

FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM

IMPACT REVIEW

Conducted for Golden School District No. 18

February - March 1995

by

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FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM IMPACT REVIEW: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A review was conducted to determine the impact of the French Immersion Programs offered by Golden School District No. 18 on the English language programs of the district, as well as to attempt to determine the possible impact of extending the program into the Golden Secondary School. The review took into consideration the following elements:

- data concerning the French Immersion program, including enrollment and attrition rates, and enrollment predictions,
- the present features of the French Immersion program,
- the concerns of parent groups and the wider community,
- student outcomes, including perceptions of students in the French Immersion program, academic achievement of both French Immersion and English program students, and other educational outcomes, for example, student perceptions of school, themselves as learners, and their programs, and
- financial impact of the French Immersion program , including potential costs and benefits, for instance, revenues, bussing, staffing, class and school size, and resources.

Findings

Briefly, we found that there is considerable controversy among the parent groups about the impact of the French Immersion program on regular English programs; however, all members of the community are ultimately concerned with a fair, equitable, and excellence program for all students. Within the boundaries of the available data, students in both groups were found to be achieving appropriately, both in terms of academic achievement and in the development of positive attitudes concerning school, teachers expectations, programs, and themselves as learners. We found the French Immersion program to have no negative impact on the English programs of the district in terms of funding, bussing, staffing, class and school size, or other resources. In addition, the data indicate that extending the French Immersion program will have no undue negative impact on the high school program.

French Immersion Impact Review: Executive Summary

As a result of these findings, recommendations were made separately concerning

- a) the K-7 French Immersion Program, and
- b) the possible French Immersion program at Golden Secondary School.

The recommendations concerning extending the French Immersion program to Golden Secondary School were made subject to a number of caveats and conditions.

The recommendations and caveats are as follows.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FRENCH IMMERSION

PROGRAM: (K - 7)

In general, the French Immersion program, K - 7, in Golden School District No. 18 seems to be strong, well-run, well-supported by parents, and producing satisfactory results in terms of student attitudes and academic achievement. The only cost to the district of operating the K - 7 program is bussing -- a cost which seems to be offset by increased funds entering the district for supplies and learning assistance. Hence, the following recommendations are made, not in a desire to correct deficiencies, but in the spirit of moving an already very good program towards excellence

1. Continue to recruit fluent, well-qualified French Immersion teachers. Language proficiency should be ensured by having someone with native-like competence present at interviews.
2. Work to develop the library and media resources in French at both the intermediate and secondary school levels. This should include print, computer programs, CDRoms, and teacher support materials in French.

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3. Strive to increase the French language "richness" of the environment at Lady Grey Elementary School. For example, students might be encouraged to use more French outside of the classroom, a small portion of each assembly might be delivered in French, more posters and signs in both languages might be visible throughout the school.
4. At the intermediate level, linguistic development might be enhanced by offering as many language-intensive subjects as possible in French. Such subjects might include social studies as well as science and language arts, and may necessitate the acquisition of some new text books. In addition, because the influence of English is so pervasive at Lady Grey School, the ratio of French to English classes could be increased to as much as 75 - 25% without a detrimental effect on English skills.
5. Identify one person in the district to be the contact person and coordinator of the overall French Immersion program. This person could be a teacher, site-based administrator, or an educator from the district office. This coordinator should be responsible for ensuring that all French Immersion teachers receive all relevant communications and documents from the BC Ministry of Education, as well as for ensuring that accurate and consistent information concerning the program is available as needed.
6. Work towards providing Learning Assistance in French to students at Lady Grey School.
7. Work towards attaining a French monitor for the district on a full-time basis.

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8. As a long-term recommendation, the district might consider establishing a complete dual-track French Immersion and English program at Lady Grey School and maintaining Edelweiss as an English program school.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE GOLDEN SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAM

In general the impact on English programs at Golden Secondary School of having extended the French Immersion program to grade 8 during 1994-1995, seems to have been negligible. As previously noted, the 8th grade program was added at no cost to the school district, and with class sizes well within the normal range for classes at the school.

After considering all available data concerning the possibility of extending the French Immersion program at Golden Secondary School, the following recommendations and accompanying caveats are submitted for consideration:

1. Maintain the 8th grade program at Golden Secondary School.
2. Accept the principle that the French Immersion program should continue to Grade 12. This means that, within the guidelines and caveats identified below, French Immersion should be considered as integral to the high school program as any other courses.
3. Implement a French Immersion Program at the secondary school which does not rely on a single teacher. This would alleviate considerable stress on the present French Immersion teacher and would facilitate offering a greater variety of subjects in French Immersion.

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4. Consider following the practice of comparison School 1 which offers different electives in French on a rotating basis, each year. Thus one elective might be available to students in grades 9 and 10, while another is available to students in grade 11 and 12.
5. Attempt to maintain a single class of French Immersion students at the grade 8 level to facilitate their entry to high school, but where numbers warrant, make use of split classes for grades 9/10 and 11/12.
6. Build the high school timetable to create as much flexibility as possible. This cannot be achieved by tying blocks of classes together. If a conflict matrix is used to timetable all singleton classes at a given grade level, no specific program will have undue prominence in determining availability of options.
7. Timetable all students needing specific combinations of singletons first -- whether these students are in French Immersion programs or simply require an unusual combination of subjects to ensure university acceptance in the program of their choice.
8. No disagreement was found during the review concerning the need for students presently in the French Immersion program to maintain their language skills and hence to offer an Honours French class for grade 11 and 12. Offering grade 11 French Language Arts will not put any additional pressures on the secondary school. In addition to offering French Language Arts for grade 11/12, only one other subject needs to be available to students to complete their graduation requirements.

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Questions have been raised concerning the potential relationship of French Immersion programs and the new provincial requirements including student educational plan, work experience, or career and personal planning. Although it would be beyond the scope of these recommendations to suggest how the secondary school might offer these courses, it has been suggested that one way to handle these requirements might be to implement an advisory block for all students. Should this prove feasible, French Immersion students might fulfill these provincial requirements in French as their additional senior course.

CAVEATS AND CONDITIONS

At present, expansion of the French Immersion program can be accomplished with existing staff at Golden Secondary School. It is anticipated that continuation of the program can also be offered without undue negative impact on the rest of the high school program. However, the following represent the caveats and conditions under which the French Immersion Program should or should not be offered at Golden Secondary School.

1. Extension of the French Immersion program should not, at any time, cost an incumbent teacher his/her position.
2. If additional hiring is required at Golden Secondary School, due to attrition of present staff or expansion of the student body, then every effort should be made to acquire personnel who will be able to complete the implementation of the French Immersion program by complementing the expertise of present staff.

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3. Should no clearly competent bilingual teacher be available, expertise in required subject areas should take precedence over ability to speak French. This caveat is included to ensure excellence in the overall education offered, as most French Immersion teachers will be also be teaching in the English program; it is not intended as an excuse for not hiring teachers with demonstrated expertise both in French and in required subject matter.
4. Nothing in the previous recommendations is intended to require that classes in French be offered if student enrollment falls below the generally accepted minimum class size at the school in any given year. As a general guideline, classes should not be offered in any given year if the enrollment in such classes would fall below the minimum class size of other singletons offered at the same grade level. However, as for any other subject, small enrollments in one year should not preclude offering the same subject the following year.

CONCLUSION

Golden School District No. 18 has actively pursued a policy of individual freedom of choice and excellence in programming for all students. The recommendations which have been made in this report are intended both to enhance the French Immersion program and to ensure the continued integrity and quality of the English program offered at all levels for all students. It is to be hoped that the recommendations will be received and implemented in the spirit of the "win - win" situation which is envisaged -- a spirit which is intended to support freedom of choice for all students and families within the district.

BACKGROUND

In 1987-88, Golden school district implemented a French Immersion program with an enrollment of 27 first grade students. The next year, 1988-1989, a new first grade class was added, and the initial group proceeded to second grade. In the third year, 1989-1990, both a kindergarten and a third grade class were added. Each subsequent year, one class of French immersion students was added to the educational program in Golden, until this year, 1994 - 1995, there are French Immersion classes from kindergarten to eighth grade.

These classes are housed in three schools:

Edelweiss Elementary School offers kindergarten to grade 4.

Lady Grey Elementary School contains the intermediate grades 5 to 7.

In 1994, an eighth grade class received instruction in French in three subject areas at Golden Secondary School.

In Canada, the teaching of French in either Core classes or French Immersion Programs is often complicated by complex historical, political, and philosophical considerations. Although it is rarely possible to totally separate the educational and pedagogical issues from these more volatile contextual issues, it is the intent of this review to summarize and present data and recommendations which are relevant for the educational programs of Golden School District No. 18, and to attempt, insofar as possible, to move the argument away from the sometimes controversial contextual positions.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to review the French Immersion program of the Golden School District, to identify the impact of the program in the light of concerns about equity, fairness, and excellence for all students within the district, and to make recommendations to the Golden School Board concerning the termination or continuation of the program. Although this review may not properly be considered a program evaluation, some observations were requested, and have been made, concerning the overall needs, disadvantages and benefits of the French Immersion Program itself.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

An educational program offered by a school district should be designed to provide as many opportunities as possible for all students to achieve their maximum potential consistent with their needs and abilities. Further, programs offered by a school district should adhere to the following principles: equity, fairness, and excellence.

Equity

The equity principle has traditionally been framed in one of three ways: equality of access, equality of treatment, and equality of outcomes. In general, equity does not presuppose equal expenditures or similarity of class size or resources for each participating student; rather, the equity principle is generally taken to imply "equal consideration of interests" (Haller &

Strike, 1986). The basic idea is that people's wants, needs, and interests must be taken seriously, that everyone's claim must be considered equally and that at the outset, no-one has a better claim than anyone else. Nwabuoga (1984) suggests that equality may be considered in terms of access, participation, outcomes, and life chances.

Fairness

The concept of fairness relates to the equity principle. When raised with regard to French Immersion programs, it may be framed in terms of what constitute relevant rather than irrelevant grounds for decisions? It begs the question, "When is differentiation "fair" and when is it "unfair?" In other words, what is right? What is just? To answer the question with respect to both fairness and equity, one must decide if differentiation, in terms of offering a French Immersion Program, has an adverse impact on English programs offered by the school board.

Excellence

Excellence may be conceived as offering the highest possible quality of education, at an acceptable level of cost, to all students.

A CONSENSUS MODEL FOR DECISION MAKING

Two theoretical concepts may be helpful in reaching agreement concerning the possible continuation of French Immersion Programs in Golden School District No. 18.

Level of Agreement

It has been suggested (Hodgkinson, 1983) that there are three main levels at which agreement may be achieved in decision-making. The first is **preference**. If everyone could agree concerning a preferred course of action with respect to the French Immersion program, there would be no need for a review or consideration of recommendations. Another level at which agreement may be reached is that of **principle**. Although this may be perceived by some to be the high ground, it is almost impossible to achieve agreement at this level. People do not change their philosophical or moral positions easily; hence, agreement may be difficult and even impossible to achieve at the level of principle. The third level at which agreement may be reached is that of **consensus** and **consequence**. If we can reach consensus concerning the consequences of the French Immersion program, we shall be able to proceed to act on a specific set of recommendations. For the purpose of this report, it is hoped that the data presented will permit Golden School District to achieve consensus over the consequences of its French Immersion program, as well as over the possible effects of extending or limiting the program at the high school level.

Achieving Consensus

One further caution seems helpful. Wynn & Guditus (1984) suggest that consensus is frequently used improperly to imply that when a majority position has been identified, the rest should just "give in" to make the decision appear unanimous. They believe that true consensus is achieved when everyone who has a legitimate interest in a given situation has had the opportunity to voice his/her opinion and to have been heard and understood. Then, feeling satisfied that their position has not been overlooked, people may decide in the interest of the whole community to agree to disagree, and to support the majority position, without further blocking, discussion, or dissension. It is this type of consensus which we hope to achieve through the consultation process in which we have engaged.

THE PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

According to the terms of the contract, the external evaluator

- a) reviewed the available literature concerning French Immersion programs,
- b) contacted other districts which have extended their French Immersion programs into a small high school,
- c) spent two days in Golden, visiting the three French Immersion programs and schools, observing students, conducting two open meetings (one designed primarily for parents of French Immersion students, and the other for all English program parents and interested

members of the community), and interviewing teachers and administrators of the French Immersion programs,¹

- d) with the help of Dr. Linda Rossler, assistant superintendent, conducted, administered, scored, and analyzed student surveys and questionnaires, acquired data concerning such pertinent topics as enrollment figures, bussing, timetabling, and finances, and
- e) analyzed, examined, and reflected upon all available data in order to make recommendations to Golden School District No. 18 concerning ending or continuing its French Immersion program.

Although some impressions were gleaned concerning the effectiveness of the French Immersion program in reaching its goals, and the quality of the instruction in the regular English language program, the mandate of this review was not to evaluate the quality of instruction in Golden district schools.

In every case, the evaluator and the district personnel have tried to act in a fair and objective fashion and to present the data accurately and without personal bias.

FROM THE LITERATURE

The literature concerning French Immersion Programs is consistent, accessible, and relatively well known. In addition to the comprehensive review of literature completed by the

¹ . There has been some suggestion that holding two separate meetings was in fact, more divisive than facilitating. Although the Administrative Officers for the French Immersion program were consulted regarding hiring an outside reviewer, this process decision was made by the Assistant Superintendent and was intended to permit free expression of opinion at both meetings. In addition, some parents who have students enrolled in both French Immersion and regular English programs exercised their right to attend and to speak at both meetings.

Carleton Board of Education, and purchased by the Golden School District, searches were completed through the Canadian Educational Index and the ERIC (Educational Resources in Education) data bases to identify any studies which might have been completed subsequent to the completion of the Carleton Review. Approximately 60 additional studies were examined.

Briefly, while there will always be differences attributable to context and personnel, the literature concurs on the following points.

- French Immersion programs, including early, middle, and late immersion lead to the acquisition of functional but not native-like French skills. (As one intermediate teacher said, "I'd feel confident if we went on a field trip that they could communicate politely and appropriately with adults or children of their own age....They still need vocabulary building and fine tuning.")
- Early French Immersion (EFI) seems slightly more effective than middle or late immersion, but the groups are not really comparable in that early French Immersion is more subject to parental decision and less subject to academic screening than the other options.
- Although there is a temporary lag (K - 6) for pupils in EFI programs, after several years, students enrolled in French Immersion programs demonstrate appropriate levels of skills in English language subjects (sometimes even exceeding their English program counterparts).

Item on which consensus has not been achieved:

- The most common view is that there are no groups of children for whom French Immersion programs are not suitable; however, some researchers suggest that children with severe learning disabilities -- autism is particularly identified -- may perform better in a program taught in their first language.

Item on which there needs to be further research:

- In general, studies to date have demonstrated that although the graduates of French Immersion programs have attained a high functional level of competency in French skills, their use of French outside school is low, and the extent to which their French language skills are directly relevant to future employment or programs of studies is not clear.

INFORMATION FROM OTHER DISTRICTS

Administrators from three small high schools in different regions of British Columbia were contacted to determine their perceptions of, and their experience with, the feasibility of offering French Immersion classes in a small high school. A summary of their responses is contained in the Appendix, Table 1.

In general, the principals indicated that they believed French Immersion could be offered through grade 12 with a little creativity and good will on the part of the staff. They perceived the benefits to far outweigh the difficulties, but agreed that if the French Immersion program resulted in classes smaller than the acceptable norm for their school, then those classes, like any others, would not be offered in a given year.

GOLDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 18

This section of the report will focus on information which was gleaned from a variety of sources relevant to enrollment patterns, and community attitudes and concerns about the French Immersion program. It will be followed by an analysis of the impact of the French Immersion Program on student outcomes (achievement and attitudes), as well as the fiscal impact of the French Immersion program on the district.

Provincial Guidelines for a French Immersion Graduation Certificate.

In order to obtain a French Immersion endorsement on their High School Graduation diploma, students are required to have:

3 credits taken in French at each of grades 8, 9, 10

3 credits taken in French in grades 11 and 12 combined.

Data Concerning the French Immersion Program Itself

Attrition Rates: Number of students who have left the program

8 boys and 4 girls left the program between 1992 and 1994.

5 students from 1st grade (1992 - 3, 1993, 1994)

1 from 2nd grade (Mar. 92)

2 from 4th grade (Aug. 92, Sept. 93)

4 from 7th grade (Sept. 1993)

Enrollment Figures: (From 1991 - 1994):

The following chart shows available enrollment figures for the last four years of the French Immersion program.

Grade	1991	1992	1993	1994
K	22	18	22	15
1	15	19	16	24
2	23	13	18	18
3	21	23	14	18
4		17	22	14
5		19	19	21
6		23	18	18
7			18	16
8				18

Enrollment Predictions:

Based on a preliminary survey of the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students presently in French Immersion, it would appear that approximately 50% of those students presently in grade 8 would continue to take French Immersion classes, if offered, through 12th grade, while the other 50% would plan to remain until 10th grade. Answers to the same questions by students presently in 6th and 7th grade, suggest that again, approximately 50% would plan to continue to take French Immersion classes, if offered until 12th grade.

Hence, if the students' initial responses prove accurate, there would be a grade 12 enrollment of 9 students in 1998, 8 in 1999, and 9 in the year 2000. These figures are somewhat greater than those experienced by other schools throughout the province for lead classes in French Immersion at the senior secondary level. Although small, these numbers are similar to those in some other grade 12 classes presently offered at Golden Secondary School.

The Present High School Situation (1994 - 1995)

During the 1994 - 1995 academic year, Golden Secondary School offered a total of 176 academic classes, spread across 8 time-table blocks. (That total does not include blocks and teachers designated for English as a Second Language (ESL), Learning Assistance (LA), Non-categorical resource (NCR), counseling, library, and other non-academic subjects. Of the 176 blocks used for academic subjects, 66 or 37.5% have enrollments between 11 and 20 students, while another 10 or 5.5% have enrollments ranging between 5 and 10 students.

Thus, it appears as if accommodating French Immersion classes with enrollments of approximately 15 would be well within the normal pattern for Golden Secondary School.

FEATURES OF THE PRESENT FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM

Based on visits to the French Immersion schools and classes and on interviews with teachers and administrators, the following features were noted.

Benefits

- caring and competent teachers,
- a strong and supportive parent council,
- the opportunity to learn a second language,
- children who were motivated, enthusiastic, and who were able to express themselves in both oral and written work at a level appropriate for their grade (notwithstanding the significant differences among children),
- some children at Edelweiss School were speaking French among themselves in the hall,
- at Lady Grey and Golden Secondary School, French Immersion students were considered to be well integrated into the school and not to be a "group apart,"
- some activities introduced into schools by French Immersion classes contributed to the cultural richness of the whole school, e.g. Marc Tardiff (clown), the carnaval.

Disadvantages

- no French was heard being spoken in the halls or playground of Lady Grey School,
- few materials were evident in French in Lady Grey School,
- few suitable films and classroom materials are available in French,
- some subjects which might be taught in French at the Intermediate level are not being taught because of a lack of text-books (e.g. social studies.)

Needs

- although resources appeared to be reasonable at Edelweiss School, at Lady Grey Elementary School, materials in French in the library appeared to be minimal (approx. 500 books for recreational reading and for research projects); at Golden Secondary School, the library contains approximately 60 books in French supplemented by approximately 4 CDRoms.
- additional instructional materials including books, charts, audio-visual materials for intermediate grades, and some text books.

CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The following lists summarize the main points which were expressed by participants at the two public meetings held in February. While not exhaustive, they represent those issues on which there seemed to be particular urgency or general consensus.

Major Issues Identified By the Parents of the Regular English Program Students

- A concern for fairness and equity for all students,
- Concerns about the potential impact of the French Immersion program on the high school timetable, including the availability of course options, class size, singletons, as well as the general attitude and peer pressures to which students may be subjected,
- A desire for fiscal accountability (for instance, whether the FI program is fiscally imposing on funds from the English program),
- Concerns about the impact of the French Immersion program on the elementary program, including class size, school size, split grades, learning assistance, and bussing throughout the district,
- A hope that the rifts and negative attitudes might end,
- A request for information which might help to promote understanding,
- A perceived need for a decision to end the uncertainty,
- Concerns about the power of the French Advisory Committee,
- Desire for information concerning how French Immersion might fit in with new provincial regulations like work experience,
- A need for more open communication with the board,
- A need for all decisions to be both fair and perceived as fair.

Major Issues Identified By the Parents of French Immersion Students

- A concern for fairness and equity for all students,
- A desire for the best education for French Immersion students for as long as possible (preferably to grade 12),
- A concern for the maintenance of acquired skills, perhaps through an honours French program, should the French Immersion program not be continued,
- A concern over the potential impact on hiring excellent teachers and on registration and attitudes of grades K - 8 should the program stop at the present level,
- A concern about the amount of French used at the Intermediate level, and a perceived need for someone to coordinate the French Immersion program,
- A desire for fiscal accountability, including information about the impact of funding the different programs of the district,
- A hope that the rifts and negative attitudes might end, and a particular concern for the peer pressure experienced by French Immersion students,
- A desire for information concerning attrition from the French Immersion program,
- Questions about what subjects might be offered and how at the high school level if the program were to be extended.

FINDINGS CONCERNING STUDENT OUTCOMES

On a preliminary survey given to French Immersion students in grades 6, 7, and 8 students provided the following information concerning their perceptions of some of the benefits of the French Immersion program.

Perceptions of French Immersion Students

8th grade students unanimously reported that having been in French Immersion classes has increased their future job opportunities, while 69% of them believed it has helped them to become well-rounded students, able to better understand people from other cultures in general, as well as to understand the "French Canadian perspective." 85% of students from 6th and 7th grades thought that the French Immersion program has enhanced their future job opportunities, while 73% believed they could better understand people from other cultures, and 81% felt it has helped them to understand the French Canadian Perspective. Students elaborated in this way:

" I can see how they'd want to be on their own because of the way they get treated."

" I can see why Quebec wants to separate from Canada because all of the people say that they don't know as much."

" I realize the French Canadians are not as bad as everyone thinks."

"Now I follow most of the news and other things concerning the Quebec separation of Canada. It's interesting to try and figure out why Quebec would want to separate,...".

When asked for suggestions concerning how to improve their program, some of the comments of the students poignantly reflected the ongoing debate over the extension of their program:

" I wouldn't change anything but I would let it go up to Gr. 12 because some kids have fought hard to be able to stay in it Every year we have to go through a long fight just to continue SCHOOL in French. I mean if a kid wants to learn French why not give them the opportunity. It's really neat to be able to go up to anyone who speaks only French and know what they're saying.

" Have more subjects in French."

" Over all, I am satisfied with the program although I wish people would not be so racist to us. I enjoy the program and hope it continues."

" The controversy. The discrimination. The way some English teachers treat French students. Over all, I am satisfied with the program although I wish people would not be so racist to us."

" Try to make more adults understand that we French immersion students are no worse or better than English students."

Academic Achievement

Although standardized achievement test data are unavailable, student report cards and school honour roll statistics were examined.

At Golden Secondary School, 36% of the eighth grade students on the honour roll are students who are also enrolled in the French Immersion program. This represents 67% of the students in the French Immersion class and supports findings from the literature which suggest that high achieving students in French Immersion programs will also demonstrate high academic skills and standards in English classes.

The academic performance of the 8th grade French Immersion students, based on teacher assigned marks, was compared to the performance of English program 8th grade students of the same teachers. The comparison was conducted on marks obtained in their eighth grade social studies classes because, for this subject, students of both programs are taught together **in English**. In both groups, students received a range of marks from E to A. However, a greater percentage of the French Immersion students received As and Bs than English program students. Hence, 34% of the comparison group of students in social studies classes received As and Bs, while 72% of the students from the French Immersion program received As and Bs in the same social studies classes -- again, taught in English by the same teachers. The range and distribution of marks for students from the French Immersion program integrated with other students in social studies is similar to that found in their science class (taught in French). Here, 56% of the students received As, and 22% Bs, with one student receiving an E grade.

This analysis of student academic performance, while limited, demonstrates that the level of achievement of students in the 8th grade French Immersion program is consistent across their subjects and does not seem to indicate any mark inflation due to the increased student - teacher contact of the French Immersion teacher at the high school. In addition, it seems reasonable to infer that these students would perform at a high academic standard regardless of the classes in which they are enrolled.

No inferences concerning the achievement of regular English program students may be made from these data -- except to suggest that, at least in social studies, they are also achieving a typical range and distribution of marks appropriate for the nature of their program.

The Educational Process Questionnaire

We see from student responses to the previous student questionnaire, how deeply the community debate over the continuation of the French Immersion program has affected them. In the next section, responses of students in the French Immersion program are compared with those of students (in the same classes with the same teachers) from the English program.

For this questionnaire², students were asked to answer 120 multiple choice questions dealing with four broad educational areas: (1) student perceptions of themselves as learners, (2) student attitudes towards school, (3) student perceptions of their teachers' expectations, and (4) student attitudes towards the French and English programs at their school. Complete data

² Table 3 in the Appendix contains the reliability coefficients and complete information for the t-tests of means for any scales and questions for which statistically significant differences were found.

concerning dimensions on which significant differences were found are contained in the Appendix, Table 2.

The questionnaire was designed to provide composite scores on the following dimensions:

- Academic self-confidence
- Self-acceptance
- Autonomy
- Peer Relations
- Independent Development
- Individualization of Instruction
- Reinforcement of Self-concept
- Classroom participation
- Career Preparation
- Teacher Expectations
- English
- Enjoyment of school**
- Reading**

What proved interesting was that only on the last two were statistically significant differences found -- both in favor of students in the French Immersion program. Despite their perceptions of negative community attitudes, French Immersion students generally were found to enjoy school more than their peers in the regular program. In addition, French Immersion program students also indicated that they read more and believed themselves to be better readers than the English students did.

Further analysis of individual items on which students in the French and English programs differed significantly showed that overall, differences were found on 19 questions, 16 in favor of the French Immersion students, and 3 in favor of the English program students.

Significantly more than students in the 8th grade English program, students in the 8th grade

French Immersion program indicated that:

- they looked forward to going to school every day,
- have an overall positive school experience,
- feel important,
- enjoy English/Language arts,
- they have a good ability to make decisions for themselves,
- ability to help others to do something,
- to get others to see the humour in a given situation,
- they read advanced texts to help them with school subjects,
- they read outside materials,
- and believe themselves to have excellent reading ability.

In addition, more than their English program counterparts, French Immersion students perceive that:

- their teachers expect hard work,
- their teachers give assignments where students are required to think a lot,
- and that they may choose from a variety of materials when working on an assignment.

Students in the English program indicate that they believe their program is favored over the French Immersion programs in the school (while the opposite perception was not found). In addition, English program students perceive more differentiation of instruction in that they report more different assignments and activities going on in their class at any one time.

Not surprisingly, students in French Immersion programs tend to spend more time both at school and outside of school with others in the French Immersion program; but there were no differences in the amount of time each group reported spending with other English program students. French Immersion students also perceived more parental support for their program than did regular program students.

Summary of The Educational Process Questionnaire Findings

Overall, with respect to category (1), student perceptions of themselves as learners, findings from this questionnaire suggest that students in both the French Immersion Program and the regular English program perceive themselves positively as self-confident, independent learners. Only in the area of reading did the French Immersion students seem to have an edge. And this finding is predictable based on findings from the research literature cited earlier.

For category (2), student attitudes towards school, few differences were found. Students demonstrated equivalent levels of career preparation, and positive peer relations. However, overall, students in the French Immersion program indicated a higher level of enjoyment of school.

For category (3), student perceptions of teacher expectations, students in the French Immersion program definitely perceived that their teachers expected them to work hard and to think a lot. However, the groups did not differ with respect to teacher expectations in general, the amount of homework reported, or their classroom involvement and participation.

Finally, in category (4), it is important that students in the regular English program did not perceive that the French Immersion programs received favored treatment; rather the reverse was true. Further, students from both programs indicated considerable involvement with all students in the regular programs, tending to dispel the myth that the French Immersion program created a separate and elite group of students.

These data suggest that a positive balance has been achieved between students in the regular English and the French Immersion programs. Both groups of students are having school experiences which are promoting equally positive student perceptions concerning their academic self-confidence, their independence and autonomy as learners. Students in each program demonstrate similar degrees of self-acceptance as well as comparable peer relations. In addition, students from the two programs report that they are similarly involved in classroom activities, that their teachers have high expectations, individualize their instruction, provide activities which foster career preparation, and provide feedback which is reinforcing of their self-concept. Further, the data indicate that students perceive their programs, whether offered in French or English, to be of equal quality. However, we did find that a greater variety of instructional strategies are being used in the English program, likely facilitating a positive means of addressing a variety of student needs and learning styles.

Thus, the data demonstrate that each program is providing appropriate and positive educational experiences for the students who have chosen to participate in them. Neither program seems to be operating at the expense of students in the other program.

FINDINGS CONCERNING THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM³

In addition to the equal funding which the province allocates on a per student basis of \$5700 annually, a number of funds come into the district for the French Immersion programs. While all figures are subject to annual adjustment, the specific French Immersion funds are listed here.

Additional Funds Available for French Immersion Programs

- Each "lead class" entering a new school has received a "start-up grant" of \$20,000 to offset start-up costs --including the expense of hiring a teacher for what is typically a slightly smaller than average class.
- Until a school has a full complement of students (a class at each grade level), schools receive a "growth grant" in the amount of \$1840 per student x .375 (which represents the number of courses taken in French).
- The growth grant is accompanied by an additional supply grant in the amount of \$95 per student x .375 (again the number of courses taken in French).

³. Table 4, in the appendix provides a summary of the funds which have come into Golden School District No. 18 as a result of the total French Immersion program as well as a prediction, made by personnel from Golden Secondary School, concerning funds which would be available to the high school over the next four years.

- In addition to the annual library grant, based on the district enrollment, in the amount of approximately \$4500., an additional library grant in the amount of \$2250 is available from the federal government to support the acquisition of materials in French.
- Inservice funds to support the French Immersion program are received annually by the district, (\$2579 for 1995 - 1996),
- Finally, the district receives a learning assistance grant in the amount of \$10,000. to help to support learning assistance services in French to French Immersion students.

Financial Benefits to the District

- Some of the funds which would normally be used to buy textbooks for students currently in the French Immersion program are available for general use, as text books and other materials for French Immersion students are bought from special supply and growth grants.
- Inservice activities to support the French Immersion program are funded from funds received for that purpose.
- If there were no French Immersion program, all students requiring learning assistance would be supported from the general fund. The additional \$10,000 provides for a small amount of additional student support in French.

Possible Costs to the District

Bussing

The district does incur minimal costs for the bussing of French Immersion students. The busses which transport the French Immersion students are also used to transport students for special education services and to alleviate school overcrowding throughout the district. At present, there are 79 students who ride the bus to Edelweiss Elementary School. Of these, 16 would have to be bussed regardless of the program in which they were enrolled. Another 15 students ride the bus from Alexander Park School to Lady Grey Elementary School. Although these students are enrolled in the French Immersion program, there is no cost to the district of having them occupy otherwise empty seats on the bus going to Lady Grey School.

In 1993 - 1994, the maximum total cost to the district (over the costs funded by the ministry) for bussing was \$11,300. In 1994 - 1995, the costs are \$13,540 or approximately \$214.92 per French Immersion student per year.

To help place these costs in context, it might be noted that two field trips were approved in February 1995 by the school board. The cost of taking 16 regular, English program students on two trips (a 2 day ski trip to Whistler and a 5 day choral trip to Banff), amounted to \$5932.00 or \$370.75 per students.

Staffing

At this time no staffing costs have been identified. Smaller classes in French Immersion which occurred during the early years of the program have been replaced by split classes which

reflect the general district class size. Costs of previous small classes were, in part, offset by lead class and growth grants. At Golden Secondary School, no additional costs have been incurred during the present academic year (1994-1995), due to the lead class grant and the need at the school to hire a new teacher. As long as class sizes at the elementary and intermediate levels remain approximately the same as the district average and the classes at the high school do not fall below the typical range of class size, there is no anticipated future additional cost to the district of staffing the French Immersion program.

Class Size and School Size

The contract language regarding class size is being implemented in a uniform fashion in all of the schools of Golden School District. This means, that whereas in the past there may have been some "empty seats" in particular classes or programs, this is no longer the case. Concerns have been expressed that some schools in the district are overcrowded and that were it not for the French Immersion program, the district might be in a position to seek funding relief from overcrowding. However, the constraining factor, is not programmatic, but is the presence of empty classroom space in the school at Field. By provincial policy, each district's space needs are calculated according to a formula based on available square footage per pupil across the whole district.

All available statistics from the district office indicate that there would be no change in total available space, in the number of classes offered at any district school, or any change in the

number of split classes if there were no French Immersion program. In other words, we were able to identify no impact of the French Immersion program on either class size or school size across the district.

Resources

As each school receives its full complement of French Immersion classes, text books and materials will begin to wear out. Replacement costs should be considered in the same light as replacement costs for texts for any other students. Although the initial French Immersion text-book acquisition was cost-free to the district, text book replacement should be considered a normal part of the educational program for all students, and funded from the block grant of \$5700 per pupil.

**RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE FRENCH IMMERSION
PROGRAM (K - 7)**

In general, the French Immersion program, K - 7, in Golden School District No. 18 seems to be strong, well-run, well-supported by parents, and producing satisfactory results in terms of student attitudes and academic achievement. The only cost to the district of operating the K - 7 program is bussing -- a cost which seems to be offset by increased funds entering the district for supplies and learning assistance. Hence, the following recommendations are made, not in a desire to correct deficiencies, but in the spirit of moving an already very good program towards excellence.

1. Continue to recruit fluent, well-qualified French Immersion teachers. Language proficiency should be ensured by having someone with native-like competence present at interviews.
2. Work to develop the library and media resources in French at both the intermediate and secondary school levels. This should include print, computer programs, CDROMs, and teacher support materials in French.
3. Strive to increase the French language "richness" of the environment at Lady Grey Elementary School. For example, students might be encouraged to use more French outside of the classroom, a small portion of each assembly might be delivered in French, more posters and signs in both languages might be visible throughout the school.

4. At the intermediate level, linguistic development might be enhanced by offering as many language-intensive subjects as possible in French. Such subjects might include social studies as well as science and language arts, and may necessitate the acquisition of some new text books. In addition, because the influence of English is so pervasive at Lady Grey School, the ratio of French to English classes could be increased to as much as 75 - 25% without a detrimental effect on English skills.
5. Identify one person in the district to be the contact person and co-ordinator of the overall French Immersion program. This person could be a teacher, site-based administrator, or an educator from the district office. This coordinator should be responsible for ensuring that all French Immersion teachers receive all relevant communications and documents from the BC Ministry of Education, as well as for ensuring that accurate and consistent information concerning the program is available as needed.
6. Work towards providing Learning Assistance in French to students at Lady Grey School.
7. Work towards attaining a French monitor for the district on a full-time basis.
8. As a long-term recommendation, the district might consider establishing a complete dual-track French Immersion and English program at Lady Grey School and maintaining Edelweiss as an English program school.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE GOLDEN SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAM

In general the impact on English programs at Golden Secondary School of having extended the French Immersion program to grade 8 during 1994-1995, seems to have been negligible. As previously noted, the 8th grade program was added at no cost to the school district, and with class sizes well within the normal range for classes at the school.

After considering all available data concerning the possibility of extending the French Immersion program at Golden Secondary School, the following recommendations and accompanying caveats are submitted for consideration:

1. Maintain the 8th grade program at Golden Secondary School.
2. Accept the principle that the French Immersion program should continue to Grade 12. This means that, within the guidelines and caveats identified below, French Immersion should be considered as integral to the high school program as any other courses.
3. Implement a French Immersion Program at the secondary school which does not rely on a single teacher. This would alleviate considerable stress on the present French Immersion teacher and would facilitate offering a greater variety of subjects in French Immersion.
4. Consider following the practice of comparison School 1 which offers different electives in French on a rotating basis, each year. Thus one elective might be available to students in grades 9 and 10, while another is available to students in grade 11 and 12.

5. Attempt to maintain a single class of French Immersion students at the grade 8 level to facilitate their entry to high school, but where numbers warrant, make use of split classes for grades 9/10 and 11/12.
6. Build the high school timetable to create as much flexibility as possible. This cannot be achieved by tying blocks of classes together. If a conflict matrix is used to timetable all singleton classes at a given grade level, no specific program will have undue prominence in determining availability of options.
7. Timetable all students needing specific combinations of singletons first -- whether these students are in French Immersion programs or simply require an unusual combination of subjects to ensure university acceptance in the program of their choice.
8. No disagreement was found during the review concerning the need for students presently in the French Immersion program to maintain their language skills and hence to offer an Honours French class for grade 11 and 12. Offering grade 11 French Language Arts will not put any additional pressures on the secondary school. In addition to offering French Language Arts for grade 11/12, only one other subject needs to be available to students to complete their graduation requirements.

Questions have been raised concerning the potential relationship of French Immersion programs and the new provincial requirements including student educational plan, work experience, or career and personal planning. Although it would be beyond the scope of these recommendations to suggest how the secondary school might offer these courses, it has been suggested that one way to handle these requirements might be to implement an advisory block for all students. Should this prove feasible, French Immersion students might fulfill these provincial requirements in French as their additional senior course.

CAVEATS AND CONDITIONS

At present, expansion of the French Immersion program can be accomplished with existing staff at Golden Secondary School. It is anticipated that continuation of the program can also be offered without undue negative impact on the rest of the high school program. However, the following represent the caveats and conditions under which the French Immersion Program should or should not be offered at Golden Secondary School.

1. Extension of the French Immersion program should not, at any time, cost an incumbent teacher his/her position.
2. If additional hiring is required at Golden Secondary School, due to attrition of present staff or expansion of the student body, then every effort should be made to acquire personnel who

will be able to complete the implementation of the French Immersion program by complementing the expertise of present staff.

3. Should no clearly competent bilingual teacher be available, expertise in required subject areas should take precedence over ability to speak French. This caveat is included to ensure excellence in the overall education offered, as most French Immersion teachers will be also be teaching in the English program; it is not intended as an excuse for not hiring teachers with demonstrated expertise both in French and in required subject matter.
4. Nothing in the previous recommendations is intended to require that classes in French be offered if student enrollment falls below the generally accepted minimum class size at the school in any given year. As a general guideline, classes should not be offered in any given year if the enrollment in such classes would fall below the minimum class size of other singletons offered at the same grade level. However, as for any other subject, small enrollments in one year should not preclude offering the same subject the following year.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

*"...a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework is basically the conscious support of individual freedom of choice. We are free to be ourselves but this cannot be left to chance. It must be fostered and pursued actively."
(Trudeau, House of Commons, Oct. 8, 1971).*

It has frequently been said that resolving the "French Immersion debate" in Golden School District No. 18 is a "no win" situation. It is to be hoped that the converse may be true. Data relevant to the impact of the French Immersion Program on the English programs of Golden School District No. 18, demonstrate that there are negligible costs, no negative impact, and some benefits to the students of the district overall.

All three of the secondary school administrators of other schools contacted were supportive of offering French Immersion; two of them claimed to have "fought" for the inclusion of the French Immersion program at their schools. Their belief that it adds to the cultural diversity and richness of the school is widely shared. Hence, continuation of a presently effective program which operates at almost no additional cost to the district should be seen in the light of the above quotation -- as an opportunity for adding to the educational experiences of all students, whether they participate directly in the French Immersion program, or whether they experience only occasional additional educational opportunities and activities.

Golden School District No. 18 has actively pursued a policy of individual freedom of choice by offering a French Immersion program as well as a regular English language program. The recommendations which have been made in this report have been intended both to enhance

the French Immersion program and to ensure the continued integrity and quality of the English program offered at all levels for all students. It is our hope that the recommendations will be received and implemented in the spirit of the "win - win" situation which is envisaged -- a spirit which is intended to support freedom of choice for all students and families within the district.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. French Immersion Program Comparisons of Other Small Secondary Schools.

	School 1	School 2	School 3
No. students	650	650	860
No. teachers	42	40	53.7
FI students:	gr.10:14; gr.11: 6 gr.12: 2 (1)	gr. 8: 13; gr.9: 6 gr.10: 9 -- gr.11 & 12 to be added in next two years	gr.8: 12; gr.9: 12; gr.10:9; gr.11:1; will extend to gr 12 next year.
Subjects taught in French	gr.9: sci., language, sci elective (cuisine /culture); year 2:language, PE, elective; year 3: social studies, language, elective	math/science/social studies/language 8th grade - separate; 9 & 10 together	PE,Social studies, French Literature, French language; gr.8 separate; 9/10 split . (taught by 3 full time teachers)
School Organization	semester (flexible):8 blocks, 4 per semester (some double) AABCD; BBADC etc...no FI class less than 7 or more than 14 (at present)	Copernican - FI take approx. 50% in French	semester (flexible)-with am classes 1 hr.27 min & pm classes 1 hr.10 min - M,T & Th,F rotate and Wed allows contact time etc.
Finances	SB budgeting- grants offset small classes	new materials have been paid for - no cost to school; small classes are seen as an investment in the future; classes below 8 - 9 students would be dropped	no cost - additional federal funding
Impact	no effect on Eng. prog offerings; no increase in correspondence;	no impact on Eng program; FI classes not unique as singletons no teacher dissatisfaction	no impact - no problems caused by FI - "we fought to get it."
Timetable	timetable FI students first but don't build it around FI; attempt to find "best fit" for all students and all singletons	always a problem for all subjects - need training in Copernican timetabling for small school	depends on how creative the staff are--options will exist if there is the desire & need for them (about 15 is cut-off)
Advantages	another option, graduating with dual certificate, adds to the culture of the school	kids are excellent; parents are involved; "a culturally very rich place"; "a good place to be for all kids"	brings a different culture ie brings in the outside world
Cautions	teachers must be equally competent in French and English; need more than one teacher in the school; if it costs, we don't want it.	FI kids do need to grow into it and learn to reach out; take care of little things; need district support	there is a need to grow and not keep our heads in the sand...

Table 2. Educational Process Questionnaire

Variable	FI Mean	Eng. Mean	T Score	Sign 95%
Enjoyment of School	28.23	24.20	3.10	.004
Reading	16.29	14.33	3.24	.002
Questions:				
look forward 7	3.11	2.15	3.09	.004
feel important 11	4.06	3.58	2.38	.020
ability to make up mind 16	4.11	3.77	2.20	.032
helping others to do something 36	4.0	3.52	2.69	.009
getting others to see humour 37	4.05	3.54	2.05	.048
read advanced text 46	2.83	2.0	2.57	.017
outside reading 49	4.05	3.34	2.81	.008
overall school experience 52	4.17	3.20	4.87	.000
reading ability 54	4.44	3.92	2.85	.007
teacher expects hard work 75	4.78	4.20	3.42	.001
choose different materials 78	3.33	2.78	2.15	.038
different assignments - same time 82	2.35	3.03	-2.96	.006
different activities - same time 92	1.94	2.90	-3.17	.002
assignments require you to think a lot 99	4.0	3.56	2.12	.041
enjoy English Language Arts 103	3.61	3.02	2.18	.037
FI students - time at school with other FI students 111	4.33	2.90	6.04	.000
FI students - time at home with other FI students 112	4.0	2.38	6.10	.000
parental support for your program 117	4.56	3.44	4.43	.000
perception that your program is favored 118	2.17	3.39	-3.52	.001

Table 3. Educational Process Questionnaire: Reliability coefficients for scales, showing a Cronbach Alpha score.

Academic self-confidence	.88
Self-acceptance	.83
Autonomy	.65
Peer Relations	.88
Independent Development	.72
Individualization of Instruction	.72
Reinforcement of Self-concept	.78
Classroom participation	.72
Career Preparation	.62
Teacher Expectations	.74
English	.77
Enjoyment of School	.81
Reading	.80

Table 4. Funds accruing to the district for a French Immersion Program.

I. Funds which have accrued to the district for the French Immersion program on an annual basis over the last five years (matching funds required):

1990 - 1991	\$40,595.00*
1991 - 1992	13,381.00
1992 - 1993	25,016.00
1993 - 1994	30,345.00
1994 - 1995	30,151.00

* includes \$29,600 for program expansion.

Total **\$139,488.00**

II. Predicted funds to be received for established program, K - 7, including supply, library, learning assistance, and inservice grants: (based on the present amount calculated by formula, less 15%)

5 years (@ approx.) \$19,189.00 per year.

Total: **\$ 95,948.00**

III. Funds available for a secondary school program between 1994 - 1995 and 1999 - 2000:

Based on present figures, funding includes grants for:

changes in enrollment

growth grant & supply grant (All figures are approximate⁴ and are rounded to the nearest \$100.)

Already received for 1st year 1994 - 1995	\$35,300.**
Available 2nd year, 1995 - 1996	15,200.
3rd year, 1996 - 1997	15,800.
4th year, 1997 - 1998	9,500
5th year, 1990 - 1999	11,500.
6th year, 1999 - 2000	4,500.

** includes \$20,000 start-up grant

Total **\$ 91,800.**

OVERALL TOTAL OF FUNDS FOR FRENCH IMMERSION: \$327,237.00

⁴ Figures include \$2140 library grant; per pupil supply grant based on FTE ; and growth grant based on number of pupils and FTE.