



# Three-Year Strathcona County Engagement

## French Immersion Public Consultation No. 2

### What We Heard Report

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**For:**

Elk Island Public Schools

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# Executive Summary



The **focus** of the engagement was to engage participants in a discussion of French Immersion programming successes, challenges and concerns; and explore possible solutions. Participants were also offered the chance to ask questions and offer feedback.

## Process Overview

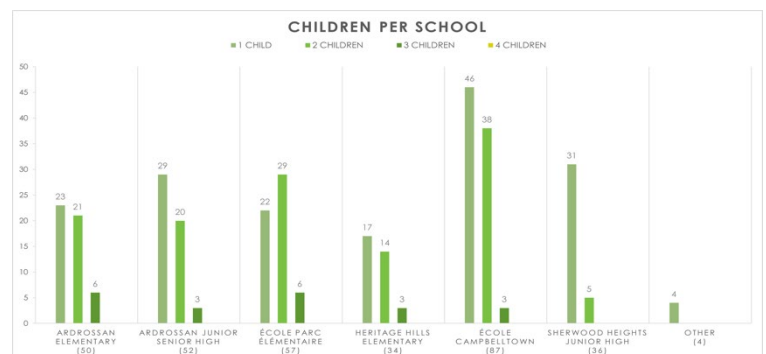
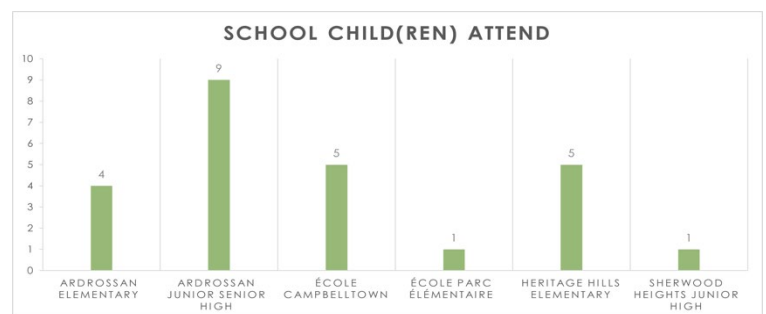
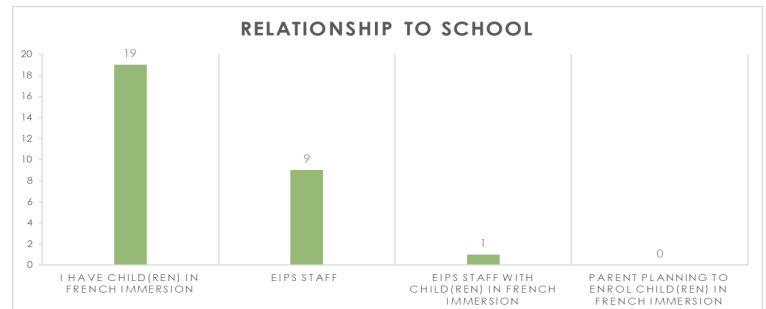
French Immersion program families, students and community members were invited to attend a public consultation session at Heritage Hills Elementary on Feb. 7, 2023—between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The focus: To affirm the findings of the Oct. 26, 2023, What We Heard Report; learn about the challenges facing the EIPS French Immersion program; have an opportunity to provide feedback on barriers to continuing in the French Immersion program; and provide advice and possible options for EIPS to consider as it makes its decision.

Upon arrival, participants were welcomed, invited to sign in and given a wayfinder explaining the process. Participants also had an opportunity to access EIPS-prepared background information about the French Immersion program and the Engagement No. 1 What We Heard Report—using a QR code. WMC team members were available to moderate the session and facilitate the breakout sessions. Also in attendance: EIPS trustees, EIPS senior leadership representatives, administrators from each EIPS French Immersion school and Division staff.

The public consultation began with a 20-minute presentation and 10-minute Q and A, moderated by WMC. Next, a single breakout session was facilitated by WMC. A WMC notetaker captured the discussion in real time.

## Who Participated?

In total, **20 participants** took part in the in-person drop-in session. For the survey, 284 people started the online survey, and 183 completed the last mandatory question, meaning some questions were skipped or missed. All submitted responses are included in the analysis even if the respondent did not complete the entire survey. The breakdown of numbers by in-person and survey processes is also noted.



# Executive Summary

## Findings

A number of big ideas emerged that WMC suggests EIPS consider moving forward. These include:



### Challenges of a Rural-Urban School Division

Many participants in public consultation No. 2 identified challenges reflective of a school division encompassing both urban and rural settings, and the geographical distance and space that goes with that.



### Conditions for Student Success

A thread through many of the responses to the questions posed during the public consultation can be summed up as the conditions participants in the consultation see as necessary for student success.



### Need a Vision for French Immersion in EIPS

The need for an EIPS vision for French Immersion programming was a common thread across the questions posed during the public consultation process.



### Time & Distance

The location and accessibility of French Immersion programming is tied to participants' desire for location (proximity) and accessibility.



### Concerns the Program will Relocate

The idea is found in both the significant number of public consultation participants who spoke about moving to Ardrossan for the French Immersion program, and those who are worried EIPS will move the French Immersion program out of Ardrossan.



### French Immersion in Sherwood Park

There is significant interest in EIPS offering a French Immersion high school program in Sherwood Park.

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## Comparison with Public Engagement No. 1 Findings

### New Themes

- Need for EIPS to develop a vision for the French Immersion program, which can be used to market the program in an effort to increase both student retention and the recruitment of teachers, and
- A stronger focus on quality teaching within and across the programs.

### Common Themes

- Location of the program, and the time and distance required to travel to the location are important to French Immersion families. Support for the French Immersion high school program to remain in Ardrossan and a concern for the overall stability of the French Immersion program in the community.
- Support for a French Immersion high school program in Sherwood Park.
- Support for location and accessibility of programming, including having K-12 French Immersion programming in each of the three communities: Ardrossan, Fort Saskatchewan and Sherwood Park.
- Need for fewer school transitions for students in the French Immersion program.
- Support for more options in French and for the availability of more options for junior and senior high students enrolled in the French Immersion program.
- Need for increased support for students and families, particularly at the higher grades.

## French Immersion Phase 2

The results of the French Immersion Phase 2 public consultation are reported below.

### Public Consultation No. 2

Two digital media pieces were designed and shared with EIPS to advertise the session. In addition, EIPS drafted a letter addressed to French Immersion program families informing them of the session and providing the date, time frame and information about the process. For those who couldn't attend the meeting, or who wanted to provide additional input, the Division also sent families a followup letter with a link to an online survey. Both letters were distributed through EIPS communications channels and posted on the EIPS Three-Year Strathcona County Engagement: French Immersion [web page](#).

The focus of the engagement was to engage participants in a discussion of French Immersion programming successes, challenges and concerns; and explore possible solutions. Participants were also offered the chance to ask questions and provide feedback.

#### **Process Overview**

French Immersion program families, students and community members were invited to attend a public consultation session at Heritage Hills Elementary on Feb. 7, 2023—between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The focus: To affirm the findings of the Oct. 26, 2023, What We Heard report; learn about the challenges facing the EIPS French Immersion program; have an opportunity to provide feedback on barriers to continuing in the French Immersion program; and provide advice and possible options for EIPS to consider as it makes its decision.

Upon arrival, participants were welcomed, invited to sign in, and given a wayfinder explaining the process. Participants also had an opportunity to access EIPS-prepared background information about the French Immersion program and the Engagement No. 1 What We Heard Report—using a QR code. WMC team members were available to moderate the session and facilitate the breakout sessions. Also in attendance: EIPS trustees, EIPS senior leadership representatives, administrators from each EIPS French Immersion school and Division staff.

The public consultation began with a 20-minute presentation and 10-minute Q and A, moderated by WMC. Next, a single breakout session was facilitated by WMC. A WMC notetaker captured the discussion in real time.

## French Immersion Public Consultation No. 2 Wayfinder



### Three-Year Strathcona County Engagement **Let's Talk About French Immersion**

#### What is the goal of this session?

To review the What We Heard Report; discuss French Immersion programming successes, challenges and concerns; and explore possible solutions. Attendees will also have a chance to ask questions and offer feedback.

#### What is being explored?

Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) is exploring ways to enhance its French Immersion program, address enrolment pressures and boost retention at the junior high and senior high levels.

#### Where are we in the process?



#### Your voice matters!

The Division will use the feedback to inform next steps, guide future public engagement efforts and develop possible options.

**Breakout room:** [Gym](#) | [Library](#) | [Drama Room](#) | [Classroom FS 234](#)



### Three-Year Strathcona County Engagement **Let's Talk About French Immersion**

Tonight's engagement session will take approximately two (2) hours. It will start with a presentation, followed by a WMC-facilitated breakout room session. The session will include conversation and feedback on the below topics—used to help EIPS develop possible options to enhance its French Immersion programming. *Your breakout room location is highlighted on this [wayfinder](#).*

1. What are your initial thoughts about the challenges presented?
2. What do you think is important for EIPS to consider as it explores solutions?
3. What might prevent you from having your child continue with the French Immersion program?
4. What are some potential options EIPS should explore?
5. Additional thoughts?

#### SIGN-UP FOR EIPS EMAIL UPDATES

To receive news and updates about the EIPS French Immersion engagement effort, visit: [bit.ly/3NafLku](https://bit.ly/3NafLku)

Following the session, WMC launched a Let's Talk French Immersion survey, designed to align with the in-person public consultation session. The survey was shared by EIPS on Feb. 8, 2023—through the French Immersion web page and as a direct email to all French Immersion families and interested community members. The survey closed on Feb. 21, 2023, at 11:45 p.m.



## Engagement Feedback

It is important for the integrity of the consultation process that consistent data is collected from all engagement forums. For this reason, the same questions were used for the in-person sessions and the online survey. There were, however, a few minor changes in the process and presentation of the online survey to help respondents answer the questions consistently. For example, for some questions, survey respondents were cued to specific PowerPoint presentation slides and frequently asked questions and answers, used during the in-person session, to provide additional context to inform their responses.

In total, 20 participants took part in the in-person drop-in session. For the survey, 284 people started the online survey, and 183 completed the last mandatory question, meaning some questions were skipped or missed. All submitted responses are included in the analysis even if the respondent did not complete the entire survey. The breakdown of numbers by in-person and survey processes is also noted.

A detailed summary of responses starts on page 8, "Summary of Participant Responses and Key Themes."

# Summary of Big Ideas, Participant Responses and Key Themes

The What We Heard Report includes a summary of the big ideas that emerged from public consultation No. 2, followed by a detailed synopsis of the feedback received. The detailed feedback includes in-person responses, survey responses, a survey response analysis encompassing a comparison with in-person responses and a comparison to the findings from public consultation No. 1.

## Summary of Big Ideas

A number of big ideas emerged that WMC suggests EIPS consider moving forward. These include:

- **Need for a vision for French Immersion in EIPS** – The need for an EIPS vision for French Immersion programming was a common thread across the questions posed during the public consultation process. Tied to the need for a vision is assurance for French Immersion families of the program's stability for the long term, marketing the program to EIPS families, and recruitment and retention of fluent French speakers to the French Immersion program.
- **Concerns the Program will Relocate** – The idea is found in both the significant number of public consultation participants who spoke about moving to Ardrossan for the French Immersion program and those who are worried EIPS will move the French Immersion program out of Ardrossan. A few participants also shared the concern either EIPS will stop offering the French Immersion program at all or that it may move from being publicly offered to being privatized.
- **Time and distance** – As identified in the What We Heard Report from public consultation No. 1, time and distance are factors for families. The theme is connected to some feedback from public consultation No. 2, that respondents want EIPS to consider a kindergarten to Grade 12 French Immersion option in each of the three major locations—Ardrossan, Fort Saskatchewan and Sherwood Park.
- **French Immersion in Sherwood Park** – There is significant interest in EIPS offering a French Immersion high school program in Sherwood Park. Participants offered reasons, including not having to travel to Ardrossan, availability of more options for students in addition to French Immersion, and consistency of programming from kindergarten to Grade 12.
- **Conditions for student success** – A thread through many of the responses to the questions posed during the public consultation can be summed up as the conditions participants in the consultation see as necessary for student success. These conditions include supporting a quality French Immersion education by having teachers, substitute teachers and administrators within the program speak fluent French; the need for supports for both students and their English-speaking parents; quality and updated material; and a vibrant, cultural experience both in and outside the classroom.

Some participants in the public consultation indicated their children receive a high-quality French Immersion program up to Grade 6, but the quality waned beginning in Grade 7.



Some also said instruction was often delivered in English at the secondary grades, particularly if a substitute teacher was required. These participants also expressed their concern their children would not leave the French Immersion program with the fluency in French, and academic skills needed, to succeed beyond Grade 12.

- **Challenges of a rural-urban school division** – Many participants in public consultation No. 2 identified challenges reflective of a school division encompassing both urban and rural settings and the geographical distance and space that goes with that. A few participants acknowledged the challenges for EIPS about any decision(s) it makes.

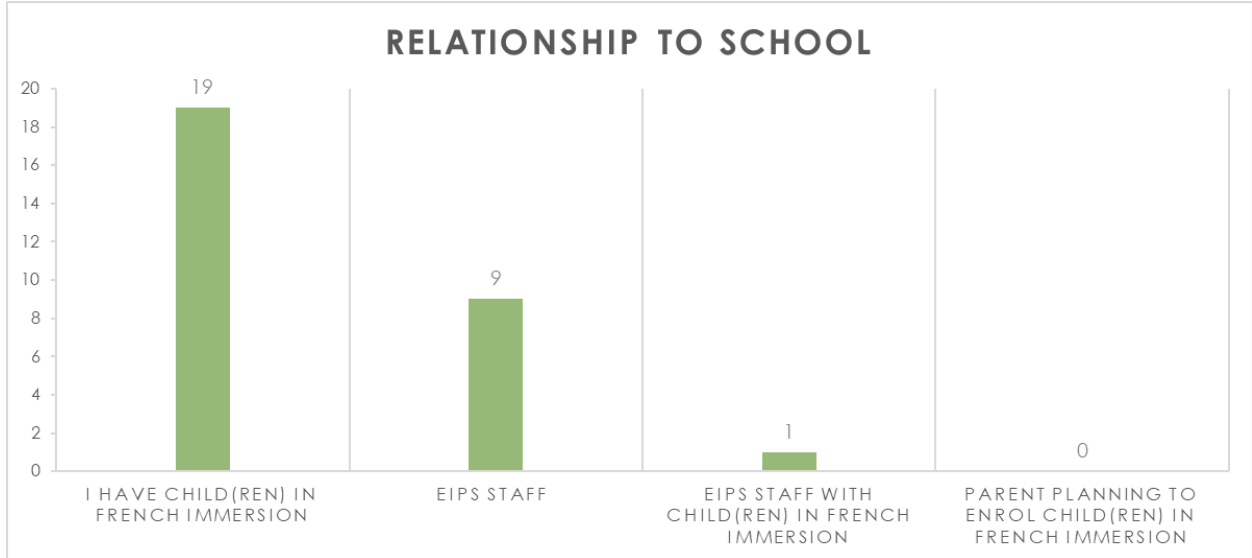
In addition to the big ideas, some feedback emerged across the five questions that WMC suggests EIPS take into consideration:

- There was a perception among some participants the challenges presented by EIPS as part of the second public consultation are divisionwide enrolment and capacity challenges and not French Immersion challenges. Tied to this were comments about the need for clear communication from EIPS and followup to the public consultation.
- The majority of respondents who spoke about retention expressed an understanding of the challenges. However, there was no consensus on a possible solution(s) to the retention challenge.
- Some participants expressed fatigue with this discussion, which they perceive to have gone on for a number of years with no perceptible progress.

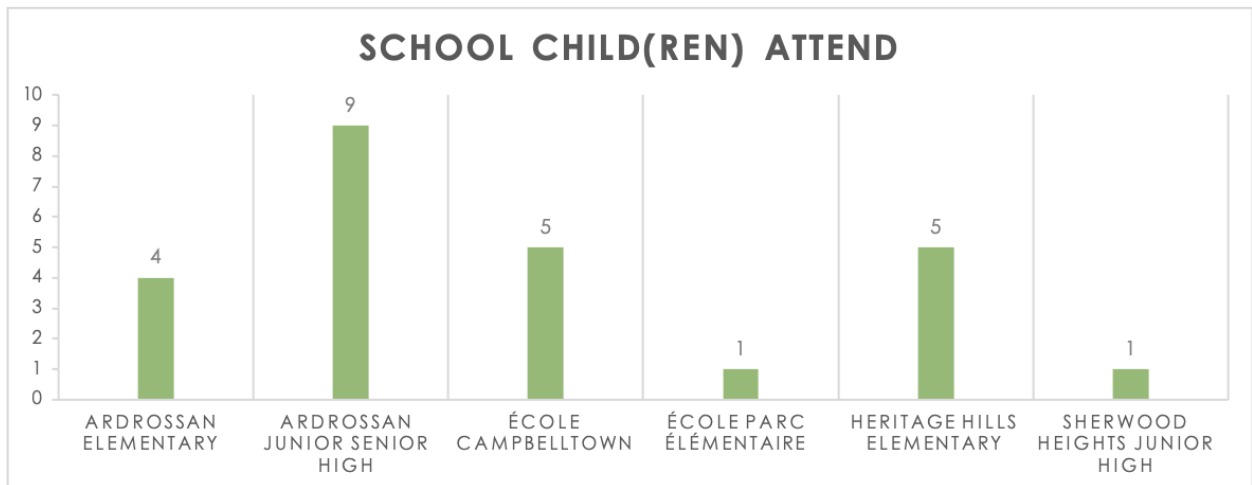
## Summary of Responses and Key Themes

### In-Person Breakout Session

#### *In-Person Demographic Data*



NOTE: Some parents checked more than one category.



NOTE: Some participants indicated they had children in more than one school. École Campbelltown and École Parc Élémentaire hosted parent-teacher interviews on February 7. The lower number of participants in attendance may be, partly, because of this.

### Question 1

What are your initial thoughts about the challenges presented?

#### Key Themes: Participants' Responses

During the breakout session, participant responses to this question included:

- Five participants expressed concern about the school changes their child(ren) experienced while enrolled in the French Immersion program. Related to the school changes comments:
  - one participant spoke about the benefits of students staying in the same school over the course of their studies; and
  - a second participant stated not knowing what school they will be attending is stressful for students and families.
- Other single-participant comments offered during the breakout session included the following ideas:
  - need for EIPS to develop a vision for the French Immersion program;
  - impact of current school boundaries;
  - need for data on why students are leaving;
  - positive École Campbelltown school culture;
  - students switching to Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School or other school divisions;
  - desire to have more programs offered in addition to French—such as sports; and
  - need for communication and followup from public engagements.

### Question 2

What do you think is important for EIPS to consider as it explores solutions?

#### Key Themes: Participants' Responses

During the breakout session, participant responses to this question included:

- Three participants reiterated the need for EIPS to develop and communicate a vision for the French Immersion program.
  - All three participants further tied that vision to supporting the recruitment and retention of French Immersion teachers.
  - Two of the three participants spoke about the importance of having teachers who are fluent in French.
- Two participants expressed concern about the impact on enrolment and the school community if the French Immersion program is moved.
- Other single-participant comments offered during the breakout session included the following ideas:
  - keeping students at the centre of decisions;
  - concern for the apparent lack of stability in the French Immersion program;

- need more data on why students are leaving the French Immersion program; and
- busing and transportation challenges because of the location of the junior and senior high French Immersion program.

### Question 3

What might prevent you from having your child continue with the French Immersion program?

### Key Themes: Participants' Responses

During the breakout session, participant responses to this question included:

- Three participants spoke about the need for a clear vision and a transition plan to support the success of the French Immersion program.
  - Tied to this were two additional comments about the failure of the French Immersion program at Bev Facey Community High in the 1990s.
- Two participants indicated the best interest(s) of their child should be at the centre of any decision to remain in the French Immersion program.
- Other single-participant comments offered during the breakout session included the following ideas:
  - concern for the time students spend busing to the French Immersion program;
  - need for support for English-speaking families;
  - lack of available options at Ardrossan Junior Senior High; and
  - to continue in French Immersion involves changing schools and leaving École Campbelltown's culture and community.

### Question 4

What are some potential options EIPS should explore?

### Key Themes: Participants' Responses

During the breakout session, participant responses to this question included:

- Two participants addressed the need for EIPS to communicate a clear plan for the French Immersion program.
- Other single-participant comments offered during the breakout session included the following ideas:
  - concern for the number of school transitions;
  - hold a focus group with Fort Saskatchewan families; and
  - collaborate with Elk Island Catholic Schools to offer French Immersion.

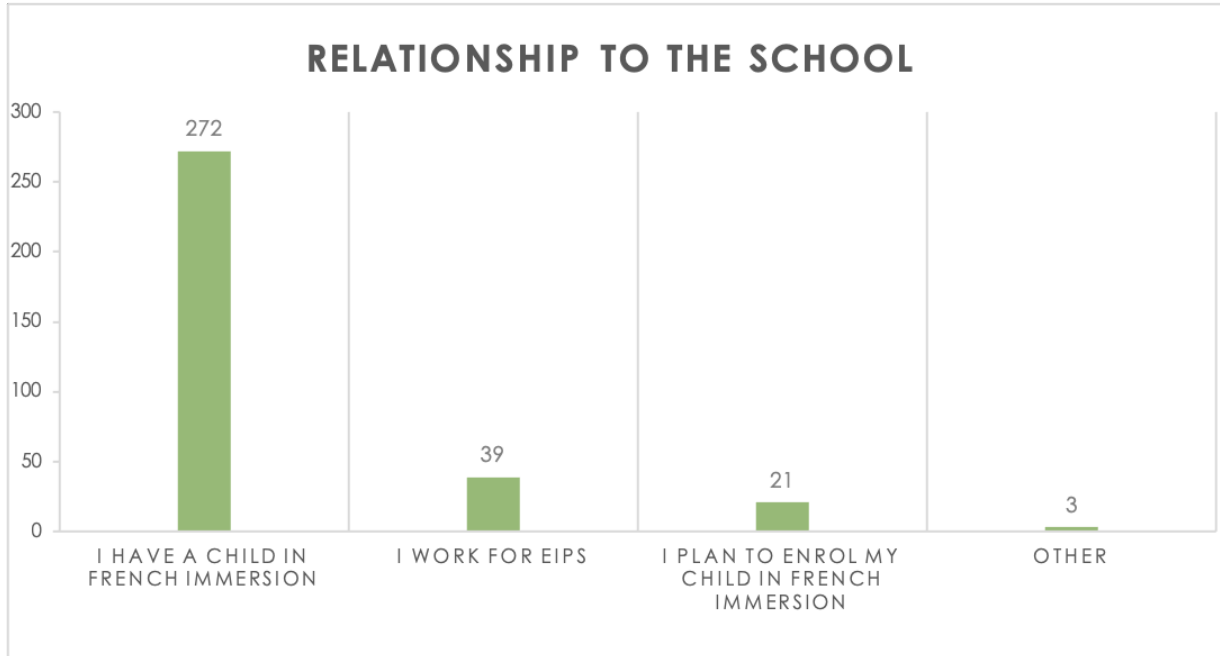
### Question 5

Additional thoughts?

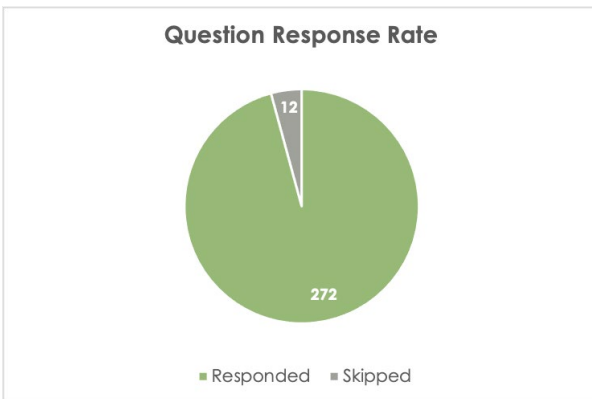
No additional thoughts were offered by participants in the breakout session.

## Survey Results

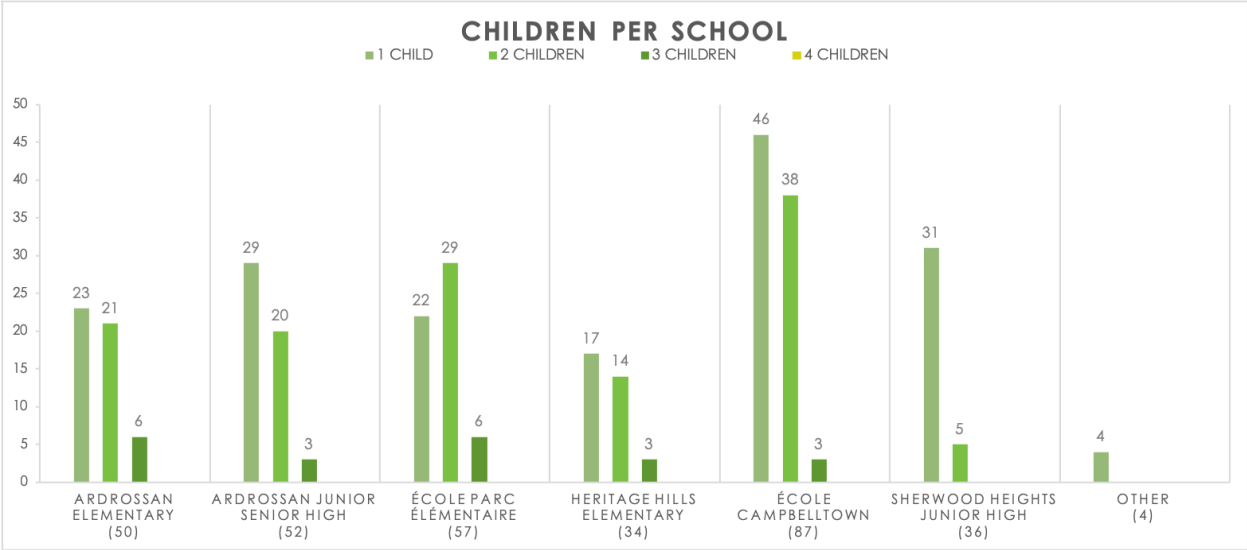
### Survey Demographic Data



NOTE: Some participants checked more than one category.



Of the 284 people who took the survey, 12 chose to skip this question.



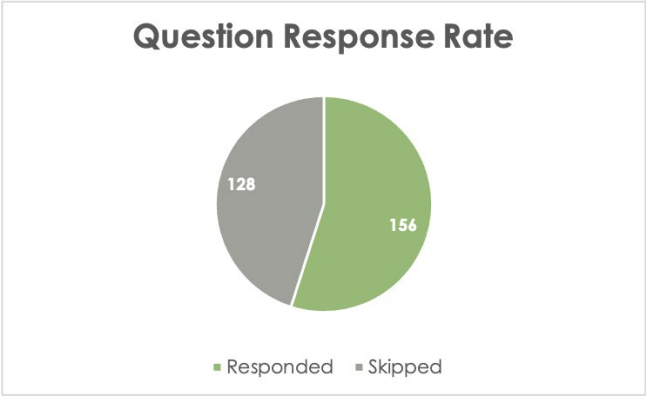
NOTE: Some participants indicated they had children in more than one school.

NOTE: For the survey results, if three or more similar responses were received, it was identified as a key theme. It's important to note, several participants provided feedback that surfaced two or more themes and the responses were coded as such. Responses that did not directly or explicitly provide an answer to the question were reviewed and captured separately from the key themes.

The Analysis section of each question encompasses a comparison with in-person responses received during the public consultation on February 7.

**Question 1**

What are your initial thoughts about the challenges presented? Do you have any concerns?



Of the 284 people who took the survey, 128 chose to skip this question.

## Survey Participants' Responses: Key Themes

From the survey responses, the key themes that emerged in response to this question include:

- Twenty-three respondents, 14.7%, stated busing, including time and distance, was a concern for them.
- Nineteen respondents, 12.2%, stated their desire to have a French Immersion senior high program in Sherwood Park.
- Seventeen respondents, 10.9%, supported keeping the French Immersion program in Ardrossan.
  - Seven of the 17 respondents indicated their choice of Ardrossan to live so their children could attend the French Immersion program from kindergarten to Grade 12.
  - Eight of the 17 respondents expressed concern about the impact on Ardrossan Junior Senior High and the community if the program were to be moved.
  - Three of the 17 respondents noted concern about the possibility the French Immersion program would no longer be offered.
- Thirteen respondents, 8.32%, stated their desire to have a French Immersion program through to Grade 12 in Fort Saskatchewan.
- Twelve respondents, 7.7%, commented on enrolment pressures and physical space as a concern for them.
- Twelve respondents, 7.7%, expressed their desire to see more support for students enrolled in the French Immersion program and English-speaking parents.
- Ten respondents, 6.4%, noted they wished to see more communication from EIPS, including information about next steps for the French Immersion program to help inform their decisions, increased marketing of the French Immersion program and more followup from public engagements.
- Nine respondents, 5.8%, suggested there was a need for EIPS to gather more information about why students are leaving the French Immersion program.
- Eight respondents, 5.1%, indicated their agreement with the challenges presented by EIPS in the background information provided as part of the survey.
- Seven respondents, 4.5%, stated location and accessibility of French Immersion programming was important to them; however no specific location was identified.
- Seven respondents, 4.5%, expressed their concern about the number of times students are required to change schools to remain in the French Immersion program.
- Other thoughts included:
  - Five respondents, 3.2%, commented on the need for EIPS to develop and share a vision for the French Immersion program.



- Five respondents, 3.2%, noted the quality of education received in the French Immersion program was tied to staffing the programs with teachers and administration fluent in French.
- Five respondents, 3.2%, expressed their concern about large class sizes and the effect of these on the quality of education and the ability of teachers to provide support to students.
- Five respondents, 3.2%, noted the impact of the current attendance boundaries on enrolment and school-capacity concerns.
- Four respondents, 2.6%, shared their desire for students to be able to stay in the same school for as long as possible.
- Four respondents, 2.6%, indicated they wished to see more junior high and senior high programs and options in addition to French Immersion, for example, sports programs.
- Four respondents, 2.6%, expressed their desire for EIPS to increase their advocacy at the government level. Advocacy efforts suggested included getting new schools funded more quickly, three respondents, and continuing French Immersion through the public education system versus through private education, one respondent.
- Three respondents, 1.9%, spoke about switching to Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School or another school division for junior and senior high school.
- Three respondents, 1.9%, shared their concerns around the process, including the length of time being taken to make a decision, the perceived bias in the statistics presented, and use of tax dollars to support the public consultations.

A few responses did not create a theme, but the importance of the French Immersion program, including the culture, students and staff, were noted as important factors to consider.

### Analysis

Approximately one-third, 48, of survey respondents who chose to answer this question, noted their desire for a French Immersion program in their location, while an additional seven respondents indicated that location and accessibility were important to them in general. In line with this were participants' concerns about busing, time and distance and the impact of any decision around the French Immersion program on these factors. One in-person participant raised the question of open boundaries for French Immersion programming.

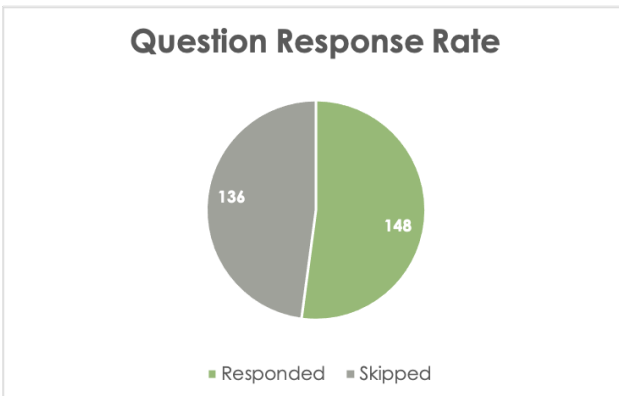
Seven survey respondents expressed concerns about the number of school changes students were required to make to remain in the French Immersion program, while five in-person participants spoke about concerns related to changing schools.

Communication from EIPS to French Immersion families, including the development and sharing of a vision for French Immersion, was important to both survey respondents, 10 people, and in-person participants, three people.

Five survey respondents and one in-person participant noted their belief the quality of education received in the French Immersion program was tied to staffing the programs with teachers and administration fluent in French.

## Question 2

What do you think is important for EIPS to consider or to know as it explores solutions?



Of the 284 people who took the survey, 136 chose to skip this question.

## Survey Participants' Responses: Key Themes

- Thirty respondents, 20.3%, stated busing, including time and distance, were concerns.
- Twenty respondents, 13.5%, expressed their desire for a senior high program in either Sherwood Park, 10 respondents, or Fort Saskatchewan, five respondents, or both, five respondents.
- Fifteen respondents supported keeping the French Immersion program in Ardrossan.
  - Seven of the 15 respondents indicated their choice of Ardrossan to live so their children could attend the French Immersion program from kindergarten to Grade 12.
  - Eight of the 15 respondents expressed concern about the impact on Ardrossan Junior Senior High, and the community, if the program was moved.
- Fifteen respondents, 10.1%, commented on the importance of considering location and accessibility in any decision, however no specific location was identified.
- Eleven respondents, 7.4%, indicated the availability of more options, in addition to French Immersion, was important to them.
- Ten respondents, 6.8%, commented on the need for EIPS to develop and share a vision for the French Immersion program.
- Ten respondents, 6.8%, noted the quality of education received in the French Immersion program was tied to staffing the programs with teachers and administration fluent in French.
- Nine respondents, 6.1%, expressed their desire to see more support for students enrolled in the French Immersion program and English-speaking families.
- Seven respondents, 4.7%, noted they wanted more communication from EIPS, including information about next steps for the French Immersion program to help inform their decisions, increased marketing of the French Immersion program and more followup from public engagements.
- Seven respondents, 4.7%, asked EIPS to keep students at the centre of any decision.

- One of the seven respondents said they want EIPS to keep both students and staff at the centre of any decision.
- Other thoughts included:
  - Five respondents, 3.4%, suggested there was a need for EIPS to gather more information about why students are leaving the French Immersion program.
  - Five respondents, 3.4%, expressed their desire for a single-track French Immersion program in each community—Ardrossan, Fort Saskatchewan and Sherwood Park.
  - Five respondents, 3.4%, expressed concern about the number of times students are required to change schools to remain in the French Immersion program.
  - Five respondents, 3.4%, shared comments and concerns around process, including lack of consultation with educators working in the program, one respondent; looking at enrolment projections, two respondents; and the need for increased advocacy focused on prioritizing education and funding, two respondents.
  - Four respondents, 2.7%, spoke about switching to Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School or another school division.

A few responses did not create a theme, but class sizes and support for students learning two languages were noted as important.

### Analysis

Approximately one-quarter, 35, of survey respondents who chose to answer Question 2, noted their desire for a French Immersion program in their location, while an additional 15 respondents indicated location and accessibility were important to them in general. In line with this were concerns expressed by 30 survey participants about busing, time and distance and the impact of any decision around the French Immersion program on these factors. Busing and transportation challenges were identified as a concern by one in-person participant.

The impact of moving the French Immersion program from Ardrossan, including loss of students from the program and negative impact on the school and community, was noted by eight survey respondents and two in-person participants.

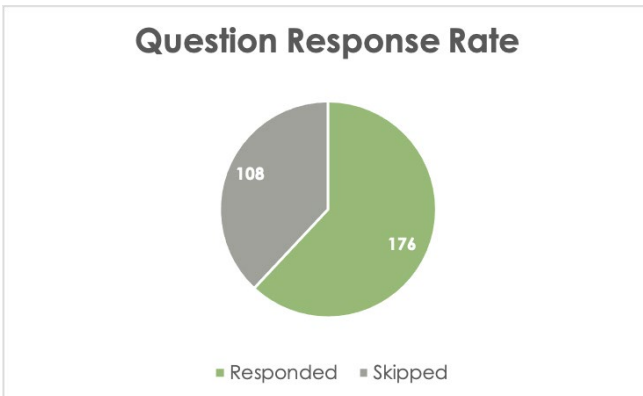
Ten survey respondents and three in-person respondents addressed the need for EIPS to develop and communicate a vision for the French Immersion program.

Seven survey respondents and one in-person participant asked EIPS to keep students at the centre of decisions.

Five survey respondents and one in-person participant noted the need for EIPS to gather data on why students are leaving the French Immersion program.

### Question 3

What factors might prevent you from z the French Immersion program?



Of the 284 people who took the survey, 108 chose to skip this question.

### Survey Participants' Responses: Key Themes

From the survey responses, the key themes that emerged in response to this question include:

- One hundred and eleven respondents, 63.1%, identified the location of the program to be a key factor in whether their child would continue with the French Immersion program. Almost all comments related to the proximity of the school, including the ability to walk to the facility. Where respondents gave specific reasons or locations, the breakdown is as follows:
  - Twenty-four respondents, 13.6%, said busing or driving their child to Ardrossan would mean they would withdraw from the French Immersion program.
  - Eighteen respondents, 10.2%, said they would withdraw their child from French Immersion if the Ardrossan-based program moved or was curtailed.
  - Fifteen respondents, 8.5%, said they would withdraw their child if there were no junior high or senior high programs in Sherwood Park.
  - Four respondents, 2.3%, said they would withdraw their child if there were no junior high or senior high programs in Fort Saskatchewan.
- Thirty-two respondents, 18.2%, stated busing, including time and distance, was a concern.
- Twenty-seven respondents, 15.3%, said the unreliability of having French-speaking teachers and substitutes might be a reason for moving their child elsewhere.
- Twenty-one respondents, 12 %, said they might move their child because the school did not provide enough resources or options for the student and family. Some responses tied this to the small size of the French Immersion program in some locations.
- Eighteen respondents, 10.2%, said they would withdraw their child if there were barriers to their academic success.
- Seventeen respondents, 9.7%, said their child would make the decision about remaining in the program.
- Fifteen respondents, 8.5%, said the declining quality of French Immersion programming after elementary might be a reason to leave the program.

- Twelve respondents, 6.82%, identified the need for more supports for both students and families as a critical factor for remaining in the program.
- Other reasons identified included:
  - Eight respondents, 4.6%, said a strong school culture would be necessary for them to remain.
  - Eight respondents, 4.6%, referenced class sizes as a significant factor.
  - Seven respondents, 4%, said they would consider switching to Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School or other divisions.
  - Six respondents, 3.4%, said they might leave if there was inadequate physical literacy or athletics programming.
  - Five respondents, 2.8%, identified the need for a vision for the French Immersion program.
  - Four respondents, 2.3%, said having to change schools would be a factor.
  - Three respondents, 1.7%, said they would leave if they thought their child would not be adequately prepared for secondary education.

### Analysis

It is clear from the responses to this question French Immersion programming proximity is a high priority for many respondents. The French Immersion program in Ardrossan is well regarded by those attending it. Many indicate they would likely leave the French Immersion program if it were moved or downsized, 18 respondents. An almost equal number of respondents identify a junior high and senior high program in Sherwood Park as key to their child remaining in the program, 15 respondents. A large cohort of respondents clearly stated they will not put their child in an Ardrossan-based program because of busing and transportation concerns, 24 respondents.

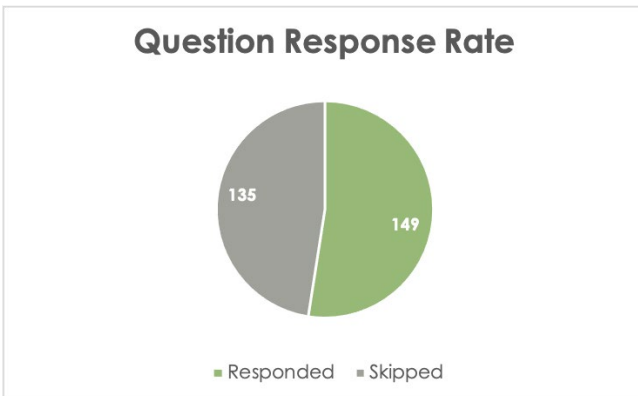
Other respondents indicated location, busing or travel times were key considerations. Although they made no specific mention of either Ardrossan or Sherwood Park.

It would appear the travel time involved in keeping Ardrossan as the only junior high or senior high site is a barrier for many respondents. The sentiment was not a comment on the quality of the program, but on its location.

Other leading issues identified included the quality and reliability of French Immersion instruction after elementary school, and the availability of optional programming.

#### Question 4

What are some potential options EIPS should explore?



Of the 284 people who took the survey, 135 chose to skip this question.

#### Survey Participants' Responses: Key Themes

From the survey responses, the key themes that emerged in response to this question include:

- Forty-four respondents, 29.5%, identified a French Immersion junior high and senior high school in Sherwood Park as a preferred option.
- Twenty-five respondents, 16.8%, suggested expanding French Immersion programming within existing high schools as a partial measure to continue the program, as opposed to only offering it in Ardrossan.
- Twenty-seven respondents, 18.1%, had detailed suggestions about changes ranging from moving locations to smaller class sizes to added academic supports . in programming at all grade levels.
- Fifteen respondents, 10.1%, suggested expanding the French Immersion program in Fort Saskatchewan.
- Twelve respondents, 8.1%, had a number of suggestions about enhancing academic support for students and families, especially for families who are not French-speaking.
- Ten respondents, 6.7%, suggested changes in boundaries to enhance flexibility and accessibility.
- Other options identified included:
  - Eight respondents, 5.4%, suggested improvements in busing, such as making it free to all French Immersion students.
  - Eight respondents, 5.4%, had comments that were general in nature and did not contain specific options.
  - Four respondents, 2.7%, had comments regarding the Ardrossan site, including suggestions for increasing capacity.
  - Four respondents, 2.7%, suggested broader collaboration with Elk Island Catholic Schools for program delivery.

- Three respondents, 2%, suggested specific support activities for students and families, including tutoring, peer mentoring, reading clubs and longer learning sessions.
- Three respondents, 2%, commented on class sizes, with two asking for smaller cohorts.

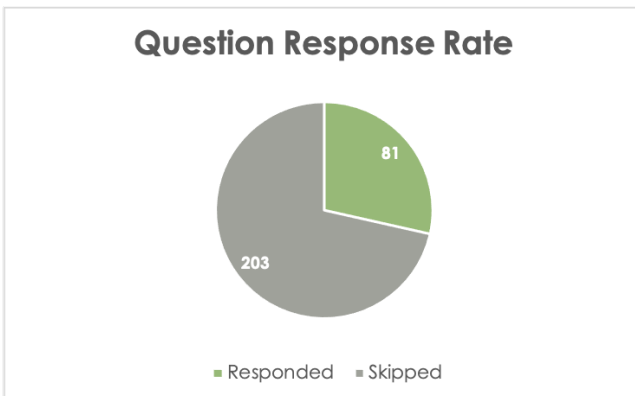
### Analysis

The majority of options focused on developing an expanded program in Sherwood Park. Almost half, 46.3%, of respondents suggested expanding the French Immersion program in Sherwood Park by either establishing a French Immersion school offering junior high and senior high school or increasing the programs available in existing high schools. The response is consistent with the themes in earlier questions.

As well, four respondents, 2.7%, suggested expanding the Ardrossan program and 15 respondents, 10.1%, suggested growing the Fort Saskatchewan program. Other than suggestions to improve student and family support, there was no strong support for any other option.

### Question 5

Additional thoughts?



Of the 284 people who took the survey, 203 chose to skip this question.

### Survey Participants' Responses: Key Themes

From the survey responses, the key themes that emerged in response to this question, include:

- Fourteen respondents, 17.2%, restated their view that a French Immersion junior high and senior high school in Sherwood Park was needed.
- Twelve respondents, 14.8%, expressed support for the Ardrossan program as it currently exists.
- Twelve respondents, 14.8%, commented on a variety of issues not related to the survey focus, often recounting their experiences with EIPS or giving remarks of a very general nature.
- Eleven respondents, 13.6%, expressed the need for a vision outlining the future of French Immersion within EIPS.
- Seven respondents, 8.7%, provided comments on the impact of boundaries on channelling of students to schools within EIPS.
- Three respondents, 3.7%, suggested advocacy for increased program funding be a priority.
- Other comments, each with two respondent mentions, 2.5%, addressed:



- the expansion of the French Immersion program in Fort Saskatchewan;
- the need for more support for students and families; and
- the promotion of French Immersion.

## Analysis

Eighty-one of the 284 respondents who participated in this survey answered Question 5. That is a smaller number than the previous four questions, and most comments were a reiteration of positions mentioned in the earlier questions.

### Question 6

Questions?

Throughout the course of the public consultation process, 51 questions were submitted through the in-person breakout session and the survey. WMC submitted these questions to EIPS to address in the next FAQ.

## Comparison with Public Engagement No. 1 Findings

### Common themes

Feedback from both the first and second public consultations suggests the location of the program, and the time and distance required to travel to the location are important to French Immersion families. Other common themes across the public consultation process, so far, include:

- Support for the French Immersion high school program to remain in Ardrossan and a concern for the overall stability of the French Immersion program in the community.
- Support for a French Immersion high school program in Sherwood Park.
- Support for location and accessibility of programming, including having K-12 French Immersion programming in each of the three communities: Ardrossan, Fort Saskatchewan, and Sherwood Park.
- Need for fewer school transitions for students in the French Immersion program.
- Support for more options in French and for the availability of more options for junior and senior high students enrolled in the French Immersion program.
- Need for increased support for students and families, particularly at the junior and senior high school levels.

### New themes coming out of public consultation No. 2

Feedback from the second public consultation yielded some additional themes, including:

- Need for EIPS to develop a vision for the French Immersion program, which can also be used to market the program in an effort to increase student retention and recruitment of teachers; and
- A stronger focus on quality teaching within and across the program.