREFACE

The following report is the collaborative contributions of many people both within and outside of New Brunswick.

Over 1,900 New Brunswick teachers have shared their written opinions, been visited in their classrooms or have provided their personal counsel through one-on-one interviews or in focus groups. Nearly 450 parents from throughout the province have provided written responses to the invitation to share their opinions and views. Each District Superintendent, Director of Education and French Second Language Supervisor from every Anglophone school district has spent considerable time consulting and advising in the preparation of this report.

The senior administrative staffs of each of the nine Anglophone School Districts within the province has prepared a major position paper in response to issues posed for this review. Large, very important educational stakeholders have spent considerable time and effort in order to prepare submissions. Organizations such as The New Brunswick Teachers' Association, the New Brunswick Business Council and the New Brunswick Association for Community Living, to name but a couple, have made special efforts to gain consensus within their organizations and subsequently met with the Commission and provided their invaluable direction and professional advice. A large number of individuals, including the Federal and New Brunswick Commissioners of Official Languages, the husband of the former Governor General of Canada and the New Brunswick Ombudsman have all given of their valuable time and expertise.

Many of the members of the management and staff of the Department of Education have also made major contributions to this report. These individuals of this Department have freely given of their time to provide professional counsel, background, and invaluable assistance with their expertise.

In summary, this report is the result of countless hours of consultations with educators, parents, volunteers and professionals, and without their dedication, this report could not have been written.



## PART ONE: The Introduction

The Mandate:

On July 23, 2007, in response to the Government of New Brunswick's **Charter for Change** and its challenge *to have "the best education system in the world"* and within his **When Kids Come First** initiative, Education Minister Kelly Lamrock announced the formation of a Commission charged with the following mandate:

*"The Commissioner(s) will be mandated to conduct a comprehensive assessment of FSL programming and services and to engage educators and interested stakeholders in an assessment of the current models of FSL instruction within the Anglophone sector. The Commissioner(s) will provide recommendations to the Minister on identifying the best way forward to improving student achievement levels while at the same time addressing and/or eliminating any associated negative impacts on the overall system as identified above (e.g. streaming/art/music/physical education)."*

*The Commissioner(s) will:*

- 1. Examine current research on Second language Education and best practices (primarily FSL) in other jurisdictions in the area of delivery models for second language programming, teaching methodologies and accountability measures for monitoring student and system-wide progress.*
- 2. Consult with educators and other identified stakeholders in fully identifying the barriers to student achievement and suggested opportunities for improvement, with a specific focus on how to meet the government's overall goal of 70% of all students in the Anglophone sector achieving a stated proficiency in FSL upon graduation.*
- 3. Assess whether the existing curricula, teaching methodologies, teacher training and availability, and associated standards set for French second language instruction are appropriate to meet the stated goal.*
- 4. Assess the potential for Intensive French as a "prescribed" program within the Anglophone Sector.*
- 5. Assess the role of AIMS(sic) program in the future.*

- 6. Assess the costs-benefits of maintaining a suite of FSL program models in the Anglophone Sector versus the potential for one comprehensive FSL model meeting the needs of all students.*
- 7. Provide recommendations and advice on how to improve the level of student achievement and any associated legislative and/or policy changes that are may be (sic) required to meet this aim.*

The Background:

Since 1968, with the adoption of The New Brunswick Official Language Act , making New Brunswick Canada's only officially bilingual province, second language learning has been an integral part of our province and its educational system.

As the sole officially bilingual province, New Brunswick has many unique social, cultural and educational features, the latter having created its own challenges and innovations. As a province of Canada with a relatively new history of legislated bilingualism, the population does not have the benefit of many decades of educational programming in FSL. In point of fact, it has only been approximately thirty years since we initiated early French immersion into schools. As a result of New Brunswick's leadership in bilingualism and consequent education FSL innovation, we have been in the vanguard of Canada's FSL programming.

Due, in part to the relative recency of "official bilingualism in New Brunswick", the people of New Brunswick do not have the benefit of hundreds of years of language cultures enjoyed by many European countries in which people may be expected as a matter of course to become fluent in several languages. As a consequence, the learning of a "second" language is, for many, a philosophical and cultural shift. Sometimes this metamorphosis is slow, as the acceptance of second language appreciation, acquisition and education demonstrates. In particular, there are still segments of New Brunswick's population that do not yet appreciate the value of living in a bilingual province with all of the political and cultural advantages this entails. Certainly the prevalence of the latter attitudes will continue to have its effects reflected for some time in the education of our youth through opposition to second language courses and programs.

In its infancy during the early 1970s, French second language programming and the associated presentation of courses were very inconsistent. In 1974, then Deputy Minister Armand Saintonge initiated a study which concluded that there was a major shortage of qualified teachers, some lacking a university degree and others who had not taken a single course of French Second Language training. "In order for immersion to succeed it must have good programs, but particularly it must have teachers who know the language, speak it with ease, and who are supported by their system."<sup>1</sup>

Since that time, there have been seven major province-wide studies or reviews of FSL programs in New Brunswick: the "Stern Report" (H.H. Stern) of 1983, the studies of John Lange, 1989 ("Report of Study Committees in Second Language Instruction"); Sally Rehorick, 1992 and 2005 ("French Second Language Learning in Schools", Quality Learning in French Second Language in New Brunswick"); Price Waterhouse Coopers Report, 2000; Elana Scraba, 2002 and the 2003 CAMET Report ("Core French Survey: A Regional Report").

From 1974 to now, the period of time during which the aforementioned reports were completed at the request of the Department of Education, various policy modifications and innovations were introduced into FSL programming within New Brunswick. Today, New Brunswick's FSL programs are, in the main, not too different than one would have found when, in 1977, an immersion program and concomitant policy (Policy 501) were introduced to accompany the basic Core program. In 1983, Policy 501 was revised to include two FSL immersion programs, an early and a late one. From 1983 onwards, there have been numerous attempts to study and "tinker" with our FSL programs and introduce new policies and guidelines. At this point in time, the various efforts towards finding "workable" and acceptable FSL programs have evolved into the existence of approximately 18 variations of FSL programs, a number first suggested in 1993<sup>2</sup> and since confirmed by this current Commission.

The Consultation Sources:

The Commission visited and met with the senior administrators in each of the nine school districts within the province. The Superintendent, the Director of Education, the principal French Second Language Coordinator/Specialist were

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<sup>1</sup> A. Saintonge, Department of Education (1975)

<sup>2</sup> Rehorick, Sally, 1993, "French Second Language learning in New Brunswick Schools: Paradigms, Challenges and Strategies".

each involved in one hour, one-on-one consultations. In addition to the interviews within each school district, the Commission requested and received an extensive written submission which was in response to questions addressing district-wide issues<sup>1</sup>. Each school district arranged for further one-on-one interviews with individual teachers who represented cross-sections of the FSL programs within each district. During the visits to various school districts, the Commissioners visited with teachers in their classrooms and observed classes being taught in which different and/or pilot programs/teaching methods were used.

Because of their particular, specific roles in teacher-training (including Second Language training), the Commission met with personnel of l' Université de Moncton and the University of New Brunswick. Also, the Commissioners met and consulted with the Dean of Faculty of the Atlantic Baptist University and with Drs. Joan Netten and Claude Germain concerning the Intensive French Second Language Program and spent further time concerning program planning with Dr. Netten.

Nearly 1,800 teachers provided feed-back to the Commission through the internet service provided by the New Brunswick Teachers' Association. This exceptional response to the Commission's request for assistance by way of teachers' input was a tribute to the N.B.T.A.'s commitment to the objectives of this inquiry<sup>2</sup>.

A web site, developed by The Department of Education, designed specifically for parents, members of various stake-holding organizations and students was made available between early August and the end of October. During this time and following the closure of the site, approximately 450 parents and involved stake-holders responded, providing their reactions to the questions posed and their written reactions to the terms and mandates of the Commission<sup>3</sup>.

In the course of the Commissioners' travels to various school districts throughout the province, the New Brunswick Teachers' Association arranged late afternoon "focus group" meetings in order that the Commission could meet and listen to

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<sup>1</sup> see Appendix A (1) for examples of School District Administrators' questionnaires and discussion guidelines

<sup>2</sup> see Appendix B (1) for questionnaire used by the N.B.T.A and Appendix B (2) for summaries of teachers' responses

<sup>3</sup> see Appendix I for Department web site for parents and thematic summary of responses and letters

groups of teachers who represented their individual districts and various FSP programs which they taught.

The Commission also met with members of two District Education Councils, a broad spectrum of current FSL students, the entire board of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association, a number of one-on-one consultations with key members of the staff and management of The New Brunswick Department of Education, the New Brunswick Advisory Council on Youth, the New Brunswick Ombudsman, the Canadian and New Brunswick Commissioners of Official Languages, The French Second Language Council of the NBTA, the Chair of the Premier's Advisory Council on the Status of the Disabled, the New Brunswick Business Council, New Brunswick Association for Community Living, Chambers of Commerce and Canadian Parents for French. <sup>1</sup>

Each of the District Education Councils of New Brunswick and the New Brunswick Federation of Home and School Associations submitted written reports to the Commission and over 100 school principals provided written evaluations of the current FSL programs and suggestions for change.

Written submissions were also solicited from such New Brunswick organizations as the Autism Society, Blind and Rubella Association, Learning Disability Association, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Association, the Education Critic for the Official Opposition, The Second Language Research Institute of Canada, and The University of New Brunswick Learning Centre.

## **Part Two: The Issues – An Overview**

Despite the success of FSL programs in elementary and secondary schools across Canada, there is growing concern about their future. Numerous studies have indicated a general decline in the status of FSL instruction in Canada (Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, 2004; Canadian Heritage, 2005; Canadian Parents for French, 2004). School boards across Canada are struggling to recruit and retain qualified FSL teachers (Canadian Parents for French, 2002; 2004; Macfarlane & Hart, 2002; Turnbull & Lawrence, 2002). French teachers are growing increasingly frustrated over poor working conditions (Edgar, 1995; Richards 2002), and student attitudes toward the study of French in Canada are increasingly negative (Kissau, 2005; Netten, Riggs & Hewlett, 1999).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> see Appendix A(2 through 9) for questionnaires and discussion guidelines for these groups

<sup>2</sup> Kissau, Scott, "The Depreciated Status of FSL Instruction in Canada", Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue #44, August 1, 2005.

The latter passage from Kissau's (2005) article provides a starting point for discussion of several of the issues which this Commission addressed in its investigations.

#### French Second Language Enrolments:

In point of fact, the issue of declining enrolments in early French Second Language programs was raised by several school districts, particularly in reference to the sustainability of Early Immersion classes within particular schools. At no point, in any of the discussions, did either an individual or organization speak to declining enrolments as an issue relative to the success or failure of FSL programs in New Brunswick.

Although a number of individual researchers and organizations across Canada have predicted sustained declines in French Second Language enrolments, it would appear that much of this speculation has been based upon periodic plateaus, at least in part, due to students' moving from one form of FSL program to another. Coupled with the latter explanation for enrolment variability are two major factors: the attrition rates from early FSL programs and declining school populations.

Despite the small increase in numbers of registrations into FSL programs, particularly in French Immersion programs, there has been a concomitant increasing attrition rate in the late high school years, resulting in an influence upon net enrolment figures. Of much greater importance in understanding the FSL registrations is the issue of FSL enrolments being largely a function of declining school enrolments across Canada. This point may be clearly seen in the following table which is based upon data drawn from eight of our largest English-speaking provinces which have both immersion and core FSL programs.

Although there has been a decrease in early French Immersion registrations between 1999 and 2006, the decline in total student populations has resulted in a proportionate gain in FSL Immersion and total FSL registrations in most provinces.

TABLE 1: Showing FSL Immersion Enrolments and Total FSL Enrolments as a Percentage of Total School Enrolments in Selected Provinces .

	Total Immersion Registrations Percentage of all Students <sup>1</sup>		Total FSL Registrations as a Percentage of all Students <sup>2</sup>	
	1999 – 2000	2005-2006	1999-2000	2005-2006
Alberta	4.6	5.3	24.8	26.2
British Columbia	4.7	6.3	42.9	42.5
Manitoba	8.9	9.6	46.6	48.7
New Brunswick	17.4	18.7	57.1	57.7
Nfld & Labrador	5.2	8.9	57.6	61.6
Nova Scotia	6.9	10.0	54.7	52.9
Ontario	5.5	5.7	50.2	46.9
Saskatchewan	4.9	5.1	49.7	40.0

In order to further clarify the issue concerning the relationship between declining school enrolments and the status in FSL registrations, the following table shows the relatively high ( $r=.951$ ), significant correlation ( $p=0.004$ ) between New Brunswick's declining school enrolments and decreasing registrations into Late Immersion Programs between 2001-2 and 2006-7 academic years. Between September of 2001 and September of 2006, registrations into Late FSL Immersion have declined by approximately 4% while the Grade 6 student populations have declined by 755 students (11.2%).

TABLE 2: Correlation\* Between Late FSL Immersion and Total Grade 6 Enrolments in New Brunswick between<sup>3</sup> 2001 and 2006

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Late Immersion <sup>1</sup>	1462	1261	1269	1161	1074	1020
Total Enrolment <sup>2</sup>	6765	6548	6565	6413	6304	6010
Proportion	21.6%	19.3%	19.3%	18.1%	17.0%	17.0%

\* $r= .951$ ,  $p=.004$

<sup>1</sup> Department of Education, Policy and Planning 2003 – 2006; School District Files

<sup>2</sup>“Summary Statistics, School Year 2006-2007”, Policy and Planning, Department of Education.

<sup>3</sup> Anglophone students only

Similarly, employing Department of Education data for over the same period, one can readily see that the “declining enrolments” in the Early French Second Language Immersion Program is highly and significantly ( $p=.002$ ) correlated ( $r=.842$ ) to the over-all decline in total student enrolments. In fact, the annual proportion of enrolments to Early Immersion registrations between 1997 and 2006

<sup>1</sup> CPF “FSL Enrolment in New Brunswick 1999-2006 Source: New Brunswick Department of Education (“all students” include Francophone and Anglophone students)

<sup>2</sup> ibid

has only varied by less than 4 percent (3.9%) but, since 2000, there has been a drop of 13.6% enrolment.

TABLE 3: Correlation\* between Early FSL Immersion and Total Grade 1 Enrolments 1997-2006

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total Enrolment <sup>1</sup>	6325	6145	6020	5879	5729	5520	5567	5389	5257	5036
Early French Immersion <sup>2</sup>	1822	1876	1881	1905	1830	1783	1706	1655	1624	1646
Proportion	28.8%	30.5%	31.2%	32.4%	31.9%	32.3%	30.6%	30.7%	30.9%	32.7%

\* $r=.842$ ;  $p=.002$

<sup>1</sup>“Summary Statistics, School Year 2006-2007”, Policy and Planning, Department of Education

<sup>2</sup> Policy and Planning, Department of Education, 2002 – 2007; District Records, 1995-2006; Annual Reports, Department of Education 1996-2007;

### Availability of Qualified Teachers:

Upon reviewing the concerns expressed by the Superintendents of the nine school districts, the Directors of Education and the French Second Language Specialists, there was total agreement that the principal issue confronting these administrators is the inability to recruit and retain qualified, French language-competent teachers. In most cases, the district administrators have had to make the difficult choice of either hiring and staffing classrooms with Francophones or hiring teachers who have been properly trained for the specific grades and subjects. <sup>1</sup>

Of all of the district administrators interviewed and those others who also provided written<sup>2</sup> submissions, not one stated opposition to the language proficiency requirements for teachers as stipulated in Policy Statement 309. In fact, the vast majority of administrators voluntarily voiced their support for the language proficiency standards laid out in Policy 309. However, the realistic situation is that few, if any, of the provincial school districts are not in violation of Policy Statement 309 due to their inability to hire FSL teachers with the necessary language proficiency. Often, if a teacher who possesses the necessary academic background and possesses the necessary linguistic competence is

<sup>1</sup> Appendices C, D, E, F, for thematic summaries of comments and interviews

<sup>2</sup>see Appendix G



hired, that teacher will not remain long in an English-speaking area but will return to teach within a Francophone school district or environment.

Clearly, the paucity of qualified teachers is both a product of the demand on a limited number of graduates with acceptable levels of French language skills plus the lack of adequate training within specific universities' programs. There was a lot of input, both live consultations and written submissions, concerning teacher availability and teacher-training. The following selected statements, which are direct quotes from Superintendents, Directors of Education and the District FSL Specialists, are a sample of the comments received by the Commission:

- it is difficult to find FSL teachers with the educational training in various subjects
- our biggest problem is with the competency of teachers
- sometimes we have no choice but to hire a FSL teacher with less than Superior level French
- we look for teachers at U de M and UPEI fairs, Quebec, NB French cities – it's becoming more challenging to find teachers every year
- often we hire Francophone teachers who have limited English proficiency and this restricts their engagement with parents, the school staff and the community
- some are right out of university
- we have concerns with universities – UNB graduates are sometimes not qualified – had better success with St. Thomas and U of Maine graduates.
- a lot of teachers are far from superior
- universities are not meeting training needs generally, not just French teachers – we have identified this at the superintendents' table.
- we have a really good parking lot of teachers coming into the classroom but they have only one course in pedagogy – they don't know how to teach reading, have trouble with behaviour – they have a good theory base but no practical skills
- we look on website to find teachers – other places offer a bonus for teachers to start
- UNB graduates do not have the good interviews or resumes, not learning the language, and lack teacher-training
- it is a challenge to find teachers – especially math
- teacher competency is a major problem – teachers are making mistakes (in French) in every school in the district
- most of our teachers are being hired from Nova Scotia (Acadia and St. FX),
- Atlantic Baptist University is okay for early years

- not from UNB anymore. St.FX and Acadia students rise to the top in interviews – also hiring from U de M. - UNB needs to use some classroom teachers
- staffing does not have the confidence that they are getting the best FSL teachers – such a big roll over
- UNB graduates have a lot of theory but not enough practical background, not in touch with teaching.
- concerned that the educational system is spending thousands of dollars on PD because the universities haven't adequately prepared their graduates
- we are drawing teachers out of the northern part and U de M
- some teachers in our district are hired only because they speak French
- hard to get qualified teachers
- teacher training needs to be fixed
- universities are not pulling their weight –it seems that it's up to us
- the government should move to accreditation instead of certification – programs should also be developed from help of superintendents and districts – in terms of what skills teachers should have, and be added in university programs
- we are bringing in teachers that can speak French, not because they can teach
- we are hiring most of our teachers from Nova Scotia
- teachers do not have a lot of practical skills – need a course in classroom management skills
- UNB is the weakest of the universities
- will hire from Maine and Nova Scotia – none from UNB
- much training needs to be done with training teachers from grades 4 to 12 on current language methods – this training has not gone past the early years
- more and more challenging each year to find teachers
- Core very sad and FSL teachers don't believe that kids in Core can learn French
- lack of FSL teachers
- U de M does above and beyond a good job in teacher training in knowing balanced literacy
- -at UNB there is knowledge of guided reading
- U de M graduates are very good
- "I would use one program for all –without immersion! – the philosophy of language learning would be different with one program offered .
- ABU – early year teacher training has a program developed based on the district's curriculum – this helps with early year teachers
- - UNB – they are not learning the language and lack teacher training

- teaching methods are outdated, they need improved skills - for example UNB's graduates – not needed to take classroom management – that is a problem
- need teachers that can deliver the curriculum
- the delivery of these programs is draining
- - teachers not all being properly trained in current second language
- universities are not providing good pertaining – we have to hire French teachers who are under-qualified
- concern that UNB grads are not qualified
- new teachers don't know what to do
- we need qualified manpower
- we have a major problem in recruiting FSL teachers. This has forced us to place teachers with lower French proficiency in French Immersion classes.
- teachers interview great, but there needs to be a major sweep in the training
- teacher training needs to be fixed
- the department of Education has a Teacher Certification Branch, If we made it a requirement to have literacy and special needs courses, universities would probably change the programs so the government could give certification.
- best kids are from Fort Kent (U of Maine ) and Maine (Orono).

And one Education Director summed it with the statement “The better prepared you are as a teacher, the better success the class will have.”

Compounding the issue of the availability of qualified teachers, in terms of both language proficiency and academic preparation or pre-training, is the general consensus that our New Brunswick English language universities are failing to provide adequately prepared entry-level teachers. In fact, several senior administrators have specifically stated their preference to recruit their new teachers from Education faculties in Maine and Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, these comments have been general, extending beyond the acquisition of French second language teachers. In three instances, senior district administrators have specifically discussed the fact that they have spent considerable time and financial resources to provide the necessary pre-training in areas which should have been taught to recent graduates in their New Brunswick English-language Education Faculty programs.

## Teacher In-service:

The following is a follow-up letter from one of the teachers who wrote to the Commission following our consultation with her. This is an excellent summary of the tone of what the Commissions heard concerning FSL teacher professional development throughout the province during their interviews.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns, the concerns I believe are shared by many of my French Second Language colleagues.

I thought about the question/point, why is the success rate so small?? I bet if you looked at the data over the years it would show a steady decline from the mid-90's, the time when support to our discipline started to disappear. I was lucky to have started my teaching in the late '80's when there was a lot going on. As I mentioned to you in\_\_\_\_\_, I was able to take summer courses in Tracadie, I was trained in Fredericton on administering the oral proficiency test, my district offered ongoing PD of the Roger Tremblay Modules, the department provided copies of novel studies and thematic units. What happened??? Are we not having success because something is wrong or is it because we are not supporting our programs appropriately?? I also remember our district having a supervisor to oversee all things French....Last year in our district our new Director of Education was named, she was our former French Supervisor who also has to continue that role, how well is that suppose to work?? I can't imagine being able to do both! Also in our district we have 2 technology mentors, a few math mentors and I think a few literary mentors as well. Why is our discipline struggling to meet with success....perhaps it's because we need support? So I sit and wonder...I think about your question....I always believed the Immersion model was good, I think there are many good resources and methodologies, I know the teacher know-how, the knowledge and expertise is out there....So I too am puzzled?? I wonder if more leadership and support is what's needed?? One thing I am sure of, the need for a review is necessary!

Personally I am doing great and have had success with both Immersion and Core. I believe I was fortunate to have started my career in the heyday for my discipline, where the training and core resources available to me set the foundation for my teaching success. I have seen far too many frustrated new French teachers join the profession and struggle....My cry for help is particularly for them!

I thank you in advance, finally after so many years I truly believe someone is really listening.

The issue of in-service education for teachers has proven to be one of the most common and hotly discussed topics which the Commission encountered when receiving consul from teachers. At all levels, in all of the FSL programs, teachers

are vociferously unhappy and discouraged by the perceived lack of support they have received by way of in-service education.

In one meeting with several high school teachers who have taught Immersion and Core French for an average of nearly 20 years, we were told that they have never been invited to nor offered an in-service program in their subject area.

Provincially, over and over again, school administrators and FSL teachers have stated that professional development is essential yet lacking. Teachers must have on-going training, up-grading and opportunities to share ideas, materials and methods. To further underline this importance, it was astonishing to learn of the number of FSL teachers, particularly within the Core program, who told the Commission that they have had no formal background preparation in teaching French.

#### Teacher Guides , Curriculum and Teaching Materials:

Particularly when interviewing French Immersion program teachers, the subject of the quality and availability of FSL materials emerged. It would seem that there is a small number of themes within these selected comments: time lapse between English and French distribution of materials, lack of quality curricular material (especially learning objectives or subject mastery criteria in FI guides) availability of resource materials and budgets commensurate with additional costs for French-language texts.

- do not send curriculums for subject in English until it is ready in French
- it would be nice to have more methods and resource materials
- resources: some books are written for Francophones, not Anglophones learning French.
- We do not have the proper tools to teach French
- the problem begins with the Department of Education – not enough FSL people
- there is a translation delay from English to French –it is a problem ex: Grade 10 math, English students get the new curriculum documents and French have nothing because it is delayed. Both should be released at the same time!!
- there is never enough money for supplies because FSL is not a priority in our schools
- teaching materials is a problem, the translation of stuff, it takes a year or two to translate it and teachers need the materials
- the English books translated into French are difficult levels due to difference in language

- we need curriculum documents (guides, resources) in French – faster! – in-service for English documents has already happened by the time the French documents arrive.
- curriculum is small or minimal
- teachers are working without curriculum and resources
- FSL curriculum documents not available (nor resources) – sometimes publishers later decide not to translate so district has to locate their own resources (eg: G 10 math – using Omni because there is no resource coming –though it doesn't follow provincial curriculum)
- we need more French curriculum – and want materials and resources to go with curriculum.
- need companies to provide resources that aren't delayed by two years.
- resources are an issue – high school resources are pathetic!
- do not release curriculum 'till it is ready in both English and French
- a number of curriculum documents come through APEF – some don't look as though Department of Education has had input.
- resources: she has no idea what to teach or where to start – one school is good and the other has nothing – lack of consistency
- when curriculum is to be introduced – this must be available for both language groups at the same time.
- some FI teachers are Francophone and can't easily use English curriculum and resource documents.
- no resources to provide to TAs in FSL
- FSL curriculum guide is useless. – there is no mapping
- materials are so much more expensive for FSL
- there isn't a map of what should be accomplished per grade – there is no real curriculum
- our curriculum isn't on paper – it's almost taught by word of mouth

#### Numbers of French Second Language Programs:

During discussions and within the formal, written documents senior district administrators have repeatedly addressed the issue of the number of FSL programs within their districts.

- not enough resources to maintain what we have
- we are trying to be everything to everyone and not providing a quality teaching strategy or curriculum to anyone when it is spread so thin. We need to focus on doing some things really well,
- we cannot afford any more programs added on to fix something
- there are too many programs. "We are all over the map."

- our biggest issue - there are so many levels of FSL training and we are not doing great in any of them.
- staffing is a major issue (with so many programs). We can't locate enough qualified teachers. We are using local permit teachers for long time supply and daily support. The quality of instruction is a concern.
- The current situation leads to streaming – we have only 10% of our SEP students in FI programs.
- classroom composition, human, material and financial resources.
- there is a huge financial and personnel cost for these various FI programs.
- Con- duality which causes inequalities re classroom composition, class size, resources etc. Pro- provides opportunities for students who want to excel in French
- I do not see any benefits to maintaining the current arrangement
- Too many programs to manage, especially given declining enrolments and difficulties in attracting quality FSL teachers
- disappointing French proficiency results in all programs given the existing targets.
- de facto streaming which takes place, resulting in challenging classroom compositions in the English program.
- we should have one system
- biggest concern – managing all of the programs
- there needs to be one program
- standardize programs across the province!
- limit the programs being offered
- are we dividing our resources into too many pots? Yet, one size fits all ... does not always fit all. We must look at the culture and regional differences in the district.
- there should be only one program – in a bilingual province all kids should have French – entry point G.4 or 5 and offer enrichment for those who want more.
- we need to choose a few programs and do them well. We cannot afford all of them
- don't have the human resources or financial resources to support them all.
- FSL is not working, fix it by rethinking the whole thing. Too many programs .... you have early, late core classes and you can put them together – quite the headache!

And finally, one of the best: “It's time we started all over, no more duct tape!”

### **PART THREE: The Programs**

Since the formal introduction of compulsory French into the New Brunswick curriculum in 1963, followed by the introduction of French immersion in 1970s, there has been a seemingly unending amount of discussion concerning the various merits of each of the programs and theories relating to each.

Concomitant with the growth of interest in French as a Second Language and the increasing awareness of various theories relating to the value of each educational program, there has been much public and professional attention paid to it by way of reports and commentaries.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, a plethora of variations of FSL programs and teaching methods, largely under the auspices of individual school districts, have also been introduced into the schools of New Brunswick. As recent as this year, this Commission has become aware of approximately 18 different variations of programs or teaching methods which are being used in New Brunswick schools. Upon examining the latter program variations and by removing the different minor variations in starting points and different pilot teaching methods being used, it is clear that there are only four basic FSL programs which are being used province-wide. These four programs, namely Core, Early Immersion, Late Immersion and Intensive French will be the subject of this section of the report, examined in terms of their differences, the issues associated with each, the anecdotal evidence surrounding each, and a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the efficacy of each.

#### **The Core FSL Program**

##### a) anecdotal evaluation

The primary program concern which virtually every district administrator, school principal, parent, teacher and every other FSL stakeholder has voiced centers upon the abysmal failure of the Core program to provide our children with meaningful French language achievement . These concerns have been repeated over and over again, in interviews, consultations, written reports and email responses to the Commission's invitations for feedback.

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<sup>1</sup> the Pricewaterhouse Cooper report, September 200, p.14-17, provide an excellent review of many of these reports.



Quoting New Brunswick's Commissioner of Official Languages<sup>1</sup>, in reference to his series of visits and meetings with people involved in the delivery of FSL programs:

If there was one constant in all of the meetings in this process, it was that the Core French program, as it has been offered for many decades, is inadequate and in dire need of major changes. This is not necessarily surprising and only confirms what we had heard and read previously with respect to the program. Many have suggested that it has been taught the same way, using the same resources and approach for many decades. We were told that there is not one other program in our provincial educational system that has not been the subject of amendments and improvements over the years. Are these exaggerations? Whether they are or not, it became very clear as we went from one meeting to another that the value of this program is seriously called into question. We were told that it is disliked by teachers, students, parents and other[sic] involved in the system. Some have even volunteered that many teachers actually detest having to teach it and that most students cannot wait for the day when they no longer have to take the program.

The Commission, during its meeting with Commissioner Carrier received this same statement, the substance of which has been repeated over and over, throughout the province.

It is particularly difficult to report constructively on the anecdotal evidence relating to the Core Program, primarily due to the universal condemnation of it. Statements, such as: "I hate teaching because I hate the Core Program" – a teacher; "The Core program is teaching the 3 Rs – ram, remember and regurgitate" - a teacher; "The Core Program is simply not working" – a superintendent; "So much of our time is spent on the Core program but the kids are not learning" - teacher; "Some Core teachers think it's working but it's not" – FSL supervisor; "I do not see any benefits to the Core French program which are worthy of generalizing." – superintendent;

One district administrator very accurately summarized the views of all of the FSL administrators throughout the province in her written evaluation of the Core Program:

I can only see weaknesses. Students are unable to recall the information learned from a previous lesson as there is not time for them to use the language in class. The materials do not support current research that requires oral language development to be done prior to any reading or writing. Vocabulary memorization is often done which does not support communication. I have often heard students say they can't learn French. They feel there must be

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<sup>1</sup> Carrier, Michael A., Annual Report 2005-2006, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, March 2007.

something different about them because they have tried in class without experiencing any success.

Another district administrator very nicely summarized what the Commissioners have heard from other superintendents: "In Core French I cannot say anything positive about what we've been doing for years other than to say that Intensive French brings new life to the program."

#### b) Quantitative Evaluation

Moving away from the anecdotal evaluation of the Core Program, in order to carry out forensic analysis the Commission asked for and received all of the Department of Education's available data concerning enrollments, persistence, attainment records and costs associated with each of the FSL programs. Of particular interest were those data associated with the Core Program<sup>1</sup>.

Policy Statement 309, revised October 25, 2001, is the guiding set of regulations and requirements for each of the French Second Language programs currently being offered in New Brunswick. Specifically, there are several very important sections within this Policy Statement which directly impact upon the Core program:

##### Policy Number 8 . *Time-on-task:*

"The Core French program is compulsory from grade 1 to grade 10 for all students who are not enrolled in one of the two French Immersion programs."

##### Policy Number 4. *Goals of the French Second language Programs:*

"The goal of the Core French program is to develop in students a degree of proficiency in their second official language corresponding to the *Intermediate* level of the New Brunswick Second Language Proficiency Scale (oral component)."

##### Policy Number 9. *Evaluation:*

"The superintendent shall ensure that students who have participated in the Oral Interview at the end of Grade 12 receive an assessment of their level of achievement as described in the New Brunswick Second Language Proficiency Scale."

Using Policy Statement 309 as the criterion for various program parameters, including a statement regarding Core as a compulsory program for students not

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<sup>1</sup> not all data was available for all years i.e. 2002-3; and it appears Oral Proficiency Testing was not carried out /reported systematically prior to 1999.

enrolled in another FSL program, the attainment goal of Intermediate Oral proficiency and that the assessment is to take place in Grade 12, is essential for analysis of the Department of Education data.

Because of the various FSL programs in the province prior to 2001, particularly those many French immersion programs with differing starting points, it was virtually impossible to distinguish which students were in a Core program or which were in some variation of an immersion program. Coupled with the latter issue, the data for what Oral Proficiency testing was done prior to 1999 is far from accurate or complete. From 1999 onwards, with a greater degree of accuracy it has been possible to distinguish Core students from immersion students and the data concerning those students who were examined in Grade 12, thus provide reliable efficacy data in terms of persistence and achievement.

TABLE 4 : Core Program<sup>a</sup> Oral Proficiency Assessment Results

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number <sup>b</sup>	362	299	305	238	239	264	198	189
Basic or Higher	96%	92%	94%	93%	93%	95%	87%	91%
Basic Plus or Higher	61%	58%	64%	59%	66%	75%	52%	65%
Intermediate <sup>c</sup> or Higher	19%	18%	22%	18%	23%	38%	17.2%	14.7%
Intermediate Plus or Higher	2%	2%	2%	2%	5%	9%	2.5%	3%
Advanced or Higher	0%	0%	0%	0%	.8%	2%	0%	0%

<sup>a</sup> 1999 – 2006 Grade 12 FSL Oral Interviews

<sup>b</sup> number of students tested

<sup>c</sup> Policy Statement 309 (2002) Oral Proficiency Goal

The data in Table 4, presenting the numbers of Core students who have been tested for oral proficiency testing each year since 1999, provides a picture of the steadily declining numbers of Core students who continue with their FSL study into Grade 12, coupled with the declining proportion of Core students who have reached the Provincial goal of Intermediate proficiency.

In 2006-7, only 14.7% of those students who persisted to Grade 12 met the minimum goal of Intermediate Proficiency.

As TABLE 5 unambiguously shows, the attainment data relating to Core students is a most serious indictment of the efficacy of this program. Of those 4063 students who began their FSL Core program 12 years prior to their assessment in Grade 12 (September of 1994 to 2006-7), only 189 (4.65%) remained in the program. Of the 189 in Grade 12 who were given the Oral Proficiency Examination, only 28 met the minimum attainment goal level. **Therefore of the 4063 students who entered into the Core Program in 1994, only .689 percent attained the provincial minimum goal of Intermediate Proficiency by the spring of 2007!**

TABLE 5: Core Attainment Results 2001-2 to 2006-7

Year	Entered Program <sup>a</sup> Grade 1	Number Evaluated <sup>b</sup> Grade12	Number Passed <sup>b</sup>	% Attained Intermediate Goal <sup>c</sup>
2006-7	4063	189	28	.689
2005-6	4181	198	34	.813
2004-5	4279	264	100	2.337
2003-4	4494	239	54	1.202
2002-3	3726	238	43	1.154
2001-2	4902	305	77	1.571

<sup>a</sup> CPF and "Summary Statistics", School Year 2006-2007, Policy and Planning, March 2007. (total registration 12 years previously minus total immersion registrations during first six years)

<sup>b</sup> Department of Education FSL Oral Interview Results "Briefing Note" July 2005 and July 2007

<sup>c</sup> Policy Statement 309

Further examination of TABLE 5 indicates yet more negative information concerning the Core program, that of declining trends in combined persistence and achievement rates between 2001 and 2006.

In an effort to understand what the educators felt was at the root of the perception of dismal failure of the Core program, each teacher, school and district administrator was asked to discuss her/his understanding of the reasons. As the following comments bear out, there certainly isn't just one issue, rather it would appear that there are numerous problems within the program itself, compounded by the fact that by now it has acquired a demoralizing reputation – one which has percolated into broader teaching/learning issues. The following selected excerpts regarding the problems with the Core Program are from the Commission's discussions with individual school administrators, teachers and districts' administration staff members.

- the students are bored
- the Core program must go!
- the periods are not long enough
- many teachers do not have either the language or classroom skills
- there is little incentive for students to continue beyond grade 10
- there are few role models
- kids would come in as if they hadn't been taught before, every year it seems that they have to start at square one. Kids do not seem to have any retention
- there is streaming in most of the Core classes
- Core classrooms have become a "dumping ground"
- the curriculum is boring
- too much emphasis on reading and writing and little to none on oral skills
- we place our least skilled, least experienced teachers into Core classes
- materials do not support authentic communication

- students are unable to recall the information learned from previous lessons
- vocabulary memorization is the most common form of teaching – certainly does not support authentic communication
- shoot Core!
- teachers need management training skills
- many children are not ready to learn a second language
- teachers are not all properly trained in current second language acquisition
- there are no mentors
- there are lots of parents who have “you can’t make my kids learn French” attitudes
- we need properly trained teachers!
- the Core classrooms are really sad, very negative
- inequities in class composition
- kids are spending a lot of time in Core French and learning nothing.
- composition problem – “he can’t read in English and you want to teach my son French?”
- there’s no retention in the Core program
- teaching - outdated, needs improved skills ex: UNB – not needed to take classroom management, that is a problem
- Core resources are outdated
- kids would come in as if they hadn’t been taught before, every year seems to have to start at square one

And finally:

“A paradigm shift in methodology and curriculum content of the Core French program is paramount. French has to become more interesting, more relevant, and more oriented to the goal of learning to speak the language. This is the most obvious first step towards motivating students to continue their study of French.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Donna Cashman, “Core French Survey: A Regional Report”, Atlantic provinces Education Foundations (CAMET), 2003. p.63

## Early French Immersion:

Of the three principal French Second Language programs in New Brunswick, the Early Immersion program is the most recognized and defended as the most successful. Clearly, the majority of proponents of French Immersion think only of Early French immersion as synonymous with French immersion and with successful French Second Language education.

That Early French Immersion has its defenders and advocates is an understatement!<sup>1</sup> At various times, New Brunswick has experimented with various entry levels for immersion programs, including all grades between K and 7.

During the past several decades there has been a plethora of research reports and theories advancing the benefits of either early or late immersion practices. In her 1993 report to the New Brunswick Department of Education, Rehorick (1993) echoed this research, and includes the statement "There have been numerous studies into the question of optimal age (see Ellis, 1986, Rehorick, 1983, and Cook, 1991 for summaries of the research) with very little conclusive evidence to support one starting age over another."<sup>2</sup> Further light concerning starting times for FSL programs is shed by Elizabeth Murphy (2001) in her summary of the research:

In summary, although the debate on this issue is not yet over, we can affirm that the bulk of the empirical evidence does not support the hypothesis that an earlier starting time correlates with a higher level of proficiency than a later starting time. Recent evidence has refuted initial claims of a neural superiority of the brain of children with regard to language learning. In fact, a substantial amount of evidence suggests that, because older learners are more effective learners, they may have an advantage over younger learners with regard to language learning. The results are not conclusive, however, and it is still not clear

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<sup>1</sup> On a web site which the Department of Education created and publicised in order that the Commission might receive feed-back from parents and other interested stakeholders, of the over 450 responses, the majority of respondents wrote in defence of the Early Immersion program. Interestingly, a great many of these respondents also identified themselves as belonging to an association and their theme was vitriolic opposition to the Commission's supposed recommendation to cancel Early Immersion. Unfortunately, an overwhelming majority of these responses failed to provide any constructive thoughts as to how the Commission, and consequently the Department of Education, might proceed in order to effect positive changes to our existing programs.

<sup>2</sup> Rehorick, Sally, *Paradigms, Challenges and Strategies*, p.27, 1993

if this advantage (if it exists) holds true for all or only some aspects of language learning.<sup>1</sup>

For at least some students, Early Immersion is an excellent choice of immersion programs. For other students, the reports and data suggest they might have benefited from another program.

The anecdotal evidence provided by senior district administrators is very positive concerning Early Immersion. An accurate example of this is the following statement by one of our district superintendents:

This program allows us to begin working on French Language instruction at a time when children are eager and able to learn the language with ease. In addition, this program has resulted in higher FSL proficiency than either later immersion or Core French. Some parents find that they have an opportunity to learn with their children. The weakness is that First Language literacy skills suffer, also a natural streaming takes place whereby weaker students are placed in the English program. This creates a serious classroom composition issue.

Several other comments, by administrators and teachers, which are indicative of the diverseness of opinion concerning the efficacy of the Early Immersion program, warrant inclusion in this discussion.

- better French language but weak English language skills: writing, spelling, composition
- French language inflection is stronger
- Early Immersion can create challenges in the family
- the down side is that many students are turned off by the program by high school and opt out
- it is not possible to be in compliance with Policy 309 in high schools in our district
- there are fewer academic and behavioural problems in Early FI classes
- the children are often together for many years in the same school and it becomes complex with relationships.
- early immersion works best but kids need to have a better grasp on English
- not all kids are ready to learn when first starting school
- I question whether kids can learn all subjects in a second language. kids can learn a second language but some subjects should be taught/learned in mother language.

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<sup>1</sup> Murphy, Elizabeth, "The Relationship of Starting Time and Cumulative Time to Second Language Acquisition and Proficiency", *The Morning Watch: Education and Social Analysis*, 2001

- In \_\_\_\_\_ it has become the right decision to put kids in immersion for the wrong reasons – streaming
- we are not all second language learners
- Early French Immersion is New Brunswick’s free private school

By far, the most prevalent criticism of Early French Immersion centers on the need for children to have more school time in order to acquire basic skills in English before embarking upon study in the French language. This issue is one which has been hotly opposed by proponents of Early Immersion. One French Second Language coordinator, a major proponent of Early Immersion, clearly indicated that we need a single entry point into immersion programs as early immersion works best but, not all kids are ready to learn when first starting school so, if we focus upon English language acquisition up to grade 4 or 5, then we could make an educated choice of programs. The most recent study of FSL programs<sup>1</sup> commissioned by the Department of Education, touches on some of the more current research relating to the effects of second language learning on first language literacy and academic skills. This Commission, during its investigations, have received many contradictory live and written submissions from parents and teachers which echo those submitted for earlier reports.

The following are a few, selected comments by district administrators relating to the “readiness” of children to commence immersion in grade one:

- strong believer in immersion but learn their language first
- kids need a good footing in one language in grades K – 3; too many kids are having trouble in English. Introduce the second language in grade 4 or 5-there may be less attrition with later entry points because it gives kids, parents and teachers a chance from grade 1- 4 to see the kid’s abilities before entering immersion.
- entry point should be grade 4 so that there is time to support students in reading and writing in English.
- Kids need to be grounded in their first language; too many kids with learning difficulties become apparent in the early years – all kids need to be comfortable, able to focus, some are simply not developmentally ready

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<sup>1</sup> Rehorick, Sally, et al “Quality Learning in French Second Language in New Brunswick, pp.9-10, April 2006



- early immersion grades 1 -5 needs to be revamped – the writing samples are too weak, there aren't enough approaches for teachers, there is no developmental theory for how children learn to read in a language they don't yet speak.
- with early immersion, they never had a chance to let their mother tongue mature
- if early FSL immersion is to be kept, begin in grade 4 – learn English first!
- absolutely mandatory that kids have good footing in first language – so many kids are having difficulties in English.
- we need kids to have a solid first language, many of our kids are coming from homes where they are not exposed to numbers or books, while others in kindergarten can convert fractions to decimals.

It would appear that one of the main issues concerning the Early French Immersion FSL program is the drop-out rates in both the elementary and high school years. The following table provides an over-view of the early years' attrition from the past 10 years. It is most encouraging to note that this trend of attrition during the elementary years has been steadily decreasing (from 34.1% in 1997-8 to 14.9% in 2006-7) yet, a drop-out rate of nearly 15 percent is still of no little concern. According to the parents' and teachers' anecdotal reports, the vast majority of these withdrawals from the Early immersion programs have been precipitated by the parents' and/or teachers' perceptions regarding the children's lack of English language competence.

TABLE 6: Showing Average Declines in FSL Early Immersion Enrolments from Grade 1 to Grade 5, Between September 1997 and September 2006<sup>a</sup>

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Grade 1	1,822	1,876	1,881	1,905	1,830	1,783	1,706	1,655	1,624	1,646
Grade 2	1,537	1,618	1,686	1,701	1,717	1,670	1,642	1,589	1,505	1,450
Grade 3	1,261	1,483	1,490	1,577	1,574	1,595	1,564	1,528	1,479	1,390
Grade 4	1,337 <sup>b</sup>	1,226	1,380	1,406	1,487	1,491	1,522	1,502	1,457	1,391 <sup>b</sup>
Grade 5 <sup>b</sup>	1,201	1,265	1,132	1,301	1,346	1,417	1,443	1,449	1,437	1,401 <sup>b</sup>
Net Change	621	611	749	604	484	366	263	206	187	245
% Change	-34.1%	-32.6%	-39.8%	-31.7%	-26.4%	-20.5%	-15.4%	-12.4%	-11.5%	-14.9%

<sup>a</sup> Department of Education, "Summary Statistics: School Year 2006-2007, Policy and Planning Department, March 2007.

<sup>b</sup> anomalies may be due to merging of middle immersion students – Department data does not differentiate

Further examination of this attrition rate, as depicted in Table 7, using 2006-7 data, suggests that the bulk of drop-outs occurred sometime between registering into grade one and grade two. Actually, the amount of attrition

which has occurred within the first five grades, using the 2006-7 academic year as an example (14.88%) is mainly due to the decline in enrolments between grade one and two (80%).

TABLE 7: The Percent of Decline in FSL Early Immersion Between Grades 1 Through 5 for

<u>2006<sup>a</sup></u>					
Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Enrolment	1646	1450	1390	1391	1401
% Change		11.9%	4.14%	0%	-7.2%

<sup>a</sup> Department of Education, "Summary Statistics: School Year 2006-2007, Policy and Planning Department, March 2007.

Evidently, if the anecdotal reports are a valid explanation of this drop-out rate, then there are numbers of children who are simply not "ready" to be receiving their early education in a second language.

TABLE 8: Showing Early Immersion Registrations by Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 for 2004 - 5 Through 2006 - 7<sup>a</sup>

Year	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	% Decline 9 - 12
2004	1146	973	618	466	59.3%
2005	1188	1031	740	548	53.9%
2006	1257	1131	845	613	51.2%

<sup>a</sup> numbers are derived from actual school records in Department of Education data base

Unfortunately, the Department of Education data sets prior to 2005-6 do not clearly differentiate between Early and Late Immersion enrolments. The reason for this lack of data input is simply due to the number of FSL immersion programs which have existed and the changes in naming programs prior to 2005. However, the accuracy has been verified through comparing Department records with those provided by the School Districts.

Several very important observations can be made through examining those data presented in Tables 6, 7 and 8. First of all, the data between 1997 and 2006 indicates an encouraging trend (Table 6) that, despite shrinking enrolments, there is a growing persistence rate of students between grades 1 and 5. According to the data presented in Tables 7 and 8, there are two very clearly delineated periods during which major decreases in enrolment are occurring within the twelve years of the Early Immersion program; between grades 1 and 2 and after grade 9.

Using the 2006–7 data (Tables 6, 7 and 8) as our example, from the start of grade 1 to the beginning of grade 12, there is a total drop in enrolments from 1,646 to 613 (2006 enrolment) or 63%. The 196 students who dropped out between grades 1 and 2 (Table 7) represented a 11.9% decrease from the entry registrations. The major decrease in enrolments within this cohort of students took place between grades 9 and 12 with a decrease from 1257 to 613, a decline of a further 48.8%.

Although the anecdotal reports concerning the decline in registrations between grades 1 and 2 simply lead to conjecture, it is very evident that the reason discussed previously (lack of English readiness and preparedness) would be the principal reason given.

If one were to attend carefully to the volumes of written and oral anecdotal information provided to the Commission pertaining to this drop-out phenomenon, by teachers, parents and educational administrators, the two reasons for the major decline in early immersion enrolments between grades 9 and 12 may be easily explained. The first reason for dropping out of the FSL Early Immersion Program is the students' perceived need to complete their education in English in preparation for university. The second major reason for dropping Early Immersion is the fact that the program in grades 11 and 12 are perceived as "maintenance" years of French thus serves as little advantage.

The following quotations from administrators and teachers give a very colourful view of the main basis for students leaving their immersion program in high school.

- the immersion kids are dropping out of grade 10 because they want physics and so on to prepare them for university
- the universities don't care what language you took your math and sciences in, they just want your marks – this is killing immersion
- how about offering immersion students the option of staying in their program and taking the sciences and math in English?
- when it's not mandatory, kids won't take it seriously
- give credits for French if the students are taking the courses in French
- kids are dropping out in high school to take the electives – they're also going to English universities.
- there aren't enough courses available in French. If they want them I'll find the teacher for them.
- kids are dropping out because they're worried about their marks for university
- we lost over 60 of our best kids last year because we couldn't give them their courses – including math – we are losing them in high school because we can't offer the courses

- math shouldn't be taught in French!!
- if they don't need it they won't take it!

Despite the support accorded the program, the bottom line with regard to the success of the Early Immersion Program is not as positive as many would want or have us believe. The data for each year (1999 -2006) in Tables 9 and 10 provide a revealing picture of the status of this program.

TABLE 9: 1999-2006 Enrolment Numbers for Grade 1 and Persistence to Proficiency Examination in Early Immersion

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Grade 1 Enrolments	1881	1905	1830	1783	1706	1655	1624	1646
Grade 12 Examination	396	412	440	409	432	391	391	554 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>contains remaining Middle Immersion cohort (≈ 140)

The declining enrolments in Early French Immersion between 1999 and 2006, coupled with their high correlation to the declining school populations, suggest that this trend will continue into the foreseeable future. Keeping in mind that there is an eleven year lag between the Grade 1 and Grade 12 enrolments, all other things being equal, the numbers of Grade 12 students who remain enrolled in the program will shortly begin to reflect the Grade 1 enrolment decline.

Table 10 presents an overview of the attainment levels of Early Immersion students who have reached Grade 12 while remaining within the program. It is important to note that of the 554 students<sup>d</sup> who persisted to Grade 12, 42 percent attained the Advanced goal. Thus, in the 2006-2007 academic year, within the Anglophone population of New Brunswick grade 12 students, there were 554 Early Immersion students who presented themselves for assessment.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE 10 : Early Immersion Program<sup>a</sup> Oral Proficiency Assessment Results

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number <sup>b</sup>	396	412	440	409	432	391	391	554 <sup>d</sup>
Basic or Higher	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Basic Plus or Higher	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Intermediate or Higher	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Intermediate Plus or Higher	83%	79%	79%	81%	79%	83%	86%	85%
Advanced <sup>c</sup> or Higher	38%	27%	25%	28%	32%	35%	37%	42%

<sup>a</sup> 1999 – 2006 Grade 12 FSL Oral Interviews

<sup>b</sup> number of students tested

<sup>c</sup> Policy Statement 309 (2002) Oral Proficiency Goal

<sup>d</sup> includes the balance of Middle Immersion students

<sup>1</sup> Department of Education, "Briefing Note: Grade 12 FSL oral Interviews 2006-2007", July 6, 2007.

Of these 554 students (which includes the remaining Middle Immersion cohort of approximately 140), 234 or 42.2% attained the goal of Advanced Proficiency or above. Perhaps more importantly, this group of 234 successful students is all that remains of 1,469 students who entered Early Immersion in 1995. Therefore, of the 1,469 students who entered into an Early Immersion program in 1995, **only 234 or 15.93% persisted to achieve the Program Goal of Advanced or above.**<sup>1</sup> Using the 2005-6 data as a basis of comparison (without the inflated 2006-7 numbers), of the 391 Grade 12 students who presented themselves, 137 attained the goal of Advanced or higher, which represents **9.3% of the students who initially enrolled in Early French Immersion in 1995 or only 2.08% of all 1995 Grade 1 students.**

When the same data is used to re-calculate the program efficacy in terms of revising the Early Immersion Program Goal downwards to Intermediate Plus or above (the same level which is currently in place for the Late Immersion Program<sup>2</sup>) **84.6% achieved this goal but this is only 22.8% of those who entered the Early Immersion Program in 1995.**<sup>3</sup>

#### **Late French Immersion:**

The first "Late Immersion" program was introduced into Canada in 1971. New Brunswick very quickly followed with introduction of its own version of Late Immersion in the early 70's. Although there have been a number of variations of what "late immersion" represents in terms of a beginning grade, it is commonly, and currently, fixed at grade 6.

Due mainly to the various other FSL programs and "Late" immersion programs with different grades of commencement, it has been impossible to gather data from the Department of Education data base which gives an accurate picture of Late Immersion prior to the 2001-2 academic year.

By many of the standards one can employ, the Late French Immersion program is a comparative success. The drop-out rates of 24%, 26.2% and 17% between Grade 9 and 12 for the years 2004-5, 2005-6 and 2006-7, as presented in Table 11, compared with those percentages for the same grades and the same

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<sup>1</sup> the attainment goals are those set out on the Department of Education's Policy Statement 309  
<sup>2</sup>ibid

<sup>3</sup>Department of Education, "Briefing Note: Grade 12 FSL oral interviews 2006-2007", July 6, 2007.

years' percentages of 57.4%, 53.3% and 57.4% from the Early Immersion data (Table 9) provide a compelling picture. In fact, the actual numbers of students in the Late Immersion Program who continue from Grade 9 to Grade 12 in Late French Immersion is, despite much lower initial enrolments, greater than those from the Early Immersion Program!

TABLE 11: Showing Declines in FSL Late Immersion Registrations from Grade 9 to Grade 12, Between September 2004 and September 2006<sup>a</sup>

	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7
Grade 9	1,068	914	857
Grade 10	988	953	806
Grade 11	868	816	795
Grade 12	811	675	711
Net Change	257	239	146
% Change	- 24.06%	-26.15 %	- 17.04%

<sup>a</sup> Department of Education, School Year 2006-2007, Policy and Planning Department, March 2007.

An even more compelling case with respect to student persistence in measuring the differences between the Early Immersion and Late Immersion French Programs is the persistence rates for students between their entry points into their respective programs and their completion of their immersion program in Grade 12. Table 12 provides a comparative view of the success rates of the two programs in terms of the attrition rates from the two programs. Not only are the proportionate attrition rates approximately twice as high within the Early Immersion program, the net completion numbers are significantly ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) lower than those of the Late French Immersion program.

An important basis of comparison concerning persistence within the two programs is presented in Table 12 insofar that in each of the high schools in the province, students from the Early Immersion programs and those from the Late Immersion programs are merged into one cohort in either grade 9, 10 or, in some cases, grade 11. This practice has, for the purposes of this report, presented a somewhat unique opportunity to gather anecdotal information concerning the differences in the linguistic abilities of students from the two programs.

TABLE 12: Comparing FSL Early and Late Immersion Registrations for Grades 9 through 12 between September 2004 and 2006

	2004-5		2005-6		2006-7	
	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
Entry (G1/6)	1,655	1,161	1,624	1,045	1,646	1,020
Grade 9	1,146	1,068	1,188	914	1,257	857

Grade 10	973	988	1,031	953	1,131	806
Grade 11	618	868	740	816	845	795
Grade 12	466	811	548	675	613	711
% Persistence from entry	28.15%	69.85%	33.74%	64.6%	37.22%	69.7%

When asked for statements defining the differences between the products of the two programs, most teachers responded by stating that, clearly, the Early Immersion students had better enunciation and accents than did the Late Immersion students. Also, not surprisingly, the Late Immersion students tended to be weaker in their French, particularly in the early high school years but those differences tended to dissipate as the students moved along towards grade 12.

One of the major attributes of the Late Immersion Program is its consistency in terms of both enrolments and the attainments levels of students. As provided in Table 13, the picture of consistency has been remarkable with an average of 616 students per year. For the period of 7 years prior to the 2006-7 academic year, there has been a remarkably consistent achievement level averaging 44% of examined students reaching the "Intermediate Plus" level of proficiency.

TABLE 13 : Late Immersion Program<sup>a</sup> Oral Proficiency Assessment Results

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number <sup>b</sup>	598	618	601	666	618	617	611	602
Basic or Higher	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Basic Plus or Higher	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Intermediate or Higher	95%	90%	5%	92%	97%	96%	65%	95%
Intermediate Plus <sup>c</sup> or Higher	45%	37%	40%	43%	46%	48%	47%	46%
Advanced or Higher	5%	5%	7%	6%	7%	14%	10%	9%

<sup>a</sup> 1999 – 2006 Grade 12 FSL Oral Interviews

<sup>b</sup> number of students tested

<sup>c</sup> Policy Statement 309 (2002) Oral Proficiency Goal

A few selected comments concerning the late Immersion picture provide an anecdotal frame-work for gaining an over-all view of this program:

- parents and teachers can see where their kids are in terms of how they make out up to Grade 5.
- Late Immersion should be a higher level for Policy 309, it is so close to the Core proficiency level.
- all kids should get their grounding in English before immersion – perhaps Late Immersion is the answer.
- if you want an immersion program for all children, not just the chose few, the late program is the way to go
- parents choose the early program, kids choose the late program
- late immersion kids have stronger English language skills

- late immersion has some curriculum and instructional issues, it is not a strongly taught program.
- in this program, students have had prior intensive instruction in their first language literacy. Some argue, however, that it is too late to begin to learn a second language, but that has not been my observation. A challenge with this program is that these students are grouped with Early immersion students when they reach high school, and there is a period of adjustment.
- I do not believe that math and science should be taught in the second language!
- this program has the potential for **all** students

The Commission received the following very thoughtful statement concerning Late Immersion from a senior district administrator:

The Late Immersion Program could be very successful if the focus for the early part of the year was solely on language acquisition. As the same curriculum outcomes must be achieved by students just beginning to learn a second language, as their peers learning the curriculum in their mother tongue, it stands to reason that there needs to be a level of proficiency in the language prior to learning subject content. It is a challenge on the best of days to experience success with higher level scientific questions and mathematical problems. When faced with doing these tasks in a second language one has yet to have any competency in, is nothing but a shame. This is proven through the provincial Assessment results. Late Immersion results are lower than Early Immersion results in Grade 7 mathematics. Also, the Late Immersion program was launched without giving teachers the proper training, curriculum documents and resources. The majority have no training in current second language methodology.

In the 2006-07 academic year, within the Grade 12 Anglophone population of New Brunswick, **there were 602 Late Immersion students who presented themselves for assessment.<sup>1</sup> Of these students, 275 or 45.6% successfully attained the goal of Intermediate Plus or above. When viewed according to the number of Late Immersion students who initially registered into this program (1,535<sup>2</sup>), 17.92% attained the goal of Intermediate Plus proficiency or above.**

Employing the same means to test the efficacy of the Late Immersion program by revising the Late Immersion program goal downward one level to that of

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Education, "Briefing Note: Grade 12 FSL oral Interviews 2006-2007", July 6, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Department of Education and School District records (obtained October, 2007)



**Intermediate proficiency, 94.6% of students tested achieved this goal, which is 570<sup>1</sup> students or 35.33% of all students who entered a Late Immersion program.**

There is an endnote concerning both of the current French Immersion programs which addresses their future sustainability. The continual declining registrations in Early Immersion and in Late Immersion (Table 14), coupled with the over-all continuing decline in the total student population and extremely high attrition rates in Early Immersion (Table 12), points toward the question of future sustainability of the immersion programs.

Table 14: Comparisons of Early and Late Immersion Registrations – 1997 - 2006

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	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Early Immersion <sup>2</sup>	1882	1876	1881	1905	1830	1783	1706	1655	1624	1646
Late Immersion <sup>3</sup>	1171	1268	1430	1535	1462	1261	1269	1161	1074	1020

By using the available declining persistence data, the increasingly high attrition rates within the Early Immersion program, **by 2012 nearly 80% of the immersion classes within New Brunswick at the Grade 9 level and above will have to be combined Early and Late Immersion.** The latter statement is based upon the Department of Education’s Policy Statement 309, which stipulates the minimum enrolment requirements for immersion programs.

#### Streaming and Student Achievement<sup>4</sup>

During the course of the Commission’s research relating to the efficacy of the various FSL programs, a reoccurring theme emerged; that of “streaming” within the Core and Immersion programs. Time and time again this topic arose through submissions and discussions with parents, educators, school administrators, invited stakeholders and senior district administrators. This latter topic has led the Commission into a previously unplanned avenue of investigation.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of education, “Briefing Note: Grade 12 FSL oral interviews 2006-2007, July 6, 2007.

<sup>4</sup>ibid

<sup>5</sup>ibid

<sup>4</sup> see Appendix J for comments on streaming

The following is a very small sample of the many feedback comments which the Commission received concerning the 'streaming' which has taken place:

Former Administrator: (segment of letter written to the Commission)

I think that most people are aware that French Immersion (FI), especially the 'early' program, is responsible for the current troubled state of the English program. This happens because, in order to make FI 'a success', conditions have been put in place and past practice has encouraged a selection process to ensure that students enrolled in FI are 'suited' to the task. This has resulted in heavily streamed classes, an imbalance in favour of FI in terms of class size and class composition issues for teachers in the English program. Any success that FI might have had (and compared to other provinces we have little to be boastful of here) comes at a huge opportunity cost to the English program. FI is nominally open to all but this is not the case. In fact, principals will tell you that some parents put their children in FI, not to learn French, but to keep them out of the larger, more challenging Core classes. In addition, once in FI it happens that students not seen to be 'performing well' are transferred to the English program – NEVER the other way.

Parents:

French Immersion is a very elite program and segregates the school system and children. Most behavioural and other challenged children are in the English (Core) stream. I can see the parents of French Immersion children do not want to let go, since their children receive far better education, due to smaller classes and less problem children but it is a very unfair system in this way and effects the system as a whole making it weak overall.[sic]

"What was the worst is the segregation here in the schools. The English stream has all the children with learning and behavioural problems."

I do not believe that students have reasonable access of FSL education in our province. FSL education has been mainstreamed for those who can perform and who do not have many learning difficulties. I feel that the FSL education at this time is somewhat elitist where only those families who [sic] are the most literate, educated or better off, get the best opportunities.

Principals:

Research supports having full heterogeneous groups of students as the standard. This allows models of strong performance in every class. Streaming caused by Early Immersion does not favour the strong group (as many parents believe) and does nothing for the lower end by loading too many challenging students together. It has caused a "two tier" system which is not effective or fair to all. Early Immersion causes a breakdown of this heterogeneous mix.

"French Immersion programs have contributed heavily to streaming of students, resulting in an overload of struggling learners."

“Most SEPs are in Core. With so many SEPs in Core there is a huge impact on the program.

Most educated parents choose French immersion. If this is the case, the pool of students who are left in the English program consists of a greater number of students with parents with less education, sometimes having fewer material resources and more educational and parenting issues to contend with. This seems to be the experience of many teachers who are left to teach in the English classes.

“When a student struggles in the FI program they are removed to English, thus putting a huge strain on resources and causing a great deal of work for teachers to get these transferred students to grade level.”

The number one major issue against the current manner in which FSL programs are delivered in the province of New Brunswick pertains to the negative impact on the system caused by the streaming of students. Even though the streaming of students is unintentional, happening because of parental choice, it occurs over and over again, providing what can only be described as a “private school” experienced in a public school setting. In fact, parents are choosing immersion, because they don’t want their child in the English classroom with the majority of discipline issues as well as the large number of students on special education plans.

“Parents will resist not having the streaming choice of early immersion and having their children exposed to the learning and behavioural challenges that are present in the English classes.”

Provincial Official:

“Parents choose immersion because it is a “better” classroom for their kids, no streaming.”

Superintendents:

“In our city it has become the right decision to put kids in immersion for the wrong reasons – streaming.”

“The Core program is not working, just look at the results. Streaming is caused by French Immersion.”

“Immersion kids are ‘streamed’, English teachers have large classes.”

“The parents have perceptions of Core classes as “ghetto classes”.”

“Immersion is “glorified streaming”, children are put in it to avoid troubled students.”

“The current situation leads to streaming – we have only 10% of our SEP students in FI programs”.

“Early Immersion creates duality in the system – which causes inequities re classroom composition, class size resources etc.”

"FI causes de facto streaming which takes place, resulting in challenging classroom compositions in the English program."

Teachers:

"There will always be students who struggle with different subjects, including Core French but I have almost 40% SEP students in my class!"

"Because all of the problem children are in the Core program, there are many fewer academic and behavioural problems in French immersion."

The following table (Table 15 ) is a copy of the Department's report concerning the distribution of children with 'exceptional needs', as those defined by needing SEPs, between the English Core and French Immersion programs. Clearly there is a shockingly large inequality in the distribution of 'exceptional' children between the English Core and French Immersion programs. This table, showing that over 93% (93.2%) of these children are in the Core program gives overwhelming credence to those reports of 'streaming' heard by the Commission.

TABLE 15 : Students with Exceptionalities by Program <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> copied from "Report on the Population of Public School Students with Exceptionalities: Anglophone Sector", New Brunswick Department of Education, Students Services Division, March 23, 2006, p.10.

Table 16 provides an overview of the distribution of exceptional children across the various grade levels. Upon inspection of the increasing numbers of exceptional children, particularly in Grades K through 2, it is evident that the delay in the initial identification process of exceptionality is the principal cause of these increases. Using Grade 2 as our example of this inequity of distribution,

Program	Frequency	Percent	Valid
English Core	13 759	93.1	93.2
French Immersion	1 002	6.8	6.8
Total	14 761	99.8	100.0
Missing	24	.2	
Total	14 785	100.0	

one could assume that there are, province-wide, approximately 70 children with exceptional needs in the Early Immersion program and 954 in the English Core program.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> premised upon "valid percentage" distributions of 93.8% and 6.2% (Table 12) X Grade 2 enrolment (1024) in Table 13.

TABLE 16 : Students with Exceptionalities Provincially by Grade <sup>a</sup>

Grade	Frequency	Percentage of Total Number of Students with Exceptionalities
K	455	3.1
1	815	5.5
2	1 024	12.6
3	1152	7.8
4	1237	8.4
5	1413	9.6
6	1340	9.1
7	1314	8.9
8	1330	9.0
9	1546	10.5
10	1301	8.8
11	1066	7.2
12	772	5.2
Unaccounted		
Total	14 785	100.0

<sup>a</sup> copied from "Report on the Population of Public School Students with Exceptionalities: Anglophone Sector", New Brunswick Department of Education, Students Services Division, March 23, 2006, p.10.

The inequity in distribution of exceptional children between French Immersion and the English Core Programs is further clarified in terms of proportions of children in the programs as presented in Table 17.

TABLE 17: 2005 Grade 2 Enrolments of Exceptional Children in French Immersion and English Core Programs

	2005	French Immersion	English Core
Total Enrolments	5,546 <sup>a</sup>	1,505 <sup>b</sup>	4,041
Exceptional Children	1,024 <sup>c</sup>	70 (4.6%)	954 (23.6%)

<sup>a</sup> "Summary Statistics: School Year 2006-2007", Policy & Planning, March 2007, Table 18, p.45

<sup>b</sup> "Summary Statistics: School Year 2006-2007", Policy & Planning, March 2007, Table 18a, p.47

<sup>c</sup> "Report on the Population of Public School Students with Exceptionalities: Anglophone Sector", New Brunswick Department of Education, Students Services Division, March 23, 2006, p.10.

With 'exceptional' children being only 4.6% of the students in the French Immersion program, but 23.6% of the children in the English Core program, one can readily appreciate the homogeneity within the classes in the FI program and the heterogeneity within the English Core classrooms. Consequently, it is but a small leap of logic to envision the effects this imbalance of distribution has upon academic outcomes, particularly in those cases where "Provincial Assessments" are conducted, comparing the various attainment levels of students within the FI and English Core programs. A case in point, would be the 2006-7 Grade 2 Provincial Literacy Assessment, comparing the French Immersion Program results with those of the English Program.

TABLE 18: 2006-7, Grade 2, Provincial Reading Assessment – French Immersion – Descriptive Statistics (Percentages)

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
readpc	1405	87	13	100	68.23	16.455	-.295	.065
Valid N (listwise)	1405							

**French Immersion Distribution of Results (%)**

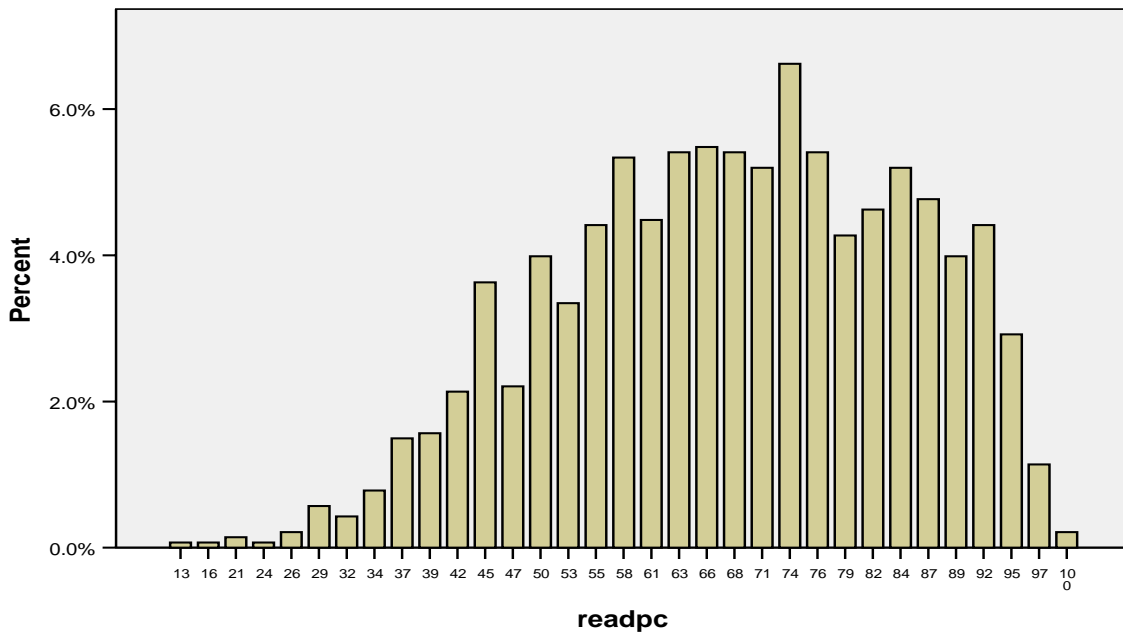
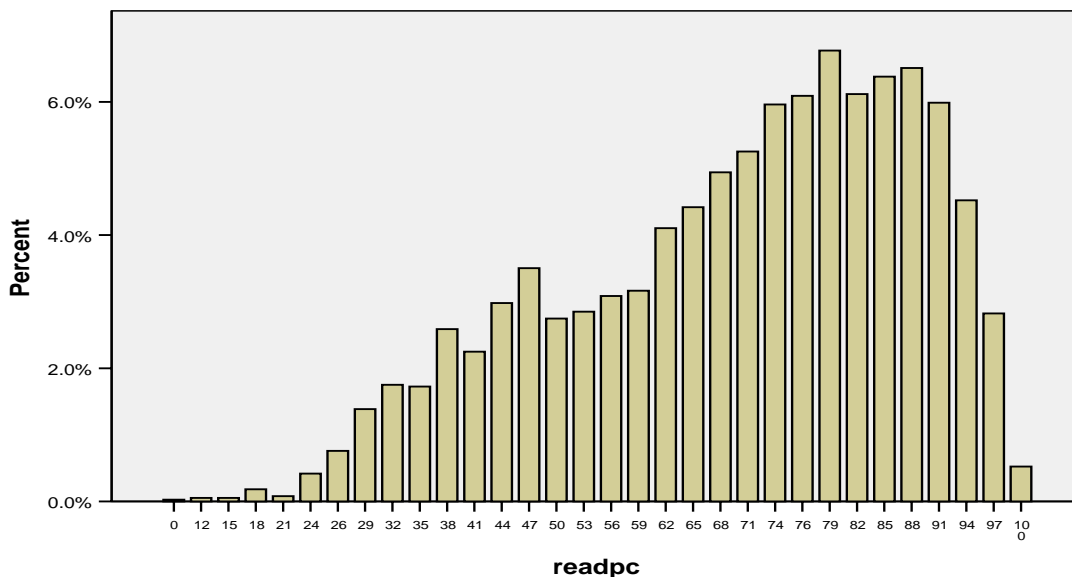


TABLE 19: 2006-7, Grade 2, Provincial Reading Assessment – English Core – Descriptive Statistics (Percentage)

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
readpc Valid N (listwise)	3825	100	0	100	69.29	.303	18.764	-.577	.040

English Core Distribution of Results (%)



Comparing Tables 18 and 19, there are a number of very important apparent issues. The average Grade 2 Provincial Reading Attainment level of the English Core students (mean = 69.29) is higher than that of the French Immersion students (mean = 68.23). The criteria by which these results have been reported by the Department of Education,<sup>1</sup> employing proportions of students of each program attaining achievement levels, has led to the misconception that the French Immersion Program has produced superior results. In point of fact, as Tables 18 and 19 clearly show, on average: i) the English Core program has

<sup>1</sup> "Of the 3930 second grade students registered in the English program, 72 % met or exceeded the appropriate achievement level in reading, an increase of 1>0% from 2006." "Of the 1407 second graders registered in the French Immersion program, 79% met or exceeded the appropriate achievement level in reading, an increase of 5% from 2006."

produced better results in terms of attainment average and ii) a greater number of students who have attained the Provincial Achievement Level!

The difference in the sizes of the negative skewness between the distributions of FI and Core students (-.295 versus -.577) presents the entire picture concerning the program differences. The distributions in Tables 15 and 16 clearly show that the two programs are distinctly different and comparing them in terms of proportions of attainment levels presents a totally inaccurate picture of the efficacy of the English Core program. The presence of exceptional children constituting 23.6% of the total population of the English Core program versus only 4.6% of those in the French Immersion program tells the entire story.

The data surrounding the 2006-7 Grade 4 Provincial Reading Assessments presents many of the same results as did the Grade 2 Reading Assessments. In order to examine the actual efficacy of these results, it is essential to place the Grade 4 distributions of exceptional children within the programs in their proper context. Table 20 provides an overview of the enrolments of exception children in both the English Core and Immersion programs. It is interesting to note that the proportion of exceptional children in the Grade 4 English program is greater than it was in the Grade 2 program (26.4% to 23.6%), while the proportion within the Immersion Program is also greater at 5.8% (compared to 4.6%).

TABLE 20: 2005 Grade 4 Enrolments of Exceptional Children in French Immersion and English Core Programs

	2005	French Immersion	English Core
Total Enrolments	5,818 <sup>a</sup>	1,457 <sup>b</sup>	4,361
Exceptional Children	1,237 <sup>c</sup>	84 (5.8%)	1153 (26.4%)

<sup>a</sup> Summary Statistics: School Year 2006-2007", Policy & Planning, March 2007, Table 18, p.45

<sup>b</sup> Summary Statistics: School Year 2006-2007", Policy & Planning, March 2007, Table 18a, p.47

<sup>c</sup> "Report on the Population of Public School Students with Exceptionalities: Anglophone Sector", New Brunswick Department of Education, Students Services Division, March 23, 2006, p.10.

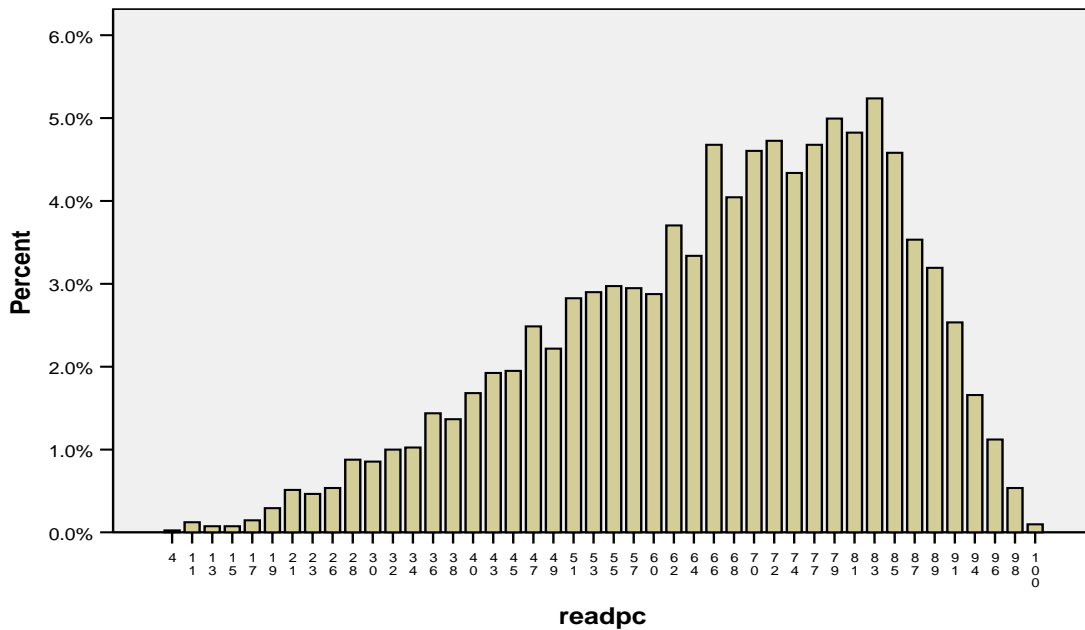
The increase in the proportion of exceptional children between Grades 2 and 4 is, no doubt, due to the fact that a greater number of children have been assessed and thus identified as 'exceptional'. Concomitant with the increased numbers of identified children is the likelihood that greater numbers of children are experiencing academic difficulty as they progress through the various grade levels. Thus, more children will evidence learning difficulties in Grade 4 than in Grade 2, and this will be manifested in their academic performance



TABLE 21: 2006-7, Grade 4 Provincial Reading Assessment - English Core  
Descriptive Statistics (Percentage)

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Readpc	4104	96	4	100	66.61	.279	17.880	-.575	.038
Valid N (listwise)	4104								

English Core Distribution of Results (%)

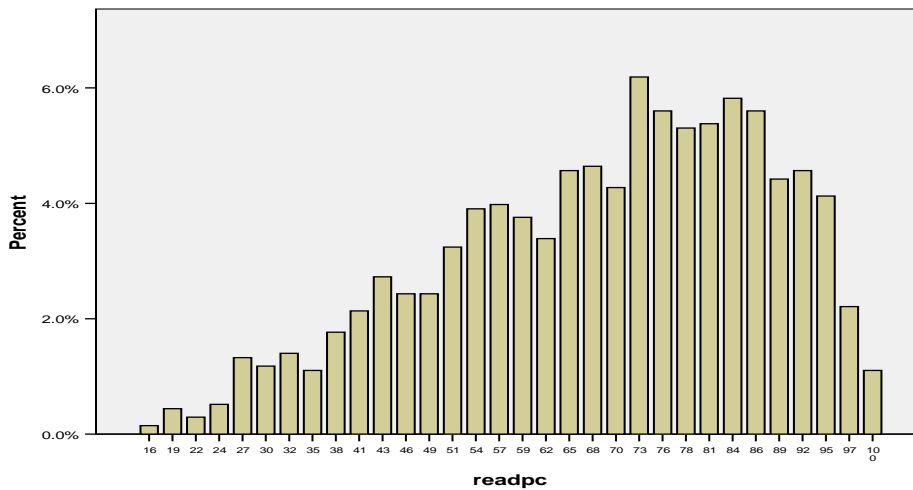


A comparison of averages resulting from the assessment results indicates that the English Core students' average is less than that of the French Immersion program students' (mean = 66.61 and 68.63). This latter difference is a direct result of the increase in the numbers of exceptional children in the English Core program between Grades 2 and 4, along with the theory that the learning difficulties of these children are exacerbated with the increasingly difficult curricula content .

Table 22: 2006-7, Grade 4 Provincial Reading Assessment - French Immersion - Descriptive Statistics (Percentages)

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
readpc	1357	84	16	100	68.63	.511	18.824	354.362	-.498	.066
Valid N (listwise)	1357									

1. French Immersion Distribution of Results(%)



Despite the differences in average Literary Assessment results which have been produced in Grade 4, the students in the English Core program produced a superior proportion of grades which “met or exceeded the appropriate achievement level in reading”.<sup>1</sup> An examination of the relative similarity of sizes of skewness between the two distributions of students within the programs (-.575 and -.498) suggests that the French Immersion program’s students have become a much more heterogeneous population between Grades 2 and 4 while, at the same time, there has been virtually no difference within the English population (-.577 and -.575). This would explain why the French Immersion Program’s students fared relatively less well on the Grade 4 assessment – “Of the 1365 fourth graders

<sup>1</sup> “Of the 4267 fourth graders registered in the English program, 69.5% met or exceeded the appropriate achievement level in reading...”. – “Briefing Note: Assessment Results”, Department of Education, 2007

registered in the French Immersion program, 66.8% met or exceeded the appropriate achievement level in reading, an increase of 4.1% from 2006.”<sup>1</sup>

During the 2006-7 academic term, the Grade 5 Provincial Mathematics Assessment Test was administered to both English Core and French Immersion students. In all, 5,704 students wrote these tests. Tables 23 and 24 present the descriptive statistics relating to the English Core and the French Immersion program students’ results.

A review of the data in Tables 23 and 24 points out that there is a difference between the average marks obtained by the Core and Immersion students (mean = 59.33 and mean = 64.47), with the French Immersion program having the higher average grade. It is hardly surprising that the French Immersion program average is higher, as the English Core program contains 1,294 exceptional students (27.97% of all Core students) to only 85 (6.3%) in the French Immersion program.

Table 23: 2006-7, Grade 5, Mathematics Provincial Assessment - English Core  
**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Math Total Core	4312	95.00	5.00	100.00	59.33	20.370	-.111	.037
Valid N (listwise)	4312							

TABLE 24: 2006-7, Grade 5, Mathematics Provincial Assessment - French Immersion  
**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Math Total Immersion	1392	88.00	12.00	100.00	64.47	19.337	-.217	.066
Valid N (listwise)	1392							

Further examination of Tables 23 and 24 reveals a most interesting fact, the amount of skew in the distribution of the French Immersion data, particularly when compared with that of the English Core program, containing such a relatively much greater proportion of exceptional students (27.97 of English Core and 6.3% of French Immersion students). One would assume a significantly greater level of homogeneity within the French Immersion program’s grades. The data provided in Table 25 underlines the fact that there is a distinct lack of homogeneity of variance between the two programs’ distributions, as indicated

<sup>1</sup> “Briefing Note: Assessment Results”, Department of Education, 2007

by the Levene's Test ( $F = 7.529$ ;  $p = .006$ ). Because of the lack of homogeneity of distributions between the two data sets, the corrected data set from a test of differences of means (ANOVA) is used to indicate that there is a significant difference between these two distributions.

TABLE 25: 2006-7 Grade 5 Mathematics - Provincial Assessment - English Core and French Immersion  
**Univariate Analysis of Variance**

program	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
English Core	59.33	20.370	4312
French Immersion	64.47	19.337	1392
Total	60.58	20.242	5704

**Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances(a)**

Dependent Variable: allmath

F	df1	df2	Sig.
7.529	1	5702	.006

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: allmath

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	27816.137 (a)	1	27816.137	68.692	.000	.012
Intercept	1.613E7	1	1.613E7	39824.406	.000	.875
program	27816.137	1	27816.137	68.692	.000	.012
Error	2308954.443	5702	404.938			
Total	2.327E7	5704				
Corrected Total	2336770.589	5703				

a R Squared = .012 (Adjusted R Squared = .012)

In an attempt to discover wherein the distributions of grades difference(s) between the two programs lie, two simple arithmetic analysis were carried out. The first analysis, presented in Table 26, was a simple examination to compare the proportionate distributions of grades over 50%. Due to the fact that, using the entire data sets as the basis for proportionate distributions was not providing any more information than the comparisons of means (comparing averages), the data was re-examined (Table 27) using only the grades above 50%. This procedure, although not perfect, was carried out in an attempt to compensate for those 1,244 exceptional children in the data base (who were not otherwise identified). Using the portion of each program population which scored above 50% as the basis for comparison purposes, it is evident that despite there being a difference between the English Core Results and those of the French Immersion

program, this relatively small difference is “underwhelming” in light of the fact that nearly 28% (27.97%) of the Core students are children with special needs.

TABLE 26: Total Percentage Distribution of Grades in 2006-7  
Grade 5 Mathematics Provincial Assessment<sup>a</sup>

	Core English(n=4,312)	French Immersion(n=1,392)
0 – 49	34.4%	25.4%
50 – 59	15.0%	14.5%
60 – 69	15.4%	16.1%
70 – 79	15.3%	18.3%
80 – 89	13.8%	15.7%
90 – 100	6.1%	10.0%

<sup>a</sup> Department of Education data file

TABLE 27: Distribution of Grades 50% and Over in 2006-7  
Grade 5 Mathematics Provincial Assessment.

	Core English (n=2,829)	French Immersion (n=1,039)
50 – 59	22.8%	19.4%
60 – 69	23.5%	21.7%
70 – 71	17.4%	24.4%
80 – 89	27.0%	21.1%
90 – 100	9.3%	13.4 %

And finally, when the grades for the two programs are analyzed according to the classifications ascribed to grade-performance,<sup>1</sup> by combining the “Strong Achievement” and “Appropriate Achievement” categories, 67% of the English Core program students and 76% of the French Immersion students fell into the combined category. This is despite the fact that 27.97% of the English Core program is made up of students with special needs while they constitute only 6.3% of the French Immersion program. The averages for these two categories, for each of the programs, are presented in Table 28.

Table 28: Average Grades for English Core and French Immersion Programs on the 2006 - 07, Grade 5 Mathematics Proficiency Assessments

	English Core Program	French Immersion program
Strong performance	84.09% (n =1207)	84.58% (n =521)
Appropriate performance	61.55 % (n =1683)	61.41% (n =538)

<sup>1</sup> SP = Strong Performance, AP = Appropriate Performance, ED = Experiencing Difficulty

The 2006-7, Grade 8 Mathematics Proficiency Assessment results provide a further insight into the effect of “streaming” within our French Second Language programs. Applying the Department of Education’s data supplied concerning the distributions of exceptional children, <sup>1</sup> there would be approximately 1,240 exceptional children in the English Core program, 49 in Early Immersion and 41 in Late Immersion.

TABLE 29: 2006-7, Grade 8 Mathematics Provincial Assessment - English Core, Early French Immersion and Late French Immersion - Oneway ANOVA

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
English	3814	53.72	20.723	.336	53.06	54.38	2	100
Early FI	1309	64.92	17.060	.472	64.00	65.85	14	96
Late FI	949	68.23	16.605	.539	67.18	69.29	18	98
Total	6072	58.40	20.335	.261	57.89	58.92	2	100

**ANOVA**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	230884.576	2	115442.288	307.362	.000
Within Groups	2279457.831	6069	375.590		
Total	23222323.000	6072			

The results of the Grade 8 Mathematics proficiency Assessment (Table 29) indicates that there are significant differences ( $p \leq 0.000$ ) among the three means of the French Second Language programs. Specifically, as described in Table 29, Early Immersion ( $n = 1309$ ) and Late Immersion ( $n = 949$ ) students scored, on average (EI = 64.92 and LI = 68.23) significantly higher ( $p \leq 0.000$ ) than did the English Core students (mean = 53.72). The pair-wise analysis of means provided in Table 30 also indicates that Late French immersion students, on average, did better than Early Immersion students. There was a statistical significant difference between these two means ( $p = .000$ ).

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<sup>1</sup> “Report on the Population of Public School Students with Exceptionalities: Anglophone Sector”, New Brunswick Department of Education, Students Services Division, March 23, 2006, p.10.

TABLE 30: Multiple Comparisons (Scheffé) Between English Core, Early Immersion and Late Immersion Results on the 2006-7 Grade 8 Provincial Assessment

(I) Program	(J) Program	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Upper Bound	Lower Bound
English	Early FI	-11.20(*)	.621	.000	-12.72	-9.68
	Late FI	-14.51(*)	.703	.000	-16.23	-12.79
Early FI	English	11.20(*)	.621	.000	9.68	12.72
	Late FI	-3.31(*)	.826	.000	-5.33	-1.29
Late FI	English	14.51(*)	.703	.000	12.79	16.23
	Early FI	3.31(*)	.826	.000	1.29	5.33

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Unfortunately, the data base of the Department of Education does not provide a means by which those children on SEPs can be tracked in terms of their entrance and exiting from immersion programs. Therefore, it can only be assumed that those children with special needs who persist in the Early and Late French Immersion programs are those who one would consider to be “higher functioning”.

Olson and Burns note that French Immersion is better understood “*functionally as a process of class identification*” (p.7). These authors explain that French Immersion children are elite not only in terms of their socio-economic background, but also in terms of the selection that happens when “problem” and “language difficulty” children are “exiled” from the Immersion classes: “the effect, if not the intent, has been to generate an elite cohort”.<sup>1</sup>

Judging from the data presented within this section of the Commission’s report, Olson and Burn’s statement of elitism has been most prophetic in terms of the New Brunswick experience in French immersion.

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<sup>1</sup> Mannavarayan, Jeanne-Marie, “The French Immersion Debate: French for All or All for French”, Detselig Ltd, Calgary, AL, 2002, p.129.

## Intensive French<sup>1</sup>

Intensive French (IF) may be defined as an enrichment<sup>1</sup> of the Core French program in grades 5 or 6, in which FSL is offered intensively (approximately 70% of the school day) in a concentrated period of time (five months). During the remaining five months, students follow their regular curriculum in a compacted format (Netten and Germain, 2004b).<sup>2</sup>

### a) Quantitative Review

The Commission has carefully reviewed the report<sup>1</sup> on the Intensive French pilot project carried out between 2002 and 2006, authored by Netten and Germain, and submitted to the Minister of Education in January, 2007. This pilot study was carried out in 64 classrooms and included approximately 1400 students. The sample of students used for evaluation purposes has been drawn from 36 classes containing a total of approximately 800 students. In addition, the Commissioners have obtained the raw data resulting from the pilot projects and have analyzed these data in order to gain further insights into several additional areas of interest.

To begin with, a test for statistical difference was run between the overall pre-test and post-test Pilot data for the years 2002 through 2006. Table 31 presents this summary of the pilot phase of the Intensive French program. From this table, one can see that the averages increased from the pre-test of 11.69 to the post-test of 14.07, a significant difference ( $p = .000$ ).

TABLE 31: Intensive French Pilot Programs 2002-2006<sup>a</sup> Paired t-Test of Oral Pre-Test and Post-Test Results  
**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Oral Pre-test	11.69	696	1.036	.039
	Oral Post-test	14.07	696	1.513	.057

### Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed) <sup>a1</sup>
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			

<sup>1</sup> see Appendix L for hours of instruction, cost analysis and lists of trained teachers for Intensive French

<sup>2</sup> Alina MacFarlane, An Examination of Intensive French: A pedagogical Strategy for the Improvement of French as a Second language Outcomes in Canada, April 2005,p,6.



					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Oral Pre- test - Oral Post-test	-2.375	1.337	.051	-2.475	-2.275	-46.849	695	.000

<sup>a</sup>  $p \leq 0.05$     <sup>b</sup> 2006-7 data from District #2 only

For the purposes of clarifying the pilot program’s results, Netten and Germain established a series of oral proficiency levels, based upon those nominal categories being currently used by the New Brunswick Department of Education. They sub-divided four of the Department’s categories into eight categories in order to treat the resulting data as ordinal data , thus allowing them to employ parametric statistical methods in their analysis. The eight new categories they used are in Table 32.

TABLE 32: Rating Scale and Descriptors Developed by Netten and Germain to Assess Intensive French Results<sup>1</sup>

10 = unrateable (U);    11 = novice low (NL)    12 = novice medium (NM)    13 = novice high (NH)  
14 = basic low (BL)    15 = basic medium (BM)    16 = basic high (BH)    17 = intermediate (INT)  
15 = Intermediate High (I NT)

New Brunswick Middle School Scale<sup>2</sup>

<b>NOVICE</b>		Essentially, no ability to communicate
<b>Low</b>	11	<i>Isolated words or memorized expressions. Essentially, no ability to communicate.</i>
<b>Med</b>	12	<i>Phrases, not sentences. Frequent long pauses. Ability to identify objects (colors, clothing, numbers...). Some ability to put 2 to 3 words together (incorrect phrases). (ex.: avoir soeur)</i>
<b>High</b>	13	<i>Phrases and short memorized sentences. Ability to create longer phrases (ex.: manger le restaurant hier)</i>
<b>BASIC</b>		Ability to communicate with some spontaneity
<b>Low</b>	14	<i>Ability to use simple sentences (Subject + V + Complement). Can maintain very simple conversation with some spontaneity.</i>
<b>Mid</b>	15	<i>Some concept of 'past time'. Can maintain simple conversation about autobiographical details, leisure-time activities, daily schedule, etc.</i>

<sup>1</sup> Netten, Jean and Claude Germain, "Interim Report on Results of the Evaluation of oral and Written Production", January 2007

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

Consequently, the data presented in Table 33 indicate that the average Grade 5 student, in a period of 5 months, advanced from a pre-test level of Novice Low (11.69) to a Post-Test level of Basic Low (14.07). According to the descriptors used during this pilot period, these 696 students, on average, advanced from “Isolated words or memorized expression. Essentially no ability to communicate” to “Ability to use simple sentences (Subject + Verb + Complement). Can maintain very simple conversation with some spontaneity).

It is essential to bear in mind that all of these students, prior to their pre-test, had had four years of English Core French yet tested at the Novice Low level. Also, over 40% of the grade 12 English Core students who were tested for their Oral Proficiency during 2006-7 scored at the level of Basic or lower.

In an attempt to track the progression of results through the 5 years of the pilot period, the data contained in Table 33 was collected. Each of the five years of the project produced statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) differences between the pre-test and post-test means.

TABLE 33: Paired t-Tests of Oral Pre and Post – Test Results for Years 2002 Through 2006 .

	Pre-Test	Post-Test	n	t	Significance (2 tailed) <sup>a</sup>
2002-03	11.50	12.46	98	-10.466	.000
2003-04	11.58	14.33	114	-20.788	.000
2004-05	11.91	14.28	178	-26.174	.000
2005-06	11.70	14.41	225	-34.119	.000
2006-07 <sup>b</sup>	11.59	14.23	81	-19.694	.000

<sup>a</sup>  $p \leq 0.05$

<sup>b</sup> data from District #2 only

According to the evaluation report authored by Netten and Germain the lack of progress during the first year was due, at least in part, to a lack of appropriate curriculum, insufficient classroom resources and activities, and lack of adherence to the main principles of the program; classroom time.<sup>1</sup>

The Commissioners had some concerns regarding the effect of the teaching or instructional variability upon program results and the amount of classroom time devoted to Intensive French. The amount of time stipulated for the grade 5 level of this program is a minimum of 270 required hours followed by (or preceding the intensive period) an additional 45 hours. Unfortunately, the data supplied by the authors of this program, could not supply the Commissioners with the necessary information by which they could calculate out the effect of variance

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<sup>1</sup> Netten, Jean and Claude Germain, “Interim Report on Results of the Evaluation of oral and Written Production”, January 2007

in the numbers of class hours from the data realized within each classroom. According to the report submitted to the Department of Education<sup>1</sup>, this variance had little appreciable effect upon the over-all gains on the post-test results.

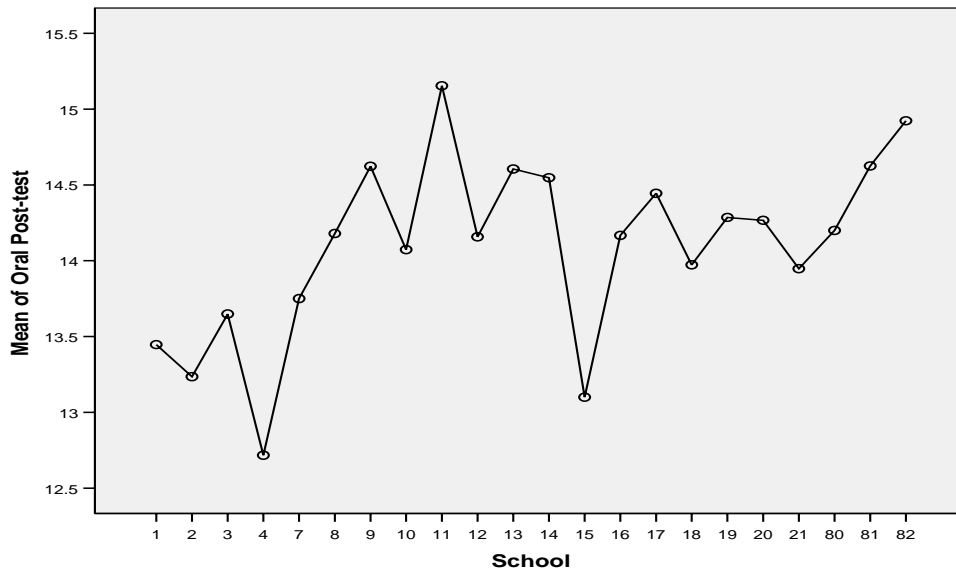
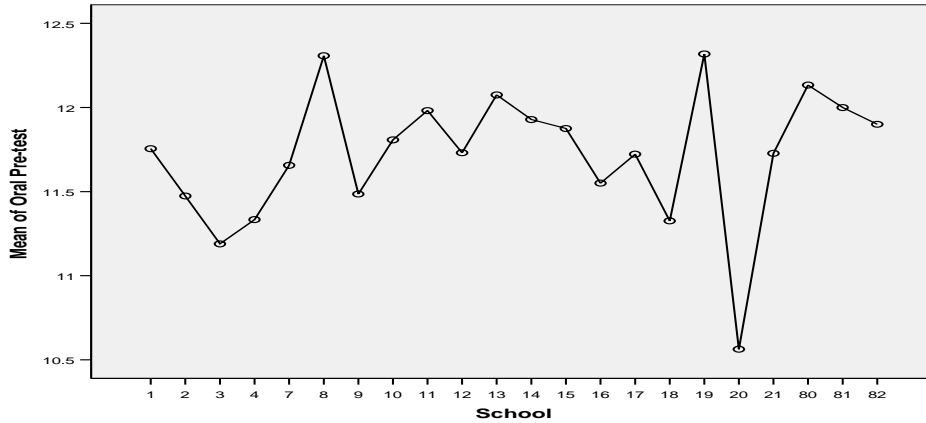
In order to ascertain the amount of variability in results attributable to teaching competence and/or training, the most effective means the Commissioners could realize this goal was by means of comparative analysis of the individual classrooms used throughout the study. In short, as there was no data available relating to the individual teachers' training, we compared all of the classes taught with each teacher to the entire group of classes in the pilot, then to each class in the pilot sample.

Table 34 provides a series of data relating to the analysis of individual classrooms. First of all, there is a significant difference between the 23 individual, different classrooms used within the pilot study on the Oral pre-test ( $p \leq 0.000$ ) and also on the Oral post-test ( $p \leq 0.000$ ).

TABLE 34: Oneway ANOVA and Graphic of All Intensive French Pilot Data by School

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Oral Pre-test	Between Groups	89.753	21	4.274	4.452	.000
	Within Groups	699.808	729	.960		
	Total	789.561	750			
Oral Post-test	Between Groups	281.288	21	13.395	6.759	.000
	Within Groups	1492.214	753	1.982		
	Total	1773.502	774			

### Intensive French Means Plots of Oral Pre-Tests and Post-Tests



The graphic illustrations of the pre and post test average scores from each classroom indicate some relatively large variability. Within the pre-test averages, it's important to note the extreme range of averages (#20 McAdam to #8 Vincent Massey and #19 Birchmount), particularly in light of their post-test results where # 20 ended the pilot period above average and #s 8 and 19 ended slightly above average. For comparison purposes, school number 4 (Hillsborough) ended significantly ( $p < .05$ ) below #s 9 (Vincent Massey Elementary) , 11 (Blackville, 13 (Chipman) and 14 (Lower Lincoln). At the other end, school #11 (Blackville) scored significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) on the post-test than #s 2 (Hillsborough and 1 (Donald Fraser).

The bottom line in the review of the quantitative data is that:

- i) the pre-test class average is a poor predictor of the post-test scores,
- ii) there is a great deal more homogeneity within the post-test scores than within the pre-test scores and

- iii) there are in-class issues other than language “readiness” affecting post-test scores but, and this is important,
- iv) the Intensive French program produces exceptional results!

### Qualitative Review<sup>1</sup>

From the written and oral submissions and the many meetings with stake-holders, the Commission has received a great many very positive recommendations and general comments concerning the Intensive French program. In fact, without exception, every comment received has been positive. The following is an attempt to present a balanced sample of the types of comments and the representative groups who have provided their views of this program.

#### FSL Learning Specialist:

This is a program that follows the most current research and methods of second language acquisition. Students experience success and are motivated to continue their journey of learning French whether it is in French Immersion or in Enhanced Core French the following years. For those who chose to enter Late Immersion, they stand a better chance of experiencing success in their study subjects.

-“Absolutely! Start Immersion with IF. Teachers find it is helpful for them to take another leap.”

- “After a five month Intensive French intervention, grade 5 students are able to communicate as well as regular Core French students in grade 9 or 10 (and sometimes grade 11)”.

#### Superintendents:

-“I cannot say anything positive about what we have been doing for years other than to say that Intensive French brings new life to the program.”

-“Our experience with this program has been extremely positive. From our observations the oral French performance of our students is remarkable. The level of engagement is impressive, and this has caused our teachers to remark that they believe it is an effective program.”

-“Kids need a good footing in one language in grades K through 3. Too many kids are having trouble in English. Introduce the second language with it in grade 4 or 5.

-“Great results! The challenge will be to maintain this after grade 5.”

-“Intensive French is the only suggestion I can make for improving our programs.”

#### District Education Council:

-“Intensive French is an excellent program for learning a second language. The program needs an immersion behind it for the students.”

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix M: synthesis of comments on Intensive French

### FSL Teachers:

- "Intensive French is seen as a very successful program. It is a good lead-in to Late Immersion."
- "IF is a fabulous program."
- "Teachers in our school are already excited to be trained for Intensive French."
- "Use Intensive French as a jumpstart for Core and Immersion."

I am currently teaching the Intensive French all day long to one grade 5 class. I feel this is an extremely valuable program. I have seen great results...because it is Intensive in time." Intensive French is a great program that is accessible for all learners. This program should be introduced as a staple to the core French curriculum so that all students have this learning opportunity and so that subsequent Core French classes can be adjusted to teach all students at a higher level of proficiency. Currently, the implementation is inconsistent and therefore the follow-up in middle school is sporadic and ineffective. Incorporate Intensive French in grade 4 or 5, with follow-up through middle school and perhaps another intensive term later on (grade 7 or 8).

- "I am excited about the Intensive core pilot program. It promotes literacy and communication in a second language. It is a program that could be offered in all schools and to all students.

### New Brunswick Teachers' Association (1,727 responses):

"IF has received solid support in the discussion groups and in the anecdotal section of the survey..".

27% "Intensive French should be implemented/available and added to the current FSL options"

9% "Intensive French should be implemented/available but Core should be eliminated"

19% IF should be implemented/available but there should be no Immersion option prior to grade 4/5

21% "I don't have an opinion/ don't know"

### Principals:

- "Intensive French should be start of Core and Immersion."
- "...get rid of early Core and start with Intensive French."

NB really impressed me when they sought out the Intensive French program – it seems up to date with the latest research on how children best learn a second language, it offers a viable method for small rural schools where population does not warrant English and French immersion and are surprised to learn that in this environment they actually can understand and speak French. Before this program was introduced to our school, I never heard students speaking French in

the hall, on the playground, to their French teacher outside of class. Now I hear it all the time. I am very happy with the new program (Intensive French).

- " I am very happy with the new program (Intensive French). "

Parents:

- "The Intensive program is fantastic and I can't wait until my children begin it."
- "I do think that a late immersion, or even better, Intensive French, gives them better access to the French second language program, at their choice."
- "Intensive French instruction: wonderful program, should continue in middle school!!!"
- "Overall, the only concern I have with the Intensive French program is with the grade 4/5 split classes. I would like to know what the intentions are for the 2008/09 school year. After my child has gone through the Intensive French program in grade 4, not grade 5, will she be repeating? I want to see something done about the split classes in the grade 4/5's. What is the future for grade 4 students that have already been through Intensive French once? What happens in grade 5? This is my biggest concern."
- "I feel that the Intensive grade 5 program will strengthen the core program but at the same time this grade 5 program should not be mandatory. Choice is important and if a number of students are forced to take this program who do not want to be there, it will be a detriment to those who are excited to be there."
- "Currently the Intensive core French program is voluntary and is proving to be successful...but there are two major factors which must be considered before any changes are made. Those two factors include: 1) Many of these children volunteered (along with the support of their parents/guardians) for the program. Do you think children who are struggling or have disabilities are the children who volunteered? I believe that many parents would be supportive of such a program but if the suggested changes take place and this is no longer voluntary, parents may not be so agreeable 2) These children are coming into the program with 4 years of background. It is much more likely to be successful when you have some prior knowledge of the subject matter! I strongly believe that removal of core French from grades 1-4 is a terrible mistake that must be re-thought."
- "They are piloting a French language program to start the students at the grade 5 level and as I understand they would be taught in French for half the term. We are a bilingual province and I agree that our children should have a basic knowledge and understanding of the French language, but I don't know if I

agree with the province implementing a program that will be mandatory for children to participate beginning in grade 5. I would like to have the French language program continue being a choice for all students who wish to participate at the early or late immersion level. "

Careful examination of the many anecdotal reports of Intensive French, which were submitted to the Commission by all groups of stakeholders, conveyed several very clear messages.

1. Those who are closely associated with the program (mainly teachers, principals and administrative staff) are very positive and supportive of continuing and broadening it in our schools.
2. The majority of parents whose children have experienced this program are very enthusiastically supportive of it.
3. There are parents, including a few teachers, who are opposed to this program as it is viewed by them as "forcing French" upon their children. In the main, these individuals have not had children in this program but nonetheless are in opposition to its becoming a required part of the curriculum without them having their input.
4. A few, not many, parents and teachers have taken umbrage with the piloting of Intensive French as they feel that the children were hand-picked and due to the fact that they had previously been in the English Core program, the results were an inflated indication of the programs potential.
5. Many of the education professionals and parents are anxious concerning what will be presented to their children following the Grade 5 introduction of Intensive French  
but
6. The majority of parents and teachers (almost all who have had direct contact with Intensive French) have been very effusive in their positive support and endorsement.

As this program has moved from the pilot stage into being a program which is now perceived as a part of the suite of FSL offerings, a major challenge lies ahead to dispel many of the negative rumours and hearsay relating to misconceptions of its value and role(s). On the whole, the feed-back which the Commission has received concerning this program has been very positive.



## Part Four: Financial Evaluation

### 1. Current Program Costs

The following, according to the latest financial figures provided from the Finance and Services Department<sup>1</sup>, are the current per student estimates of French Second Language costs, based upon teacher-related costs for the 2006 – 2007 academic year<sup>2</sup>. It is important to note that the information is self-reported FTEs and the cost per student (2007 dollars) is not a fixed variable.

#### Core French:

Core program (including Core French = \$4,087)

Basic cost of student = \$4,087 - \$193 (cost of Core Instruction) = \$3,894.

Basic per student cost x 12 years (\$3,894 x 12) = \$46,728.

plus

Incremental<sup>3</sup> cost of Core program x 12 years (\$193. x 12) = \$2,316.

Total cost for a student in the Core program for 12 years = \$49,044

#### Early French Immersion:

Basic per student cost x 12 years (\$3,894 x 12) = \$46,728.

plus

Incremental cost of French Immersion program x 12 years (\$356. x 12) = \$4,272.

Total cost for a student in the Early French Immersion program for 12 years = \$51,000.

Total annual program incremental cost (based upon 15,154 students x \$356) = \$5,394,824.

#### Late French Immersion:

Basic per student cost x 12 years (\$3,894. x 12) = \$46,728.

plus

5 years of Core French from grades 1 through 5 (\$193. x 5) = \$965.

plus

Incremental cost of French Immersion program x 7 years (\$347 x 7) = \$2,429.

Per student Incremental cost in the Late French Immersion program for 12 years (5 years of Core program plus 7 years of Late Immersion) = \$3,394.

Total cost per student for 12 years in program = \$50,122.

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<sup>1</sup> see Appendix N: (1) Finance Department Correspondence and FTE Cost Calculations dated January 23,2008 and pricing of English vs. FSL Resources

<sup>2</sup> DM1341 and D14

<sup>3</sup> "incremental cost" refers to the \$193 investment in the Core program plus the investment costs associated with the Early and Late immersion programs.

Total incremental cost of program based upon 2006–7 enrolment ( 6,131 x \$347) +[(1020 x 5) x \$193) = \$3,166,936.

## 2. Costs Applied to Student Persistence:

### Core French Program:

Due to the inability to track individual students within the existing data base, coupled with the number of students who have left the immersion programs at various points, it is impossible to establish a longitudinal picture of the actual cost of a specific cohort as it progresses through the Grades 1 through 12 Core program.

By simple arithmetic calculation, using the 53,339 2006 - 2007 students within the Core program at an incremental cost of \$193 per student, cost of the Core program was \$10,294,427. Based upon the attainment figures for the Core program (scheduled in Table 5), 189 reached Grade 12 and were evaluated, at the per student cost of \$54,467.88 and only 28 or .689 percent of the 4063 students who began the Core program in 1995 attained the Provincial goal of Intermediate<sup>1</sup> oral proficiency. As a function of 2007 dollars, this translates into a per student cost of \$367,358.11

### Early French Immersion Program:

Tables 35 and 37 were developed using 2006 – 2007 student enrolment data. The total number of Early Immersion students enrolled during the 2006 – 2007 academic year was 15,154. At an incremental cost of \$356. per student per year (2007 – 2008 dollars), the total annual cost of this program is \$5,394,824.

During the 2006 – 2007 school year, 554 Early Immersion program students presented themselves for assessment, of whom 234 achieved the program goal of Advanced or above. In summary, of the 1,469 Grade 1 students enrolled into Early French Immersion in September of 1995 , (detailed in Table 37) only 612 persisted to Grade 12, and of that number, 554 presented themselves for assessment and 234 achieved the oral proficiency goal of Advanced<sup>2</sup> or above. Calculating the persistence/attrition rates of the 1995 Early Immersion cohort, and converting it into 2007 – 2008 dollars, as shown in Table 37, it cost

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<sup>1</sup> Policy Statement 309

<sup>2</sup> ibid

over \$4 ½ million (\$4,603,080. in incremental dollars) for 612 students to reach Grade 12, or to bring those 554 students to assessment of whom only 234 achieved oral proficiency, which resulted in a cost of \$19,671.28 (incremental dollars) for each student who attained the goal of Advanced or higher.

Table 35: French Immersion Enrolments by Program for Grades 1 through 8<sup>1</sup>.

Grade	Early Immersion	Late Immersion	Total
1	1,646	-	1,646
2	1,450	-	1,450
3	1,390	-	1,390
4	1,391	-	1,391
5	1,401	-	1,401
6	1,369	1,020	2,389
7	1,333	973	2,306
8	<u>1,328</u>	<u>969</u>	<u>2,297</u>
Total French Immersion	11,308	2,962	14,270

Table 36: French Second language Enrolments<sup>2</sup> by Program for Grades 9 through 12.

Grade	Early Immersion	Late Immersion	Total
9	1257	857	2,114
10	1131	806	1,937
11	845	795	1,640
12	<u>613</u>	<u>711</u>	<u>1,324</u>
Total French Immersion	3,846	3,169	7,015

Table 37: Early Immersion Incremental Costs for 2007 Graduates, Grades 1 – 12, for the Years 1995 to 2007 in 2007 dollars

Grade	Enrollment <sup>2</sup>	x \$356.	Grade	Enrollment	x \$356
1	1469 <sup>4</sup>	\$522,964	7	1045	\$372,020
2	1350	\$480,600	8	1036	\$368,816
3	1261	\$448,916	9	1004	\$357,424
4	1226	\$436,456	10	973	\$346,388
	1132	\$402,992	11	740	\$263,440
6	1081	\$384,836	12	613	\$218,228

<sup>1</sup> Policy and Planning, Department of Education, October 1, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Policy and Planning, Department of Education, October 1, 2007

<sup>3</sup> Policy and Planning, Department of Education, 2000 - 2007

<sup>4</sup> estimated

### Late French Immersion Program

As the Late French Immersion program has traditionally commenced at the Grade 6 level, these students have completed five years of the Core program prior to entry, followed by seven years of French immersion. Based upon the 2006 – 2007 enrolment data, and using the 2007 dollar figures, there were 6131 students in the program which, when translated into dollars, totaled \$3,111,757. incremental dollars [\$2,127,457 for seven years of French immersion + **\$984,300. (1,020 x \$193. x 5) for five years of Core French** = \$3,111,757.]. Of the 712 Late Immersion Program students who persisted until grade 12, 602 presented themselves for oral proficiency evaluation and 275 attained the Intermediate Plus goal.

In summary, 17.06% of the Late Immersion students who began their program, completed it by attaining the oral proficiency goal set by the Department of Education at a per student cost of \$11,315.48.

Table 38: Comparative Incremental<sup>1</sup> Cost Summary of Annual French Second Language Programs using 2006 – 2007 Enrollment Data and 2007 - 2008 Dollars.

Program	Percentage of Total Students	Incremental Cost Per Student	Total 2006 -2007 Incremental Cost	Cost Per Goal Attainment <sup>a</sup>
Core	73.3%	\$193.	\$10,294,427.	\$367,358.11
Early Immersion	19.0%	\$356.	\$5,394,824.	\$19,671.28 <sup>b</sup>
Late Immersion	7.7%	\$347.	\$3,111,757. <sup>c</sup>	\$11,315.48
Total	100%		\$18,801,008.	

<sup>a</sup> total incremental cost of program (grades 1 through 12) for 1 year, divided by number of students reaching goal

<sup>b</sup> \$19,671.28 based upon Sept. 1995 – June 2007 (see Table 37) actual registrations

<sup>c</sup> includes five years of Core French prior to Late Immersion program

The total incremental cost for the 2006-2007 French Second Language programs in the Anglophone schools of New Brunswick (in 2007-2008 dollars) was nearly 19 million dollars (\$18,801,008.).

Early French Immersion, with 19% of the students in French Second Language programs, costs over 28.5% (28.69 %) of the total FSL budget. On the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> "incremental cost" refers to the \$193 investment in the Core program plus the investment costs associated with the Early and Late immersion programs.

the Core program, with over 73% of the students in FSL, costs 54.75 % of the total FSL budget. The cost of the Late French Immersion program, with 7.7% of the FSL students, constitutes 16.55 %<sup>1</sup> of the annual FSL budget.

As a footnote, the cost of FSL texts, when compared to their English language equivalents are, on average 33.07% higher.

## **Part Five: Recommendations**

### **Recommendation #1:**

That all French Second Language programming for Anglophone New Brunswick children begins at Grade 5 with Intensive French.

#### **Recommendation #1a**

that all teachers of Intensive French receive appropriate training before placement in IF classrooms.

#### **Recommendation #1b**

that the Grade 5 teachers who are to receive Intensive French training must be reimbursed for their time and the costs associated with related training be absorbed by the Department of Education.

#### **Recommendation #1c**

that all Grade 5 classes in Intensive French have an absolute minimum of 270 hours in French instruction. Following, or sometimes preceding the intensive period, another 45 hours of instruction during the intensive year, making a total of 315 hours in French during the academic year.

#### **Recommendation #1d**

that principals receive in-service preparation in the structural fundamental components of Intensive French in order that they can provide supervision and assistance.

#### **Recommendation #1e**

that Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – Education Act) be amended to reflect the addition of the compulsory aspects of the Intensive French program.

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<sup>1</sup> The Late French Immersion costs include 5 years of Core French program costing \$984,300

**Recommendation #2:**

That Late Immersion, beginning in Grade 6, be adopted as the sole French Immersion program for Anglophone students in New Brunswick.

**Recommendation #2a**

that after Grade 10, students who have chosen to study through Late Immersion, will not be required to study their Science and Mathematics courses in French and that schools shall have the option of offering Science and Mathematics courses for Late Immersion students in either French or English between grades 6 through 10.

**Recommendation #2b**

that, except under exceptional circumstances, all students who choose to enrol in the French Immersion program shall continue their program through Grade 12.

**Recommendation #2c**

that all students, upon reaching Grade 12 in the Late Immersion program, participate in the Oral Interview and receive an assessment of their level of achievement as described in the New Brunswick Second Language Proficiency Scale.

**Recommendation #2d**

that Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – Education Act) be amended to eliminate the references to, and conditions pertaining to, the Early French Immersion program.

**Recommendation #3:**

That an Enriched Core Program continue to be developed as a follow-up of Grade 5 Intensive Immersion. This program will commence in Grade 6.

**Recommendation #3a**

that the Enriched English Core program be an extension of the Intensive French program commenced in Grade 5.

**Recommendation #3b**

whereas the current English Core program will be replaced with the Enriched Core program, the current English Core will be phased out as the Grade 5 teachers are trained in Intensive French methodology.

**Recommendation #3c**

that all teachers of the Enriched English Core program receive the necessary training before placement in Enriched Core classrooms

**Recommendation #3d**

that those teachers trained for the Enriched English Core program must be reimbursed for the costs associated with their professional training.

**Recommendation #3e**

that, for all Anglophone students who elected to enter the Enriched English Core program shall continue from Grade 6 through Grade 12.

**Recommendation #3f**

that, at every grade level in the Enriched English Core Program, an evaluation of each student's French achievement/proficiency shall be carried out and the resulting grade shall be recorded as a part of the student's annual report/transcript.

**Recommendation #3g**

that the Intensive French curriculum be extended through to Grade 12 within the Enriched English Core program.

**Recommendation #3h**

that Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – Education Act) be altered to reflect the various parts which pertain to the changes resulting from replacing the present Core program with an Enriched English Core Program.

**Recommendation #4:**

That all other existing French Second Language programs in New Brunswick schools be "grandfathered" out, commencing with the introduction of the two French Second Language programs recommended by this report.

**Recommendation #5:**

That annually, a careful, comprehensive province-wide review of all of the Anglophone secondary school course offerings in the French language be carried out in order to ensure that sufficient and suitable courses are offered into which both French Immersion and Enriched Core students may choose to enrol.

**Recommendation #6:**

That all curricular materials, classroom texts and teaching guides which are destined for FSL and English classroom use be made available in French at the same time that they are available in English.

**Recommendation #7:**

That comprehensive formative and summative evaluations shall be carried out as an integral, on-going part of each of the FSL programs provided by the New Brunswick Department of Education.

**Recommendation #8:**

That an interim coordinator, responsible to the current French Immersion/Spanish Specialist, be appointed to work on a full-time basis in order to oversee, manage and coordinate all aspects of the introduction of the Intensive French program and, with the exception of the current "Late Immersion program", supervise the phasing out of the current French Immersion programs.

**Recommendation #9:**

That a second French Second Language Specialist be added to the Department, to work in concert with the current Specialist, dividing the responsibilities entailed in managing the two FSL programs, managing the development and implementation of curricula revisions, resolving curricular issues and working with the districts to ensure adherence to Provincial Policy and Standards throughout the province.

**Recommendation #10:**

That a sufficient number of Methods and Resource teachers with the necessary background training in French language acquisition in each school district be trained and available to work with all children, with and without special needs, in conjunction with the French Second Language teachers.

**Recommendation #11:**

That all Grade 5 Intensive French classrooms have the flexibility to increase the minimum number of teaching hours to accommodate those children who experience difficulties in developing their second language proficiency.

**Recommendation #12:**

That every child, regardless of perceived capability, be equally encouraged to continue their education from Grade 5 onwards in the Late Immersion program.



**Recommendation #12a**

That measures be taken to ensure that the Department of Education's student data base acquires the capability to track the program registrations of those individual students who are working with S.E.P.s

**Recommendation #13:**

That an on-going series of relevant, Professional In-service Development courses addressing the teaching/learning needs of Special Needs Children in the FSL classroom, be developed and made mandatory for every teacher involved in French Second language classes.

**Recommendation #14:**

That the Department of Education must undertake a review of university courses being included in the pre-training of teachers destined to teach in French Second Language programs.

**Recommendation #15:**

That the language goal required for teachers employed to teach French as a Second Language, should be the superior level as defined by the New Brunswick Second Language Proficiency Scale.

**Recommendation #16:**

That the goals for oral language attainment for the proposed Enriched Core program (Intermediate) and the Late Immersion program (Intermediate Plus), as set out in Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – New Brunswick Education Act), and stated in the "Certificate of French Immersion" be retained as currently stipulated for the English Core program and Late Immersion program in Policy 309 and become the only criteria recognized for attainment. It is concomitantly recommended that these goals shall be increased as the revised program results warrant.

**Recommendation #17:**

that parents must be clearly and correctly informed of the second language employment criteria for hiring purposes within both the Provincial and Federal governments.

**Recommendation #18:**

That the “target of ensuring that 70% of all high school graduates will function effectively in speaking their second official language” will continue to be the goal of French Second Language acquisition throughout New Brunswick.

**Recommendation #18a**

That there must be a common, province-wide definitional statement and understanding of the goal to “function effectively” as presented in “When Kids Come First”.

## Notes Concerning Selected Recommendations

### Recommendation #1

*That all French Second Language programming for Anglophone New Brunswick children begins with Intensive French at Grade 5.*

Intensive French is a five month program that is inserted into Core French in grade 5 or grade 6, when students are 10 to 12 years of age and are at the beginning of their second language learning experience. During this period of time 70% of the school day is devoted to the learning of French through tasks designed to engage students cognitively in using the language. The program is open to all students, including those with learning difficulties (Netten and Germain, 2004b)

Intensive French is not only "core French" intensified. Due to the increased number of hours and the concentration of teaching time, the regular core French curriculum was not suitable; a different curriculum developed from the outcomes provided by the Department of Education for Grade 7 to Grade 11 was designed by the teachers based on their experience. In addition, the "pédagogie du projet" which enables more cognitive involvement and interaction among students was adopted. The curriculum, a whole language approach, is based on five themes and is adapted to the interests of students. Each unit or topic (such as *Ma famille et moi* studied under a theme (*Moi*) encompasses small project activities undertaken by students individually or in groups (e.g. create a family album); the units culminate in a related major project activity (such as an open house at school). The whole process is driven by communication and motivation with the focus on meaning: "In order to enable students to use language as determined by genuine communicative and conceptual needs, projects set at a higher level of abstraction will be necessary" (Brumfit, 1984)<sup>1</sup>.

There are two major changes from the regular Core French program that characterize Intensive French. One is the organization of time that increases both the time and the intensity of exposure to French for five months of the school year. Since French is taught for approximately 70% of the school day, exposure to French is increased from the normal 90 hours a year to around 300 hours. Only mathematics and some other specialist subjects, such as art and music, are taught in English during the five months of intensive exposure to

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<sup>1</sup> Brumfit, C. (1984). *Communicative methodology in language teaching: The roles of fluency and accuracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

French; in the other five months, the students return to the regular timetable where all subjects are taught in English, except French, which returns to only 10% of the curriculum. Despite this arrangement, all learning outcomes of the grade 5 or 6 curriculum are found in the work of Cummins (hypothesis of the interdependence of languages, 2001) and Vygotsky (the unified nature of cognitive development, 1986).

The second major change is the teaching strategies used to enable students to learn to communicate in French. An initial emphasis is placed on the development of implicit competence in the second language, rather than the development of explicit knowledge of grammatical rules (language awareness). This change is based on recent neurolinguistic research on the development of oral competence in young children in a second language (Paradis, 2004). In addition, a literacy approach is taken to the teaching of the language. Students are taught to read and write in their mother tongue in the primary grades. The use of this approach to the teaching of Core French is a major departure from the usual way in which it is taught in the school system.

Resources used to implement the program include current teachers of FSL, a guide for teachers to assist them in implementing the program, access to a relatively large number of supplementary readers, and the students themselves. The program is student-centred; all themes are chosen according to the interests of the students, the students choose the projects that they will undertake, and the conversations in the classroom are deliberately focused on the students themselves.<sup>1</sup>

To obtain further understanding of the theoretical bases, specific features and an impartial review of the outcomes regarding Intensive French, the Commission recommends "An Examination of Intensive French: A Pedagogical Strategy for the Improvement of French as a Second Language Outcomes in Canada"<sup>2</sup>, authored by Alina MacFarlane, Ph.D., The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> Netten, Joan and Claude Germain, "Intensive French Pilot Project: Interim Report on Results of the Evaluation of Oral and Written Production", January 2007.

<sup>2</sup> MacFarlane, Alina, "An Examination of Intensive French: A Pedagogical Strategy for the Improvement of French as a Second Language Outcomes in Canada", The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, April, 2005.

**Recommendation #1a**

*That all teachers of Intensive French receive appropriate training before placement in IF classrooms.*

As of September, 2006, there were 317<sup>1</sup> single and 102<sup>3</sup> combined Grade 5 Anglophone classrooms in New Brunswick, of which there were 43 piloting Intensive French. In all, according to the records of the Department of Education, there are currently (January, 2008) 85 teachers in the province who are trained to teach Intensive French classes at the Grade 5 level. In addition. From the interviews which the Commission has had with Department of Education personnel (including David MacFarlane), French Second Language Supervisors and Dr. Netten, there is a sufficiently large resource of suitably trained personnel that the necessary training for the implementation of Intensive French can be carried out within this province by provincial specialists. There are currently 8 teachers who are trained as Intensive Immersion mentors with an additional 3 who are completing their training.

If, to train all of the teachers necessary to implement this program at the same time throughout the Province is not feasible, then the introduction of the Intensive French program over a period of more than one year would be warranted.

**Recommendation #1b**

*That the Grade 5 teachers who are to receive Intensive French training must be reimbursed for their time and the costs associated with related training be absorbed by the Department of Education.*

According to the information provided by Department personnel<sup>2</sup>, the training costs (room, board, fees of facilitators and rooms for facilitators) would cost approximately \$1,500 per teacher. The costs of resources would cost approximately \$6,000 per class. Thus, given the current number of Grade 5 classes in New Brunswick, a total of 334 teachers will eventually require IF training, costing \$501,000. As only 60 teachers can be trained per session, with classes or groups of between 8 and 10 per group, it would take approximately 5 sessions to train every grade 5 Intensive French teacher in the province and the

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<sup>1</sup> "Summary Statistics; School Year 2006-2007", New Brunswick Department of Education, Table 10, p.21, March, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> David MacFarlane, in consultation, October 9, 2007

total annual cost of doing so would be, approximately \$140,280 (or \$2,338 per teacher) for each of the five sessions.

The latter figures are based upon the teachers receiving their training during the summer months without recompense for their study time. It has been suggested that consideration be given to training sessions for teachers during the academic year and using substitute teachers. Given that we presently have 8 trained mentors and 3 who are nearing training completion, the annual cost can be significantly reduced if our own teachers are employed for training purposes.

Drs. Netten and Germain have provided the Commission with their cost estimates for the same training, based upon their previous experiences over the past six years in New Brunswick. Their estimates are substantially lower, suggesting that the total cost for training 60 teachers during a summer session would total \$92,000, or \$1,533. per teacher<sup>1</sup>.

### **Recommendation #1c**

*That all Grade 5 classes in Intensive French have an absolute minimum of 270 hours in French instruction. Following, or sometimes preceding the intensive period, another 45 hours of instruction during the intensive year, making a total or 315 hours in French during the academic year.*

“The goal of the IF program is to enable students to reach a level of spontaneous communication in the five month period.” ..... “In order to reach this level, the number of hours of intensive instruction is crucial. Based on research undertaken .... a minimum of 270 hours is required (Germain and Netten , 2004). Following or sometimes preceding, the intensive period, another 45 hours of instruction is required, making a total of approximately 315 hours of instruction in French during the intensive year<sup>2</sup>. Fewer hours will seriously limit the possibilities of students attaining a spontaneous level of communication. Learners with special needs may require more time to reach this level.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Netten and Germain: “Intensive French and Enhanced French Summer Session Cost Analysis”, December 2007. detailed in Appendix \_\_\_\_.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Netten. In correspondence, December, 2007, Appendix \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>3</sup> Netten, Joan and Claude Germain, “Intensive French Pilot Project: Interim Report on Results of the Evaluation of Oral and Written Production”, January 2007, p.12.

During the 2004-2005 academic year (3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Pilot period), an analysis of student progress was carried out by means of comparing the pre-test to post-test results in each class and the effect of adherence to the required minimum of 270 hours of instruction. according to their report<sup>1</sup>, Netten and Germain singled out three classrooms with fewer than 270 hours of French instruction and noted that all three had results which were lower than those with 270 or more hours of instruction.

#### **Recommendation #1d**

*That principals receive in-service preparation in the structural fundamental components of Intensive French in order that they can provide supervision and assistance.*

#### **Recommendation #1e**

*That Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – Education Act) be amended to reflect the addition of the compulsory aspects of the Intensive French program.*

1. that all children shall begin their French Second Language training with Intensive French in Grade 5
2. that the required minimum number of instructional hours in French be no fewer than 270 during the intensive portion of the school year, followed by an additional 45 hours of French instruction during the post-intensive period.

#### **Recommendation #2:**

*That Late Immersion, beginning in Grade 6, be adopted as the sole French Immersion program for Anglophone students in New Brunswick.*

For the various reasons outlined in “Part Three” of this report and the “Summary” section preceding this “Recommendations” section, the Late Immersion program is clearly superior to the Early Immersion program in both its efficacy measured in student persistence and student achievement plus its sustainability and economy of program time and resources.

#### **Recommendation #2a**

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<sup>1</sup> Netten, Joan and Claude Germain, “Intensive French Pilot Project: Interim Report on Results of the Evaluation of Oral and Written Production”, January 2007,p.21.

*“That after Grade 10, students who have chosen to study through Late Immersion, will not be required to study their Science and Mathematics courses in French and that schools shall have the option of offering Science and Mathematics courses for Late Immersion students in either French or English between grades 6 through 10.”*

From the data gathered during the course of this study, there are two points at which significantly large numbers of students attrite from the FSL Immersion programs. The first point of significant attrition, which pertains only to the Early Immersion program, is at the end of Grade 1, driven principally by the belief that the children are not capable of adjusting to the choice of an immersion program. The second point of departure from the program is at the end of Grade 10. This latter attrition is huge and jeopardizes the sustainability of the immersion programs, particularly the Early Immersion program. By far, in fact almost universally, the sole reason for this attrition is students' desire to take their more difficult courses in the English language in order to be better prepared and have better grades for university entrance. These courses are science and mathematics. By waiving the requirement to take their grade 10, 11 and 12 science and mathematics courses in French, the perceived necessity to withdraw from the Immersion program is virtually eliminated. By way of an addendum to the latter point is the recognized inability of some middle and high schools to provide suitable numbers and levels of French language courses. This conundrum should be eliminated by relaxing the necessity of taking science and mathematics courses in the French language.

### **Recommendation #2b**

*“ that, except under exceptional circumstances, all students who choose to enrol in the French Immersion program shall continue their program through Grade 12.*

Having removed the principal reason for withdrawing from their immersion program (Recommendation #2a), the main obstacle for student persistence has been removed which will result in stabilized high school course offerings, program sustainability and a greater return on our investment in French Second Language acquisition. In short, the message becomes considerably clearer: French is an important and valued part of education in New Brunswick!



**Recommendation #2c**

*“that all students, upon reaching Grade 12 in the Late Immersion program, participate in the Oral Interview and receive an assessment of their level of achievement as described in the New Brunswick Second Language Proficiency Scale.”*

Although Policy Statement 309 *suggests* this recommendation, there is perceived latitude in its application, resulting in areas of school districts in which the testing is not obligatory and other areas in which it is. In order to ensure that our FSL programs and French language acquisition are perceived to be important, this policy must be clearly stated and enforced within the school districts.

**Recommendation #2d**

*“ that Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – Education Act) be amended to eliminate the references to, and conditions pertaining to, the Early French Immersion program.*

Policy Statement 309 should be amended to state that Late Immersion be the only French Second Language Immersion program offered in New Brunswick Anglophone public schools.

**Recommendation #3:**

*That an Enriched Core Program continue to be developed as a follow-up of Grade 5 Intensive Immersion. This program will commence in Grade 6.*

In order to benefit fully from the implementation of Intensive French at grade 5, the Core French program in grades 6 to 12 will also require modifications. The amount of time devoted to Core French in grades 6 to 8 remains the same as that specified in Policy 309, but some degree of intensity of instruction must be maintained in order to continue the development of communication skills. Therefore, Core French should be offered in two blocks of 80 minutes plus one period of 40 minutes per week (200 minutes/week). In grades 9 to 12, Core French should continue to be offered in two blocks of 80 minutes plus one

period of 40 minutes per week. The Core French program should not be semesterized.<sup>1</sup>

**Recommendation #3a**

*That the Enriched English Core program be an extension of the Intensive French program commenced in Grade 5.*

**Recommendation #3b**

*Whereas the current English Core program will be replaced with the Enriched Core program, the current English Core will be phased out as the Grade 5 teachers are trained in Intensive French methodology.*

**Recommendation #3c**

*That all teachers of the Enriched English Core program receive the necessary training before placement in Enriched Core classrooms.*

**Recommendation #3d**

*That those teachers trained for the Enriched English Core program must be reimbursed for the costs associated with their professional training.*

**Recommendation #3e**

*That, for all Anglophone students who elected to enter the Enriched English Core program shall continue from Grade 6 through Grade 12."*

In order to benefit fully from the implementation of Intensive French at grade 5, the Core French program in grades 6 to 12 will also require modifications. The amount of time devoted to Core French in grades 6 to 8 remains the same as that specified in Policy 309, but some degree of intensity of instruction must be maintained in order to continue the development of communication skills. Therefore, Core French should be offered in two blocks of 80 minutes plus one period of 40 minutes per week (200 minutes/week). In grades 9 to 12, Core French should continue to be offered in two blocks of 80 minutes plus one period of 40 minutes per week. The Core French program should not be semesterized.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Netten and Germain. In private correspondence, December,2007. see Appendix \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>2</sup> Joan Netten, private correspondence, December, 2007

**Recommendation #3f**

*That, at every grade level in the Enriched English Core Program, an evaluation of each student's French achievement/proficiency shall be carried out and the resulting grade shall be recorded as a part of the student's annual report.*

It is most important that the students' be assigned grades for their efforts/progress in their French courses. Although there is a paucity of empirical evidence to support this recommendation, there is a great deal of anecdotal material supporting the theory that one of the principal reasons why little progress is made in French-language development in high school is due to the lack of motivation to do so – namely no grades being assigned to their transcripts. By assigning grades to transcripts, there is the concomitant endorsement of the significance of French-language acquisition and recognition of the importance of French as another academic subject.

**Recommendation #3g**

*That the Intensive French curriculum be extended through to Grade 12 within the Enriched English Core program.*

Although there have been great strides towards the completion of the "Enriched Core" program curriculum, there has yet to be more work done on the Grades XI and XII content. The Commission strongly recommends that those employees of the Department who are charged with high school curriculum and FSL programs continue to work with Drs. Netten and Germain and members of the Saskatchewan Department of Education to finalize this portion of the program.

**Recommendation #3h**

*That Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – Education Act) be altered to reflect the various parts which pertain to the changes resulting from replacing the present Core program with an Enriched English Core Program.*

**Recommendation #4:**

*That all other existing French Second Language programs in New Brunswick schools be “grandfathered” out, commencing with the introduction of the two French Second Language programs recommended by this report.*

The Commission recommends that the letter from Deputy Minister John Kershaw, dated May 16, 2007<sup>1</sup>, serve as the basis for describing the ‘Enhanced’ / ‘Enriched’ Core program and the “Intensive French” program processes and their respective implementation.

**Recommendation #5:**

*That a careful, comprehensive province-wide review of all of the Anglophone secondary school course offerings in the French language be carried out in order to ensure that sufficient and suitable courses are offered into which both French Immersion and Enriched Core students may choose to enrol.*

**Recommendation #6:**

*That all curricular materials, classroom texts and teaching guides which are destined for FSL and English classroom use be made available in French at the same time that they are available in English.*

Anecdotal material and interviews with teacher and French Second language specialists have decried the current lag time in providing French-language curricular materials and teachers’ guides. In fact, teachers have complained that on occasion there have been delays of a year or more before obtaining French-language materials. As a result of this delay, children in the English programs are working their way through revised, recently published materials while the French – language students are on older, out-of-date materials or curriculum.

**Recommendation #7:**

*That comprehensive formative and summative evaluations shall be carried out as an integral, on-going part of each of the FSL programs provided by the New Brunswick Department of Education.*

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<sup>1</sup> see Appendix K

As this Commission has discovered, there is very little empirical evidence to identify problem areas, points of departure and other program and course – related issues within the current Core program. It is considered to be of paramount importance that, with the introduction of the two recommended programs, a series of standardized formative evaluations be instituted, followed by a summative evaluation, all to be incorporated as an integral part of the revised programs. All of the latter evaluations must be reflections of the objectives and materials within the courses and program.

**Recommendation #8:**

*That an interim coordinator, responsible to the current French Immersion/Spanish Specialist, be appointed to work on a full-time basis in order to oversee, manage and coordinate all aspects of the introduction of the Intensive French program and, with the exception of the current ‘Late Immersion program’, supervise the phasing out of the current French Immersion programs.*

**Recommendation #9:**

*That a second French Second Language Specialist be added to the Department, to work in concert with the current Specialist, dividing the responsibilities entailed in managing the two FSL programs, managing the development and implementation of curricula revisions, resolving curricular issues and working with the districts to ensure adherence to Provincial Policy and Standards throughout the province.*

**Recommendation #10:**

*That a sufficient number of Methods and Resource teachers with the necessary background training in French language acquisition in each school district be trained and available to work with all children, with and without special needs, in conjunction with the French Second Language teacher<sup>1</sup>s.*

Time and again, parents and teachers have bemoaned the lack of qualified methods and resource teachers to assist the teachers in providing for those children who, to a greater or lesser degree, are in need of assistance and direction in their acquisition of French as their second language. As teachers have continually pointed out, the vast majority of students who require this help need but a small “push” to succeed in this new environment but too often there

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix O: “ Proposal for a FSL Resource Program”, prepared by Jane E. Bartlett (D.10)

is no one available with the necessary training. The Commission has learned that, of the approximately 250 to 260 trained Methods and resource teachers currently working in the Anglophone sector, there is not a single appropriately trained methods and resource French language teacher.<sup>1</sup>

**Recommendation #11:**

*That all Grade 5 Intensive French classrooms have the flexibility to increase the minimum number of teaching hours to accommodate those children who experience difficulties in developing their second language proficiency.*

This recommendation is a critical component in the design of the Intensive program, relating to fostering the language acquisition of children with special needs and those other children or entire classes which, for whatever reason, are encountering acquisition difficulties.

**Recommendation #12:**

*That every child, regardless of perceived capability, be equally encouraged to continue their education from Grade 5 onwards in the Late Immersion program.*

If, in conjunction with Recommendations # 10, 11, 12a, 13 and 14, our children with special needs are encouraged to enrol into the Late Immersion program, there is every reason to believe that they will succeed in acquiring their second language ability<sup>2</sup>. There is more than adequate evidence to support active encouragement of all children to enrol into the Late Immersion program.

**Recommendation #12a**

*That measures be taken to ensure that the Department of Education's student data base acquires the capability to track the program registrations of those individual students who are working with S.E.P.s*

Among a number of obvious short-comings, the current student data base lacks the capability to longitudinally study and track students or individual programs, thus provide meaningful data relative to directions and choices of groups of

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<sup>1</sup> from interviews with District Superintendents and Director, Student Services, DoE.

<sup>2</sup> Genesee, F., (2007), "French Immersion And At-Risk Students: A Review of research Evidence", *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 63(5), University of Toronto Press.

students. This must be corrected to ensure that the efficacy of programs and courses can be studied.

**Recommendation #13:**

*That an on-going series of relevant, Professional In-service Development courses addressing the teaching/learning needs of Special Needs Children in the FSL classroom, be developed and made mandatory for every teacher involved in French Second language classes.*

Over and over again, teachers and FSL specialists have complained about the lack of relative in-service – particularly those currently teaching in the English Core program. In addition to in-servicing teachers in teaching/learning theory and practise, it is essential that an educator be educated and trained to welcome children with diverse and special learning needs. This is of major importance and relevance for those teachers who are teaching second language classes, so much so that, in light of the lack of any university-related training in this area, professional in-service is a “must”.

**Recommendation #14:**

*That the Department of Education must undertake a review of university courses being included in the pre-training of teachers destined to teach in French Second Language programs.*

As outlined in the first chapter of this report, this Commission learned that the principal concern of administrators related to the availability and pre-servicing of teachers. As was previously discussed, a significant amount of district budgets is currently being spent on training new teachers in areas which, the majority of administrators stated, are areas which should have been basic components in the teacher-training programs. Included in this list of pre-training weaknesses are courses in: classroom management, tests and measurements, learning theory, child and adolescent development, additional training in FSL methods and in teaching children with special needs. In a number of cases, district administrators singled out a specific, provincial university whose students are less well prepared due to a lack of backgrounds in the latter courses and are not perceived as good candidates for teaching openings in FSL and in general academic areas.

**Recommendation #15:**

*“That the language goal required for teachers employed to teach French as a Second Language, should be set at the Superior level, as defined by the New Brunswick Second language Proficiency Scale.*

The Commission has learned that this is an issue which has several important facets. On the one hand, many district administrators have stated that, due to the shortage of qualified FSL teachers, they have resorted to hiring virtually anyone who has a teaching certificate and speaks French. It would appear that, under these circumstances, there is little monitoring of language standards as represented in Policy Statement 309. A number of FSL coordinators have outspokenly declared that having these teachers is presenting a number of classroom and learning-related problems, not the least of which is inferior teaching standards and poor language models.

The obvious response to this situation is the enforcement of Policy 309 with more strict enforcement of minimum language requirements and teacher certification standards.

**Recommendation #16:**

*“That the goals for oral language attainment for the proposed Enriched Core program (Intermediate) and the Late Immersion program (Intermediate Plus), as set out in Policy Statement 309 (Section 6 – New Brunswick Education Act), and stated in the “Certificate of French Immersion” be retained as currently stipulated for the English Core program and Late Immersion program in Policy 309 and become the only criteria recognized for attainment. It is concomitantly recommended that these goals shall be increased as the revised program results warrant.”*

Unfortunately, there has been a wide-spread misconception regarding the meaning and use of the attainment standards which have been clearly set forth in Policy Statement 309. Periodically, various groups have interpreted these standards as nothing but “wishful thinking” and have suggested and tried to use the “Intermediate” standard of achievement as the universal standard for all programs. In a sense, this “lowering the bar” action appears to have been an attempt to inflate the attainments levels of the immersion programs.

Assuming the introduction of two revised programs to make up the suite of French Second language programs, it is strongly recommended that the current



attainment goals of “Intermediate” and “Intermediate Plus” be retained for the Enriched Core and Late Immersion programs. This enables the Department to review the attainment goals in light of the efficacy of these two programs and allows the increase in the standards as the programs present their results.

**Recommendation #17:**

*That parents must be clearly and correctly informed of the second language employment criteria for hiring purposes within both the Provincial and Federal governments.*

**Recommendation #18:**

*“That the “target of ensuring that 70% of all high school graduates will function effectively in speaking their second official language”<sup>1</sup> will continue to be the goal of French Second Language acquisition throughout New Brunswick.”*

Consistent with the “Quality Learning Agenda: Policy Statement on K – 12: Quality Schools, High Results”<sup>2</sup> this Commission recommends that 70% continue to be recognized as the attainment goal in French language competency for each of the two French Second language programs. In each case, the 70% will apply to each program’s own attainment level.

**Recommendation #18a:**

*That there must be a common, province-wide definitional statement and understanding of the goal to “function effectively” as presented in “When Kids Come First”.*

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Education, “When Kids Come First”, 2007, p.24

<sup>2</sup> “Within ten years, 70% of all high school graduates, English and French, will be able to function effectively when speaking their second official language.”, Province of New Brunswick, p. 33, Objective II, Develop the Whole Child, Provide Quality Language Programs,.

## Conclusions

1. Despite the various commendable features which recommend Early Immersion French Second Language Program to many students, the persistence rates, attainment levels, sustainability data and costs all clearly state that it is not a program suitable for the majority of New Brunswick students.

This program, in large part due to its dwindling enrolment numbers, coupled with its high drop-out rates and the steadily increasing enrolment numbers of the Late French Immersion program, is becoming an extremely costly and non self-sustaining program. By 2012, the vast majority (approximately 80%) of post Grade 8 courses will have to be combined with Late French Immersion courses in order for the Early Immersion program to continue to be offered.

2. Data from the piloting of the Intensive French Immersion program over the past five or six years have provided substantial evidence supporting the efficacy of this approach to French Second Language acquisition. The introduction of French Language to all New Brunswick students by means of the Intensive French at the Grade 5 level will allow for the Revised or Enriched Core Program and the Enhanced Late Immersion Program to begin at Grade 6 and continue through to Grade 12.

3. Providing the option for students in the Late Immersion program to take their mathematics and science courses in either language will, to a large degree, eliminate the current drop-out rates experienced within senior high school.

4. By providing for the introduction of French into the Anglophone education curriculum at the Grade 5 level, results in savings must be reallocated to other area in Grades 1 through 4, to provide a renewed emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy and to provide the time and means for Art, Music and Physical Education.

5. Teacher training for French Second Language instruction must be a priority officially addressed through the Department of Education. Clearly, some innovative approaches concerning means by which necessary curricular and course changes can be effected is necessary. An example of possible alternative approaches arose out of the Commission's discussion with l'Université de Moncton. This university is willing to discuss offering a six year FSL teacher-training program in which they will provide financial assistance to Anglophone students who graduate from New Brunswick FSL programs, thereby ensuring French language fluency and granting both an undergraduate degree and a B.Ed. degree in FSL teaching methods at the completion of the 6<sup>th</sup> year.

6. In order that the inclusionary recommendations of the Wayne McKay report and policies of the Department of Education be carried out within the context of all of the FSL programs, it is necessary that FSL programs be adopted which have been proven to successfully meet the various learning needs and the greatest numbers of New Brunswick children. These programs must contain both the learning/teaching paradigms, and the classroom and timetable flexibility to accommodate the broad array of individual student's learning differences. An essential addition of Methods and Resource teachers, appropriately trained in second language acquisition in concert with an active and appropriate in-servicing program of the current FSL teachers, must be instituted. Also, and perhaps of greatest importance, there has to be an active, province-wide program to encourage all children, regardless of perceived abilities, to enroll in the Late Immersion program.

There are no simple or singular solutions. Finding solutions will require courage, time, commitment, and mobilizing the entire province to develop a true Learning Culture.

Resolving issues will require people to set aside previously held ideas and to compromise in the interest of **all children's learning**.

- Elana J. Scraba<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Elana J. Scraba "Schools Teach – Parents & Communities Support – Children Learn – Everyone Benefits" , advice to Dr. Dennis J. Furlong, April 24, 2002.