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Following extensive consultation, a revised model for French second-language learning in New Brunswick has been developed. Using elements from a number of proposals received, it involves a *Universal Program* from K-2, a choice of *Immersion* or the *English Prime* program at grade 3, a *Grade 6 Immersion* option and a *Blended Program* in grades 11-12.

Objectives

In line with the philosophy of *When kids come first*, and to meet government's goal of self-sufficiency, the revised model is intended to:

- increase French proficiency for a greater number of students (70% of students to reach the intermediate level in oral proficiency);
- promote equal opportunity through reduced streaming;
- improve achievement in literacy, mathematics and science for all students;
- provide additional time during the school day for physical education, art, music and other enrichment activities (well-rounded curriculum); and
- be fiscally sustainable.

Universal Program K-2

Starting in September 2008, all students will begin their public education journey in English from kindergarten through to the end of grade 2. This *Universal Program* respects the importance of children achieving a strong foundation in literacy in their mother tongue, particularly reading and writing, during the early years of school. Research studies show that a student's reading ability at the end of grade 3 is a more accurate predictor of school success than any other variable, and that programs designed to correct reading problems beyond third grade are largely unsuccessful (Pikulski, 1994; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). This time will also be used to assess students' learning needs and provide supports to address early learning challenges. The fact that all students will be following the same program during the early years also allows for students to be heterogeneously grouped, another variable which has been shown to positively support learning (Willms, 2006) and social development. This should help address the issue of approximately one child in six entering school in New Brunswick at risk of learning challenges.

Early Introduction to French

To provide early introduction to French language and culture, and to develop students' interest in learning a second language during the early grades (K-2), curriculum modules will be introduced, starting in January 2009 for grade

one and for kindergarten and grade 2 in September 2009. At grade 3, literacy resources (2009) and the social studies curriculum (2010) in the *English Prime* program will be part of the curriculum modules to introduce more elements of French language and culture as another means of engendering enthusiasm for learning a second language.

Research shows that the existing Core French program at grades 1 through 4 has had minimal impact on students' second language proficiency. Since many students do not experience success in the program, motivation to study French declines, and attitudes towards learning French tend to become negative (Netten & Germain, 2004 and forthcoming 2008). Beginning in January 2009, the modules noted above will replace Core French.

Grade 3 Immersion Option

Starting in September 2010, students will have the option of a grade 3 entry point to *French Immersion* (where numbers warrant the program being offered) or to enter the *English Prime* program. This means that students enrolled in kindergarten this past school year (2007-08) will be the first ones to have a choice of program at grade 3. By the end of grade 2, many students have developed a strong foundation in their first language literacy skills, a positive factor for success in immersion. Many students will have also received interventions addressing diagnosed learning difficulties, better positioning parents and students to choose programs based on information on learning styles and capabilities.

Curriculum for grade 3 immersion will be developed over the coming two years. A Ministerial Advisory Committee of experts and stakeholders will be appointed as a result of the consultation process and a mandate of this committee will be to work with the Department of Education to develop the new grade 3 immersion option, including ways to make it more inclusive. On-going implementation of MacKay recommendations will also result in strategies to help students who struggle in French Immersion.

English Prime Program Option

As of September 2010, students entering grade 3 can choose the *English Prime* program or the *Immersion* option. The *English Prime* program will involve a pre-Intensive French component for all students at grade 4. This component will be available to grade 4 students starting in September 2009. It will incorporate the Intensive French methodology and provide students on average 150 minutes of French second language learning per week. The instruction will be offered in 3

blocks of 50 minutes per week, or 2 blocks of one hour one week, followed by 3 blocks of one hour the following week.

In grade 5, all students in the *English Prime* program will participate in Intensive French, a five-month, literacy-based approach to teaching French as a second language that requires a minimum of 270 hours of intensive instruction. The program may be either the first five months of the grade 5 school year or the last five months. Intensive French is followed or preceded by an additional 45 hours of French instruction, preferably in blocks of time, resulting in approximately 315 hours of instruction in French during the grade 5 intensive year. Assessments of students who have participated in the Intensive French program, show that 72% of students are able to communicate spontaneously, and on average oral proficiency improves from novice low to basic low (Netten & Germain, 2007). Students are also able to write a composition of several paragraphs and tend to show a more positive attitude toward learning French, as well as increased self-confidence and esteem. These results are replicated in eight other provinces and two territories implementing Intensive French at grade 5 or grade 6.

Grade 6 Immersion Option

At the end of grade 5, students in the *English Prime* program may continue in the program and participate in Post-Intensive French, or enroll in *Grade 6 French Immersion* (where numbers warrant the program being offered). *Grade 6 French Immersion* will incorporate the Intensive French methodology, particularly in the initial months of the program, to facilitate the transition and learning in the other curriculum areas in French. The students in *Grade 6 French Immersion* will have 70% of their instruction in French in grades 6 through 8, and 50% in grades 9 and 10. English-speaking students in late immersion programs have been found to perform as well or better on tests of French language proficiency as children who begin their immersion experience in kindergarten or grade one, when comparing similar amounts of instructional time focusing on French language learning (Genesee, 1981, 1987). The late immersion option also offers those students who may not have their first language literacy skills solidly in place by the end of grade 2 a second opportunity to become involved in an immersion program.

English Prime with Post-Intensive French

Students who choose to remain in the *English Prime* program in grades six through ten will participate in post-Intensive French. Post-Intensive French is a literacy-based program like Intensive French and enables students to continue to develop the ability to read and write in French, as well as maintain and improve

their oral skills; similar instructional strategies are used as those employed in Intensive French. During the middle school years (grades 6-8), students will receive 200 minutes of French second language instruction per week. The instruction will be offered in blocks of time (e.g., two 75-minute blocks and a 50-minute block). In grades 9 and 10, students will participate in one course (90 hours) of post-Intensive French per year.

Oral Proficiency Levels and Testing

Minimum FSL Oral Proficiency Levels For Revised Program

Program and Proficiency Level

- Grade 3 Immersion: Advanced (by grade 12)
- Grade 6 Immersion: Intermediate Plus (by grade 12)
- Post-Intensive French: Intermediate (by end of grade 10)

It is anticipated that, with increased opportunities, through additional FSL courses in school and extra-curricular activities, as well as personal motivation and strong parental support, between 5-10% of students in Grade 6 Immersion or Post-Intensive French will graduate with the Advanced level.

FSL Assessments For Revised Program

Grade and Type of Assessment

- Grade 5 Oral Proficiency
- Grade 10 Oral Proficiency
- Grade 10 Literacy Assessment - Reading and Writing
- Grade 12 Oral Proficiency

The existing assessment schedule will be expanded to take into account the revised programming. At the end of grade 5, a sample of all students will be tested for French oral proficiency for program assessment purposes. At the end of the last semester of grade 10 in which students complete French instruction, all students will participate in a provincial oral assessment. As well, there will be a provincial assessment in French reading and writing at grade 10. The universal grade 10 oral interview assessments will begin in the 2013-14 school year to allow students who have participated in the 5-month Intensive French program to work their way through 5 to this level. A grade 12 assessment will also be taken by each student enrolled in one or more French courses in grade 12.

A complete review of the program will be conducted at the end of 2015-16, the graduating year for the first cohort of grade 5 students from the Revised Program.

A Blended Program in Grades 11 and 12

French second language learning will not be compulsory at grades 11 and 12; however, students will be encouraged to continue French second-language course work to strengthen their French proficiency.

Students who achieve an oral proficiency designation of intermediate or above on the grade 10 test will receive an official certificate and may choose to participate in any of the FSL options available in grades 11 and 12. Opening access to French second language courses through a *Blended Program* will help to reduce the streaming that has occurred in the past with courses at grades 11 and 12. In response to student-voiced concerns about having access to greater choices in courses in French beyond mathematics and science at this level, existing course electives will be strengthened, and new ones offered in French. This will involve providing more courses through e-learning as well as face-to-face. Students who continue to take French second-language courses in grades 11 and 12 will be eligible to be reassessed to determine their level of proficiency upon leaving high school. Those testing higher in grade 12 than they did in grade 10 will receive a second, upgraded certificate of proficiency. Students who do not achieve a proficiency of intermediate by the end of grade 10 will still have additional instructional opportunities to improve their French and to receive an official certificate of proficiency.

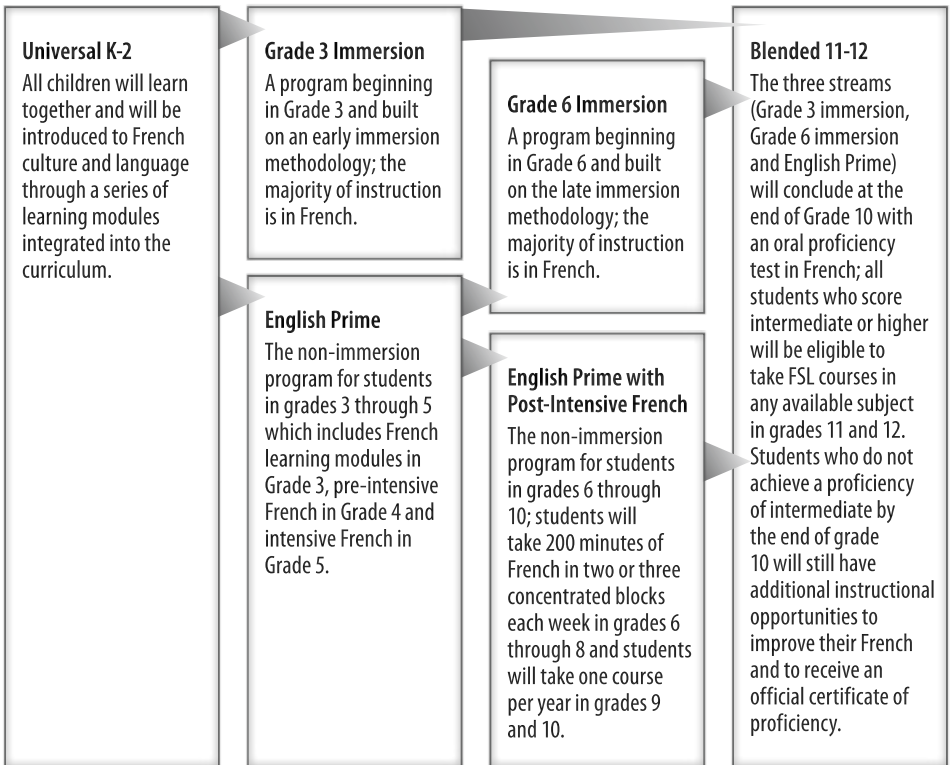
Bilingual Learning Environments

A Bilingual Learning Environment Policy will be developed that will require administrators at the middle school and high school levels to integrate opportunities into school life for students to participate in activities involving authentic French conversations. Such experiences help maintain students' proficiency and allow them to become more comfortable using French in a variety of situations. This policy will also require administrators of elementary schools to introduce students to the French culture in New Brunswick.

Art, Music, Physical Education and Enrichment

The *English Prime* program will offer additional time in grades 1-3 to be dedicated to literacy, art, music, physical education and enrichment. This decision is supported by the research of SPR Associates Inc. (2008) which identifies a strong relationship between the amount of instructional time in language, math, and science classes and higher skill scores on PISA. This research also indicates that students from schools offering programs for gifted students and those offering arts and sports programs tend to have higher PISA scores.

The Revised Program



New Brunswick Second Language Oral Proficiency Scale

- **Intermediate:** Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.
- **Intermediate-plus:** Able to satisfy most work requirements with language usage that is often, but not always, acceptable and effective.
- **Advanced:** Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.

Comparative Table

Status quo / Current Model (2007/08 and previous years)		Original Proposal (Mar. 14)		Revised Model for 2008/09 (Aug. 5)				
K	Universal Kindergarten		Universal elementary school, with no French until universal intensive French in Grade 5		Universal K-2, including French modules			
1	Early Immersion	Core French (1-5)						
2								
3					Grade 3 immersion	English Prime with French: modular (3), pre-intensive (4) and intensive (5)		
4								
5								
6	Late Immersion	Core French (6-10)	Enhanced Late Immersion	Post-Intensive French	Grade 6 immersion	English Prime + Post-Intensive French		
7								
8								
9								
10								
11		French optional			Blended High School, French open to all with intermediate proficiency			
12								

