

# French Immersion Exit Survey Review Surrey School District

September 2018

# Introduction

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At the heart of Surrey Schools is a district-wide shared vision for learning – Learning by Design – where we prepare our learners for a world in which they think creatively and critically, communicate skillfully, and demonstrate care for self and others. Within this vision, we have a variety of opportunities and environments to meet the needs of our students and community. One such opportunity is our French Immersion program. French Immersion is an intensive second language acquisition program where students study in French while following the regular B.C. Curriculum.

At the February 14, 2018 meeting of the Surrey School Board, a representative from Canadian Parents for French requested that the District conduct an exit survey on the French Immersion teachers who have left French for English classrooms with the goal of improving retention of existing French Immersion teachers.

As such, Human Resources gathered the data related to active Surrey teachers who moved from a French position to an English position between 2014 and February 2018. The Executive Director of Human Resources responded to this request on February 27, 2018 (attached). In this letter, Human Resources shared data showing that thirty-two active employees moved from a French position to an English position during this period. The Executive Director of Human Resources committed Human Resources to undertake an exit survey of these thirty-two teachers.

The exit survey was discussed at the FRIM Advisory meeting on March 7, 2018. At the meeting, members opined that possible contributing factors to movement from French to English might include:

- Teachers not being able to register their own children at their school.
- Teachers leaving the French program due to lack of confidence with their French language skills.
- The class size limits on secondary English classes (25 students) compared to Français Langue. Classes (30 students).

Elements of these concerns were included in the exit survey. Human Resources also reviewed the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers (CAIT) “Why are new French immersion and French as a second language teachers leaving the profession?” (2008) report on their Canada-wide survey. Information from this document was also included in the multiple choice options of the exit survey. A draft of the exit survey was discussed at the FRIM Advisory Committee meeting on April 25, 2018. Minor adjustments were made to the draft exit survey. The final exit survey was sent to teachers on May 10, 2018. Nineteen out of thirty-two teachers completed the survey.

The following report shares the results of the exit survey and identifies possible next steps for supporting the retention of teachers in French assignments in the Surrey School District.

# FRIM Exit Survey Results

Between 2014 and 2018, the District employed between 126 and 140 teachers each year in the following assignment categories:

- Intensive French Teacher
- Kindergarten (FRIM)
- Early Immersion Class
- Late Immersion Class
- Immersion Class (Secondary)

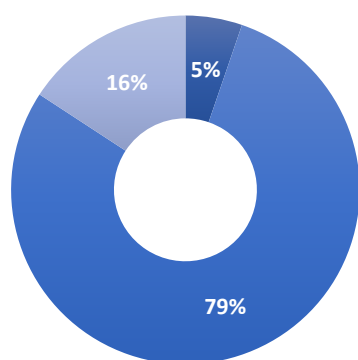
The District has identified 32 active teachers who departed from French enrolling positions in the period from 2014-spring 2018. Our data shows that these employees were in the following roles as of spring 2018:

- 3 promoted to Administration roles
- 2 moved to non-enrolling roles within the French Immersion Program
- 1 was in a helping teacher role with the French Program
- 2 retired and have been re-hired as TTOCs (including FRIM)
- 15 were teaching enrolling classes outside the FRIM Program
- 6 were teaching in non-enrolling roles outside the FRIM Program
- 3 were TTOCs (not retired)

These employees were invited to participate in a FRIM Exit Survey in May 2018. Nineteen teachers completed the survey.

## First Job

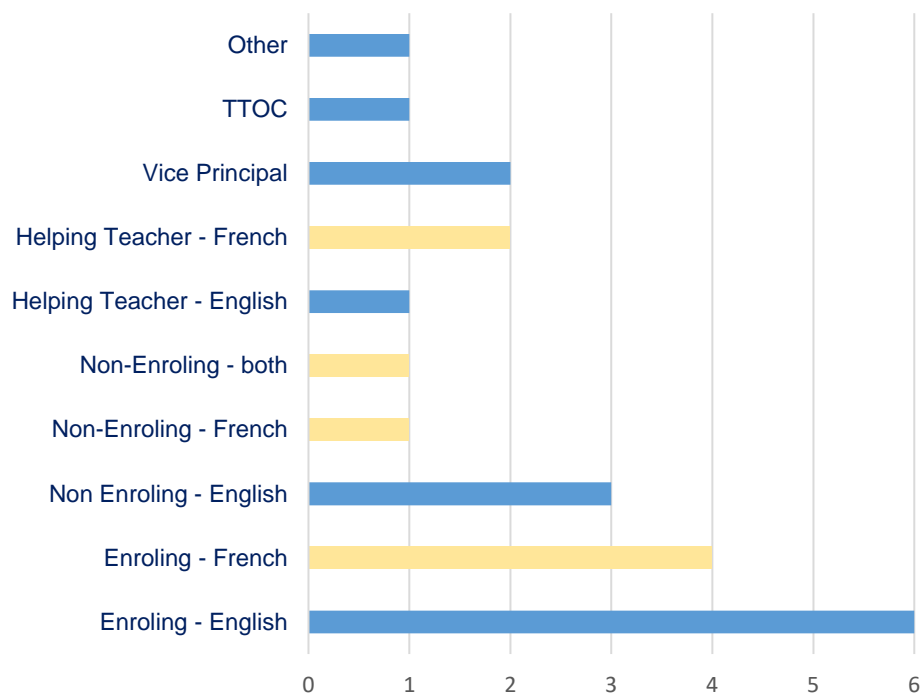
Which position most interested you?



- Classroom Teacher - English - 5%
- Classroom Teacher - French - 79%
- Classroom Teacher - Both - 16%

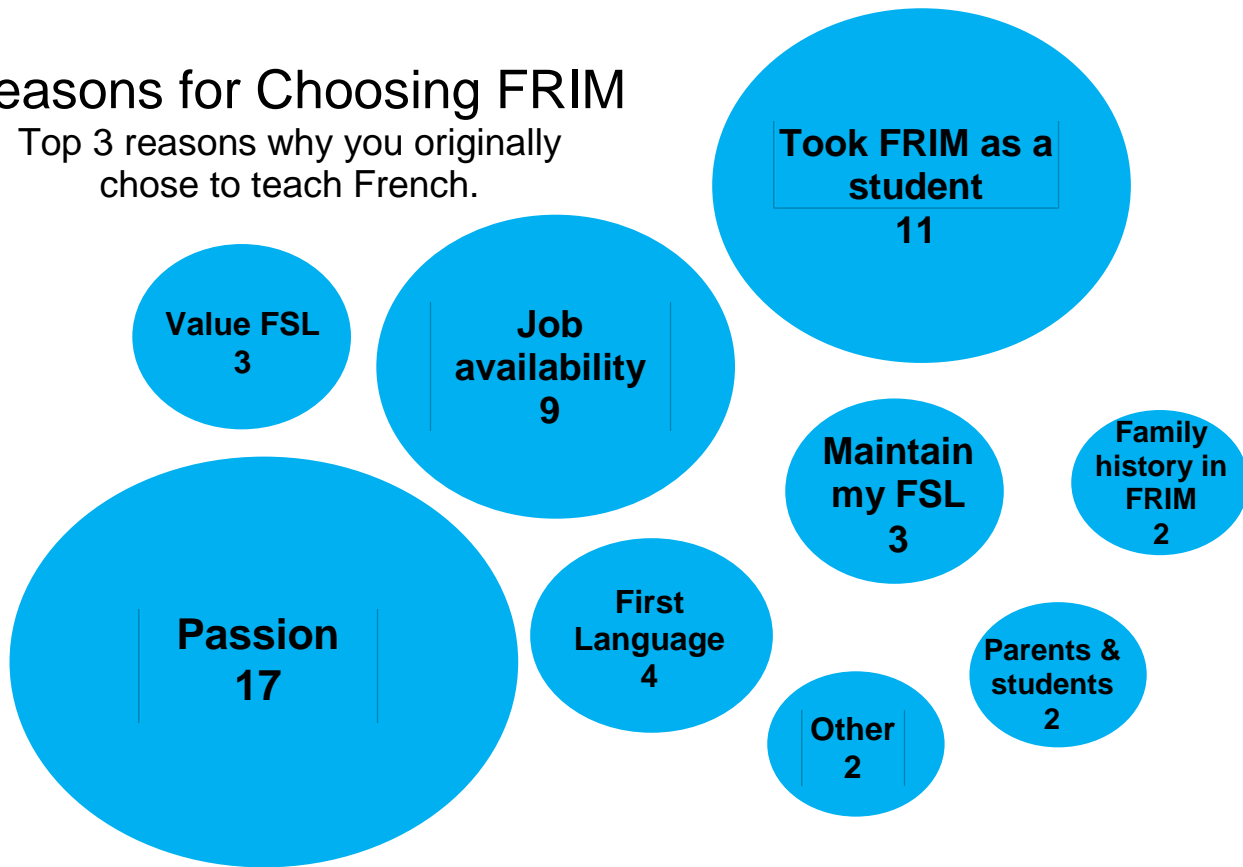
## Current Job

What is your current role in the District?  
*(respondents were able to select more than one response)*



## Reasons for Choosing FRIM

Top 3 reasons why you originally chose to teach French.



## Leaving French Immersion

List your 3 reasons for leaving French Immersion

Lack of resources	12
More comfortable with English	5
No positions available	5
Workload/Expectations	4
Support for special needs	4
My children couldn't attend my school	3
Felt discouraged	2
Lack of collaboration	2
Promotion	2
Personal reasons	2
Proximity to home	2
Lack of TTOCs	1
Did not leave FRIM	5

# Returning to French Immersion

When asked, “What would help to facilitate your return to FRIM”, we received a variety of answers. Given that 63% of teachers indicated lack of resources and 26% spoke to workload, support of students with special needs, and comfort in French - we have highlighted some responses as follows:

Review the supports in place for students with learning challenges:

- “More support for students with learning challenges especially high school.”

Additional time to prepare learning materials:

- “additional preparation time due to the necessity of having to create resources/teaching materials at the appropriate skill level for the students in my class”
- There are “fewer ready-made resources – I had to make my own classroom booklets for take-home reading/finding supplementary resources is not as easy to find.”

Reduction in workload:

- “I’d like to see the workload in elementary immersion reduced. And, I really disagree that ELL and secondary English classes have lower caps than immersion (Français Langue). It’s hard to teach the language well and teach content with the max amount of students in most classes. I didn’t feel as successful as I could have at reaching each child.”

Support sharing of resources between teachers:

- “More sharing out about what respective French teachers are doing, and how.”
- “Working in a second language all day can be draining, and when we feel isolated from one another it exacerbates the inefficiency of what we’re able to do. We need to be able to come together and share, co-plan, in order to develop confidence and improve our practice. The district could facilitate some sharing sessions for us.”

Encouragement and supporting teacher growth:

- “Teachers should be lifted up, encouraged, offered resources and opportunities to improve (if they desire). The fact that they take on the challenge of teaching French should be embraced and appreciated.”
- “I feel I would need to refresh my French skills, particularly in writing, and gain more confidence”

# Next Steps

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Information gathered from the FRIM exit survey provides us with an excellent opportunity to examine our process for supporting our FRIM teachers. Our findings were consistent with the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers (CAIT) Canada-wide survey which found that departures by FRIM and FST teachers were primarily explained by difficult work conditions, lack of instructional materials, challenges in the relational aspects of teaching, problems with classroom management and difficult clientele, and initial training and career choice of a drop-out teacher. Recommendations for consideration arising from the Surrey School District FRIM exit survey include:

- Review the detailed exit survey results to categorize specific needs.
- Review the supports in place for FRIM students with learning challenges, including teacher professional development in this area.
- Review the French Immersion resources that support the BC Curriculum and are appropriate to grade level for second language acquisition students.
- Provide support for preparing and sharing of resources between teachers.
- Investigate partnerships with education programs that would allow French speaking teachers to gain confidence with the language with the goal of teaching FRIM and/or advertise existing educational programs outside of the district that support this need.
- Review workload expectations of FRIM teachers in comparison to non-FRIM teachers.

# FRIM Survey Questions

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**When you began teaching, which position most interested you:**

- Enrolling Classroom Teacher-English
- Enrolling Classroom Teacher-French
- Enrolling Classroom Teacher-no preference
- Non-Enrolling Teacher-English
- Non-Enrolling Teacher-French
- Non-Enrolling Teacher-no preference
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**What French position did you teach in the district?**

- Early French Immersion
- Late French Immersion
- Intensive French
- Enhanced French
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your current role with the district?**

- Enrolling Classroom Teacher-English
- Enrolling Classroom Teacher-French
- Non-Enrolling Teacher-English
- Non-Enrolling Teacher-French
- Non-Enrolling Teacher-English and French
- District Helping Teacher-English
- District Helping Teacher-French
- Counsellor-English
- Counsellor-French
- Vice Principal
- Support Staff
- Principal
- TTOC
- Other:

**Please list the top three reasons why you originally chose to teach French.**

**Please list the top three reasons for moving from French to English?**

**Was your decision to move out of the French program influenced by any of the following?**

**Please check all that apply.**

- I was promoted
- I retired
- There was a reduction of available French positions at the school
- I wanted to teach a different grade level or school level (elementary/secondary)
- I wanted to teach at a specific school
- I chose to TTOC
- I was dissatisfied with the work
- I was not able to enrol my child at my school due to lottery/placement process
- I was dissatisfied with the school environment

There was insufficient performance feedback  
There were insufficient resources available in French  
There were insufficient professional development activities available in French  
I didn't feel comfortable with my French skills  
I found the clientele challenging  
I felt the workload was higher than in the English program.  
I changed districts  
Other:

**Are you interested in returning to the French Program?**

Yes

No

Maybe

**What would help to facilitate this return?**