

A Case Study of the Process of Initiation  
and Implementation of French Immersion

by Camilla Marie Stewart

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A CASE STUDY OF THE PROCESS OF INITIATION  
AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FRENCH IMMERSION

BY

CAMILLA MARIE STEWART

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the process used to initiate and implement French Immersion in Prairie School Division. The study revealed that in this division the process was the result of initiatives taken by members of the Superintendent's Department during 1977-1979. Throughout the story, the Superintendent's Department continued to play a key role in implementing and supporting this program. While implementation is a continuous process, June, 1992 was chosen as the cut-off point for this study because the first group of French Immersion students graduated with their French Immersion certificates in Prairie School Division at that time.

The study examined: 1) the process of initiation, 2) the role of the members of the Superintendent's Department and the School Board, 3) the initial involvement of parents, 4) the organization of parents who enrolled their students in French Immersion, and 5) the role of parents throughout the initiation and implementation process.

In summary, the main conclusion of this study is that the Assistant Superintendent in charge of program was the driving force behind the initiation and implementation of the program. When new people filled that position, they

simply continued the process. The late 1970s was an opportune time financially, philosophically, and politically for the school division to initiate French Immersion. The fact that transportation was a non-issue became a major bonus in the process and was the fact that the division was experiencing declining enrollments in some areas and expansion in others which enabled them to successfully accommodate the program using the existing schools and transportation system. By 1992, a new era had entered the educational scene. The reality of financial restraint on the part of the provincial government had introduced new transportation regulations. In fact, changing political realities in the area of finances were reflected in the policy statements that were developed by the School Board. Implementation was not a static decision-making process but rather a dynamic expression of the evolutionary process of this program. In the final analysis, French Immersion may have been initiated in 1979 because it was the successful innovation of the day. The process examined in this study was very smooth but changing financial and political realities would create a very different scenario today. The thesis concludes with two recommendations for further research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The time has come to acknowledge a great personal journey but first things first. There are many people in my life that I could choose to dedicate this book to but I have chosen one of my former students -- a woman of faith, courage, persistence, and humour. With her permission, I take her name in vain, not because she is unique but rather because she shares the spirit of so many people whose names I cannot take in vain but whose spirit touches mine. I dedicate this thesis to Elizabeth Derwin.

At this time, I would like to offer a series of expressions of gratitude:

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The tears are flowing freely as I write this last part in the very early hours of Friday, September 17, 1993. I am taking my final tour of the campus as a M. Ed. student. I feel almost lost but yet I know that my studies are completed. In the spring of 1983 I made a decision to return to a university for one year of healing. (It didn't matter which university.) As I prepare to begin a new chapter of my life, ten years later, I realize that the University of Manitoba has been a place of tremendous healing and a place where I have learned a great deal about myself. The thesis was never an end but only a means for me to journey within myself and discover "me". It is time for me to leave the nest. One day, I will return to a university to learn more about me.

May God (as you understand God) bless and heal all who pick up this work.

A friend of H. P. (Higher Power)

Camilla Marie Stewart, sfo

## CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> . . . . .	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> . . . . .	<b>vi</b>
	<u>page</u>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b> . . . . .	<b>1</b>
Background Information . . . . .	1
Purpose of the Study . . . . .	10
Research Questions . . . . .	11
Basic Assumptions . . . . .	12
Delimitations of study . . . . .	13
Significance of the Study . . . . .	14
Definition of Terms . . . . .	15
<b>CHAPTER 2: RELATED LITERATURE</b> . . . . .	<b>19</b>
School Board . . . . .	21
Citizen Participation . . . . .	26
French Immersion . . . . .	29
Manitoba: French as a Language of Instruction . . . . .	31
Manitoba: School Board Policies on French Immersion . . . . .	35
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</b> . . . . .	<b>38</b>
Discussion of the Method . . . . .	38
Pilot Study . . . . .	39
Sources of Evidence . . . . .	40
Interviews . . . . .	40
Documents . . . . .	43
Pilot Study Findings . . . . .	44
Data Analysis . . . . .	45
Limitations of the Study . . . . .	50
<b>CHAPTER 4: THE CASE STUDY</b> . . . . .	<b>52</b>
Provincial Historical Background . . . . .	58
Intiation Process . . . . .	60
Community Reaction . . . . .	67
Implementation: An Overview . . . . .	70
Accommodation . . . . .	73
Transportation . . . . .	81
Entry Points . . . . .	82
Teachers/Principals . . . . .	87

Curriculum . . . . .	96
Policy Development . . . . .	99
French Immersion Parents . . . . .	104
As Members of Parent Council . . . . .	104
Decision-making . . . . .	112
Views on French Immersion . . . . .	126
French Immersion 1992-1993 . . . . .	130
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .</b>	<b>133</b>
Introduction . . . . .	133
Conclusions . . . . .	134
Recommendations . . . . .	143
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .</b>	<b>144</b>

<u>Appendix</u>	<u>page</u>
A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: . . . . .	156
B. LETTERS OF PERMISSION . . . . .	172
C. LETTERS TO COLLABORATORS . . . . .	177
D. FRENCH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS AND RELATED POLICIES . . . . .	188

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>page</u>
1. Fictional Map of Prairie School Division . . . . .	55
2. Key Events in Story . . . . .	56
3. Fictional Names of People . . . . .	57

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Background Information

During the 1970s, numerous Canadian school boards implemented a program which reflected the newly articulated aspirations of some non-Francophone parents regarding the education of their children. These parents wanted their children to become bilingual while attending school, which led to French immersion being implemented across Canada (Stern, 1978).

The literature on French immersion consistently points to three reasons for the spread of French immersion in Canada: 1) the success of the St. Lambert experiment; 2) the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism; and 3) the Official Languages Act. The eyes of many people involved in bilingual education were trained on the St. Lambert experiment and in particular on the evaluation studies being conducted by Dr. Lambert and his colleagues in the Department of Psychology at McGill University (Stern, 1986).

In fact,

what makes the Canadian experience unique is the systematic evaluation of the educational consequences of a home-school language switch. French immersion programs have spread extremely rapidly across Canada, not so much because they have succeeded in transmitting high levels of French proficiency to students at no cost to other

academic skills, but because they have been seen to have succeeded. . . . Thus, research has played a crucial role both in the spread of French immersion programs across Canada and in establishing the Canadian experiment as one of the most significant innovations in second-language teaching in this century. (Cummins, 1983, p. 118)

The high profile role of research has been cited by Stern (1978; 1986) and Stanley (1974) while others have simply mentioned the success of the St. Lambert experiment of the South Shore Protestant School Board as a principal reason for the spread of the program (Bruck & Swain, 1976; Campeau, 1984; Canadian Education Association, 1983; Genesse, 1984).

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which was established and mandated by the federal government, has been cited as a factor which influenced French as a Second Language instruction in Canada (Campeau, 1984; Canadian Education Association, 1983). Statistics Canada (1978-79) indicated the impact of the Royal Commission in this way:

Prior to the initiation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism . . . , the minority official languages (English in Quebec, French in the remaining provinces) were offered in two modes: as the language of instruction to the minority group and as a subject of study to the majority group. Since that time, a new programme termed immersion has appeared in all provinces, although in varying degrees. The rapid implementation of these programs in recent years has had a significant impact on language education in Canada. (p. 19)

The Official Languages Act of 1969 has been cited by Campeau (1984), Halpern (1984), and Shapson (1984) as a

factor contributing to the growth of French immersion. "The Act provided the necessary context within which provincial governments could henceforth promote and develop language policies" (Letourneau, 1977, p. 93). To facilitate the implementation of the Act, the Secretary of State assumed responsibility for promoting bilingualism "in fields of endeavors that are outside the statutory jurisdiction of the Federal Government" (Dobell, 1976, p. 8). Sotiriadis (1981) and the Canadian Education Association (1983) indicated that federal transfer grants to the provinces for bilingual education played a significant role in the implementation of French immersion programs. Therefore, although the adoption and implementation of French immersion programs are part of the provinces' educational responsibility, these policies of the federal government seem to confirm Mackay's observation that the impact of Ottawa in educational matters has been growing (1984).

The St. Lambert experiment, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and the Official Languages Act were major influences in the decision-making process at the local level. Stern (1986) attributed most of the initiative in starting the implementation process to parents' groups and Mackay (1984) pointed out that "effectively organized parents' lobbies have had a significant impact on school board policies concerning French-immersion classes and schools in most provinces" (p.

44). Furthermore, a survey conducted by the Canadian Education Association (1983) revealed "that the initiation for a program comes almost twice as often from parents as it does from the school board" (p. 12).

In response to the positive research results cited above and the federal statutes that were passed, various parents' groups across Canada initiated the process of decision-making which resulted in the wide-scale implementation of French immersion. However, in 1978 Stern wrote:

If today we want to show appreciation for the beginnings of immersion and other forms of bilingual education in Canada and want to acknowledge the originators of this movement, this honour, in my view, must go to the St. Lambert Bilingual School Study Group [under the chairmanship of Olga Melikoff]. (p. 837)

Therefore, in order to understand the model that other groups imitated, it is important to examine the situation in Quebec that led to the conception of the original parents' group.

In the 1960s, the Quiet Revolution took place in the Province of Quebec. During this time, the French language gained respect and legitimacy as a language of communication in all aspects of Quebec life, including business, which had been dominated by the English language. This marked a turning point in the history of Quebec (Genesse, 1984) which has influenced the rest of Canadian society.

The awakening had serious repercussions on the English-speaking community in Quebec. Levine (1982) categorized the Anglophone response as follows: 1) exit; 2) confrontation; and 3) adaptation. One of the main areas of adaptation according to Levine (1982) was education. In particular, Anglophone parents became concerned about the level of French instruction in the schools (Campeau, 1984; Genesse, 1984; Stanley, 1974; Stern, 1978, 1986). The specific innovation which spread across Quebec was French immersion, which originated in the community of St. Lambert.

Melikoff (1972) provided an insight into the events that took place in St. Lambert from 1963 until 1971. Prior to 1963, Anglophone parents in St. Lambert sent their children to programs outside the Protestant School Board or to inferior Protestant French classes if they wanted their children to become bilingual. In 1963, a group of parents decided that a program should exist within the Protestant School Board system. Therefore, on October 30, 1963, twelve parents formed a group called the St. Lambert Protestant Parents for Bilingual Education which decided that the best way to achieve its stated goals was to ask the school board to implement a program in which French would be the language of instruction from kindergarten to grade three (Melikoff, 1972).

These parents were motivated by a variety of concerns.

Some parents of the group had generally more "instrumental" reasons for wishing their children to be bilingual. They wished the continuing progress and success of their children in a province progressively becoming more dominated by the French fact. Others considered bilingualism a personal asset for cultural, intellectual, and social reasons -- the so-called "integrative" motivation. All were concerned with French-English relations in the province, at a time when these were not yet making the headlines. (Melikoff, 1972, p. 221)

While the concerns differed, the parental aspiration in a changing Quebec was the same -- bilingual children. During the time from October 1963 until the first experimental kindergarten class began in September 1965, the focus of the parents' group changed twice but the unchanging aspect was the continued articulation of parental demands regarding the bilingual education of their Anglophone children (Melikoff, 1972).

The organized parents' group first approached the superior, the chief executive officer, who told them to find the students and the idea would be considered. When they found the students, they went to the St. Lambert School Board which told them that it "did not handle educational policy" (Melikoff, 1972, p. 222). Then they went to the Chambly County Protestant School Board which decided to consult experts on the matter. The majority of responses was negative, so the board decided against implementing French immersion (Melikoff, 1972).

According to Melikoff (1972), this made the parents even more determined. The demand for these classes increased as the parents consulted their own experts, opened their own classes, received favorable press coverage, and became involved in local elections for school board. In fact, the issue became so public that a policy decision had to be made. By the spring of 1965, the St. Lambert School Board was favorable to the program and

when faced by the favorable publicity of the parents' classes in the local press, and by the persistence of the parents who attended Board meetings regularly, the Central Board relented. They agreed to set up one experimental kindergarten for the fall of 1965. (p. 226)

At this point the parents' group's role changed from preparing groundwork and developing research and communication skills to supporting the implementation of the program (Melikoff, 1972).

The decision of the Chambly County Protestant School Board to open one experimental kindergarten in St. Lambert in the fall of 1965 was "a momentary end point in the continuing business of government" (Green, 1971, p. 179). The Board would have to make many decisions about the implementation and continuation of the program. At the time kindergarten was not a compulsory grade level in the school system (Melikoff, 1972) so the real test of the school board commitment to the innovation came with the decision to continue the program into grade one and beyond.

As was noted, the parents' role changed with this decision; moreover, the size of the group and its name also changed. The parents elected a group called the St. Lambert Bilingual School Study Group which was seen to be a "watchdog." However, as time passed, "its essential role was to hold the experiment together when it was in danger of collapsing, as it was on a regular basis" (Melikoff, 1972, p. 228). In 1967, this group changed its role to one of helping to institutionalize the experiment (Melikoff, 1972). The process, as described by Melikoff (1972) and Stern (1978), illustrates the commitment to an idea that is needed in order to get the idea approved and implemented by a school division.

St. Lambert was the site of the adoption and implementation of the first early French immersion classes in Canada. The innovation was quickly diffused throughout Canada. Stern (1978) explained a pattern of adoption that was used in local school jurisdictions:

1. a school board decides to set up an immersion class or classes on the basis of parental, school board or administrative initiative;
2. an immersion class teacher is appointed; a curriculum is developed, or, at times, improvised and put into operation;
3. in some instances, a research team is found and given the task of evaluating the effects of the project. (p. 838)

Furthermore, a 1983 study by the Canadian Education Association revealed that, even several years after the first programs were implemented, boards implementing French immersion still had problems and challenges to face.

The most often mentioned problems boards faced were:

1. hiring teachers
2. program development and opposition from community, teachers, or school
3. problems associated with teacher layoffs

The biggest challenges the board faced in implementing the program were:

1. dealing with the community (parents) reaction
2. program development and obtaining suitable instructional materials
3. hiring teachers
4. dealing with teacher opposition and teacher layoffs
5. problems associated with transportation
6. deciding on a location for the immersion program. (pp. 11-12)

In short, the decision to implement a program contains many other decisions that must be made for implementation to occur.

### Purpose of the Study

The original purpose of this study was to achieve an indepth understanding of the role of the parents' group in the initiation and implementation of French immersion in one school division. As a result of the pilot study, the purpose of the study had to be revised. It became an examination of the process used to initiate and implement the program because the collaborators clearly indicated that French Immersion was initiated by members of the Superintendent's Department rather than as the result of a parental lobby.

Given this, the study examined 1) the process of initiation, 2) the role of the members of the Superintendent's Department and the School Board, 3) the initial involvement of parents, 4) the organization of parents who enrolled their children in French Immersion, and 5) the role of parents throughout the initiation and implementation process.

Since implementation is a process involving many decisions, a time frame for the study had to be determined. Originally the time from the organization of the parents' group to its present day role was chosen. Based on the pilot study, the school year 1977-78 was selected as my starting point because discussions began in that year; 1992-93 was chosen as the concluding point because the

students in the lead kindergarten class had completed their studies by that time. Therefore, the study examined some of the elements in the initiation and implementation process as it unfolded in Prairie from 1977-1992. Among the key elements studied was the role of the parents in the decision-making process.

### Research Questions

The main questions around which the study was designed were reprioritized as a result of the pilot study. The focus shifted from the role of the parents as initiators and implementors to the process of initiation and implementation. Therefore, the role of the parents became part of the story rather than the purpose of the story. Consequently the research questions were:

1. Why was French Immersion initiated and implemented in this division?
2. Who influenced the decision-making process?
3. How was it implemented?
4. When did the parents become involved in the process?
5. Did the parents become organized? Why? How?
6. What was the role of the parents of French Immersion children?
7. Did the parents ever approach the Board regarding French Immersion?

8. If so, what relationship developed between the School Board and the French Immersion parents?
9. How has the parents' group participated in the ongoing implementation process?

### Basic Assumptions

Merriam (1988) and Yin (1984) took the position that the researcher's biases should be stated at the beginning of the study so that the validity of the study would be enhanced because the researcher would be aware of the areas where there might be a need to be more open-minded. Additionally Gaskell (1988) wrote:

How well the research is carried through is a critical issue and must be subjected to scrutiny. But debate about the adequacy of the data collection must not substitute for debate about the adequacy of the assumption in which the research is situated. It is these assumptions that have political implications for what can be discovered and concluded and what can be introduced into the policy debate. (p.410)

Her position reinforced the fact that it is the issue of researcher bias that will have to be carefully monitored during the course of this study.

Therefore, the following list of preliminary assumptions was generated:

1. that the majority of French immersion programs in Canada were implemented by school boards as a result of parental initiative;

2. that an ongoing relationship developed between the parents' groups and the school boards;
3. that French immersion raised a series of concerns in the minds of school board members, school administrators, teachers, the general public and the parents' groups which were answered by the Board in the form of board motions on the issues or policies that were inserted into the policy manual;
4. that there was some opposition at the division level to the implementation of French immersion; and
5. that most school boards implemented one grade level at a time based on student enrollment figures and division resources.

#### Delimitations of study

There are a number of methods of teaching French as a Second Language but this study will focus on the option of French immersion. Thus, the other methods will only be mentioned to the degree that they relate to an aspect of French immersion.

Second, the language of instruction in the French immersion class is French. Given this, the study will examine the history of French as a language of instruction in Manitoba. Within this context, it may be necessary to discuss the programs for Francophone students but they will only be mentioned because of their impact on French immersion.

### Significance of the Study

The study is considered significant in the following ways:

1. There are many references in the literature to the role of parents' groups in the initiation of French immersion. However, there is very little written on their involvement in initiating the process of decision-making. The existing references explain only the St. Lambert experience. In fact, Mawhinney & Jakes (1989) indicated that there are relatively few studies on the interest articulation stage of educational policies in either Canada or the United States. Therefore, this study will provide parents' groups, lobby groups, school boards, and national organizations such as the Canadian Parents' for French with information on the evolution of a parents' lobby group and its impact on the school board and school board policy. point Educational leaders who are presently dealing with developing policy for French or other modern languages may find the study valuable in providing insights into how to work with lobby groups and the general public in developing policy. This study may provide them with some alternatives to solve the problems in their jurisdictions.
2. People who study policy may be interested in the complex relationship between the community and the

school board. The political, social, economic, and other factors that play a role in the decision-making process could be of great interest to those who are particularly concerned with the process. In fact, Stern (1986) stated:

It [French Immersion] is still a growing movement, one that social and education researchers might wish to examine more closely because of its enormous impact and unusual interplay of policy, politics, educational administration, research, and the efforts of teachers to make it work. (p. 41)

point end Thus, this study could be one step toward examining the interplay that Stern described. However, this study is concerned with the additional variable of the efforts of parents to implement French immersion and make it work.

#### Definition of Terms

**Allophone:** consisting of or belonging to a population whose first language is neither English nor French.

**Anglophone:** "Consisting of or belonging to an English-speaking population" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1981).

**Bilingual Education:** "schooling provided fully or partly in a second language with the object of making students proficient in the second language while, at the same time, maintaining and developing their proficiency in the first

language and fully guaranteeing their educational development (Stern quoted in Swain & Barik, 1978, p. 22).

**Bilingual French Program:** A program in which 50 percent of the instruction is conducted in French and 50 percent of the instruction is conducted in English.

**Core French Programs:** A program in which pupils take a period of instruction in French as a second language each day. The time period can range from 20 to 40 minutes per day.

**Dual Track School:** A school in which both French immersion and regular English programs are housed.

**Early French Immersion:** A French immersion program in which the students are enrolled in either kindergarten or grade one.

**Extended French Program:** A program which includes a core French program as well as one or two other subjects which are instructed in French.

**First Language:** The first language learned; also called "mother tongue".

**Francais:** "A program of instruction aimed at the French-speaking student in a French-speaking environment by a French-speaking instructor" (Campeau, 1984, p. 12).

**Francophone:** "Consisting of or belonging to a French-speaking population" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1981).

**Immersion Centre:** A school which houses only the French immersion program.

**Immersion Program:** ". . . a home-school language switch program where the English-speaking child from an Anglophone home environment is placed in a French-language classroom of an Anglophone school system. Typically the initial years of an immersion program are conducted totally or predominantly in the French language. In succeeding years, increasing proportions of the school day are taught in English" (Halpern, 1976, p. 168).

**Intermediate French Immersion Program:** A program in which the students are enrolled in French immersion at the grade three or four level after being introduced to reading and language arts in English.

**Language of Instruction:** The language in which the subjects are taught.

**Late French Immersion Program:** A program in which the students are enrolled in French immersion at the grade six, or seven, or eight levels. These students would have followed the regular English program until they switched. They also may have followed the Core French Program.

**Partial Immersion Program:** This term is often found in the literature and can refer to either extended French programs or bilingual French programs. In general, it is a program in which one or more subjects are taught in French in addition to French language arts or Core French. The combination could consist of up to and including 50 percent of the instructional time per day.

**Second Language:** The language learned after the acquisition of the mother tongue.

## CHAPTER 2: RELATED LITERATURE

The initial purpose of this study was to achieve an indepth understanding of the role of parents as advocates at the school board level. The focus of the study was on the initiation and implementation of French immersion in one school jurisdiction. Consequently, the review of the literature will present historical issues pertaining to school boards and to French as a language of instruction.

The Constitution Act, 1867 (formerly called the British North America Act or BNA Act) established two levels of government -- federal and provincial and divided the powers between them (Mackay, 1984). Local governments, with the exception of Aboriginal governemnts, were placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces, which makes them agents of the provincial government (Bargen, 1977; Mackay, 1984).

Constitutionally, education was placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces (Mackay, 1984). The provincial governments passed legislation which created local school boards (Bargen, 1977; Mackay, 1984), a North American innovation (Worth, 1987). It is important to realize that local school boards could be abolished by the provincial government at any time (Bargen, 1977; Mackay,

1984). However, this is an unlikely scenario because it would be politically unfeasible and an administrative problem (Bargen, 1977).

On the other hand, the role and the jurisdiction of public school boards have been changed over time (McCordic, 1974). Letourneau (1977) and Ralph (1979) discussed how the amalgamation of school boards affected the French-speaking population in Manitoba. Levine (1982) traced the creation of larger school jurisdictions in Quebec. Glegg (1988) illustrated how legislation passed in British Columbia limited the powers of the local school board. Furthermore, all provinces can indirectly limit the powers of the local board as a result of the financing (Bargen, 1977; Byrne, 1978). Given this context, the provincial government usually has a great deal of influence at the local school board level.

However, the innovation called French Immersion illustrates the reality that "education is a national concern, a provincial function and a local responsibility" (Bargen, 1977, p. 6). This literature review will begin by examining how the local school board functions. Second, the issue of citizen participation in local decision-making will be highlighted. Third, the history of the diffusion of early French immersion and the development of new types of immersion programs will be discussed. Fourth, the legislation dealing with French as a language of instruction

in Manitoba will be outlined. Finally, the current French immersion policies in the province of Manitoba will be examined in order to determine the reoccurring themes around which French immersion policy has been developed.

### School Board

These local authorities exist at the pleasure of the provincial governments and have only powers delegated to them by the province. The province can direct school boards to do certain things, allow them to do certain things, and forbid them from doing certain things. (Richards, 1985, p. 17)

The current powers of local school boards are stated in the Public Schools Act or the equivalent piece of legislation of the province concerned.

The existence of the local school board is a testimony of the importance that Canadians attach to the value of representation (Worth, 1989). Danzberger et al. stated that school boards are "essential mechanisms of representative democracy. They deal with the most volatile and sensitive issues that affect the citizenry: their children and their tax dollars" (cited in Fris, 1988a, p. 27). It is for these reasons that the board members are elected (Worth, 1989).

The decision of many provinces to change the structure of school districts so that they are much larger has brought with it increasing problems of representation and role definition for trustees (Lam, 1982). They must function in the dual role of local representative of the people and

local officials as well as agents of the province with delegated powers (Glegg, 1988). Awender (1988) argued that the role has become complex because of politically sensitive issues and the need to deal "with cycles of reform and multiple constituencies" (Kirst cited in Awender, 1988, p. 31).

Sweezy (1982) indicated that the main function of the board is to formulate policy so that the system functions smoothly. Fris (1988a) stated that policy development and implementation are the main focus of the school board. Regarding implementation, Sweezy (1982) wrote "to ensure the operation works successfully, the board must accept the principle of delegation to the chief administrative officer who carries the authority to implement the policy" (p. 6). Leadership is the exercise of authority -- the authority of knowledge as opposed to the authority of law (Byrne, 1968, p. 7). As Danzberger et al. pointed out there is a continuing need for boards to sort out "the grey areas between [their] policy-making responsibilities and the superintendent's administrative responsibilities (cited in Fris, 1988b, p. 28).

"One truism about today's educational environment is that the success of a school system depends upon the joint effort by a school board and its superintendent toward a set of common goals" (Awender, 1985, p. 176). However, the superintendent does not stand alone because as divisions

grew in size, so did the senior administrative staff (Byrne, 1968). The staff provides the superintendent with technical knowledge on a variety of policy issues which in turn increases the influence of the superintendent in the school jurisdiction (Byrne, 1968; Glegg, 1988).

However, the locus of decision-making is the school board meeting (Hemphill, 1968). Hemphill discovered that two administrators played key roles in setting the agenda for these meetings: the superintendent and the secretary-treasurer. In fact, the most common practice was for the secretary-treasurer to write and circulate the agenda. More recent studies by Isherwood et al. (1984) and Awender (1985) attributed this task to the superintendent in consultation with other administrative officers and the chair of the board. The shift may have taken place because of the move from split responsibilities to a unitary position of responsibility (Farquhar, 1989a)

In summary, the superintendent controls the information base (Awender, 1985) and is the funnel of information between the school board and the school system (Isherwood, 1984). Thus,

it is the superintendent who determines to a large extent what appears on the agenda, at what date it is brought forward and in what order items are considered. . . . Because of such control over this particular aspect of the communication process, then, the superintendent is able to exert a great deal of influence over the directions and activities that the board ultimately pursues (Awender, 1985, p. 191)

According to Isherwood et al. (1984), an interest group is a "hot" item on a school board meeting agenda. Swezey (1982) indicated that school boards need to establish procedures for dealing with the public in order to ensure a smooth-functioning school jurisdiction, to avoid snap decisions, and to prevent public pressure on individual trustees. Isherwood et al. (1984) indicated that members of the community normally have to approach the superintendent before they can meet with the board. The superintendent would employ the following procedures: (1) listening to individuals and groups; (2) following policy where it exists; (3) conducting investigations where policy does not exist; (4) practicing "preventative maintenance"; (5) performing a screening function; (6) following "due process" in the conduct of investigations; (7) maintaining rational, cool leadership behaviour; and (8) becoming an influencer and using resources to influence decisions on salient issues (Isherwood et al., 1984). If the superintendent believes that the issue should be answered by the board, then the group usually has to present a brief in advance which the superintendent sends to the trustees with the agenda and all supporting documents (Isherwood et al., 1984).

The role of the superintendent in the development of policy changed as boards became politicized in the 1960s. As a result, there was more negotiation between school boards and interest groups than "top-down" policy

development. Byrne (1978) and Ingram (1978) indicated that the superintendent has to become a researcher, evaluator, advisor, strategist and interpreter rather than a policy-maker. Additionally, The Alberta School Trustees Association (ASTA, 1988) indicated that the superintendent was the policy writer, policy analyst, and policy advisor; developed policy alternatives and explained implications to the board; and developed procedures and regulations for translating board policy and guidelines into programs and services. However, ASTA (1988) and Isherwood et al. (1984) indicated that communication should be established with all affected groups as soon as possible in order to have their support in the policy formulation and implementation process.

A study of an urban school jurisdiction in Alberta revealed that there is a perceived and preferred need for school boards to maintain control over the policy decisions regarding new programs. The specific categories that were examined were: starting pilot programs, continuing pilot programs, language programs; and special education programs (Ewanyshyn & Konrad, 1988).

### Citizen Participation

Pellegrino (1973) traced the history and type of parent participation that existed in the early 1970s. He took the position that parents should not be restricted to "token" committee tasks or to jobs that no one else wanted but rather they should be able to participate in all levels of involvement according to their skills and interest. His position is based on "the concept of lay control of education" which "is at the heart of our public systems" (p. 8). He pointed out the structure of the school board and the concept of elected representatives.

Pellegrino (1973) and Stamp (1975) indicated that it was the rapid changes in the school system of the 60s and 70s that created the demand among parents for involvement. Furthermore, Stamp (1975) indicated that the participation movement involved people from all levels of the socio-economic structure and that the people were prepared to stick with the cause on the long term.

Mackay (1984) indicated that for a parent group to be successful it must lobby the correct level of government. Borgen (1977) argued that decisions should be made at the level of government closest to the people. However, the local terms of power must be stated in a provincial statute (Borgen, 1977).

For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that a bilingual French program could not exist in Manitoba until 1967 while a total French immersion program could not have been implemented before 1970 (Letourneau, 1977; Ralph, 1979). Similarly, Dr. Isler indicated that it was the lobbying by the Ukrainian community that caused an amendment to the School Act to be made enabling bilingual programs to be implemented (Dr. Isler cited in Fris, 1988a). The issue of provincial statutes regarding French as a language of instruction will be discussed fully in a later section of this review.

The general literature on citizen participation puts forward some key ideas on how groups in the community must organize and gather facts in order to create change. Burgess (1976) advocated action research in order to involve parents and other citizens for a long period of time. He argued that everyone must agree on the goals of the project and its working definition before any progress can be made. People who cannot agree with the group should find another project. The issue of group dynamics is central to this type of approach. Definitions of key terms must be agreed on by everyone.

Burgess (1976) indicated that citizen action research was first and foremost a way of creating dialogue with a decision-making body. However, this research group could become an interest group which would open new options for

involvement including sponsorship and support of political candidates. Isherwood et al (1981) indicated that the public appeared more interested in an "issue" than in being a permanent member of the Home and School or the school board.

Parents who want specific programs implemented may have to organize at the local and/or provincial levels. For example, the Ontario government passed legislation regarding heritage language classes but they will only begin "when a request to teach a particular language is made by the parents of twenty-five or more students of that board" (Heritage, 1989, p. 20). Oandason (1984) described how, in Manitoba, "the onus is on each ethnics communities [sic] to organize themselves and work together towards the implementation of their own heritage language, be it supplementary, core, or bilingual" (p. 22). She indicated the need to conduct surveys and present briefs to the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 School Board. Thus, it is clear that people have to stand up for their rights.

Since the passing of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, numerous articles have been written on its role in education and the courts. Eberlein (1988) took the position that the Canadian court system should not become a super-board by doing the day-to-day business of the school jurisdiction. Wilson and Usher (1985) speculated on the issues involved in special education while Mackay (1987)

indicated that the earliest and most controversial challenges to the Charter have come from the parents of disabled children. The Elwood case in Nova Scotia was an illustration of how a Charter case can be used outside of court (Mackay, 1987). Furthermore, the Supreme Court decision ordering the school to provide for Shelley Carriere "signals a new movement toward courts rather than school boards as the last resort for parents whose children are denied access to special education" (Cruickshank, 1978, p. 16).

### French Immersion

Early French immersion was introduced into Quebec during a critical time in the province's history. In 1964, the Ministry of Education was established which gave the parents a higher lobbying level (Levine, 1982). The Immersion program spread in Quebec because of the "French fact" and the desire of the Anglophones to be able to live in their changing country.

The role of the parents group is well documented by the Canadian Education Association (1984). Stanley (1969) traced the development and implementation of late French immersion of The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal.

Webster (1986) told the rest of the story. She related the history of the Canadian Parents for French and described their role within the province of Ontario. Furthermore, she indicated the reasons, many of them financial, why numerous boards in Ontario will not implement French immersion.

Why do parents enroll their children in French immersion? Webster (1986) provided these insights:

Many parents enrolled their children in immersion because they wanted bilingualism, others because they simply wanted a "better" education.

A study of the parents who enrolled their children in the first French Immersion classes in the Ottawa-Carleton area provided the following information:

Their reasons for doing so clustered into four groups. One group consisted of the economic reasons, a second language would be instrumental in getting a better job. A second and equally important group of reasons was the feeling that educated people speak more than one language. This reason, which is an elitist reason, is also typically a non-North American reason. The third group of reasons was somewhat different. One of the families surveyed felt that by putting the children into an immersion program they would ensure a more challenging education for them. The fourth group of reasons was more altruistic. Some of the people questioned felt that as Canada does have two official languages, and a vibrant French culture worth understanding, an immersion program might be the way to learn about them. (Halpern, 1984, p. 21)

In summary, there were many diverse and contradictory reasons for parents to enrol their children in French immersion.

Mackay (1984) speculated that French immersion parents may have won some constitutional rights. Webster (1985) pointed out that there was no guarantee but rather it was a local board initiative. The Supreme Court of British Columbia decided on September 2, 1987 that there was no constitutional protection for French immersion. Later in this review, other issues will be examined in terms of court decisions.

### **Manitoba: French as a Language of Instruction**

A prerequisite to the ability to offer French immersion in a school division is a statute that indicates that French is a recognized language of instruction in the province. Manitoba's first Schools Act in 1871 established a Board of Education, divided into a Protestant and a Catholic Section (Child, 1977). In 1890, the Manitoba Liberal government led by Greenway abolished the board and placed education under the department of education. The Catholic minority claimed constitutional violations (Child, 1977; Letourneau, 1977). This was the beginning of the Manitoba School Question which raised the issue of language because the students attending the Protestant schools had been mainly English-speaking while the students attending the Catholic schools had been mainly French-speaking. The issue reached the federal election platforms in 1896 (Letourneau, 1977; Child, 1977).

"Bilingualism in Manitoba's schools has now become not only an issue of language and religion but also one of politics" (Bilash, 1987). In November 1896, the Laurier-Greenway Compromise was passed (Bilash, 1986). Section 258 of the school act read:

When ten of the pupils in any school speak the French, or any other language other than English as their native language, the teaching of such pupils shall be conducted in French, or such other subject and English upon the bilingual system. (Bilash, 1987, p.9)

The legislation established bilingual schools in the provinces. Letourneau (1977) traced the reactions to this law as new immigrants came to the province and the events within the province which led to the abolition of the bilingual schools by the new Liberal government in 1916.

From 1916 until 1970, there was an ongoing struggle in the province to reinstate French as a language of instruction (Letourneau, 1977; Ralph, 1979). In 1955, there was a turning point for French as a Second Language teaching because school boards were given the authority to request permission to offer French as a second language in the elementary grades (Sotiriadis, 1981).

Letourneau (1977), Ralph (1979), and Sotiriadis (1981) traced the events in the francophone community. According to their reports, francophones had continued to struggle to have French reinstated. The first breakthrough came in April 1967 when Bill 59 was passed unanimously by the Roblin

government. The Bill reinstated French as language of instruction but only for up to 50 per cent of the instructional time.

Letourneau (1977) traced the history and personalities of Bill 113. In 1970, the government of Premier Ed Schreyer passed the Bill which restored French as a language of instruction in Manitoba -- on an equal par with English., Thus, the prerequisite for the local board to implement Francais and French immersion programs had been achieved.

While it was the francophone population that worked for the law to be passed, Letourneau (1977) cited the Minister of Education to illustrate the connection between Bill 113 and the Official Languages Act. Miller, the Minister of Education, said "in fact, the real tasks involved in the nation-wide implementation of the official languages principle lay with the provinces" (Cited in Letourneau, 1977, p. 97). The rest of Miller's speech clearly illustrated that he saw the Bill as helping more than the Franco-Manitoban. The Education Minister said:

The Bill is a single and straight forward attempt to provide French-speaking Manitobans, and others who are interested as the case may be, with their established right [to] be instructed in the official language of their choice within the framework of our public school system . . . We favor no melting pot philosophy. (cited in Letourneau, 1977, p. 97) [emphasis added]

As Sotiriadis (1981) indicated the subsequent amendment to the Public Schools Act provided for French as a language of

instruction to both francophone students whose first language was French and to other students wishing to study French in an immersion setting.

Ralph (1977) and Sotiriadis (1981) traced developments at the Department of Education. The evolution of the Bureau de l'Education Francaise (BEF) illustrated the provincial government's commitment to French language programs. The development of the conflict about whether more resources should be put into Francais programs where enrolment figures were dropping or French immersion programs where the enrollment figures were increasing was explained by Ralph (1977).

Sotiriadis (1981) indicated that the actual amendment carried the condition that a specified number of parents had to ask for the program. This meant that unless a group of parents lobbied for the program, the school board did not have to implement the program. Woodley (1983) reported that trustees in Manitoba formulated policy when the same problems kept reoccurring. Ralph (1979) indicated that the issue of whether to house French immersion in a Francais school, an immersion centre or a dual-track school was a question in several western school divisions during the late 1970s.

### Manitoba: School Board Policies on French Immersion

A preliminary study of the policy manuals housed at the offices of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees (MAST) revealed that, in 1990, thirteen divisions had developed policy which addressed specific French Immersion issues. Some divisions only developed policy around one issue whereas other divisions developed policy on six or seven issues.

Five school divisions introduced the policy with a philosophical statement or a preamble. These introductions tended either to refer to the general goals of the division regarding the education of all children or to refer to the Public Schools Act or the Official Language Act in a manner that clearly indicated they were justifying the decision to implement.

Only one division discussed the funding of the program. Sotiriadis (1981) and Ralph (1979) discussed the transfer grants for programs promoting bilingual education. In fact, on December 12, 1989, Canada and Manitoba renewed their five year agreement for French language education.

Entry into the program and enrolment requirements were mentioned by a number of divisions. The entry points seem to be k/1 or grade 4 or grade 7 with most divisions deciding not to implement the grade 4 level. The issue of enrolment is equally diversified. One division used three categories

and assigned a number to each category. Two other divisions gave specific guidelines. One said "where numbers warrant" whereas the other used a number (23).

The issue of facilities was addressed by eight divisions. The debate has centered around the immersion centre versus the dual-track school. Lapkin et al. (1981) and McGillivray (1978) found that students in immersion centres did better than students in dual-track schools. Genesse (1987) supported that position.

Connected with housing was the issue of transportation. Six divisions developed policy on this topic. Also, the provision of transportation for immersion students has turned into court cases. In one case, the parents were awarded transportation (Anderson, 1985) but in the other case they were rejected (Anderson, 1986).

Two divisions made policy statements on the language of administration in the schools. Three divisions dealt with teacher qualifications but the impression I got was that fluency was the main criteria. Campeau (1984) indicated that there is no policy in Canada regarding the certification of teachers for immersion. Annandale (1985) discussed the impact of this issue on the training of teachers in Manitoba.

Considering that ever since the first French immersion class was implemented in St. Lambert, evaluation has been a

central focus, it is surprising that only two divisions included this in their policy. McGillivray (1983) reminded The Canadian Parents for French that the numerous research studies conducted may have been part of the reason for the success of the program. These studies indicated that the students in French Immersion were doing as well as their counterparts in the English program. Self-fulfilling prophesy is a powerful motivator.

Five divisions made references to the French immersion program as established by B. E. F. Also, one division wrote a very lengthy policy on secondary French immersion. One division made a reference to communication within the division.

In conclusion, the policies reflected the recurring themes for the various divisions (Woodley, 1983) but they also reflected the issues in the literature. Local policy can be influenced by the media (Gergen, 1968). Ralph (1982) described several other influencing factors such as: environment, international ("global village"); Quebec; provincial issues; neighbouring divisions and the local jurisdiction.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Discussion of the Method

The purpose of this study was an indepth examination of the process of initiating and implementing French Immersion that was used by Prairie School Division. Thus, the case study design was chosen because it "has proved particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy" (Merriam, 1988, p.33).

Schramm (quoted in Yin, 1984) explained that "the essence of a case study is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result" (pp. 22-23). Yin (1984) indicated that case study design is suited to "why" and "how" research questions which require no control over behavioral events and are focused on contemporary events. The research questions stated above clearly reflect these considerations.

Yin (1984) defined the method chosen in a manner which leads into a discussion of the practical aspects of doing the research.

A case study is an empirical inquiry that:

1. investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when
2. the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which
3. multiple sources of evidence are used. (p. 23)

### Pilot Study

Yin (1984) advocated the use of a pilot study in order to refine the data collection plans. The interview protocol was used to interview one knowledgeable person from each of the following categories: school board members, superintendent's department, and parents' group for French immersion. The purposes of the pilot study were: 1) to get a sense of the story, and 2) to analyze critically the questions and indicate where clarification or additional questions may be needed in order to obtain the information. The pilot was conducted between October and November of 1991 after a preliminary document study was conducted in the division which was the subject of this research.

The results of the pilot study indicated that the basic assumption upon which my study was based did not apply to this division. Two of the collaborators clearly indicated that the initiative for this program came from the Superintendent's Department and was supported by the Board (Nathan, personal communication, November 8, 1991 and Barry, personal communication, October 28, 1991). The third person

indicated that she thought it was a co-operative venture between the School Board and the parents but she did not recall any kind of lobby (Collette, October 21, 1991).

The sequence of proposed and actual questions can be found in Appendix A. While these questions focused primarily on the role of the parents' group and the relationship between it and the school board, they were open ended enough to reveal the actual series of events. I am aware of a body of literature that deals with the micropolitics of the group itself but I decided not to include it in the literature review because of the way in which the story unfolded.

### Sources of Evidence

Yin (1984) and Merriam (1988) described the various sources of evidence along with their strengths and weaknesses. This study employed semi-structured interviews and documents as the major sources of data.

### Interviews

Interviews are used in order to get indepth, personal insights from those who were involved in the study (Merriam, 1988). A semi-structured (Merriam, 1988), focused interview (Gergen, 1968; Woodley, 1983; Yin, 1984) was chosen because it is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored which can be dealt with in any order. Also, the researcher

can ask for elaboration or clarification during the interview. Thus the perspective of the interviewee is permitted to emerge which allows the interviewer the opportunity to capture new insights.

The interviewees were called collaborators for the purpose of this study because they were consulted at various points in the study (i.e., to verify the summary of their interview, to provide sources of data). They were selected by a method which is referred to in the literature as purposive, purposeful, or criterion-referenced (See Merriam, 1988) because "purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one gets to select a sample from which one can learn the most" (Merriam, 1988, p. 48).

The collaborators were chosen using "reputational case selection" in which "instances are chosen on the recommendation of experienced experts in the area" (Goetz & LeCompte quoted in Merriam, 1988, p. 50). The instances in this case are people who were involved in the implementation of French immersion in the division. The list was compiled by asking knowledgeable people in the division and by studying documents (Gergen, 1968).

In combination with this, theoretical sampling, developed by Glaser and Strauss, was used. It

is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data

to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. (Glaser & Strauss quoted in Merriam, 1988, p. 51)

Theoretical sampling was combined with reputational sampling because the collection and analysis of data are simultaneous events in case study research (Carney, 1987; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1984). Also, it is not always possible at the outset to know all the key personalities involved in the decision-making process. In fact, Gergen (1968) wrote, "an added feature . . . has been to interview the top influentials . . . in order to obtain additional nominations" (p. 194).

In order to obtain the co-operation of the collaborators, I contacted them by telephone to explain the study and set up an interview time. Before the interview, each participant read a written explanation of the study and the role of the collaborators. I assured them anonymity with regard to the information that they provided and obtained signed informed consent before proceeding with the interview. The participants also granted written consent for the interviews to be tape recorded for analysis purposes. See Appendix C for copies of all correspondence with the collaborators. At the time of the interview, I made notes on the individual interview schedules regarding follow-up questions or other aspects of the interview that would not be picked up by the tape.

Among the collaborators who participated in the study, there were five past and/or present school board members,

five past and/or present member's of the Superintendent's Department, six parents and three others that had not been considered in the original categories. It was suggested by some collaborators that three other people from outside the division be interviewed regarding the early days of French Immersion but I chose to confine my interview to people who were from the division. Additionally, I did not interview all parents who were identified nor did I follow-up on leads regarding other divisional staff with the exception of the first three French Immersion Principals in the division. There was one key parent that I could not contact and one potential collaborator who decided not to participate.

### Documents

During the course of the study, I examined School Board Minutes for relevant motions and to gain a sense of the chronology and the issues encountered during the initiation and implementation process. The Policy Manual contained the following relevant policies: Aims and Objectives, French Immersion, Heritage Languages and Transportation. While the parents' groups did keep minutes of their meetings, these were not available for study with the exception of one year of minutes at the high school level. Additionally, throughout the course of the implementation process, the parents did present briefs to the Board on issues such as transportation but these briefs were not available at this

time. In summary, the only documents available to me at the local level was the official School Board Minutes and the Policy Manual. I was informed by a member of the Superintendent's Department that the old School Board Office lacked space for storage of archival material and among the parents contacted no one had any written information.

### Pilot Study Findings

I began the process of choosing collaborators by contacting the Superintendent of Schools in September of 1991. In consultation with him and my advisor, I chose to do the pilot study using Collette, a parent who had been involved in the beginning and had been a spokesperson for the Crocus French Immersion Parents' Group; Barry, a veteran member of the school board; and Nathan, the Assistant Superintendent in charge of program in 1977-78. Two out of three collaborators clearly indicated that the program had been initiated by the Superintendent's Department. Collette was unsure of the process but had "a feeling it was the parents and the school board working co-operatively" (personal communication, Oct. 21, 1991).

In response to this finding, I decided to pursue the issue of parental involvement by looking at what they did in a division where the parents had to respond rather than lead. Thus, the research became a quest to tell the story from the perspective of the people involved rather than try

to fit their experiences into a framework of preconceived research questions.

### Data Analysis

As stated earlier, data analysis and data collection are not two separate entities but are intertwined (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1984). During the data collection phase, the analysis performs the function of keeping the study focused and manageable. It also provides leads to documents and collaborators while allowing the researcher to make notes on the insights, questions, themes, ideas, and connections that seem to be emerging in the data. These notes are considered to be part of the data base.

A data base has been defined by Yin (1984) as the place where all data are stored for later intensive analysis. Merriam (1988) indicated that the data can be arranged either chronologically or topically. The purpose of the data base is twofold. First, it permits the easy retrieval of material for indepth analysis. Second, it provides other researchers with ready access to the primary data.

While this overview is important it is also necessary to explain how specific data were analyzed. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. After this was done, a content analysis which "is a systematic procedure for describing the content of communications" (Merriam, 1988, p. 116) was done

on each interview. From this, a summary of the interview was written. The summary was sent to the collaborators for them to verify (Carney, 1987; Merriam, 1988).

The collaborators were allowed to make comments. Carney (1987) points out that the researcher should take this precaution when conducting interview checks.

Advise your respondent that his or her thinking may have developed, in certain aspects, since the interview. If his or her main points are now somewhat different than they were at the time of the interview, ask him or her to distinguish between the interview's main points and the new main points. (p. 55)

This precaution allows for more indepth analysis and can illustrate changes in perspective over time.

Once all the respondent checks were completed, the second part of the analysis occurred. Essentially, a content analysis was done on all the tapes in order to organize the data into categories, typologies, or themes (Merriam, 1988).

In essence, the data from the documents were also analyzed using content analysis. However, in the case of documents, it is important to realize that they were not written for the study so it is important to know the source of the document and the intended audience in order to fully analyze its significance (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1984).

However, the main type of data analysis that was used was triangulation, which is the use of multiple sources of data to confirm the emerging findings (Carney, 1987; Merriam,

1988; Yin, 1984). This means that one has to determine, using a process of cross-referencing, if the emerging categories are relevant for all sources of data. The higher the consistency among the data, the greater the validity of the study (Carney, 1987; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1984).

Yin (1984) argued that a general strategy should be used in analyzing the data. The one which seemed most suited to this study was "relying on theoretical propositions" (p. 100) because this study was based on the proposition that events outside of Manitoba, particularly in Quebec, influenced the political climate in Manitoba and provided the motivation for Anglophone parents to approach the school boards for the implementation of French immersion.

Additionally, Yin (1984) put forward the argument that in order to create greater internal and external validity, the study should use specific analytic techniques. Given the fact that the analysis discussed to date demands the creation of categories, it is feasible to use what Yin described as pattern-making, especially the special type called explanation-building in the triangulation process (see Yin, 1984, pp. 103-109).

On the other hand, Merriam (1988) discussed six strategies that can be used to ensure internal validity -- "the question of how one's findings match reality" (p. 166). They are triangulation, member checks, long term

observation, peer examinations, participatory modes of research and researcher's biases. Long term observation is not applicable to this study. The researcher's biases will have to be stated at the beginning of the study because the researcher is the data collector and data analyzer which means that all the evidence will be filtered through her world-view and assumptions. Merriam (1988) argues that, instead of the traditional view of reliability, the researcher should aim for consistent and dependable results. By searching the literature, she advocated three measures for establishing this. First, the investigator should explain her position vis-a-vis the various aspects of the study. Second, triangulation should be used. Finally, an audit trail should be created so that an independent researcher could audit the study.

Carney (1987) stressed the central need for an audit trail which "is made up of the sets of records used in the standard operating procedures in each of the major components of your research design" (p. 14). According to him,

this series of records constitutes a "trail" of documents of record (hence the concept of the audit trail). Any subsequent researcher can use these records to verify whether you've done what you claim to have done, and whether the data are there and substantiate what you claim to have found. (p. 15)

Therefore, an audit trail accompanied the various aspects of the study. My audit trail consisted of numerous dated and

undated notes over the three years that I have worked on this project.

The issue of generalizability of case studies is one of much debate (Merriam, 1988). The fact that one cannot generalize from a case study is considered to be a limitation of this type of research. However, Merriam (1988) put forward four alternatives to the traditional definition of generalizability. She considered reader or user generalizability to be the one most applicable to case study research. In short, it means let the reader apply the study to his or her situation which is the common practice of law and medicine where applicability is determined by the practitioner. This may be a very good guideline for readers who find this study significant.

Before I conducted this study, I assumed that a parental lobby was the reason for French Immersion in the vast majority of cases. Now, I realize that the decision took place in an historical, educational and political context which influenced the decision-making process at the local level. In this sense, I believe the results can be generalized so that others will look at the context in which school board members make decisions.

### Limitations of the Study

The central limitations of the study were:

1. the availability of documents. Minutes of parents' group meetings, briefs presented to the Board, agendas and letters were not available through any of the collaborators.
2. I had a sense at times that I was missing parts of the story because I could not locate key people or documents that could verify certain issues such as the role of people from outside the division, surveys conducted, etc. Additionally, I did not interview people who would have been involved in the schools at the secondary level.
3. the semi-structured interview technique does have its limitations. The most obvious is that the views of the collaborator may be influenced by the wording of the question or may reflect a momentary thought because the person has not reflected on the issue before. Hence, after reflection, the person may want to add, delete, or change a response. This is, in part, considered by including a respondent check procedure.
4. Also, the fact that the interviewer will enter the domain of the collaborator makes the situation contrived and may in fact influence the answers that will be provided. This is one of the main reasons

for multiple sources of evidence and for triangulation.

#### CHAPTER 4: THE CASE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine indepth the process of initiating and implementing French Immersion that was used by Prairie School Division. The program was an initiative of the Superintendent's Department and its development spanned the years from 1977-1993. In essence, the Assistant Superintendent in charge of program anticipated that members of the community would eventually request French Immersion. In response to this anticipated need, he initiated a process of inquiry which resulted in the implementation of a kindergarten and a grade one program in September of 1979 in Crocus School.

The implementation of this program has been consistently influenced by the way in which the Superintendent's Department and the School Board have dealt with the issues of accommodation and transportation over time. Prairie is one of the few school divisions in the province that has been experiencing population growth. This growth has manifested itself in increased enrollments in schools in developing areas of the division and declining enrollments in older, more established areas of the division. During the initial planning and implementation phases, the French Immersion program was placed in a school experiencing declining enrollments and the students were bussed.

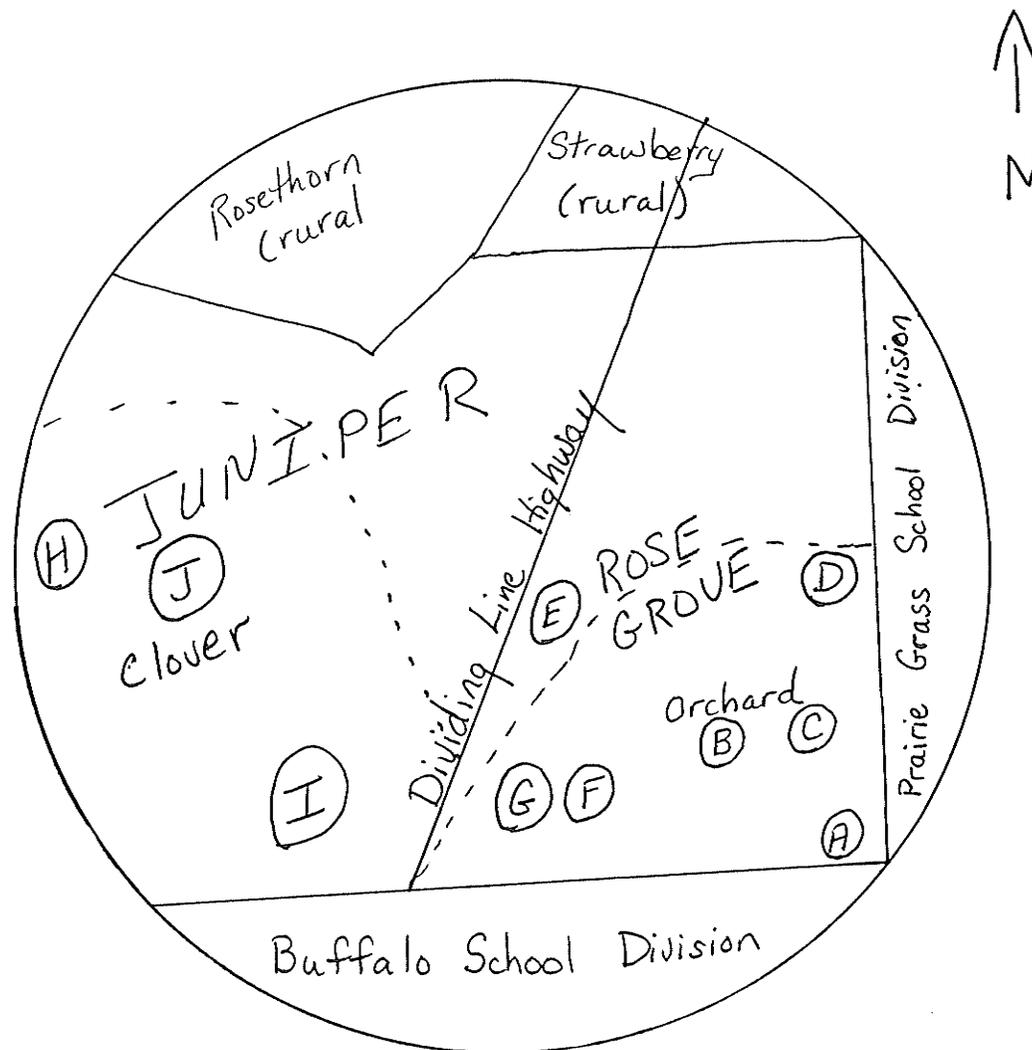
However, this was not special treatment because many students had to be bussed and French Immersion students just fit into an already elaborate bussing system that had been established to meet the educational needs of the division's student population. During the fourteen years of implementation, the ways in which students have been accommodated have reflected population shifts and changes in the provincial regulations regarding the transportation of students.

It is important to note that Prairie School Division provides educational opportunities for students from two rural municipalities (Rosethorn and Strawberry) and one urban municipality (The City of Winnipeg). Prior to 1972, the division provided for students from a rural municipality called Juniper which included an area called Clover. In 1972, Juniper was incorporated into the City of Winnipeg but special regulations were passed maintaining previously agreed transportation provisions for students living in Juniper and attending school in Rose Grove. In essence, every student who came from Juniper to Rose Grove was considered transportable and received a transportation grant from the provincial government. Clover was a rapidly expanding, new housing development in 1979 with insufficient schools for its student population, while Orchard was declining; so the division transported students over Dividing Line Highway, claimed the transportation grant and

created an elaborate bussing system. See Figure 1 for a map of Prairie School Division which indicates the areas of the division and the schools that will be discussed in this chapter. See Figure 2 for a chronology of the key events in the initiation and implementation story.

In order to analyze the data, I chose a thematic approach. The early sections of this analysis explain the national, provincial and local contexts for the initiation of early French Immersion in Prairie School Division. The remainder of the chapter examined the initiation and implementation process by analyzing the various issues for which the division developed policy. The chapter ends by providing a brief overview of the 1992-93 situation regarding French Immersion in the division.

The story will be told using the documentary and interview data that I collected. The collaborators were promised anonymity so I have used fictitious first names. At this point, it is important to explain how I assigned the names. The Superintendent of Schools in 1977 was given a name beginning with "S". The various Assistant Superintendents were given names beginning with "A". All other employees of the division were assigned names started with the letter "D". Board members were given names starting with "B" while parents were assigned the letter "P". These names, their positions, and their interview dates are contained in Figure 3.



- A: Bison School (first school considered)
- B: Crocus School (tri-track to milieu)
- C: Sunrise School (English program school)
- D: Popular School (program expanded)
- E: Swan School (English and Ukrainian Bilingual Programs)
- F: Horizon School (junior high component)
- G: Northern Lights School (senior high component)
- H: Rainbow School (dual-track elementary)
- I: Butterfly School (dual-track elementary)
- J: Exploration School (dual track middle grades school)

Figure 1: Fictional Map of Prairie School Division

DATE	EVENT
Jan. 1978	Committee established to develop survey of interest
1979	
March	Bison School selected;
May	Location changed from Bison to Crocus; Transportation granted;
1981	French Immersion kindergarten students attended Sunrise School;
1982	Crocus School became an immersion centre for all immersion students;
1984	Expansion of facilities by adding Popular School as a lower grade school;  Secondary Planning Committee;
1985	Guidelines approved for implementing secondary program;  French Languages Programs Policy formulated and approved (first);
1987	Implementation of late immersion;  Early French Immersion students attended Horizon School for junior high;
1988	French Language Programs Policy (revised);  Dual-track elementary schools introduced;  Lead grade one students attend other divisions for high school;
1989	High School Program implemented at Northern Lights School;
1992	First class graduated in the division (early and late immersion students);

Figure 2: Key Events in Story

NAME	POSITION/DATE OF INTERVIEW
Sam	Former Superintendent of Schools February 4, 1993.
Adam	Former Assistant Superintendent (Program) November 8, 1991.
Allan	Former Assistant Superintendent (Program) October 24, 1986. September 22, 1987.
Andrew	Former Assistant Superintendent (Personnel) January 28, 1993.
Daryl	Consultant January 18, 1993.
Denis	Former French Immersion Principal March 1, 1993.
Derrick	Former French Immersion Principal February 18, 1993.
Desmond	Secretary-Treasurer February 10, 1993.
Barry	School Board Member October 21, 1991.
Betty	School Board Member January 21, 1993.
Bob	School Board Member February 16, 1993.
Bridgit	School Board Member February 1, 1993.
Pam	French Immersion Parent February 12, 1993.
Patricia	French Immersion Parent October 21, 1991.
Paula	French Immersion Parent January 27, 1993.
Pauline	French Immersion Parent February 13, 1993.
Penny	French Immersion Parent February 20, 1993.
Priscilla	French Immersion Parent February 15, 1993.

Figure 3: Fictional Names of People

### Provincial Historical Background

Gregor and Wilson (1984) referred to the period from 1959-1982 in the development of education in Manitoba as "restructuring the system" (p. 137). It was a time of amalgamation and consolidation based on initiatives of the 1950s. Bergen (1967) traced some of the factors behind the reorganization process and concluded that the initiative came from the provincial government through legislation. Gregor and Wilson (1984) stated that one of the results of the reorganization was "a long period of change in school financing" (p. 139). The most fundamental change was from local responsibility to provincial responsibility for financing the education of the children.

A direct consequence of the amalgamation of school districts was the need to transport students over larger distances (Gregor and Wilson, 1984). Therefore, the provincial government established transportation regulations and grants to ensure that all students would have an opportunity to receive an education. According to my collaborators (Sam, Adam, Desmond, Betty, Barry, Bob, Bridgit, and Paula), these regulations profoundly enhanced the history of educational opportunity in Prairie School Division and the ability of the School Board to implement programs such as French Immersion.

It was recommended by the School Divisions Boundaries Commission in 1959 that Prairie School Division be created by amalgamating four school districts. Furthermore, the division was divided into three wards and the number of trustees per ward was recommended according to population figures in 1959 (Report of the School Divisions Boundaries Commission, 1959). The new school division collected money from the various municipalities from which the students originated. One such municipality was the City of Winnipeg.

In 1972, the City of Winnipeg Incorporation Act extended the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg (Statutes of Manitoba, Allan, 1986) but by parents such as Pam who stated "I think that they felt that there was an apparent need and I think that that's when they began to look into it." A central part of the process was responding to the community's needs. Perceived needs were confirmed through surveys and public meetings (Adam, Andrew, Barry, Penny and Betty).

It is important to note that at the superintendent's level, the Assistant Superintendent in charge of program, was the most influential person in the process (Adam, Sam, Barry, Andrew and Betty). Sam indicated that it was not only the three Superintendents who would have played key roles but also Consultants in the division and the school administrators would have had input at Principals' Meetings. Once the program was implemented, school administrators

began to play key roles and many decisions were made at the school level (Sam, Adam, Andrew, Derrick and Denis). It was acknowledged that from the time of initiation onwards that the French co-ordinator for the division played an important role as he was the only French-speaking person in the Superintendent's Department (Sam).

### Intiation Process

Betty indicated that French Immersion was the initiative of the Superintendent's Department. The person within the Department that advocated it was Adam, Assistant Superintendent in charge of program at the time. A former French Immersion Principal supported this position when he said, "He [Adam] was certainly the Superintendent in charge of the developing years" (Derrick). Parents of children in the lead classes also remember Adam as the person who visibly supported the program.

He [Adam] went through it with us as a learning. This whole thing was new to him too and he was always trying to make the right decisions for us and help us. (Pauline).

Another parent stated

Initially, he [Adam] was there for us. We asked some of the most ridiculous questions right through to the most serious questions and he treated them equally with respect. (Pam)

Adam himself confirmed that he was the one who exerted the most influence throughout the process. Sam indicated that the French Immersion Program would have been the

responsibility of Adam who was assisted by others within the division as appropriate.

It is difficult to determine exactly how the program came to the attention of Adam but some possible scenarios could be entertained. Barry indicated that Board members were always attentive to the desires of the community. So, one of them may have informally raised the program as a possibility to explore. A member of the Superintendent's Department, at the time, indicated that he had suggested to Adam that the possibility of introducing French Immersion in the division be explored (Daryl). However, this person was quick to point out that it was the fact that Adam acted which caused the initiation of the program.

The first School Board motion passed on French Immersion was recorded on January 9, 1978 and stated "that a committee be established to prepare a survey of interest in a French Immersion program in Prairie School Division" (School Board Minutes). It carried unanimously. Desmond concluded that it was from the results of that survey that French Immersion was initiated. Adam, Andrew, Daryl, Barry, Bob and Betty all indicated that the survey influenced the decision to proceed. Unfortunately, a copy of this survey and/or the results were not available to me.

Betty highlighted another factor that entered into determining need. "They are always taking a look at the

demographics and trying to figure out where we go from there." Penny, Pauline and Priscilla all indicated that demographics have been a key element in the decision-making process at various points in the history of French Immersion in this division. In fact, Doreen stated

I feel that they had done all of their feasibility studies long before they ever put it into motion and once they had, they were committed to it.

Another tool that was used to determine need was a committee set-up by Adam to study the situation. The various areas of the division were represented by parents and there was probably trustee representation on the committee. Adam could only remember one committee member and he could not recall the committee's findings. He recalled that the committee met only a few times and the early meetings were used to inform committee members about the nature of the program. The committee members suggested public meetings which were held and they discussed the possible locations for the program. The sentiment, at the time, was that a school in an area experiencing declining enrollment should be chosen (Adam).

Regarding the committee, Betty confirmed that it met very few times and that time was devoted to explaining the program. She could not recall the members of the committee outside of Adam but she did recollect some of the views expressed. She noted that some people did not know what French Immersion was; so it had to be explained. Some

parents quietly supported the program but they were not vocal because the program was not driven by the community. Some parents including herself had concerns. Her personal concerns were that the committee was a sham and that a very persuasive Superintendent was advocating the program in a manner that would lead to problems because parents would expect more than the program could deliver. Other parents expressed concern about the location of the program, displacement of students, and availability of staff. In Betty's opinion

They were very low keyed concerns. They were not concerns that anyone needed to be worried about. There was no question that the program was wanted, was seen as being healthy.

She did not recall any voices of opposition on the committee.

In summary, Adam stated that he established a committee of parents to discuss the possibilities of French Immersion in the division. He indicated that principals probably provided the names and stated that the only person he could remember was Betty. Betty confirmed that she was on the committee and that all elementary schools had been asked to send representatives. However, not all of the schools responded. Additionally, she recalled that it was made up of representatives from the Superintendent's Department, educators in the division and school trustees. The only people she remembered were Adam and Barry. She described Barry as a trustee who was concerned about the education of

students. She described the committee as a front because the decision was made before it ever met. In her opinion,

the committee had no mandate whatsoever. The committee was put in place purely as an exercise to say that we have vetted this stuff past a representative sampling of parents and they approved it. So then the Superintendents could go out to the community and say we did this folks. We involved the community in making the decision and now the decision that has been made is that we shall proceed with the program. But it was all pretense. It was not real. (Betty)

She did not recall any documents being produced nor did she know whether any minutes of these meetings still existed. No one made presentations to this committee.

Daryl confirmed that there was an initial committee set-up but he did not recall the membership. He thought the mandate was to "establish some guidelines for implementation in our school division if parents indicated sufficient interest to do so." On the other hand, the School Board Minutes indicated that an ad-hoc committee for French Immersion was struck. There was no mandate given but the trustees on it were Barry and Brett. There was no reference to other members (School Board Minutes, November 6, 1978). School Board Minutes do contain references to reports given by either trustees or Adam on French Immersion Committee Meetings but the contents were not stated. Barry recalled that the Ad-Hoc Committee discussed issues such as admission criteria, housing and type of school. After examining all of the information available to me I could only conclude that there was a committee but I do not know if there was more

than one. Barry stated that the committee was also involved in public meetings; he added, however:

what our format has been was to allow our administrators to act as organizers and facilitators of the meetings and Ad-Hoc members and other members whether they were on the committee or not would be present and listen to what publics were saying and sometimes get into a discussion with people informally during the process of the meeting and generally what was done then was that the administration would gather in the information ... and then we'd make some policy changes or direction that we wanted to take that would ultimately come to a point where we would implement.

Sam and Adam confirmed that the Board relied on the Superintendent's Department to collect information and present it to the Board. Sam further stressed that this job would have been delegated to Adam.

Patricia, Penny and Bridgit recalled the public meetings which were in essence information meetings. Adam did the presentations. Support for the role of the meeting came from numerous sources. "We would try to answer any questions people have and specifically concerns" (Bob). "These meetings played a very important role. They indicated through parental participation that there indeed were people in the division interested in the program. If no one had come forward then the program would not have happened. Those meetings ensured that the process of implementation would proceed" (Daryl). Adam, Patricia, Pauline and Penny indicated that part of the process was to sign up if you were interested in enrolling your child.

Pauline recalled that these meetings were also a time when people with opposing views were vocal.

The information sessions proved that parents wanted the program but they did not really give parents a voice in the decision-making process. Sam stated:

I think it would be safe to say that parental involvement came more after the decision was made and after parents had made the choice and they had children to go into it. Then, there would be a great deal of let's say staff initiated meetings with parents. For example, I have no recollection of a group of parents strongly involved with the Board.

Parental involvement will be discussed later but it suffices to say here that they were not a strong force in the initiation process.

I chose May 14, 1979 as the date on which the initiation process ended and implementation began because on that day the Board passed the following two motions unanimously:

79-331 That the French Immersion program be accomodated at Crocus Schol for the 79-80 school year rather than at Bison School as previously decided.

and

79-334 That the Board approve the provision of transportation for pupils to and from the French Immersion and English-Ukrainian Bilingual Programs provided such transportation can be completely covered with the transportation grant.

In the final analysis, "it came very painlessly" (Bridgit) because it was a School Board initiative. Several times in the interview, Sam marvelled that he could not

recall more about French Immersion but concluded "and why French Immersion doesn't come through much louder has to be, you know, a relatively easy process."

### Community Reaction

A constant theme from the people who were members of the Superintendent's Department at the time was that they did not recall any positive or negative reaction from the community (Adam, Desmond and Andrew). Adam thought that the only people involved were the parents who enrolled their children and that the parents in the English stream were not concerned because there had already been discussions about closing Crocus. The potential closing scenario was confirmed by Derrick, Andrew and Desmond. Sam speculated that the lack of opposition may have been because "much of Prairie School Division is an upper middle class group who would perhaps see the value in relation to having their children bilingual at some point in time." He also pointed out that the relocation of students and transportation were not problems at the time. "Although I don't know whether they [parents] were necessarily that aware of it to begin with."

Daryl pointed out that there were some minority feelings. There were people who did not want French shoved down their throats. Pauline recalled one man at an information meeting who was very vocal on that point. Bob recalled some

negative responses "but not a major reaction." On the whole,

I think most people were in favour of French Immersion. I don't recall any real negative. You're always going to hear a comment if they hadn't spent money on French Immersion then we could have got more money and done more things but that was very, very minimal. I found the same with most of our language programs. We haven't had any backlash of any. We have a very mixed ethnic community in our division. Most people accept it and supported our Board. Sure there were a few negatives. I'm sure every Board had those. By and large our Board has a very supportive community here. (Bob)

Barry indicated that he received both apprehensive and bigoted calls regarding the program. Daryl presented a continuum of community views

But, I think the really strong feelings were either those who were very much for it and wanted to become involved in it and then the apathetic portion of the community who really didn't even care that the meetings were held because it had no interest for them whatsoever. And then the very few vocal people who were strongly opposed to French Immersion.

While Adam and others stressed that parents of children attending the English program were aware that the school was scheduled for closing, Paula, Pauline, Betty and Penny made it clear that some of those parents blamed French Immersion for displacing their children. However, Paula stated "very much the majority from the ones I spoke to" understood that their numbers were dwindling and they chose to move to other schools. Bridgit thought that parents in the original catchment area "were probably quite happy to retain the English program in the school" which was a direct result of

the initial implementation of French Immersion. She went on to say "I think the Board's mistake was putting both French Immersion and Ukrainian into the same school" because "the school couldn't accommodate both programs if the English program was meant to stay."

Paula noted a concern on the part of some people about the number of busses that would be coming into the area and their effect. Betty highlighted that some of these parents were concerned about dropping property values.

In the beginning, the reaction could be divided into the larger community and the community surrounding Crocus School. However, once the Immersion Program outgrew Crocus School, Betty indicated that parents in schools such as Sunrise began to worry that their children would be displaced due to French Immersion. Betty, Pauline and Penny indicated that once the program moved to junior and senior high where it was a dual-track situation that there were a number of concerns expressed by the indigenous population about the effects that French Immersion would have on the school.

Pam stated "you had to do a lot of talking as an average anglo parent." This "talking" involved justifying the choice of French Immersion. Pauline confirmed this type of community response but she explained that it was from "parents of children that were already in the English

program and had no opportunity to get their child in French Immersion. ... It was our choice." Although Priscilla joined the ranks of French Immersion parents once the program had been in place for a few years, she felt that the reaction was always negative and that this reaction stemmed from issues of space. "It's always room, space."

In conclusion, the reaction of members of the community was dependent on whether or not they perceived the program to directly affect their lives. In some cases, it became a scapegoat so that people did not have to face the real possibility of school closures. The reaction changed as the program grew with people in the different areas of the division reacting in different ways over time. Much of the initial reaction was a normal reaction to change and once the change was accepted, the reaction became neutral or positive.

### **Implementation: An Overview**

The School Board decided to implement an early French Immersion program at the kindergarten and grade one levels in a tri-track school beginning September 1979. They further decided to provide transportation to these students. In the area of curriculum, it was decided to begin English Language Arts at the grade one level. In essence, the program operated out of the tri-track school from September 1979 until June 1982.

During this time, the school had an umbrella Parent Council which represented all three programs housed in the school; namely -- English, French Immersion, and Ukrainian Bilingual. As the French Immersion program grew, the issues of accommodating the programs brought all three groups to the School Board Office.

In September 1982 Crocus School became a French Immersion Centre under the administration of a bilingual principal. As the program continued to grow, accommodation again became an issue and Popular School was designated for the K to 3 program. Parents, school level administrators and teachers were glad to have their dream school.

In 1985 the Superintendent's Department and the Board developed and passed the first French Immersion Policy. It put the program within the context of the division's goals and objectives using a preamble. Then it dealt with issues specific to the program such as: where numbers warrant, entry levels, K-6 program and 7-12 program. The final section dealt with related issues such as teacher qualifications and development, funding, student and program evaluation, related cultural enrichment and miscellaneous items. The policy had been evaluated and changed over time. The text of this and related policies can be found in Appendix D.

In 1987 late French Immersion at the grade seven level was introduced and all junior high immersion students were moved to Horizon School, a dual-track facility. In 1988 the lead grade ones had to choose between completing their education in the English program in the division or transferring to other divisions to obtain their French Immersion certificate. In 1989 the division implemented the grade 10 program in the division by combining early and late immersion students for classes. The first class graduated with their French Immersion certificate in June of 1992.

The issues at the secondary level centered around the courses that students can take in order to receive their French Immersion certificate. There was also a debate in the '80s about whether it should be a 50/50 program with the core courses being taught in French or a 75/25 program in favour of French instruction. Also, all courses in the French Immersion program are at the 00 level. Finally, the classes in the division's dual-track schools are dispersed throughout the school rather than grouped in one area.

As a result of growing numbers, in recent years, the division has moved to dual-track schools at the elementary level in Clover area. This has caused some controversy but the Board felt that an equal educational opportunity could be provided in a dual-track school. Currently, the division has a Task Force studying the issue of accommodating all students and all programs in Prairie, so there may be more changes in store for the French Immersion Program (Bob).

### Accommodation

A series of motions passed on March 26, 1979 indicated the type of issues that concerned the Board regarding the actual implementation of a French Immersion program. The themes of that day continued to reccur in the history of French Immersion and in the later development of policy for this program. The original motion combined location and transportation in this manner

That the French Immersion classes in kindergarten and grade one be offered at Bison School for all pupils in Prairie School Division with the understanding that transportation will be provided for those children who do not reside within walking distance of the school. (79-236)

This was amended in a way which combined location with a specific number of students saying

That the motion be amended to read that French Immersion classes in kindergarten and grade one be offered in Bison School for all pupils in Prairie School Division with the understanding that there be a minimum of twenty-four students in each class. (79-237)

This was not accepted because it changed the original intent but numbers continued to be a concern that was later addressed in policy in general terms that would allow Prairie School Board to make individual case decisions. The final amendment dealt only with location and was moved, seconded and passed, thus announcing to the community the Board's decision to implement a French Immersion program. The motion stated

That the motion be amended to read that French Immersion classes in kindergarten and grade one be offered at Bison School for all pupils in Prairie School Division.

One of the trustees who voted against the motion went on record at the next meeting as not being against French Immersion (School Board Minutes, April 9, 1979). Given that the location of the program was changed from Bison School to Crocus School on May 14, 1979, there may have been reservations about the proposed location in the minds of some trustees on March 26; so, a vote against the location would not have been a vote against the implementation of the program. Credibility is given to this analysis by the fact that the May 14th vote was unanimous. However, one trustee who voted for the Bison School location was absent for the May 14th vote.

Bison School was originally chosen but the final assessment indicated that it was not feasible. The collaborators cited several reasons for the change in schools. First, Bison School had only six rooms and no gymnasium (Adam, Sam, Andrew, Bob, Betty and Barry). Second, it bordered on another division (Sam and Adam) which would mean longer distances to transport students (Barry). Third, while Sam indicated that Bison School was considered because it was small and could potentially provide an immersion centre for the program, Barry stated that in the final analysis it was felt that the facility would be overcrowded too quickly.

Adam explained that Bison School was chosen by some people because their political agenda was to close the

school because the numbers were dwindling. Sam indicated that there were several historical realities that provided the context including the fact that the two schools were built in the same year for political reasons. One collaborator stated that the part of the division where Bison School was located was seen to be less favourable politically than the area around Crocus School; politicians did not want to raise issues that could be avoided thus they changed the location from Bison to Crocus. As the history unfolded, Crocus evolved into an immersion centre for the division while Bison closed.

In 1979 the School Board decided that Crocus School would not only house the new French Immersion Program but also the new Ukrainian Bilingual Program and the indigenous English program. Every person that I interviewed said that Crocus School was chosen because it was experiencing declining enrollments. Sam, Daryl and Pam indicated that Crocus had been a one generation school as were the others in the area. The children had grown and left home and very few new families had moved into the area. Derrick pointed out that there were very few classes left in the English stream and that some classes were made up of more than one grade level. Pam and Pauline stated that the indigeneous population did not have enough students for an English kindergarten; students in the area were already going to other schools. Paula shared this reflection:

the enrollments at Crocus had declined to the point that there was sufficient room to house both the French Immersion program and the Ukrainian Bilingual program along with the existing English program. I imagine that Crocus may have been slated for closing and that the addition of the language programs made it possible for the English program to remain at the school for a few more years.

Andrew confirmed the above memories of Pam, Pauline and Paula. Moreover, he confirmed that the status of the school had been raised in school closure discussions.

Daryl stressed the central location of the school and several collaborators, as noted, commented on it as a better facility for programming. While all this was true, comments from Betty indicated that that was not the total picture. She thought that it was a politically good choice for the Board not only because of dwindling enrollments but because demographics would have indicated that many of the students would come from Clover and qualify for the transportation grant. This anomaly was discussed earlier but it is important to realize that while transportation was raised in the initial motion on March 26, it was not addressed in the motion that was passed that day. After the Board dealt with location on May 14, 1979, it passed a motion dealing with transportation which gives support to Betty's assertion. The motion stated:

That the Board approve the provision of transportation for pupils to and from the French Immersion and English-Ukrainian Programs provided such transportation can be completely covered with the transportation grant. [Emphasis added].  
Carried unanimously. [One trustee was absent.]

Interestingly, Sam observed that parents may not have been aware of why the Board could grant all this but they were happy about the fact that transportation was provided.

As I analyzed the interviews, I met with some conflicting views as to when the debate on the dual-track versus the immersion centre began and developed in Prairie School Division. Sam indicated that the immersion centre was the ideal of the late 1970s which was one of the original reasons for looking at Bison School as a possible location. On the other hand, Adam does not remember much discussion as to which one would be best. In his view, the decisions on the placement of students were not philosophical but rather based on enrollment figures and facilities at hand. Given the rapid growth of the division, he did not feel that they could discuss philosophical issues because they had to find spaces for the students. Andrew shared Sam's view that an immersion centre was the goal of the day.

Bob remembered that creating an immersion centre was the goal of the division when the program began because "we thought it made a better educational setting for it." Barry also recalled this goal. Both trustees recalled that this ideal was supported by the Bureau de l'education francaise and the Canadian Parents for French. It was certainly the goal of the parents in the division (Penny, Pam, Pauline, Paula and Patricia).

As I will illustrate below, Crocus School evolved into an immersion centre, so the discussion may not have been seen as an issue from 1979-1982. However, it became a real issue when the division later decided to open a dual-track elementary school. The rest of this section will tell the accommodation story in Prairie School Division. The issue of dual-track schools versus the immersion centre will be addressed at the appropriate time throughout the story.

Crocus School housed the French Immersion Program, the Ukrainian Bilingual Program and the remaining classes of the indigenous English program population from September 1979 to June 1982. The issues during those years will be covered in the section entitled "French Immersion Parents". However, it is necessary to mention that there was an increasing amount of tension in the school as it became more and more apparent that the school did not have the capacity to house all three programs.

During the 1981-1982 school year the space issue was handled by housing the French Immersion kindergarten students at Sunrise School and the Ukrainian Bilingual kindergarten students at Swan School. This caused controversy within the division. In September 1982 Crocus School became an immersion centre as the remaining students in the English program went elsewhere and the Ukrainian Bilingual Program was given a new home at Swan School. This meant that there was no longer a need to house kindergarten

students at Sunrise School and the whole program was under the roof of an immersion centre. The program also came under the administration of a bilingual principal; a development which will be discussed in the section entitled teachers/principals.

Popular School was chosen by the Board to form part of the elementary immersion centre. It was combined with Crocus and administered by one administrative team even though the buildings were separate (Denis, Daryl, Adam, Bridgit and Betty). Bridgit noted that as the program grew that there was a disadvantage to this arrangement because the two schools housed large numbers and the children did not get to know the administrators. Generally speaking, this disadvantage was outweighed by the fact that the administrators were able to oversee the complete elementary program. In 1992 it was decided that each school would have its own principal but there continued to be only one parent council for both schools (Daryl).

Horizon School was chosen for Junior high because the Crocus/Popular complex fell within its catchment area. In fact, "the elementary schools should be able to feed into Horizon" (Bridgit). The school administrators chose to organize the classes so that the grade levels were grouped together rather than grouping the French Immersion classes in one section of the school (Bridgit, Pam and Pauline). This was consistent with the way things had been organized

under the tri-track system (Derrick). Additionally, it was the model used at both the high school level and the later dual-track elementary schools that were opened. More on this issue will be discussed in the section dealing with French immersion parents.

Northern Lights School is situated beside Horizon School and the students logically walked across the lawn and began their high school studies (Pam, Paula, Betty, Barry, Bridgit and Bob). The issues of when to implement this program and the options that would result in a student achieving a French Immersion certificate have been dealt with in other sections of the paper.

Dual-track elementary schools were initiated in 1988 because the Crocus/Popular complex was bursting its seams and the division had decided to build a new school in Clover. This school was designed as a dual-track school from the beginning because demographics had illustrated that many French Immersion students came from this area (Josie). Thus, Rainbow School opened as a neighbourhood dual-track school. It was this decision that opened the debate on the immersion centre versus the dual-track school. The debate and policy decision will be covered in another section. It suffices to state here the following words from the April 25, 1988 policy on French Language Program.

The Prairie School Division Board recognizes both approaches as viable and successful formats for the education of children, with neither approach being inherently better or worse than the other.

In saying this, Prairie School Division reversed its previous commitment to housing the elementary program which stated "where possible, the program will exist in an immersion environment or the entire school being an immersion centre" (French Language Programs, 1985). The dream of a unified immersion centre was ended.

### Transportation

Prairie School Division had to transport many students during the early years of rapid development in Clover. The decision to do so was based on the fact that it was less expensive for the division to transport students than to build schools (Betty, Desmond and Andrew). As time progressed, the transportation grant was awarded under new criteria and the population in Clover became stable. In fact, some schools were experiencing declining enrollments. These changing factors caused the division to drastically reverse its transportation policy.

Universal transportation was practically guaranteed in 1979. Parents believed that to offer French Immersion the division had to offer transportation but in reality the offer simply reflected the general philosophy of the day (Patricia, Penny and Paula). By the '90s, the division still granted transportation to all elementary students living a specified distance from the school but it was only provided to secondary students who qualified for the grant.

All other secondary students had to pay user fees. Complete policies are contained in Appendix D entitled French Language Programs and Related Policies.

### Entry Points

French Immersion was initially implemented as an early immersion program with entry in kindergarten or grade one. When the first kindergarten class entered grade 7 in September 1987, the division implemented the late immersion program. Both groups were combined for classes beginning at the grade ten level. There was discussion of a grade four entry level but that never materialized. Also, the lead grade one class had to complete the high school component of the French Immersion program in other divisions. The lead kindergarten class plus the first late immersion class graduated in Prairie in June 1992.

Adam indicated that entry level was one of the items discussed by the initial committee. The decision was to implement early immersion with entry at kindergarten and grade one for the first year only. Daryl pointed out that there has always been and continues to be entry at both kindergarten and grade one. In Daryl's opinion

it is always easier for a child in grade one to have had the kindergarten experience. But it is not impossible to have an English kindergarten experience and then go into French Immersion in grade one and we have many children who do that.

The main difference between these students and the lead grade one class is that the first grade one class was homogenous in educational experience relating to French Immersion whereas these later students are placed in with students who have taken kindergarten in a French Immersion setting. In the beginning, kindergarten and grade one were chosen as the entry points because "I think historically it had proven it was quite possible in either point but nothing beyond grade one could be considered as an entry point" (Daryl). Adam indicated that part of the rationale for entry at both levels was that this would ensure at least two teachers in the program. Sam indicated that several factors probably influenced the decision such as advice from the Bureau de l'education francaise and the fact that those would be the easiest levels to implement in terms of staff and curriculum. While uncertain of the exact reason, he stated

but my assumption was that the desire was such that to have implementation only at the kindergarten would not have satisfied a lot of parents who had children in kindergarten during all of the negotiations and wanted it also in grade one. (Sam)

Hence political considerations did enter the picture.

I asked the various collaborators from the Superintendent's Department staff if legal requirements entered into the decision to implement at the grade one level as attendance in a kindergarten program is not required in the province of Manitoba (Public Schools Act).

Sam and Daryl felt that legal issues did not enter into the deliberations because most children in Prairie School Division do attend kindergarten. Patricia identified herself as one of those parents who had been looking for French Immersion for her child when she enrolled her in kindergarten and was waiting for it to be implemented in grade one. Adam acknowledged that the legal requirements as set out in the Public Schools Act were met. Allan (1987) indicated that while legalities were not an issue in the formation of policy, they were a factor that had to be considered and incorporated. Thus entry was provided at kindergarten and grade one.

In the course of interviewing the collaborators, I uncovered the fact that some discussion were entered into regarding a possible grade four entry point. Pauline indicated that this was initiated by parents of children in the lead classes who had older children in the English program. These parents were very disappointed that a grade four entry point was not established. Adam indicated that it was an option in some divisions but that the Department of Education only approved kindergarten and grade seven as entry points. There is no mention of a possible grade four entry in the School Board Minutes. Adam had become Superintendent by the time the late French Immersion program was implemented so he was not aware of details but thought it was a response to demand. Daryl recalled that parents

requested the program; so the division surveyed all grade six pupils in the core French program to determine interest. Public meetings were also held. The program was implemented with two small classsss in order to allow maximum language development.

The limitation of this section is that there were no parents of late immersion students interviewed. Pauline assumed it was probably initiated as a lobby "by parents who felt left out" because their children had not been in the lead classes. Patricia concurred that

it was parents whose kids had started school too late for grade one or kindergarten introduction to French Immersion. They still wanted them to have French Immersion, so lobbied the School Board to get late Immersion. I'm not familiar with those people.

Penny did not know the initiation process for late immersion but "as far as I could sort of tell, it was just another trend. This was sort of what was going on. There was interest in it." Paula shared one possible reason for the lack of knowledge regarding the late French Immersion program when she stated "never having parent council at Horizon, I really lost contact there."

Desmond and Bob recalled students were attending late immersion classes in other divisions and that Prairie was picking up the cost. Bob suspected the implementation of late immersion was just part of the natural evolution process. Betty concluded that the reasons for the timing of

the introduction of French Immersion was two-fold. First, it had become more economical to house the program than send the students out. Second, with early and late immersion students at the junior high level, they could hire sufficient staff to offer a number of courses in French at the junior high level. Bridgit said .

the Board initiated it. They initiated it purposely because they thought this was an ideal time to initiate it to have the teachers that would be needed there at Horizon School.

She further noted that all of this coincided with other changes at the junior high level but she could not recall the details.

Andrew offered another perspective on the theme of entry points.

Well, I think the Board felt that the children should enter French Immersion at the kindergarten or grade one and there was never any serious consideration to having a class started at the grade four level. We looked at some research and felt that in Prairie that's the best route that it would go. There was always a plan that we would have late immersion at grade seven but that would be a development. We would have it by the time the kids arrived at the grade seven level.

Whatever immersion program the students entered, the parents expected that the division would provide for them until the end of grade twelve. The realities of this expectation for parents in the lead grade one class will be covered under French Immersion parents.

### Teachers/Principals

French Immersion was officially approved as a program for implementation in May of 1979 which gave little time for hiring teachers. At that point, Andrew, the Assistant Superintendent in charge of personnel, became directly responsible for this aspect of implementation (Adam and Derrick). The collaborators indicated the following traits that they wanted to see in these teachers.

I think it would be safe to say that while the desire was to have and to hire a good teacher and then to hire a good teacher who was fluent in French and was capable of teaching an immersion program. I think that there were times when we did feel that all things being equal we hired the person because of his or her ability in French and that was in more recent times. (Sam).

Daryl stressed that they were looking for teachers who were not only fluent in French but also had training in French Immersion techniques or principles. This mix was not always easy to find which meant that fluency did win "but I like to think that in the majority of cases our reason for hiring the teachers we hired was because they would be good teachers for the children in our community." Derrick stressed that they also wanted teachers who could fit into the philosophical view point of the division. They wanted to find teachers who could build up self-concept in children and focus on the affective domain as well as the cognitive domain. However, the realities of the day such as the shortage of qualified French Immersion teachers made fluency the number one criteria.

Betty and Bridgit stressed that the biggest weakness during the initial years of the program was that the teachers were not trained in early childhood methodology and child-centered learning. Derrick concurred that this may have been true of some of the teachers, but that it was not a French Immersion problem. Rather it was a reality of the time period in which teachers were moving from a traditional to a child-centered approach. He stressed that the continuum was very evident in the English program and that each teacher had to make the journey. He felt that Prairie teachers were ahead of other divisions in this area so teachers recruited from elsewhere had to catch up. Bridgit felt the problem had been corrected.

Additionally, the shortage of teachers meant that as the program developed and more teachers were needed, the people in charge of hiring had to go to other provinces to hire. Most of this out of province hiring occurred in the province of Quebec. It also resulted in the hiring of some teachers who had very poor English skills. The impact of this was two-fold. First, they had difficulty communicating with parents (Pauline and Pam). Second, it meant that specialist English teachers had to be hired at the elementary level (Denis).

The process of hiring teachers was dependent on a number of variables. For example, from 1979-1983, the school was administered by a unilingual English principal with some

knowledge of French. Therefore, the French Co-ordinator for the division played a central role in hiring and in liaison work. Furthermore, there was a need to establish a hiring committee that was capable of assessing the French language skills of the people who applied which meant among other things that the division "solicited the help of the Department in relation to getting teachers and so on" (Sam).

Derrick recalled that he was assisted by the French Co-ordinator for the division plus Emile from the Bureau de l'education francaise and Elaine from the Francophone College. Elaine was especially helpful in providing the names of people who could be contacted. They decided to hire French speaking people who were living in Manitoba but may have originally come from other places. The reason for this was that if they hired locally then there was not as high a risk of teacher turnover (Derrick and Andrew).

During the first year, teachers from the school did not participate in the process because the staffing situation was in a state of change. In subsequent years, teachers in the French Immersion program did sit on the hiring committee. Derrick indicated that he also had assistance from the principal of a French Immersion Centre in another division. This person provided him with the names of teachers whom she would hire if she had a position. Sam indicated that he did not think it was hard to find teachers for the first year. Adrain concurred with this but

indicated that it did get harder as time went on because there was a limited number of teachers available and an ever-growing French Immersion program not only in Prairie School Division but throughout Canada.

During Derrick's time as principal, staff in the division may have talked about going out of province to hire but it was never done. One of the main reasons for this is that people experienced with French Immersion were indicating

that people who came from far flung places aren't necessarily going to stay with you very long, and that creates a hardship for building anything up. And, so I think right from the beginning we were advised if we could try and find people whose roots were here.

Once Crocus School became an immersion centre and demand could not be filled by the supply, the decision was made to recruit outside the province.

Denis became principal when Crocus School became a French Immersion Centre. During his time, the hiring process was dependent on the urgency of filling the position and whether or not the interviews were conducted in the school division or in the province of Quebec. Andrew confirmed this reality and the process that was used. Basically, if the interviewing was done locally then a hiring committee of teachers and administrators was established. They interviewed the candidate and made recommendations to the Assistant Superintendent in charge of personnel who relayed the recommendations to the Board. The second scenario

involved the principal and in one instance the principal and the Assistant Superintendent in charge of personnel flying to Montreal, conducting the interviews, and hiring the teachers on the condition that the recommendation would be approved by the Board. In either scenario, the Board made the final decision but in essence unless a serious objection was raised the recommendation of the hiring committee, chaired by the school principal, was approved (Derrick, Denis, Daryl and Andrew).

Andrew acknowledged that in the early years there were difficulties in hiring French Immersion teachers because the pool of teachers was small and the demand was high. Bob confirmed this and went on to say that the division encouraged people currently on staff to upgrade their skills. Betty supported this saying that it was especially true in trying to staff the Core French Program.

The fact of the matter was that they were constantly recruiting to fill new positions or to fill positions created by the constant turnover in staff. The result was a staff made up of new or relatively new teachers (Denis) and few teachers with the experience to mentor (Bridgit). This had several consequences at the school level.

One, I was forever doing evaluations cause they were all new. Two, we needed to get them more in tune with where kids were at and their expectations. But, those were healthy things. They were things that we worked on. Any staff needs to be worked with at times. I didn't see it as a major problem except that at some points I would have liked to have some more depth on some

of it but it worked quite well. We ended up with some great teachers. (Denis)

In fact, the teachers worked together and gave a great sense of camaraderie and vitality to the whole school (Denis).

Denis indicated that inservices were set up to work on the weaknesses that the teachers experienced. Paula cited that few teachers had training in French Immersion methodology and that was compounded by the fact that it "was almost non-existent" for the teachers to have experience at the grade level they were teaching. Consequently, this meant that there were few teachers who could act as mentors in the program. According to Bridgit this continues to be a reality and she would like to see "a variety of young and more experienced teachers" in the program.

Andrew heard second-hand that there was some discussion as to what constituted "good French" in the early years. Derrick confirmed that this was a concern at conferences but not in the division. Betty did not feel that the accents of the teachers would have posed a problem. She compared that phenomenon to the reality of teachers coming on exchanges from other countries to teach in the English program. On the other hand, Denis did relate instances where discussions took place regarding the use of particular expressions. It was a point of discussion and one parent indicated that it was an issue for her and her family at the high school level because they felt it was a contributing factor to students failing a specific course.

Sam stated that even in the beginning they expected to have difficulties hiring at the secondary level. This was confirmed by everyone I interviewed. The primary area of difficulty was finding people for the sciences. Combined with finding teachers was the question of what subjects should be taught in French. This will be covered in the section on curriculum.

In conclusion, educators and parents wanted the same type of person -- someone who was not only bilingual but a capable educator as well. "That was the basic concern." (Pam).

I think that parents had a concern regarding competency not necessarily fluency in the language. Competency in the subject area, especially math and sciences. They had a real concern that because the program was growing to the extent that it had and divisions were having a difficult time finding teachers because they were all competing for the same teachers and I think it concerned Boards too. (Bridgit)

However, the fact is

so while you say you want the best teacher for the classroom and it's important to have teachers who understand children... the prime consideration was that they were fluent in French. (Adam)

While there were some complaints about the focus on this criteria,

that's what they [the parents] wanted. They wanted fluent people or they would not have been happy if the person wasn't fluent but had this wonderful background in education. So, there would always be someone to satisfy. I think people were more interested in having fluent people and the rest would come. (Pauline)

In fact, when the first policy was developed, it stated

### Teacher Qualifications and Development

1. Basic French teachers must be functionally bilingual. Immersion teachers must be fluently bilingual.
2. Bilingual substitutes must be employed whenever possible in the Immersion program.
3. French Language teachers will receive additional professional upgrading as deemed desirable and appropriate by the teacher, the administrator and the Superintendents' Department. (French Language Programs, 1985)

Allan (1987) defended this on the grounds that it was the only measurable criteria that spanned all the grade levels of the program. Other qualifications for specific positions would be covered in the advertisements for the position and/or the interview process.

One parent paid this tribute to the division.

I feel that they tried very hard in who they were hiring. They certainly made an effort to hire the best staff. There were many divisions now involved in French Immersion; so it became more difficult to get very qualified people. They did get qualified people for the program but sometimes children don't relate to certain teachers and that's in any program but I really feel that they did try to give us the best as best they could.  
(Pauline)

Denis felt that on the whole very few parents questioned the teachers' ability.

At this time, I would like to make a brief comment on the division's position regarding principals. Sam expressed the view that it was unfortunate that there was not a French-

speaking principal from day one but that was partially a result of the size of the program. Andrew confirmed that as the program grew, the decision was made to hire a bilingual principal.

I personally always felt that to me it was inconceivable that you would have a principal of a French Immersion school who is unilingual English. I always advocated that at some point we would have to do this. To me it would be consistent.

Patricia cited a number of reasons for a bilingual administrator when she described the division's decision to hire a bilingual administrator. Among them, "I think, the principal has to be bilingual in a French Immersion setting just to maintain the whole curriculum at the sort of standard it should be at." Another area of need was the whole hiring process. The School Board Minutes contain the following motions on the decision.

Nov. 2, 1981. (81B-021)

That the French Immersion program, K-4, for the Prairie School Division be accommodated in Crocus School during the 1982-83 school year. Carried Unanimously.

and

Nov. 9, 1981 (81B-025)

That the Board bulletin within the division for a French speaking principal for Crocus School for the school year 1982-83. Carried. [6 for, 1 against, 2 absent]

Thus in September 1982, Crocus School became an immersion centre with a bilingual administration.

## Curriculum

Adam and Daryl indicated that it was the responsibility of the people in the Department of Education to develop curriculum guides and materials. Daryl's perception was that even though Prairie started after some of the other divisions that "there was a number of curricula that were lacking." This would have been a province-wide reality which forced teachers to develop appropriate materials. According to Daryl, "there were a number of years where program material was behind." Sam became aware that the Bureau was criticized because curriculum materials were so far behind as a result of budget restrictions. Barry admitted that teachers and administrators may have felt that some material was better than others or that it had to be altered but the fact was that there were resources here in Manitoba whereas this was not the case for other programs such as the Ukrainian Bilingual Program.

Regarding curriculum, the main issues at the elementary level focused around the introduction of English at the grade one level and the parental concern that their children receive an education that equalled the one offered in the English stream (Pam, Penny, Patricia, Paula, Derrick, and Bridgit). The main issues at the secondary level dealt with the number of courses that should be offered in French and which courses they should be.

The lack of textbooks and resource materials was constantly cited by the parents. Penny indicated that there were always problems in "getting textbooks and learning materials." In the beginning, she felt that this was partly because the program was new and things were not in place. While this may be true, it was compounded by the fact "that you couldn't go to Quebec and get the textbooks that they used there because they were too advanced." One parent reacted as follows when I offered that as a possible explanation.

Well forgive me! I may be a majority of one here but I always thought that our children as French Immersion students would have the same capabilities as a Francais student and not a core French student and I would assume that any books that were available, our children should be able to handle. This was the assurance that I understood. Maybe I was misinformed. (Pam)

The explanations given to parents or understood by parents were hard to discern but Paula

found that students had difficulty with the language in some textbooks. These textbooks were written in Quebec and were intended for Francophone students whose French vocabulary was more advanced than the vocabulary of our non-francophone students. Teachers had to alter the material, so that it could be understood by the students.

She went on to say that the shortages were often blamed on a lack of funds but she would have preferred if it had have been explained in terms of the level of French. Denis did confirm that French Immersion students had difficulty with texts that were written for francophone students.

Derrick stated that teachers were expected to be able to develop curriculum materials and order resources. This was made clear at the time of hiring. Denis made the library one of his priorities during his years at Crocus School. This included getting materials from Quebec on consignment and also sending teachers to conferences with budgets for materials. He felt that they had all the money they needed but that the real problem was the availability of appropriate materials.

In summary, teachers did have to develop their own curriculum. They often had to explain textbooks in words that the children would understand. A shortage of resource materials was a daily reality for the pioneers at each grade level in the program. Additionally, some teachers had to learn about child-centered learning (Betty and Bridgit) while others had to learn the whole language approach (Andrew). In other words, French Immersion teachers had to apply the division's philosophy to their classroom methods. This was difficult when so much time had to be devoted to making materials for the program and developing the curriculum. Betty felt that the supplies available were part of the reason why traditional methods prevailed in the first French Immersion classes.

### Policy Development

Bob was not sure why the Board developed a policy for French Immersion, but based on his experience as a Board member he speculated that it was developed "because there was some issue or problem along the way." Betty provided this context: "we had a program and there really were no parameters for that program." Parents wanted to know the division's intention regarding the ongoing accommodation of the program. Where would it be housed for junior and senior high? Would it continue to be in a milieu? What courses would be offered in French? etc. (Penny, Pauline, Paula, Bridgit and Betty).

Allan indicated that Prairie School Division operated its French Immersion Program by Board motion as issues came up until December 16, 1985 when the Board approved the first French Immersion Policy for inclusion in its Policy Manual. In 1985, Allan went to the Board and indicated that there were a number of issues surrounding the Heritage Language Programs which required the formation of policy so that the community would know where the Board stood. Members of the Board reacted by indicating that there were also issues surrounding the French Immersion and Basic French Programs. The Assistant Superintendent agreed to develop policy for all the programs. Thus, the proposal for new policy came from the Superintendent's Department but the final outcome was greatly influenced by the response and input of the Board (Allan, 1987).

The preamble of the initial policy stated

The Prairie School Division acknowledges its responsibility and desire to provide to the students in our community instruction in the French language. In doing so, it recognizes the preeminence of the overall goals and objectives of the school division, the status of French as an Official Language in Canada, and their provision for French language education in the Manitoba Schools Act.

The goals and objectives of the school division for the maximum development of every student are the main focus of all programs including French language programs. As such, provision will be made for instruction in French according to two program models, namely the French Immersion Program and the Basic French Program, as outlined in the following guidelines. (French Language Programs 1985 and revised 1988)

This preamble placed French Immersion within the goals and objectives of the school division and guaranteed that anyone reading it would know that the division was aware of its legal responsibilities. As mentioned earlier, legalities were not an issue in the initiating process. Allan (1987) stressed that they were not an issue in 1985 but they did form part of the context.

Legalities may not have been an issue in the division but the Charter would overrule any policy of the school division in a conflict situation. Therefore, the discussion of numbers had to surface and be dealt with by the Board. Thus, Section A entitled the French Immersion Programs states "the underlying assumption is that the program will be provided as numbers of students warrant the development and maintenance of a visible, comprehensive, ongoing

program" (French Language Programs, 1985). This, in the opinion of the Assistant Superintendent, was one of the most difficult sentences in the Policy to write because the Superintendent's Department for administrative and educational reasons wanted to put an exact number in the clause, but the Board wanted the ability to determine such decisions on a case by case basis. Thus, the compromise wording leaves room for the Board to make decisions in the future based on the evidence of a specific situation rather than being confined to the letter of the law or having to make exceptions to the law (Allan 1987). Betty, Bob and Barry all indicated that the Board wanted to look at continuing programs on an individual basis rather than have a blanket policy. Bridgit, Paula and Denis noted that there was no concern for numbers in the French Immersion program but this was not the case of the Heritage Language Programs (Barry and Allan, 1986). Allan (1986) concluded that the wording had more to do with political expediency than administrative or educational expediency.

As mentioned, Betty highlighted the need for parameters of the program. The policy clearly stated the basic objectives and organizational structure of the program. See Appendix D for exact wording. It suffices here to say that early immersion was endorsed and the division's intention to implement late immersion at the grade seven level for the fall of 1986 was clearly stated.

At this point, it is important to pause to share a definition of policy.

Policies provide a sense of day-to-day continuity. Because policies have a prescriptive force and must cope with different interests in a heterogeneous society, they arouse controversy. Policies can make a significant difference in people's lives. Unfortunately, because policies affect people, not inanimate objects, the consequences of new policies -- the intensity and breadth of their effects -- cannot always be judged accurately prior to their implementation. However, policies are -- or should be -- open to reevaluation and subsequent change. (Ashworth, 1985, p. 93)

The section on accommodation and transportation dealt with the issue of dual-track schools versus the immersion centre and the various housing options that had been considered and used in Prairie School Division. This seems to be the issue in Prairie that was opened the most often by the School Board for reevaluation and subsequent change.

In summary, policy is developed when there is an apparent need for it. The writers of policy must remember that "any policy involving language, especially in the system of education has to take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected" (Lewis cited in Ashworth, 1985). Allan, with the benefits of hindsight, gave the following insight to anyone working on a policy

in a sense, the process we followed here was a very positive process. We had a great deal of involvement from the community and from the staff, and the administration, and very open discussion including not only those people who were directly interested but people who didn't have children in the French Immersion program, had no intention of ever having children in the French Immersion program, but lived in the communities that were

affected or generally lived in the school division and had some interest in what was happening. It's a good strategy, I think, to involve them because I believe that policy had to be able to stand that test, you know, it's like that trial by ordeal or it's the public test, saying this is what we believe in, folks, and if we put it out there and we give everybody all the information about this then most people would agree that that's an appropriate thing to believe.

While this process may not be recommended for all policies, it certainly had its benefits in the area of potentially controversial political decisions.

In the case of the two Language Policies, Allan (1987) felt that the timing was late but the final policies provided solid direction to his office and communication to the public. Betty felt that the decision to bring in the French Immersion Policy and the Heritage Language Policy at the same time probably made good sense. There were people on the Board who saw it as their political agenda to be the voice of one or another of these programs. Barry confirmed that there were people on the Board who spoke for various interest groups and that he personally preferred to hear delegations rather than the voice of one Board member. Pam admitted that French Immersion parents relied on the input of their members on the School Board. Thus, political agendas were certainly part of the process.

### French Immersion Parents

The purpose of this section was to discuss the role and the views of the French Immersion parents. First, I examined how the various Parent Councils were formed and the concerns of these people throughout the implementation process. Second, I examined their role in a series of decisions that were made between 1979 and 1992. Finally, I explored some of their key opinions regarding the French Immersion program.

#### As Members of Parent Council

Sam and Adam indicated that Parent Council was for the most part a school initiative. Sam speculated that at the beginning of the school year, the principal would have called a meeting of the parents for the purpose of establishing a parent council. Patricia and Penny confirmed that the principal called a meeting and asked for volunteers to form a parent council. Paula explained how she and other parents responded to the principal's request.

I stood up and I asked if it would help if I started by volunteering." Then ten other parents volunteered. That is how I remembered the French Immersion Parent Council starting.

This took place at a meeting called by the principal of French Immersion parents in Crocus School in the fall of 1979.

Crocus School began as a tri-track school which led Sam to speculate that "there was one parent group for the school and my expectation is that there were sub-groups informally if not formally". Adam felt that the school would have had one Parent Council and that the division would not have encouraged separate councils for each program. Bridgit put forward the argument that the more small parent councils there are in one school then the greater the divisiveness.

However, Patricia, Pam and Penny indicated that the parents in each program formed their own parent council which met on a regular basis to discuss the needs of their own program. Additionally, there was an overall school parent council formed to deal with common issues.

The years from 1979 to 1982 marked a balancing act within Crocus School as each group worked to have its own needs met. Derrick confirmed that the school had an overall parent group plus sub-groups. He was not sure whether or not the English parents made up a sub-group or if they were simply involved in the overall groups. Penny shared the view that it was important for the English parents to feel that they had a role to play in the school; moreover, even though they were few in number, they had the right to expect a quality education.

On the other hand, Derrick expressed the view that the parents of both the French Immersion and the Ukrainian

Bilingual students would have organized themselves no matter what. In fact, the Ukrainian parents as a result of their lobby were already organized and vocal (Sam and Adam).

What were the issues during the tri-track years? Pauline described a very informal first meeting of French Immersion parents in which they recognized the need to form a committee. People volunteered for positions and in this quiet, informal way, the first French Immersion parent group in Prairie School Division was launched. In her opinion, "a fair number" of "very vocal people were involved." Pam explained that the group eventually set-up committees for a variety of things from programming to fund-raising to attending Canadian Parents for French to tasks such as hot dog day. Pauline described it as "a group of friends that got together to ensure what they promised us was happening."

Pam, Pauline and Penny finally recalled lots of "hot dog days". Funds were needed for various items from library books to playground equipment. On the other hand, Penny recalled attending CPF meetings. Pauline indicated that parents had lots of questions about the program. One of the pressing issues was the desire to make sure the children also learned English and that the program offered as good or better an educational opportunity as the English stream (Pam, Pauline and Penny). As Pam indicated, parents tended to find their spot in the process and that was what each parent could talk about.

Penny was a President of the French Immersion parents' group in the early years and she indicated that for the first year, the representatives from the various programs worked together well. Pam stated that the role of the overall parent group was "to make sure that none of the programs would suffer due to the others -- financially, space-wise, facilities, etc."

However, Pam and Pauline indicated that as the new programs grew, the indigenous population began to feel displaced. Derrick elaborated by saying that they intellectually knew the numbers were down but on an emotional level, they were dealing with the future loss of the neighborhood school. As time progressed, Penny came to the conclusion

that [the English parents] felt rather pushed out in that their school, their community school had sort of been taken over by these programs which were drawing kids from all over the division. Everybody was bussed in. And there was a degree of animosity at that point because this was their community school and then eventually, a year or so down the line, they were moved to another school.

There was little said about the Ukrainian Bilingual parents' group except that it was strong and vocal. Sam shared this analysis of the news of the Ukrainian Bilingual parents regarding the tri-track school

Certainly, the English-Ukrainian Parent Group was very strong, very dominant and very unhappy with the tri-track school so that their shift to Swan School would represent such a remarkable shift in how they [the French Immersion parents] would approach the school.

In a nutshell, the English program was dwindling while the Ukrainian Bilingual program was growing by one class a year and the French Immersion was adding four classes per year (Derrick). By 1981-1982 space became a real issue for all parents in the school, an issue which brought them out as delegations representing their own programs (School Board Minutes, April 6, 1981).

In summary, the parents organized because the principal called a meeting. Once they were organized, they became involved in all aspects of school life. They began the tradition of actively participating in the school and helped in any way they could (Pam, Penny and Pauline). They were a high energy group of people who wanted the best for their children (Derrick). Penny indicated that they started as a "very benign parent council" but by 1981 they were ready to lobby the Board regarding the accommodation of the program.

There was a brief interlude of one year when kindergarten children were housed at Sunrise School because of the lack of space at Crocus. During this time, the French Immersion parents tended to belong to the Crocus Parent Council. This was partly as a result of the fact that some parents had children at both schools (Pam and Pauline) and partly because the parents at Crocus felt a need to share their information (Pam). Many parents did not get involved in Sunrise School because they saw this as a one-year measure (Pam).

When Crocus became an immersion centre, parents were "overjoyed". It was their school. They could develop their own agenda and stop worrying about offending the parents of children in the other programs (Pam). They could also focus on educational matters concerning French Immersion and put their energy into building the program (Pauline).

However, the program grew so swiftly that they were soon into space discussions again (Denis). In this round of discussions it was decided that Popular School would become part of the French Immersion complex. The parents formed one Council for the Crocus/Popular complex (Pam). This has remained the situation even though the complex split into two facilities in 1992. They still function as one parent council (Daryl).

Penny indicated that when the children moved to junior high, she did not become involved on Parent Council because "it was very, very discouraged by the principal." They were permitted to help raise funds at one point but "the principal just would not have it [a parent council]." Pam felt that they had met throughout junior high and indicated that Paula was the leader. However, Paula stated "I never managed to convince the administration of the junior high" to have a parent council. Furthermore, Paula indicated "that's where we lost a lot of the parent volunteers that were so keen."

Penny explained that parents did reorganize in senior high but

we started up as the band parents for fundraising and things significant to the band. And as time went on the principal sort of evolved us into the Northern Lights School parents.

Paula also became involved because the band needed parental involvement and at one point she was the "Band Parent Council President at Northern Lights School." As time went on they functioned for the whole school but Penny and Pam pointed out that many of these parents of band students were also the parents of French Immersion students. So, it appeared as if the French Immersion parents had organized themselves once again.

In summary, the formation and operation of a Parent Council often depended on the views of the administrator regarding parental roles. Derrick felt that sub-groups were needed, as he encouraged the formation of a two-tier system. Both Derrick and Denis felt that the members of the Parent Council needed to be involved in the school so an open-door policy was developed. Until very recently, parents at the junior high level felt that they were not to be organized whereas at the senior high they began as "band" parents and developed into a whole school group. Regarding the dual-track elementary schools, Priscilla indicated that Rainbow School has one parent council that is co-chaired by a person from each program.

Penny offered a personal analysis of the Northern Lights Parents Council. She pointed out that many of the band parents were also French Immersion parents so they "have a dominance on that parents committee." Therefore, the parents that started out in kindergarten are still united in senior high and there are very few new faces. She wondered aloud if this contributed to them being seen as an elitist group. Furthermore, she had to be absent from participation for personal reasons and has had time to contemplate. She felt that they may have been too close-knit a group which caused problems for other parents who may have wanted to join. She noted that Clover High School posts its meetings but this is not done at Northern Lights.

Three trustees shared views on parent councils. Betty felt that in general within the division, parents are moving from traditional roles to having more of an input in educational decisions. Barry recalled his days of active involvement in various Parent Councils from elementary to senior high and concluded that the greatest opportunity for involvement for parents exists at the elementary level. At present, there are parent councils throughout the division at all levels. Bridgit felt that Parent Councils at all levels were a very important part of the decision-making process.

### Decision-making

Parents showed up at information meetings to find out more about early French Immersion during 1978-1979. At that point, they simply responded to an invitation extended by the Board through the Superintendent's Department. The fact that sufficient parents indicated interest to form two kindergarten and two grade one classes for September 1979 gave the Board enough evidence of commitment to implement the program (Sam, Adam and Bob).

It was noted previously that once the program was implemented that the principal initiated parent group meetings at the school level. Most decisions throughout the history would have been school based (Derrick and Denis) but the study focused on parental involvement with the Board. In this latter area, parents lobbied the Board on a number of occasions. The central parental concern was the accommodation of the program. This could be divided into three sub-themes -- location, type of school and type of program. A related issue and expected benefit was the transportation of students to the program.

The Minutes of the April 6, 1981 School Board meeting clearly illustrate that three parent committees operated out of Crocus School while it was a tri-track institution. On that day the Board heard their concerns.

[representatives from the], Crocus French Immersion Parents Advisory Committee were present at 8:10 PM. The Committee wishes to make known

its views concerning accommodating the immersion program in the 1981-82 school year.

[representatives from the] Crocus English-Ukrainian Program Parents Advisory Committee, were present at 8:30 PM. The Committee wishes to make known its views concerning accommodating the program in the 1981-82 school year.

A letter from [the] chairperson, Crocus English Parents Advisory Committee, was read to the Board regarding accommodation for the 1981-82 school year. [The Chairperson of the Committee] spoke briefly to her letter.

All three matters were referred to Committee of the Whole.

After its meeting, The Committee of the Whole reported the following motion to the Board.

81-220, Alternative Language Programs.

That the proposal on Alternative Language Programs be forwarded to the various Parent Council Committees for a response, in writing, prior to April 15, 1981, and that a Board decision be made at the April 20, 1981 meeting. Carried. [Vote 8-1.]

On April 20, 1981 the Chairperson of the English Parent Committee appeared to make their views known. Once again, it was referred to the Committee of the Whole. The Board decision was

That for the school term 1981-82 the English-Ukrainian Bilingual Kindergarten Program be housed in Swan School, and the French Immersion kindergarten be housed in Sunrise School. Carried. [Vote 6-1.]

Meetings were held with Crocus and Sunrise area parents on April 28, 1981. On May 4, the chairperson of the English-Ukrainian Parents Committee appeared to present concerns in relation to the program. There were no details of these

concerns in the Minutes nor was there any mention of the French Immersion Parent Committee's reaction. However, the issue must have been reopened during the Committee of the Whole meeting because the board passed a motion reaffirming its April 20th decision regarding the kindergarten classes. I was not able to get details from the collaborators on the initial reaction to this decision.

However, the collaborators shared the following memories of their presentation and the year that was spent at Sunrise School. Patricia indicated that the French immersion Parents Committee wanted to know the intentions of the Board regarding the accommodation of the French Immersion program. To the best of her recollection, they were not only concerned about the next year but they also raised the issue of the Board's long term goals for the program. In particular, they wanted to know if the Board intended to create an immersion centre. Pam and Pauline remembered the visit and the energy of the parents but they did not recall any of the details of the presentation. Penny recalled that it was seen as a short term measure and Pam stressed that they had no choice in the matter of attending Sunrise School.

Pam went on to describe it as a negative experience. In her case, she had "two children in French Immersion and both children were in different places and it was awful. We were very upset being spread out like that." The negative aspect of the experience came through from a number of parents.

I hated it. ... It was awful. Like Crocus was over there and Sunrise was over here. And this little group of kindergartens sort of didn't belong anywhere ... It didn't work from my perception. (Penny)

Additionally, Penny felt that "the [immersion] teachers didn't have any cohesiveness with the teachers in that school." Pauline commented on not feeling welcome in the school.

Penny did not feel any reaction from the Sunrise community as she had little if any interaction with them. On the other hand,

I don't think that it was parents of the children that were sent to Sunrise that were upset as the Sunrise parents were upset with the French Immersion children. They booted us out of Crocus and now they're coming over to Sunrise. There was that feeling. (Pauline)

Pauline went on to indicate that the French Immersion parents were not too upset because they knew "that in time their kids would all be in the immersion setting." The Board made this decision on November 2, 1981 in a motion which read

that the French Immersion program, k-4, for Prairie School Division be accommodated in Crocus School during the 1982-83 school year. Carried unanimously. [One trustee absent.]

At the same meeting they decided that Sunrise School would house the 1-6 English Language Program for the Crocus Sunrise area during 1982-83. I did not note when the motion was passed designating Swan School for the Ukrainian Bilingual Program but Crocus School was an immersion centre

in September of 1982 much to the delight of the French Immersion parents.

Before moving on to the next decision, it is important to note the following regarding the alternatives open to the division for the expansion of French Immersion. One of the alternatives that was examined by the division was the idea of turning Sunrise School which is a small school close to Crocus into an immersion centre. Andrew recollected that the Sunrise School community objected to this on the grounds that they felt there was a need for an English School in the area. He noted that this community was made up of parents from the area and parents from Clover who had children bussed to that school. While the Sunrise children could have been easily accommodated in other schools, it was decided to leave it as an English school. Thus parents from other schools did influence French Immersion accommodation decisions at the Board level.

As the program continued to grow, the division continued to examine its resources. Pam did not "think that there was a stone left unturned. I think they examined each and every angle. They did their feasibility studies for every building." As noted earlier, Sunrise was ruled out because of the reaction of the parents of the students in the English program.

Once again, Bison School was considered. Bridgit explained that some Board members including herself protested on the grounds that it was only a six room school with no gymnasium and a poor location. These were the same arguments that were put forward against the school in 1979. Betty did not believe that Bison was ever a serious consideration but rather every building had to be discussed because the Board believed in making the best use of its existing facilities.

Denis explained that the division proposed splitting the program in half and creating catchment areas for Crocus and Bison Schools. In this way, there would be classes at every grade level in each school with the east side of the division attending Bison School. According to him, the parents were not in favour of this idea because they did not want to lose the resources of Crocus School and they wanted the classes at each grade level to stay together.

The final decision was in favour of Popular School which meant the relocating of some resource facilities and a day care but it had been previously closed as a school so there was no displacement of students. Denis explained the process used by the Board. In his view, the French Immersion parents had ample opportunity for input. There was an informal Board meeting at the school where parents and teachers were grouped to discuss the possible scenarios. This was followed in January 1985 by a meeting with all the

parents. Presentations were made to the parents and feedback was received. He thought "that the Parent Committee made a recommendation that they go ahead with the Popular/Crocus option."

On February 4, 1985, Popular School was designated to accommodate three grade one French Immersion classes (School Board Minutes). Bridgit felt that if any other decision had been made that the parents would have lobbied. Popular School was renovated during 1985-86 and several classrooms and a gym were added. It was eventually designated as the primary component of the French Immersion elementary complex (School Board Minutes).

The views of the parents indicated that the decision was a favourable one.

I can't remember any real dissension about choosing Popular. I think that it was always quite well received but I can't remember for what reasons or you know that sort of thing. (Penny)

Another parent stated:

I always felt that Popular was a good choice and I would have been very comfortable if my child had been sent to Popular. I liked the layout of the building. It was a real primary setting for the children and when I looked at the field I too thought ... they could always add on to that school cause there is so much field. (Pauline)

Furthermore, it was close to Crocus and would be under the same administration.

The next area that involved decision-making on the part of the parents was the junior high program. Parents had

concerns about the lead grade ones being the only class in junior high so the Board decided to house them in Crocus School for their grade seven year. Pauline noted that a number of suggestions were made regarding the housing of the junior high program but Horizon School was chosen because of its proximity to Crocus/Popular and its declining enrollments (Betty, Bridgit and Bob).

Horizon was a dual-track school. Some parents wanted a section of the school designated for the French Immersion program (Bridgit) but the administrators opted for scattering the French Immersion classes throughout the school (Paula). This was the same pattern that was used in the tri-track school (Derrick). So parents would have been familiar with the arguments in favour of this choice. Bridgit noted that there was some debate among consultants as to the best way to organize a dual-track school. Among the parents that I interviewed, there was a general consensus that these children had been grouped together for classes long enough and they needed to be mixed with other students for courses that would be taught in the English language (Pauline and Penny) This was done.

When the division implemented dual-track elementary schools, they were organized in a similiar manner (Priscilla). Some parents were displeased with this decision because they felt that an immersion setting should have been created within the schools.

Regarding the type of program, Paula indicated that some parents wanted more than a 50-50 program because the students lived in an English environment except for the immersion experience. On the other hand, some parents felt that a 50-50 program was the best option. The division chose the 50-50 program on the basis of the resources at hand and indicated that they would increase the amount of instruction time in French if that was possible (French Language Programs, 1985).

The junior high naturally fed into Northern Lights School. The issue at this point was what subjects should be taught in French? There were several views from parents. Pauline felt that the core courses should be taught in French and she supported the division's decision to do this. Pam thought that French Language Arts and the optional courses should be taught in French while the core courses should be taught in English. Patricia felt so strongly that the sciences should be taught in English that she removed her children from the program at the end of grade nine. The position of the parents was based on their children's experiences in the system and the parents' perceptions of what their children could do after high school (Pauline, Penny and Pam).

Regarding the timing of the decisions for the secondary program, the guidelines for the junior high level were approved on February 4, 1985, the same day as the Board

designated Popular School to accommodate the grade one classes. This is important to note because it illustrates that a number of accommodation issues were being dealt with at the same time. The Board Minutes also indicated that there were two committees that reported to the Board. In January 1984, a French Immersion Planning Committee was established and in December of that year the French Immersion (Secondary Level) Planning Committee made recommendations to the Board that were approved in principle. According to Allan (1986), it was in January of 1985 that he began to work on establishing policy for this growing program. Thus these two years witnessed a number of accommodation issues. The information that I received from parents tended to reflect the experiences of their children, so Pam, for example, indicated that she did not know much about the Popular decision because her children were already preparing to go to Horizon School. Thus in 1984-86, the needs of parents within the elementary parents group became much more diversified. The School Board Minutes confirm that there were informal meetings with the parents and the Board during this time period but no reports were made in the Minutes.

The Board Minutes do not contain any indications of delegations appearing regarding the secondary program. However, the informal meetings were mentioned and my collaborators indicated that there were several public

meetings regarding the secondary program. This may have been a primary reason why some of the collaborators felt that the parents were organized at the junior high level. One of the proposals that was discussed at that time was the idea of establishing a regional high school (Adam, Betty, Bridgit, Paula and Pauline). This did not materialize for a variety of reasons.

When the Board decided to build a new school in Clover, it was decided that this would be a dual-track elementary school. Betty explained that the parents in the area did not want a school period. At first, the issue was simply that they were content with bussing their children to schools in other areas of the division. For many parents, the school was Sunrise and the parents had made it their school (Desmond, Priscilla and Andrew). Betty felt since the school had been designated as dual-track from the beginning that once the lobbying against it stopped, that the people in the community had also resigned themselves to the fact that it would be dual-track. Thus the issues of displacement should not have arisen but in fact the school was full before it was even built (Adam) and eventually some students in the English program were sent elsewhere (Priscilla).

However, there was reaction from French Immersion parents to having to move from Crocus to Rainbow School. In February 1988, two separate groups of parents approached the Board about French Immersion. On February 1, 1988,

Delegation: [representatives] of the Crocus/Popular Parents' Association were in attendance to present a motion to the Board relative to the accommodation of French Immersion elementary students for the 1988-89 and subsequent years. The matter was referred to the Committee of the Whole. (School Board Minutes)

There was no mention of this in the Committee of the Whole Report nor did any of my collaborators refer to the event.

The second delegation appeared on February 15, 1988 (School Board Minutes). Their appearance was in response to a meeting with parents in which the various options were outlined and explained. Priscilla indicated that she did not feel that the parents were given any real options at this meeting but rather the Superintendent explained the options and indicated which one had been selected and why. The choice meant that the parents who made up this delegation would have to send their children to the newly designated dual-track elementary school. They went to the Board in order to explain that they felt an immersion centre was superior to the dual-track concept. Priscilla used information provided by the CPF to prepare her case. She did not feel that they had the support of the other parents in Crocus/Popular School nor did she feel that the Board was supportive. In fact, she felt that the Superintendent of the time who had children attending a dual-track school played a major role in influencing this decision. The point that she kept mentioning was that parents had lost the ability to choose where they wanted to send their children.

She felt that they should have been given a choice because there were lots of parents that would choose the neighbourhood dual-track facility over the immersion centre. On the other hand, Betty indicated that when the program went into Butterfly School it was welcomed by the community because they had seen it running down as a result of declining enrollments.

Priscilla did acknowledge that the Board did do right by the Rainbow French Immersion parents because they chose an excellent bilingual vice-principal who has done a great deal to make the experience positive. Unfortunately, the Board was not able to hire a bilingual administrator for all the dual-track schools which angers Priscilla. Paula confirmed that there were a number of parents that were angered by the fact that they could not choose the type of facility that their children attended.

In the area of transportation, the parental view was very clear. If the Board was going to offer the program then it had to provide transportation. The first time that the parents appeared to protest user fees was when they heard that only students attending language programs would be charged. Not only French Immersion parents appeared but also parents of children in Heritage Language Programs. The fees were not introduced. When the division began discussions on imposing user fees on students that did not qualify for the transportation grant then they again

protested on the grounds that to charge these students user fees would be to create an elitist program attended only by those who could pay or lived in a specific area. User fees, however, were implemented. See Appendix D.

In summary, Denis indicated that the decision to go to Popular was greatly influenced by the position of the French Immersion parents. Bridgit felt that if any other decision had have been made that the Board would have witnessed more lobbying from French Immersion parents. Paula made a similiar comment. On the other hand, Allan (1987) clearly indicated that splits in the opinions of French Immersion parents assisted the Superintendent's Department in determining a program based on the division's resources. This program was viable and educationally sound. The majority of parents were satisfied with the program that the division offered. While some parents may have felt that the division did not provide a high school French Immersion education for the lead grade one class (Pauline), in reality, the division fulfilled its promise by giving the students the option of going to other divisions (Allan, 1987 and Adam). This may have been an unfortunate decision but a necessary one in order to maintain a viable program (Bridgit). The debate about dual-track versus immersion centre was grounded in the beliefs people have about how children learn (Derrick). Despite the conviction of some parents and educators that the immersion centre is superior

to the dual-track school experience (Priscilla and Bridgit), the School Board ranked them as equal (French Language Programs, 1988). The issue of transportation was tied to beliefs about program accessibility. In the end, user fees were implemented for all secondary students that did not qualify for a transportation grant.

### Views on French Immersion

This section will examine various views of parents that were not covered elsewhere. The first view that will be explored was the point repeated by many parents "I'll put my child in but if he or she doesn't do well then that will be the first child out" (Paula, Pam, Patricia, Priscilla, Pauline and Penny). The second view was that French Immersion is not for everyone (Patricia and Priscilla). Despite the reservations of some of the parents I interviewed, the idea that it was a great, energizing experience was strong (Pam, Paula and Penny). There was a sense that these parents would recommend the program under certain conditions to others (Patricia, Pam, Paula, Priscilla, Pauline and Penny) but some parents felt that it was too soon to determine whether or not they had made the right choice as their children had not yet finished their education (Pauline and Pam).

Every parent that I interviewed indicated that they put their child in with the view that if the child did not do

well then the child would be voluntarily withdrawn from the program by the parent. With the exception of one parent, these parents described the first child that they enrolled in the program as advanced for their age or as needing a challenge in school. Paula almost withdrew her daughter at the end of kindergarten because she had been very unhappy all year but on the last day of school she came home rejoicing because of the teacher she would have the following year. Patricia, on the other hand, indicated that throughout the years that her eldest child was in the program, she kept asking teachers if she should withdraw the child as the child was having a very hard time. The teachers reassured her that the child would catch on and the child should stay in the program. At the end of grade nine, she withdrew. Patricia felt that she would have been telling a very different story if the youngest child had gone through the program first.

Derrick stated that he was unaware of these feelings among the parents. Denis, on the other hand, was very aware of this view and he explained that he stated to parents that withdrawing their children from French Immersion would not guarantee that they would have no problems in school but rather the same types of problems could surface in the English program. Pauline saw this as the school's way of reassuring parents but Patricia interpreted it as dishonesty on the part of the Board and an inability to face the fact

that French Immersion was not for everyone. Priscilla also believes that it is not for everyone. Patricia holds this belief so strongly that she actively advises parents to pull their children if the experience is not positive because of what it does to a child's self-concept to remain in a negative environment.

As was mentioned, English Language Arts was introduced at the grade one level because parents were very concerned about the English language skills of their children. This was one of the reasons why Denis implemented an intensive testing program at the grade one level which illustrated that the French Immersion students were doing as well as their English program counterparts.

This was a decision that Patricia supported in 1979 when her child enrolled in the program. Since that time, as a result of all the problems her child had in the program, she has questioned the wisdom of the parents advocating that decision. She was the only collaborator who questioned the point at which English Language Arts was introduced into the program.

The criteria under which teachers were hired was commented upon by most parents. Paula indicated that while it was not overly apparent in the division that when they attended CPF meetings there were all kinds of stories of warm bodies being hired rather than experts in the areas

that they were to teach. Patricia indicated that it became evident in junior high that fluency was more important than proficiency in subject area such as science. Pauline acknowledged both the stress on fluency and the parental feeling that the teachers were not adequately prepared in subject matter. Most of the parents I interviewed were parents of students in the lead classes and they spoke about the fact that their children always had new teachers who were learning about the program.

Pam explained that when the program started many of the parents were energetic, stay-at-home mothers with younger children and a great desire to make this venture work. They enjoyed being involved in the school in any way that they could. As time went on, the program became established, the policies were determined and the energy began to wane. Not only Pam but Penny, Pauline, and Patricia indicated less involvement as the years passed and the decisions had been made. Penny and Pam still have children in the program but they indicated that their roles have become more ordinary over the years. On the other hand they spoke fondly of the years of involvement. Priscilla made it clear that she was a "doing person" who hated long drawn out policy discussions. She just wanted something to do. Paula regretted that they did not have more time for educational issues but all in all none of the parents regretted the experience. Pauline did question whether she would make the same decision in today's educational climate.

Pauline also noted that she felt the division had never adequately recognized the lead grade one class. She felt that they had been promised a high school program which never did materialize. She also felt that the division should have acknowledged these children in some way when they received their French Immersion diplomas in another school division. She also indicated that the adjustment that these students had to make in attending school in another division was never fully appreciated by the Board. She asked: "They knew they were coming, so why weren't they prepared?"

In summary, the parents' decisions were based on their educational priorities at the time. In general, it was a good experience and parents were able to find a place in the system at least in the elementary years. As the program grew, views became more diversified. Repeatedly, beginning with Patricia in the pilot study, I was encouraged to search out the range of experiences among these parents.

### French Immersion 1992-1993

The purpose of this section is simply to ground the story in its present reality. The elementary program is housed in both immersion centres and dual-track schools. The once united complex called Crocus/Popular School has been operating as two schools since September 1992. The secondary program is housed in overcrowded dual-track

schools. At all levels, there is currently an active Parent Council.

During 1992-1993, a Task Force studied the issue of accommodating all programs and all students within Prairie School Division. This Task Force not only examined each school but spent time discussing the concept of implementing middle schools. The results of this study had not been made public at the time that I interviewed the collaborators (Bob). Thus, accommodation continues to be a major issue for this division which is in the process of building new schools and expanding some existing facilities.

The other related issue is transportation. In May 1993, the division once again revised the transportation policy. This was preceded by several public meetings. Among the parents that I interviewed, there was the view that user fees were to be expected. As noted earlier, some parents were relieved that they did have to transport their own children from the new this housing developments. It was beyond the scope of paper to look at this issue in detail but it is necessary to state that the transportation of French Immersion students is part of the larger issue of meeting past promises to parents of children in all programs when the division is experiencing severe changes in the transportation grant regulations. The current transportation policy along with an earlier one are included in Appendix D.

During the 1992-93 school year, students enrolled for the early French Immersion program at either the kindergarten or grade one levels in Popular School, Rainbow School and Butterfly School. There was not a class of late immersion students at the grade sevel level because there was not enough students enrolled to form a class at either of the locations where it could have been offered. If the students had have been willing to join forces at one place or the other then it may have been offered (Desmond).

At this point in time, most of the decisions regarding French Immersion are either school-based decisions or Superintendency decisions rather than Board decisions. Bridgit explained

The Board isn't implementing a program. Boards make policy decisions and so the Board isn't as involved in terms of French Immersion programming as it was at one time.

Thus the parameters that were lacking in 1985 (Betty) have not only been addressed but changed to reflect the changing resources of the division. One parent commented that there are currently concerns at Crocus School regarding the number of relatively new teachers and the lack of mentors. This issue will most likely be addressed in the next regularly scheduled evaluation of the program. The policy states that this is to be done every three years (French Language Programs, 1988).

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the process used to initiate and implement French Immersion in Prairie School Division. The study revealed that in this division the process was the result of initiatives taken by members of the Superintendent's Department during 1977-1979. Throughout the history of the process, the Superintendent's Department continued to play a key role in implementing and supporting this program. While implementation is a continuous process, June, 1992 was chosen as the cut-off point for this study because the first group of French Immersion students graduated with their French Immersion certificates in Prairie School Division at that time.

To recap, the study examined: 1) the process of initiation, 2) the role of the members of the Superintendent's Department and the School Board, 3) the initial involvement of parents, 4) the organization of parents who enrolled their students in French Immersion, and 5) the role of parents throughout the initiation and implementation process.

It is important to note that the study focused primarily on the initiation and implementation of the early French Immersion program. The late French Immersion program is only discussed from the vantage point of members of the Superintendent's Department, the School Board, and early French Immersion parents. I did not interview any late immersion parents nor did I speak to school level administrators at either the junior or senior high levels. Therefore, the story at the secondary level is incomplete; this incompleteness will form the foundation for the recommendations section.

### Conclusions

The leadership provided by the Assistant Superintendent in charge of program from 1977-1979 ensured the successful implementation of French Immersion in Prairie School Division. The Assistant Superintendent was employed by a Board that saw itself as progressive and leading in educational innovation. He was aware that surrounding divisions were successfully implementing the program as a result of parental lobbies. He was aware of the research on French Immersion, the federal emphasis on bilingualism, and the special grants available for the establishment and maintenance of such programs. Rather than wait for the parents to request the implementation of early French Immersion, he took the proposal to the Board and then to the

community. He chaired committees, spoke at public meetings, and did research for the Board. Once the decision to implement was made, he remained a very visible force in the eyes of the parents and was quick to address their concerns.

As I analyzed the interviews, it became very apparent that the person who occupied the program position in the Superintendent's Department had a key role to play. As the story unfolded, it was the person employed in this position who was delegated to chair the planning committee and public meetings regarding the expansion of the program, the implementation of late immersion, and the implementation of the secondary early immersion program. It was this person who raised the need for policy and chaired the process of developing policy. Throughout the story, when I asked who influenced the decision-making process, people were consistent in naming the person who was Assistant Superintendent in charge of program. Since 1977, three men have held this position. The influence of these people would have been as strong as the support that they received from the other members of the Superintendent's Department and the members of the Board of School Trustees. In the final analysis, it may have been initiated because French Immersion was the guaranteed, politically-correct innovation of the day.

Additionally, Prairie School Division in the late 1970s provided a positive context for the introduction of French.

Immersion. The overall climate in the division still emphasized the vision of the 1970s which was a time of money in the educational system and a time when parental choice was the focus. Moreover, the Board was seen as being open and attentive to the desires of the community. Board members advocated providing as many options as possible for students in the division. Thus from a philosophical standpoint, there would have been ample reason to propose French Immersion to the community.

When the division faced fiscal restraint and new transportation regulation in the late 1980s, they chose to implement dual-track schools at the elementary level. In order to determine who would attend these schools versus the elementary immersion centre schools, catchment areas were drawn around each school and students were assigned according to where they lived. This action caused some parents to feel betrayed because they felt they should be able to choose the educational setting based on their beliefs about how children learn French. Thus the era of parental choice seems to have ended as a result of fiscal restraint.

Furthermore, in the area of finances, the Board was not only grateful for the special grants for French Immersion programming but also to an historical anomaly which made transportation to French Immersion programs a non-issue for this division in 1979. The division was one of the

beneficiaries of special transportation regulations that had been passed in 1972 and earlier. These regulations allowed them to accommodate the program in a school in Rose Grove and provide transportation to the students at no additional cost to the taxpayers because they would receive a transportation grant from the province for every child who was transported from west of Dividing Line Highway to east of the highway. The majority of the students originated west of Dividing Line and Rose Grove was located east of Dividing Line. In essence, the provincial government paid the total transportation costs. It is clear from the motions that were passed by the Board in 1979 that if it had been seen that transportation costs could not have been covered by the grant then transportation would have become an issue which it did when the regulations were later changed by the provincial government.

In 1989 these regulations were changed by the provincial government. The division had to begin to look at the promises that it had made not only to French Immersion parents but to all parents within the division. These regulations caused the division to implement user fees for students at the secondary level who did not qualify for the transportation grant. It seems to me that the spokespeople of the division had an onerous task in trying to make the public aware of how the system worked, for the simple reason that people seldom wonder about a benefit until it starts to disappear.

At this point in time, parents were asking many questions about cutbacks but, it seemed that many parents never really understood why Prairie had such an elaborate transportation system nor did they understand why other urban divisions did not provide transportation to French Immersion students. The conclusion that I draw from all of this is that in Prairie School Division the issue for the School Board was the general issue of transportation of students, whereas in other school divisions the issue was specifically the transportation of French Immersion students.

Parents became involved in the process at the school level as soon as the program was implemented. They basically wanted to make sure that their children were receiving the quality of education that was promised. They were very active during the early years as there were so many issues involved in establishing this new program. On a number of occasions they lobbied the Board on the accommodation issue. In particular, they addressed the issue of the French Immersion centre being superior to the dual-track concept. In the early years, they were full of energy and united.

As the program reached the secondary level, philosophical splits became apparent. Some parents wanted a 50/50 program while others wanted more French instruction. There were debates over which courses should be taught in French and how many credits were needed to obtain a French Immersion

dipolma. Additionally, at the elementary level, some parents supported the introduction of dual-track neighbourhood schools whereas others wanted the program to be located uniquely in immersion centres. Furthermore, parents indicated that they were not permitted to organize at the junior high level and that the senior high parent group began as band parents. Finally, parents indicated that when the program was being established that they felt they had the ability to influence the decision-making process but now that the program is established their energy and interest has wanned and their activities have become more ordinary. Given all of this, I concluded that in the early years the parents were able to operate as an unified lobby group at the Board level, but as time went on, the Board began to hear a variety of French Immersion parental views.

There was some negative reaction from the community but it was very minor. Much of it was handled on an individual basis by members of the Superintendent's Department or the School Board. Whenever, the Assistant Superintendent made public presentations, he was always well-prepared with financial information and French Immersion information and success stories. Additionally, the division chose its schools so that the minimum number of people would be affected. Also, it helped immensely to be able to tell the public that this was just another alternative that parents

could choose and that the division's elaborate transportation system could accommodate the program without any additional costs to the public.

Despite these precautions, it was evident from the interviews that some parents did feel displaced. Enrollments were down; parents may have been able to see that intellectually, but on an emotional level they felt displaced. They could not understand why the French Immersion program was taking over Crocus School, a tri-track school which housed French Immersion, Ukrainian Bilingual and an English program from 1979-1982. This feeling which originated with the local population of the school spread within the school to the parents of the Ukrainian Bilingual students and to parents in nearby schools where numbers in the English programs were declining. In new areas, parents were not prepared to have a French Immersion Centre built. They wanted either an English school or a dual-track school.

Thus it became apparent to me that non-Immersion parents in the division did fear they would be displaced by French Immersion. Whether this fear was valid or not is hard to discern but I believed it played a role in the decision-making process at two points, at least. First, the division decided to maintain Sunrise as an English School for the area. Second, the division decided to implement dual-track schools in Clover rather than build an immersion centre even though the numbers may have supported the latter. This

analysis does not take into account the changes in the transportation grants which may have played a key role in implementing dual-track schools.

For the initial years of the program, the Board initiated it and implemented it using a series of Board Motions. The majority of these motions dealt with the recurring theme of accommodation. In 1985, the Board decided that a French Languages Programs Policy needed to be developed. In essence this policy established the parameters for the program. The Assistant Superintendent in charge of program took a year to formulate the policy and incorporated many meetings with various stakeholders into the policy. The first policy was passed in December 1985 and it was revised in 1988. A study of the policy illustrated the changing philosophical, financial, and educational realities in the division.

However, the words of Moore put the conclusions of this case study in perspective.

If we have learned anything from our years of second language programs, it is precisely that what is viewed as positive and significant within the context of one school system may in fact be totally unsuitable to another. (Panel, 1976, November, p. 276)

I invite the reader to examine the various aspects of the context of this story such as transportation, accommodation, political, and philosophical realities within the context of their experience.

In summary, the main conclusion of this study is that the Assistant Superintendent in charge of program was the driving force behind the initiation and implementation of the program. When new people filled that position, they simply continued the process. The late 1970s was an opportune time financially, philosophically, and politically for the school division to initiate French Immersion. The fact that transportation was a non-issue became a major bonus in the process and was the fact that the division was experiencing declining enrollments in some areas and expansion in others which enabled them to successfully accommodate the program using the existing schools and transportation system. By 1992, a new era had entered the educational scene. The reality of financial restraint on the part of the provincial government had introduced new transportation regulations. In fact, changing political realities in the area of finances were reflected in the policy statements that were developed by the School Board. Implementation was not a static decision-making process but rather a dynamic expression of the evolutionary process of this program. In the final analysis, French Immersion may have been initiated in 1979 because it was the successful innovation of the day. The process examined in this study was very smooth but changing financial and political realities would create a very different scenario today.

### Recommendations

The micro-politics at the school level need to be studied. How do parents organize? What issues do they pursue? What are the views of school administrators regarding parental involvement? What is the relationship between the school administration and the parents? Is the involvement of parents different or similar at the various levels (elementary, junior and senior high)? What percentage of parents are involved in the school? How are they involved? How are minority views on issues handled?

The study indicated that the experiences of the people in Prairie School Division was very different from the experiences of people in other schools divisions. Parents, whom I interviewed, made it clear that parents in other divisions who attended meetings of the Canadian Parents for French were reporting all kinds of problems with transportation, the establishment of immersion centres, quality teachers, etc. Additionally, Ralph (1979) made it clear in his study that in the division he examined that the debate was between the francophone population of the division and the parents of the children in French Immersion. On the basis of these observations, I would suggest that a comparative study of the context of the various divisions that implemented French Immersion in the late 1970s and early 1980s would explain why the implementation process varied so much from one division to another.

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## Appendix A

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

The pilot study indicated that French Immersion in this division was an initiative of the school board. Nathan (personal communication, November 8, 1991), Barry (personal communication, October 28, 1991) and Collette (personal communication, October 21, 1991) indicated that they felt the questions as they appeared here would reveal the story. However, Collette (personal communication, October 21, 1991) indicated that parents held a number of views about the program; so she suggested I add a question near the end regarding their personal feelings. I did this.

Additionally, I added this statement to the beginning of each interview for the actual study. "The pilot study indicated that my assumption that French Immersion was implemented as a School Board response to a parental lobby was incorrect in the case of this division."

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

## MEMBERS OF PARENTS' GROUP

(pilot study)

1. When did you become involved in the French immersion parents' group?
2. What is your role in the group? Has it changed over time?
3. Who were the people involved in the initiation of French immersion? in the implementation of French immersion?
4. What are the written resources that influenced the process?
5. How did the parents' group get organized?
6. What did the group do from the time it organized until it approached the school board with its proposal for French immersion?
7. What was the school board's reaction to the proposal?
8. What was the reaction of the community to the request?
9. What issues developed from the request for the implementation of French immersion classes. (Use tentative list.)
10. How did your group respond to each of these issues?
11. Who seemed to exert the most influence during the decision-making process?
12. How was the parents' group involved in the decision-making process?
13. Were there decisions made outside the division that had an impact on the decisions that the school board made? (What were these decisions? How did they have an impact?)
14. Did any of these decisions influence the actions of the parents' group? (If so, how?)
15. Are you satisfied with the school board's decision on the various issues?

16. Are there issues that are still being discussed?  
(What are they?)
17. A school board has to deal with a number of agenda items at the same time. What other decisions did the board have to make while deciding to implement French immersion? Did any of these issues have an impact on the discussion of French immersion? If so, how and why?
18. Has the role of the parents' group changed over time? Why? How?
19. Do you have any final comments that you would like to make?

Thank you for your co-operation. I will send you a summary of the interview as soon as possible for your comments.

\*\* PLEASE NOTE: This is a tentative list of the type of questions that will be asked. However, the final interview questions will depend on the division that is studied and the information that is gathered during the data collection process.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: (Actual)

## MEMBERS OF PARENTS' GROUP

French immersion entered the Canadian education scene in 1965 in St. Lambert, Quebec. Since that time the program has been implemented in many schools across Canada. There are now a number of different programs; such as early, late and partial French Immersion. At this time, I would like to examine how French Immersion was initiated and implemented in one Manitoba school division.

Today, I am interviewing \_\_\_\_\_.

The order of the questions are based on the assumption from the literature that most French Immersion programs were initiated as a result of a parental lobby for the program. My interviews to date in this division indicate that this may not be the case here.

1. What position did you have in the division when the French Immersion program came up for discussion? How were you involved in the early French Immersion discussions?
2. When did you become aware that the parents in the division wanted French Immersion implemented? As a parent, what was your reaction to a possible French Immersion Program in Prairie School Division? (May need to modify: When did you become aware that the Board was considering introducing French Immersion?)
3. To your knowledge, was there a parents' group for French Immersion in the division before the program was implemented? Did such a group emerge once the program was established? If so, how did it get organized? What was the role of this group?
4. Many Schools have Parent Councils. Was this true of Crocus School when French Immersion was implemented there? Do you know if it was one Council for all the programs in the school? How was it formed and what was its mandate?
5. Did you become involved in the French Immersion parents' group? When? Why? What is your role in the group? Has it changed over time?
6. Did the parents' group request a French Immersion program or was it an initiative of the school board or administration? (exact wording of this question

- will be dependent on the answer to question 1. Alternate: Was the program the initiative of the School Board or the Administration?)
7. Who were the people involved in the initiation of French Immersion? Can you explain the process that was used? Can you explain the people and the issues involved in the actual implementation?
  8. Were there written resources that influenced the process?
  9. What did the group do from the time it organized until it approached the School Board with its proposal for French Immersion? (Delete if response to question 1 indicated no parental lobby.)
  10. What was the School Board's reaction to the proposal?
  11. What was the reaction of the community to the request?
  12. What issues developed from the request for the implementation of French Immersion classes? (Use tentative list: housing, recruiting teachers, transportation, curriculum materials and resources)
  13. How did your group respond to each of these issues? (If no group existed delete or reword to determine if aware of any committee involvement of parents.)
  14. Who seemed to exert the most influence during the decision-making process?
  15. How was the parents' group involved in the decision-making process? (Alternate: How were parents involved in the decision-making process?)
  16. Were there decisions made outside the division that had an impact on the decisions that the School Board made? (What were these decisions? How did they have an impact?) [ie: B & B Report, federal monies, language of instruction, already implemented elsewhere, etc.]
  17. Did any of these decisions influence the actions of the parents' group? (If so, how?) Alternative: Did any of these decisions play a role in the decisions of the parents?
  18. Are you satisfied with the School Board's decisions on the various issues? (Ask closer to the end?)

19. A School Board has to deal with a number of agenda items at the same time. What other decisions did the Board have to make while deciding to implement French Immersion? Did any of these issues have an impact on the discussions of French Immersion? If so, how and why?
20. As time went on late French Immersion was implemented? Do you know the story of why it was implemented? What role did parents play?
21. When French immersion reached the junior and senior high, do you remember if specific issues arose? (Probe on recruiting teachers and dual-track school)
22. Has the role of the parents' group changed over time? Why? How? (Group at Crocus, group at junior or senior high, group in the dual-track elementary schools)
23. What parents would you recommend that I interview for my study? School Board members? Superintendent's Department (current and former)? other divisional staff?
24. Are there any written resources that I should study (books, minutes, etc.) that I should study?
25. In hindsight, how do you feel about the process of implementing French Immersion in the division? How do you feel about the program?
26. Do you have any final comments that you would like to make?

Thank you for your co-operation. I will send you a summary of the interview as soon as possible for comments.

## SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE STAFF

(pilot study)

1. What is your present position? What are your responsibilities?
2. When did you become aware that parents in the division wanted French Immersion implemented?
3. What was your position at that time? and responsibilities?
4. What was your initial reaction to the request for the implementation of French immersion?
5. What was the reaction of the community?
6. What issues developed from the request for French Immersion? (Use tentative list.)
7. How did the school board respond to each of these issues? (What decisions were made? What alternatives were available to the Board? How were the decisions made?)
8. Who seemed to exert the most influence during the decision-making process?
9. Was the community or groups within the community consulted during the decision-making process? (Who was consulted? When? How? Why? Where? By whom?)
10. Did decisions that were made outside the school division have an impact on the decisions that were made? (Use tentative list of decisions made at the federal government level, at the provincial level, and in other school divisions.)  
  
(What was the specific decision? How did it have an impact?)
11. Would you say that French immersion is still being implemented in this division? If so, in what way? If not, when did the process end? (year or event)
12. Are there issues surrounding French immersion that are being discussed at this time? (What are they? What are the alternative decisions available to the Board?)
13. In your opinion, who were the key people involved in the decision-making process surrounding French Immersion?

14. Did the role of the French immersion parents' group change over time? Why? How?
15. A school board has to make decisions on numerous questions at the same time. During the time of discussions on French immersion programs, what other issues were concerning the board? Did any of them have a direct impact on the decisions regarding French immersion programming? If so, why? How?
16. Do you have any final comments?

Thank you for your co-operation. I will send you a summary of the interview as soon as possible for your comments.

\*\* PLEASE NOTE: This is a sample of the type of questions that will be asked. The final interview questions will be based on the data collected in the division.

## INTERVIEW QUESTION

## DIVISION EMPLOYEES (PAST AND PRESENT)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Today, I am interviewing  
\_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of my study is to examine the role of parents in the initiation and implementation of French Immersion in Prairie School Division. Before we discuss the specifics of the program, I'd like to ask a couple of general questions.

1. What was your position in Prairie School Division in 1978 when French Immersion was proposed? What were your responsibilities?
2. Many of my questions are based on the assumption that French Immersion would have been initiated by a parental lobby. This premise comes from my review of the literature. Was this how it came about in Prairie School Division? What role did the parents play?
3. When did you become aware that parents in the division wanted French Immersion implemented? What type of program did they request? early? late? partial? why?
4. What was your initial reaction to the request for the implementation of French Immersion?
5. Were you involved in any of the committees that the Board or the administration established to study this

- issue? What were the agenda issues of those meetings?
6. What was the reaction of the larger community to the program?
  7. What issues developed from the request for French Immersion? (Use tentative list: housing, ie. location and type; transportation; recruiting of teachers; curriculum materials; library and other resources; etc.)
  8. How did the School Board respond to each of these issues? (What decisions were made? What alternatives were available to the Board? How were the decisions made?)
  9. Who seemed to exert the most influence during the decision-making process?
  10. Was the community or groups within the community consulted during the decision-making process? (Who was consulted? When? How? Where? By whom? What role did they play?)
  11. did decisions that were made outside the school division have an impact on the decisions that were made in the division? (Use tentative list of decisions made at the federal level, at the provincial level, and in other school divisions.)
  12. Once early French Immersion was operating for a number of years, late immersion was implemented. Can you tell me the story behind late immersion?

13. Would you say that French Immersion is still being implemented in this division? If so, in what way? If not, when did the process end? (year or event)
14. Are there issues surrounding French Immersion that are being discussed at this time? (What are they? What are the alternative decisions available to the Board?)
15. In your opinion, who are the key people involved in the decision-making process surrounding French Immersion?
16. Did the role of the French immersion parents' group change over time? Why? How? Was there ever more than one French Immersion parents' group?
17. A School Board has to make decisions on a number of issues at the same time. During the time of discussions on French immersion programs, what other issues were concerning the Board? Did any of them have a direct or an indirect impact on the decisions regarding French Immersion programming? If so, why? How?
18. What parents would you recommend that I interview for my study? School Board Members? Superintendent's Department Members? Any other?
19. Are there any written resources that you would recommend that I study? (ie: minutes of committee meetings, briefs, literature, etc.)

20. Do you have any final comments?

Thank you for your co-operation. I will send you a summary of the interview as soon as possible for your comments.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

## SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS (PAST AND PRESENT)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Today, I am  
interviewing \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of my study is to examine the role of parents in the initiation and implementation of French Immersion in this division. Before we discuss the specifics of the program, I'd like to ask a couple of general questions.

1. Are you currently a member of the Board? What are your responsibilities? (ie committees)
2. Were you a member of the Board in 1978 when the discussions regarding French Immersion began? Did you sit on any Ad-hoc Committees regarding French Immersion? If so, what was the role of the committee? Who were the members? Findings? If not, do you recall any such committee? role? make-up? etc?
3. Was French immersion implemented as the result of a parental lobby or was it an initiative of the Superintendent's Department or the School Board?
4. How was it determined that there was a need for the program? (survey? public meetings? etc.)
5. What was your initial reaction to the request for the implementation of French Immersion?

6. What was the reaction of the community to the program?
7. What issues developed from the request for French Immersion? (Use tentative list: housing, transportation, recruiting teachers, curriculum materials and resources) How did the Board handle each issue? (ie alternatives available, concerns, final decisions)
8. Who seemed to exert the most influence during the decision-making process?
9. Was the community or groups within the community consulted during the decision-making process? (Who was consulted? When? How? Where? By whom?) What role did this play in the process?
10. Did the decisions that were made outside the school division have an impact on the decisions that were made in the division? (ie: B & B Report, federal monies, transportation regulations, fact that other divisions had implemented). Did the division use resource people from BEF? How?
11. Did the fact that Prairie School Division was paying non-resident fees for students to attend French Immersion in other divisions influence the decision to implement the program?
12. Can you tell me why late French immersion was started in this division? Did it encounter any particular problems? (probe on recruiting teachers and dual-track versus milieu)

13. Did any concerns surface with the implementation of the high school program?
14. Do you recall why the Board decided to write a policy for French Immersion?
15. Would you say that French Immersion is still being implemented in this division? If so, in what way? If not, when did the process end? (year or event)
16. Are there issues surrounding French Immersion that are still being discussed at this time? (What are they? What are the alternative decisions available to the Board?)
17. In the early years, who were the key people involved in the decisionmaking process? when late immersion came in?
18. Did the role of the French immersion parents' group change over time? Why? How? Was there ever more than one French Immersion parents' group? Do you ever remember these parents making presentations to the Board? When? What issue? Their position?
19. A School Board has to make decisions on a number of issues at the same time. During the time of the early discussions on French Immersion, what other issues were concerning the Board? Did any of them have a direct or indirect impact on the decisions regarding French Immersion programming? If so, why? How?

20. What parents would you recommend that I interview for my study? School Board Members? Superintendent's Department Members? Other employees?
21. Are there any written resources that you would recommend? .
22. Do you have any final comment?

Thank you for your co-operation, I will send you a summary of the interview as soon as possible for your comments.

**Appendix B**

**LETTERS OF PERMISSION**

This section contains the letter of permission from the Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Education and from the School Division.



University of Manitoba

Appendix B

426 Education Building  
office: 474-9072  
messages: 474-9014

Faculty of Education  
**ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
Jim Welsh, Chair

December 7, 1989

Ms. Camilla Stewart  
134 Faculty of Education  
U. of M. Campus

Dear Camilla:

I am pleased to inform you that the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee has found your proposal entitled "Parents as Advocates at the School Board Level: A Case study of the Initiation and Implementation of French Immersion" acceptable as presented. Your signed Ethical Approval form is enclosed.

The Committee's only suggestion to you was that the heading on your consent letter "LETTER FOR INFORMED CONSENT!" was unnecessary, and should probably be deleted.

Good luck with your thesis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jim', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim Welsh, Ph.D.

cc: Dr. A. Riffel  
Ms. E. Wooler

7

ETHICAL APPROVAL OF RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS  
INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

This form is to be completed in accordance with the Faculty of Education policy on ethical review. This policy requires that Committee members take into account the relevant standards of the discipline concerned as well as, where appropriate, the standards specified by certain external funding bodies.

Project identification

(to be filled in by investigator)

Investigator(s) Camilla Stewart

Title Parents as Advocates at the School Board Level:  
A Case Study of the Initiation and Implementation  
of French Immersion.

If applicant is a student, name and SIGNATURE of faculty member supervising the proposed research  
Dr. A. Riffel 

This is to certify that the Review Committee has examined the research and experimental development project indicated above and concludes that the research meets the appropriate standards of ethical conduct in research with human subjects.

Date:

7 Dec 89

Signature of Chairperson:



Room 134, Faculty of Education  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2  
December 19, 1989.

Superintendent

Winnipeg, Manitoba,

Dear

As a follow-up to our conversation on December 14, 1989, please find enclosed a copy of the proposal that was approved by the Faculty of Education, Ethics Committee. The proposal involves case study methodology which will explore "Parents as Advocates at the School Board Level: The Initiation and Implementation of French Immersion."

The next step in the process is for me to determine the school jurisdiction in which I will conduct the study. As I indicated in our conversation, I would like you to consider whether the \_\_\_\_\_ would be open to the study. I would like to restate that students will not be involved in the study but I will have to conduct interviews with numerous adults.

As a result of our previous discussion, it is my understanding that the following steps are involved in receiving the division's approval. First, I would have to present you with the proposal to study. Second, I would have to meet with you to discuss the proposal in detail. Third, you would have to take the request to the school board for final approval.

Given the above procedures, I agreed to get a copy of the proposal to you by December 20, 1989. We discussed the week of January 2nd to 5th, 1990 as a possible time to meet. This week was considered for two reasons. First, the Holiday season makes it difficult to meet before then. Second, the earliest possible date that you could take it to the Board is January 8, 1990 and we would have to meet before it went to the Board.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. You can reach me at home (452-5138) or at university (474-6354). Also, messages can be left with the department secretary at 474-9010.

Yours sincerely,

Camilla Stewart.

January 24, 1990

Ms Camilla Stewart  
Room 134, Faculty of Education  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3J 2N2

Dear Camilla:

At its regular meeting on Monday, January 22, 1990 the Board of Trustees passed the following motion:

"That Camilla Stewart be granted permission to conduct a research study on "Parents as Advocates at the School Board Level: The Initiation and Implementation of French Immersion".

I wish you the greatest success in this research venture and look forward to you sharing the findings with us.

Yours sincerely

Superintendent

## Appendix C

### LETTERS TO COLLABORATORS

The appendix begins with the proposed letter for informed consent. The second letter was sent to the collaborators in the pilot study. The third was sent to the collaborators in the study itself. The fourth was sent to a member of the Superintendent's Department in order to ask permission to use data that had been collected for a related paper. The fifth letter was sent to the collaborators in the pilot study asking them to verify the summary of the interview. The final letters were sent to participants in the pilot who had not responded to the first letter plus all other collaborators. The purpose of this correspondence was to get written verification of the summary or transcript of the interview and permission to use this information.

## LETTER FOR INFORMED CONSENT!

(proposed)

Dear

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations at the University of Manitoba. The proposal for my master's thesis involves case study research on the role of parents' in the decision-making process for the implementation of French immersion in a school division. In order to complete the project, I will have to interview the key people who were involved in the process in one school division. I am writing to ask you to consider participating in this study.

I would like to interview you about the process of implementing French immersion in your division. The interview will last approximately one and one-half hours. I guarantee the anonymity of the information you provide, but I will want to tape the interview for analysis purposes. Furthermore, you may withdraw from participation in the study at any point.

I will send my analysis of our conversation to you for verification purposes. At that time, I would like you to react to my analysis. Precise directions will accompany the summary. The verification process will take about one-half hour.

Finally, after the analysis of the data is complete, I will send you a summary of the complete study for your comments. It will take about one hour to read and comment on the study. The various phases of your participation will take place over several weeks from March to October 1990.

I will be contacting you by telephone during the week of April 15th to 21st 1990 to find out whether or not you are willing to participate in this study. Should you be willing, we will be able to schedule the interview at that time. In the meantime, I would ask you to give this request some consideration.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours sincerely;

Camilla Stewart,

351-415 River Ave.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba,  
R3L 0C3

November 4, 1991.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXXX

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations at the University of Manitoba. The proposal for my master's thesis involves case study research on the role of parents' in the decision-making process for the implementation of French immersion in a school division. In order to complete the project, I will have to interview the key people who were involved in the process in one school division. I am writing to ask you to participate in this study.

At this time, I am doing the pilot study. This component of the research has two purposes: 1) to transcribe your story, and 2) to evaluate the interview questions. The various phases of the data collection are described below.

I would like to interview you about the process of implementing French immersion in your division. The interview will last approximately one and one-half hours. I guarantee the anonymity of the information you provide, but I will want to tape the interview for analysis purposes. Furthermore, you may withdraw from participation in the study at any point.

I will send my analysis of our conversation to you for verification purposes. At that time, I would like you to react to me analysis. Precise directions will accompany the summary. The verification process will take about one-half hour.

Finally, after the analysis of the data is complete, I will send you a summary of the complete study for your comments. It will take about one hour to read and comment on the study. The various phases of your participation will take place from October 1991 to June 1992.

I will be contacting you by telephone during the week of November 4th to 8th, 1991 to find out whether or not

you are willing to participate in this study. Should you be willing, we will be able to schedule the interview at that time. In the meantime, if you wish to call me, I can be reached at 453-0836 or 452-2883 (messages).

Thank you in advance for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Camilla Stewart, Graduate Student.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby agree to participate in the pilot study and the other phases of the research as described in this letter. I agree to having the interview recorded for analysis purposes.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness/Researcher \_\_\_\_\_

## Letter to collaborators for informed consent

January 15, 1993.

Dear

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations at the University of Manitoba. The proposal for my master's thesis involves case study research on the role of parents' in the decision-making process for the implementation of French immersion in a school division. In order to complete the project, I will have to interview the key people who were involved in the process in one school division. I am writing to ask you to participate in this study.

I would like to interview you about the process of implementing French immersion in your division. The interview will last approximately one and one-half hours. I guarantee the anonymity of the information you provide, but I will want to tape the interview for analysis purposes. Furthermore, you may withdraw from participation in the study at any point.

I will send my analysis of our conversation to you for verification purposes. At that time, I would like you to react to me analysis. Precise directions will accompany the summary. The verification process will take about one-half hour.

Finally, after the analysis of the data is complete, I will send you a summary of the complete study for your comments. It will take about one hour to read and comment on the study. The various phases of your participation will take place from January to March 1993.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated co-operation. I can be reached at 453-0836 or 452-2883 (messages).

Yours sincerely,

Camilla Stewart, Graduate Student.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby agree to participate in the master's thesis research as described in this letter. I agree to having the interview recorded for analysis purposes.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness/Reseacher \_\_\_\_\_

June 15, 1993.

Dear

At this time, I would like to begin by explaining the current time line for my research. First of all, I have been granted a final deadline of August 30, 1993 to complete all of the requirements for my degree. Second, I decided to delay mailing the individual summaries until I had completed all of the interviews and began the analysis process. At this time, I am mailing out all of the summaries and I will incorporate any feedback into the final copy of my thesis. At this point, it is my plan to have a summary of my findings ready for mailing to each of the collaborators by mid-July and to defend the thesis by mid-August.

However, your case is unique because I still feel the need to conduct a recent interview once you have had the opportunity to verify the information in the enclosed summaries. Once again, I would like to thank you for your permission to use the interviews that I conducted on Oct. 24, 1986 and September 22, 1987 in the course of this research. In preparing the summary of these interviews, I have noted a few further questions. I would like to schedule a one hour interview on these points between June 21st and June 25th/93.

The summary includes the two interviews and I have clearly marked where one starts and the other ends. The procedure for verification that I am using is to ask the collaborators to react to my analysis. I would appreciate it if you would base your initial comments on your thinking at the time of the interview, if that is possible.

However, I realize that your thinking may have developed, in certain areas, since the interview. If this is the case, would you please indicate the main points at the time of the interview and the new main points. Also, if it is possible, could you comment on the reasons for the changes.

At this time, the names and places have not been changed but in the final document anonymity will be assured. Thank you for your continued co-operation and any additional insights. I can be reached at 453-0836 (personal answering machine).

Yours sincerely;

Camilla Stewart.

Please note: The follow-up interview was not conducted as a result of extenuating circumstances.

890 Garwood Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 1N6

January 7, 1993.

Dear

At this time, I would like to offer my sincere apologies in the long delay in sending this summary out for verification. Unfortunately, shortly after conducting the pilot interviews, I had to take leave from my studies for personal reasons. I am now ready and earnest to resume my studies with your help.

As a follow-up to the interview, I am sending you my summary of it. As I mentioned at the interview, I would like your reaction to this analysis. I would appreciate it if you would base your initial comments on your thinking at the time of the interview.

However, I realize that your thinking may have developed, in certain areas, since the interview. If this is the case, would you please indicate the main points at the time of the interview and the new main points. Also, if it is possible, could you comment on the reasons for the changes.

At this time, the names and places have not been changed but in the final document anonymity will be assured. Thank you for your continued co-operation and any additional insights. I can be reached at 453-0836 (personal answering machine).

Yours sincerely;

Camilla Stewart.

890 Garwood Ave.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3M 1N6

August 16, 1993.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Several months ago, I interviewed you in connection with the research for my Master in Education thesis. The topic of my study is the development of French Immersion in \_\_\_\_\_ School Division. At that time, I indicated that I would send you a copy of the transcript or a summary of the interview for verification before I used any of the quotes in my thesis.

At this time, I am preparing the analysis and I hope to orally defend my thesis on September 2, 1993. Please find enclosed a summary or a transcript of the interview. Please remember that your anonymity and that of the division will be assured through the changing of the names of all people and places. If you have any objection to the use of any of this material in my thesis, please contact me before August 24, 1993. If I have not heard from you by that time, I will assume that you have no objection to me using this material.

Please find enclosed a stamped, self addressed envelope which you may use to return your feedback. For your convenience and my records, I have attached a cover letter and permission form to the summary or transcript. I would appreciate if you could return a signed copy of the permission form by the above date. I can be reached at 453-0836 (personal answering machine) if you would like to discuss this with me or simply leave a message.

Thank you for your continued co-operation and any additional insights.

Yours sincerely:

Camilla Stewart.

August 16, 1993.

Dear

Please find enclosed a summary of the interview that I conducted on \_\_\_\_\_ regarding the initiation and implementation of French Immersion in \_\_\_\_\_ School Division. Please note that the names and places have not been changed in this copy in order for you to be able to verify the information that you provided. Rest assured that the division along with all people and places have been assigned new names for the actual thesis.

I have included two copies of the permission form. Please keep one for your files and send the other one back to me with the copy of the summary. If I have not received this by August 24, 1993, I will still use the material because as I indicated in my letter, I will assume that you have no objection. The role of the permission form is to provide me with written permission.

Yours sincerely;

Camilla Stewart.

\*\*\*\*\*  
I, \_\_\_\_\_, grant permission to Camilla Stewart to use the information and quotes contained in the summary of my interview with her in her M. Ed. thesis. This permission is granted on the understanding that the thesis will be written so that my anonymity and that of the division are assured.

Please check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ with no objections.

\_\_\_\_\_ according to comments that I made on the summary

\_\_\_\_\_ with no objections but please consider additional insights that I provided

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\*\*\*\*\*

## Appendix D

### FRENCH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS AND RELATED POLICIES

This appendix contains the French Language policy that was passed on December 16, 1985 and the revised policy of April 25, 1988. It also contains the Heritage Language Policy passed on December 16, 1985. The March 18, 1985 Transportation policy and its most recent revision passed on March 25, 1993 is also included.

## FRENCH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The Division acknowledges its responsibility and desire to provide to the students in our community instruction in the French language. In doing so, it recognizes the preeminence of the overall goals and objectives of the school division, the status of French as an Official Language in Canada, and the provision for French language education in the Manitoba Public Schools Act.

The goals and objectives of the school division for the maximum development of every student are the main focus of all programs including French Language Programs. As such, provision will be made for instruction in French according to two program models, namely the French Immersion Program and the Basic French Program, as outlined in the following guidelines.

### A. The French Immersion Program

The underlying assumption is that the program will be provided as the number of students warrant the development and maintenance of a viable, comprehensive and ongoing program.

#### 1. Basic Objectives

The objectives of the immersion program are to enable students to:

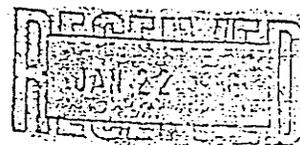
- (a) understand, speak, read, and write French;
- (b) pursue further education with French as the language of instruction;
- (c) live and function well in a community where French is spoken;
- (d) understand the emotional attitudes and values of a native speaker of French in the Manitoba and Canadian context.

#### 2. Organization

##### (a) Entry

- (i) The French immersion program is an alternative to the English-based program and is voluntary - students enter and discontinue in the program at parental option in accordance with (ii) below;
- (ii) Students may enter the program only at Kindergarten and/or Grade 1 (early immersion) or Grade 7 (late immersion) - as numbers warrant.

December 16, 1985.



(b) Kindergarten - Grade 6

- (i) Where possible, the program will exist in an immersion environment - the entire school being an "immersion centre";
- (ii) All instruction other than English Language Arts will be given in French.

(c) Grades 7 - 12

- (i) The program will exist with other programs at locations and in settings which permit the meeting of program objectives;
- (ii) A minimum of 50% of instruction will be given in French.

B. The Basic French Program1. Basic Objectives

The Basic French Program is designed to permit and assist students to achieve:

- (a) a functional knowledge of French;
- (b) the ability to make themselves understood in French conversation;
- (c) the ability to read standard, non-technical French text with minimal or no aid; and,
- (d) the ability to resume the study of French later in life.

2. Organization(a) Entry

All students other than those in French Immersion will study Basic French in Grades 4 - 9 unless parents, teachers, and administration consider it inadvisable in individual cases; such cases to be determined only after every possible avenue has been exhausted to have the student remain in the program.

(b) Grades 4 - 9

Basic French is to be considered on the same basis as other CORE, or required, subjects for scheduling and allocation purposes.

(c) Grades 10 - 12

Basic French will be provided as an option as numbers warrant.

C. Related Issues

1. Teacher Qualifications and Development

- (a) Basic French teachers must be functionally bilingual. Immersion teachers must be fluently bilingual.
- (b) Bilingual substitutes must be employed whenever possible in the Immersion program.
- (c) French Language teachers will receive additional professional upgrading as deemed desirable and appropriate by the teacher, the administrator and the Superintendents' Department.

2. Funding

- (a) Where a French language program is approved as per legislation, Departmental funds, where provided, will be designated toward that program.
- (b) Where a French language program is approved by the Board of Trustees, establishment and development funds will be provided.

3. Student and Program Evaluation

- (a) Reporting to parents on student progress must be made available in English at the option of the parent.
- (b) All French language programs must be regularly monitored and evaluated (a minimum of every three years).

4. Related Cultural Enrichment

The administrator and teachers of a school will determine the extent to which special culturally-related experiences can and will be incorporated into French Language programs.

5. Other Issues

All residents of \_\_\_\_\_ School Division will be informed of all developments in the area of French language instruction.

December 16, 1985

## HERITAGE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The Division recognizes its responsibility in our community to provide, under certain conditions, instruction in language other than English or French. The following guidelines form a basis for a comprehensive approach to such instruction in Seven Oaks School Division.

### A. General Guidelines

The goals and objectives of the school division for the maximum development of every student must be the main focus of all language programs. As such:

1. Programs will be provided only in situations where a high level of education can be maintained;
2. Programs will be open to all students who qualify for entry points as established by this policy;
3. Programs will be made available as outlined in legislation or as the Board determines;
4. Programs will be provided only where numbers of students warrant development of a viable, comprehensive, ongoing program.
5. Students will not, other than in exceptional circumstances, be displaced from their designated community school by a language program; students who enroll in language programs may need to attend school outside their communities to ensure necessary numbers.

### B. Modes of Instruction

Depending on the mode of instruction deemed to be most desirable to meet divisional and language program objectives, the following organizational models will be employed as indicated.

1. Heritage Language - English Bilingual:
  - (a) K-6 - A minimum of 50% instruction in the Heritage Language;
  - (b) 7-9 - A minimum of Heritage Language Arts and one other subject in the Heritage Language;

December 16, 1985

- (c) 10-12 - Heritage Language Arts Option as numbers warrant;
- (d) Entry Point - Kindergarten and/or Grade 1.

2. After School Heritage Language:

- (a) A minimum of two days per week (30-40 minutes per day) based on language proficiency of the learner;
- (b) Entry point - based on level of proficiency.

3. Language Examination for Special Credit:

- (a) 10-12 - As outlined in Administrative and Department of Education guidelines;
- (b) Entry point - By application as per guidelines.

C. Teacher Qualifications and Development

- 1. Heritage Language teachers must be fluently bilingual.
- 2. Bilingual substitutes must be employed whenever possible.
- 3. Language teachers will receive additional professional upgrading as deemed desirable and appropriate by the teacher, the administrator and the Superintendents' Department.

D. Funding

- 1. Where a language program is approved as per legislation, Departmental funds, where provided, will be designated toward that program.
- 2. Where a language program is approved by the Board of Trustees, establishment and developmental funds will be provided.

E. Student and Program Evaluation

- 1. Reporting to parents on student progress will be in English.
- 2. All language programs must be regularly monitored and evaluated (a minimum of every three years).

December 16, 1985

F. Related Cultural Enrichment

1. The administrator and teachers of a school will determine the extent to which special culturally-related experiences can and will be incorporated into language programs.

G. Other Issues

All residents of \_\_\_\_\_ School Division will be informed of all developments in the area of language instruction.

December 16, 1985

## CORE FRENCH IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

The School Division Board is committed to the introduction of a Core French program, grades four through six. To this end, the following implementation guidelines are being established:

- I.
  - A) That by 1988, teachers\* at the grades four through six level, be qualified to teach the prescribed French program to their own classes.
  - B) Where exceptions are recognized, an exchange involving no more than two teachers, may be arranged within staff to provide French instruction. It is expected that the staff member being relieved of French teaching will provide a high quality program in the subject being exchanged.
  - C) Where neither (A) nor (B) above, are practicable, specialists may be provided.
- II. That the Board assist teachers currently on staff, to upgrade their qualifications by:
  - A) defraying the teachers' tuitions fees for upgrading courses,
  - B) initiating local based conversational French courses,
  - C) encouraging immersion experiences through financial assistance,
  - D) permitting teachers, who are involved in upgrading, to develop further skills by apprenticing to qualified staff.
- III. That the phase in program begun in 1982 continue until 1988.
- IV. That the Board appoint teachers who are qualified to teach French, as well as other subjects at the intermediate level. French proficiency will be ascertained by the French consultant or designate.
- V. That no tenured teacher be released as a result of implementing the Core French program. However, it may be necessary, to request teachers to transfer to other schools, and/or other grade levels in order to facilitate implementation.

\* The Board may recognize exceptions on an individual basis.

May 30, 1983

### FRENCH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The School Division acknowledges its responsibility and desire to provide to the students in our community instruction in the French language. In doing so, it recognizes the pre-eminence of the overall goals and objectives of the school division, the status of French as an Official Language in Canada, and the provision for French language education in the Manitoba Public Schools Act.

The goals and objectives of the school division for the maximum development of every student are the main focus of all programs including French language programs. As such, provision will be made for instruction in French according to two program models, namely the French Immersion Program and the Basic French Program, as outlined in the following guidelines.

#### A. The French Immersion Program

The underlying assumption is that the program will be provided as a number of students warrant the development and maintenance of a viable, comprehensive, ongoing program.

##### 1. Basic Objectives

The objectives of the immersion program are to enable students to:

- (a) understand, speak, read and write French;
- (b) pursue further education with French as the language of instruction;
- (c) live and function well in a community where French is spoken;
- (d) understand the emotional attitudes and value of a native speaker of French in the Manitoba and Canadian context.

##### 2. Organization

###### (a) Entry

- (i) The French immersion program is an alternative to the English-based program and is voluntary - students enter and discontinue in the program at parental option in accordance with (ii) below;

April 25, 1988

2. Organization (Cont'd.)

- (ii) Students may enter the program only at Kindergarten and/or Grade 1 (early immersion) or Grade 7 (late immersion) - as numbers warrant.

(b) Kindergarten - Grade 6

- (i) The Board recognizes two different logistical formats for teaching French as a language of instruction hereinafter referred to as French Immersion.

FORMAT 1

The Immersion Centre: This is defined as a school building in which all of the registered children are enrolled in a French Immersion program.

FORMAT 2

The Dual Track School: This is defined as a school in which all children in some classes are registered in a French Immersion Program but that there are other children registered in a full English program also occupying the same school building.

The School Division Board recognizes both approaches to French Immersion Education as viable and successful formats for the education of children, with neither approach being inherently better or worse than the other.

- (ii) All instruction other than English Language Arts will be given in French.

(c) Grades 7 - 12

- (i) The program will exist with other programs at locations and in settings which permit the meeting of program objectives;
- (ii) A minimum of 50% of instruction will be given in French.

April 25, 1988

B. The Basic Program

1. Basic Objectives

The Basic French Program is designed to permit and assist students to achieve:

- (a) a functional knowledge of French;
- (b) the ability to make themselves understood in French conversation;
- (c) the ability to read standard, non-technical French text with minimal or no aid; and,
- (d) the ability to resume the study of French later in life.

2. Organization

(a) Entry

All students other than those in French Immersion will study Basic French in Grades 4 - 9 unless parents, teachers, and administration consider it inadvisable in individual cases; such cases to be determined only after every possible avenue has been exhausted to have the student remain in the program.

(b) Grades 4 - 9

Basic French is to be considered on the same basis as other CORE, or required, subjects for scheduling and allocation purposes.

(c) Grades 10 - 12

Basic French will be provided as an option as numbers warrant.

April 25, 1988

C. Related Issues

1. Teacher Qualifications and Development

- (a) Basic French teachers must be functionally bilingual. Immersion teachers, must be fluently bilingual.
- (b) Bilingual substitutes must be employed whenever possible in the Immersion program.
- (c) French Language teachers will receive additional professional upgrading as deemed desirable and appropriate by the teacher, the administrator and the Superintendents' Department.

2. Funding

- (a) Where a French language program is approved as per legislation, Departmental funds, where provided, will be designated toward that program.
- (b) Where a French language program is approved by the Board of Trustees, establishment and development funds will be provided.

3. Student and Program Evaluation

- (a) Reporting to parents on student progress must be made available in English at the option of the parent.
- (b) All French language programs must be regularly monitored and evaluated (a minimum of every three years).

4. Related Cultural Enrichment

The administrator and teachers of a school will determine the extent to which special culturally-related experiences can and will be incorporated into French Language programs.

5. Other Issues

All residents of . School Division will be informed of all development in the area of French language instruction.

April 25, 1988

## TRANSPORTATION POLICY

I. General Provisions

1. The Division shall transport:
  - (a) students entitled to transportation under the provisions of The Public Schools Act
  - (b) kindergarten to grade 6 students whose most direct walking distance to an assigned school exceeds 1.2 km. (7/10 mile)
  - (c) grade 7 to grade 12 students whose most direct walking distance from home to an assigned school exceeds 1.5 km. (9/10 mile)
  - (d) students attending a designated school, offering an alternative educational program whose most direct walking distance exceeds 1.2 km. for kindergarten to grade 6; 1.5 km. for grades 7 to 12
  - (e) students who are physically and/or mentally handicapped
  - (f) students who request it in writing, upon compassionate grounds, if approved by the Superintendents' Department.
2. Transportation privileges may be extended to students within the same block whose total walking distance is less than stated in (b) and (c) above, where, in the opinion of the school division, there will be little effect on the school buses' capacities and/or operating time tables.

II. Requests for Transportation

1. In the case of pupils registered in the School Division for the first time or, pupils who become bus pupils for the first time, or pupils who have been transported previously but have changed residence, requests for transportation must be made in writing on Divisional Transportation Request forms.
2. Any such request for transportation made after the Friday before the week of school opening, may be subject to a four day delay before transportation can be provided.
3. In requesting transportation, provision for a reliable emergency contact must be made. This is necessary to provide for the safety of children in the event school is let out at a time other than its normal dismissal time.

March 18, 1985

### III. Mode of Transportation

Transportation will basically be provided by division-owned school buses. An alternative means of transportation or an allowance in lieu of transportation may be substituted by the Division.

### IV. Winter Transportation

The Division will annually assess winter transportation for students living on the outer limits of school boundaries and who do not qualify for transportation under General Provisions.

### V. Boundary Parent/Personal Preference

Students attending schools other than assigned schools based on personal and/or parental preference, will not be eligible for transportation after September 1, 1984, unless they can be accommodated on an existing bus route.

### VI. Procedures

The following procedures apply to this Policy:

- (a) the most direct walking distance to and from a school shall be deemed to be as shown on the transportation map issued to each school;
- (b) the most direct walking distance for a student shall be measured according to the most direct means of walking along:
  - i) a public roadway
  - ii) a public walkway
  - iii) a public park and/or green area and/or
  - iv) a combination of the above which are maintained and/or cleared by the City of Winnipeg, or by community use throughout the school year;
- (c) measurements shall be made from a point on the public roadway nearest the residence of the student to a point on the public roadway nearest the most direct access to school grounds;
- (d) transportation shall generally be from and to a designated pick up point nearest an eligible student's home, in accordance with provincial regulation 216-82.

March 18, 1985

**VII. Special Requests**

1. In the event transportation requests involve differing pick-up and/or return locations, a Special Request form must be filed with the Division's Transportation Office.
2. While every effort will be made to accommodate such requests, this may not always be possible. Where such requests are accepted, it should be understood that contingency plans must be made in the event a child is inadvertently dropped off at his/her normal (home) location when he/she was to have been dropped off elsewhere. This may be the same contact as that referred to in Section II (3) of this policy.

**VIII. Withdrawal of Transportation Privileges**

While the Division is obliged to transport pupils when the distance from home to school is beyond the limits set forth in this policy, it must be understood that there are limits to this obligation. The Board, through its administration, reserves the right to suspend or deny for temporary periods, the privilege of transportation to those pupils who through their actions on a bus, endanger the health and/or safety of others.

March 18, 1985

## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

### 1. General Provisions

The School Division believes that student transportation services must be provided at a level which will provide equal and reasonable access to education to all students within the divisional community. To that end it shall transport:

- (a) All students living further than 1.6 kilometres from school and are eligible for transportation grants as laid out in the regulations of the Public Schools Act as follows:
- i) Rural -- Eligibility
    - pupils enrolled in grades Kindergarten to 12 who do not reside in a city, town or village.
  - ii) Special Class/Physically Handicapped -- transported pupil who is unable to walk safely to school and
    - is a Level II or Level III pupil;
    - has a learning disability, or
    - has a physical handicap.
  - iii) Urban -- all pupils who reside in the City of Winnipeg, and are eligible for transportation grants will be transported as per the following schedule:
    - 1993-'94 Kindergarten to Grade 10.
    - 1994-'95 Kindergarten to Grade 8.
    - 1995-'96 Kindergarten to Grade 6.
  - iv) Programs not offered in the Division
    - pupils enrolled in grades Kindergarten to 12 in another school division who take a recognized program not offered in . School Division.

May 25, 1993

1. General Provisions

- (b) kindergarten to grade 6 students whose most direct walking distance to an assigned school exceeds 1.2 kilometers, babysitters and daycares included;
- (c) students involved in special situations related to their safety, as authorized by the Superintendent or his/her designate;
- (d) students who, on compassionate grounds, are authorized by the Superintendent or his/her designate to receive transportation to an assigned school;
- (e) on a cost recovery basis, and conditional upon space being available as per regulations on Student Transportation Fees, secondary students whose most direct walking distance to an assigned school exceeds 1.6 kilometers or who reside in a designated transportation area.

2. Student Transportation Fees

- (a) Student transportation fees as noted in 1. (e) above shall be set annually by the Board based on recovery of the cost of providing the service.
- (b) Designated transportation areas as noted in 1. (e) above shall be reviewed and established annually by the Board of Trustees.
- (c) Space availability will be determined by age with younger students receiving first priority for available discretionary space.

3. Requests for Transportation

- (a) In the case of pupils registered in the School Division for the first time or, pupils who become bus pupils for the first time, or pupils who have been transported previously but have changed residence, requests for transportation must be made in writing on Divisional Transportation Request forms.
- (b) Any such request for transportation made after the Friday before the week of school opening, may be subject to a four day delay before transportation can be provided.

May 25, 1993

3. Requests for Transportation

- (c) In requesting transportation, provision for a reliable emergency contact must be made. This is necessary to provide for the safety of children in the event school is let out at a time other than its normal dismissal time.

4. Mode of Transportation

Transportation will basically be provided by division-owned school buses. An alternative means of transportation or an allowance in lieu of transportation may be substituted by the Division.

5. Winter Transportation

The Division will annually assess winter transportation for students living on the outer limits of school boundaries and who do not qualify for transportation under General Provisions.

6. Boundary Parent/Personal Preference

After September 1, 1991, students attending schools, other than schools assigned by the Division, based solely on personal and/or parental preference, will not be eligible for transportation.

7. Procedures

The following procedures apply to this Policy:

- (a) the most direct walking distance to and from a school shall be measured according to the most direct means of walking along:
- i) a public roadway
  - ii) a public walkway
  - iii) a public park and/or green area and/or
  - iv) a combination of the above which are maintained and/or cleared by the City of Winnipeg, or by community use throughout the school year;
- (c) measurements shall be made from a point on the public roadway nearest the residence of the student to a point on the public roadway nearest the most direct access to school grounds.

May 25, 1993

7. Procedures

- (d) transportation shall generally be from and to a designated pick up point nearest an eligible student's home, in accordance with the provincial regulation.

8. Special Requests

- (a) In the event transportation requests involve differing pick-up and/or return locations, a Special Request form must be filed with the Division's Transportation Office.
- (b) While every effort will be made to accommodate such requests, this may not always be possible. Where such requests are accepted, it should be understood that contingency plans must be made and filed with the Division in the event a child is inadvertently dropped off at his/her normal (home) location when he/she was to have been dropped off elsewhere. This may be the same contact as that referred to in Section 3. (c) of this policy.

9. Withdrawal of transportation Privileges

While the Division is obligated to transport pupils when the distance from home to school is beyond the provisions set forth in this policy, it must be understood that there are limits to this obligation. The Board, through its Divisional administration, reserves the right to suspend the privilege of transportation to those pupils who through their actions on a bus, endanger the health and/or safety of others.

10. Administration of Student Transportation Services

Within the framework of Division policy the Board hereby authorizes the Superintendent:

- (a) to administer the Division policies and regulations on Student Transportation Services;
- (b) to make additions, deletions, and revisions to the transportation system when necessary to meet the needs of the Division for the safe and reasonable transportation of students;
- (c) to notify the Board of any revisions in practices beyond those provided through Divisional regulations.

May 25, 1993