

Falling Behind:

2015 Report on the Shortage of Teachers in French Immersion and Core French in British Columbia and Yukon

Canadian Parents for French British Columbia & Yukon Branch
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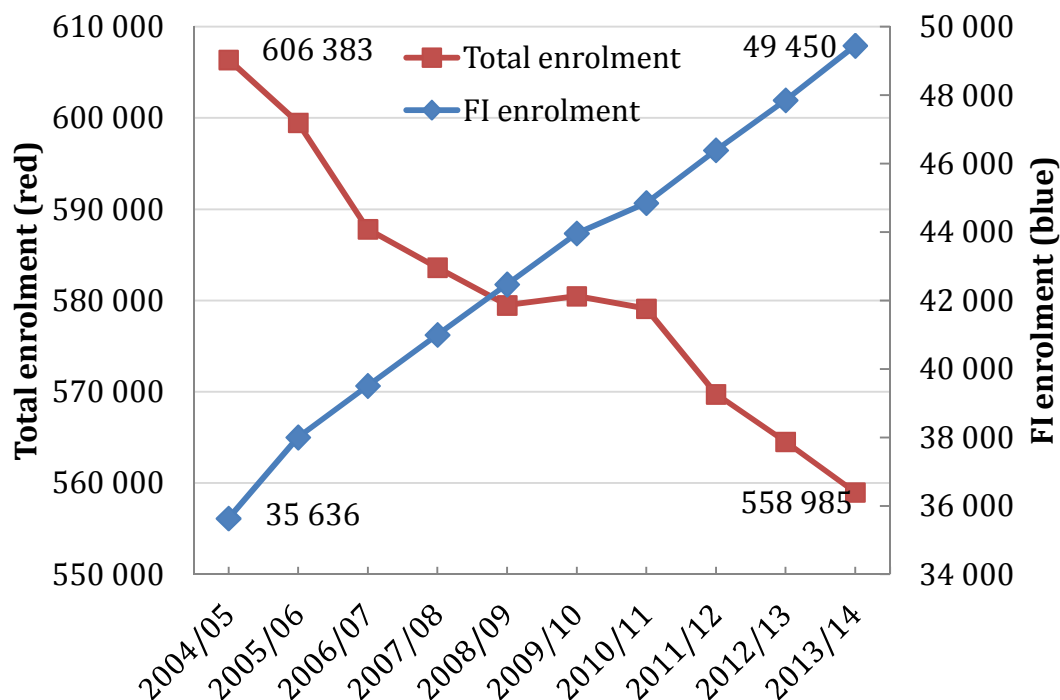
Executive Summary

British Columbia and Yukon are in critical need of French language teachers.

French Immersion Teacher Shortage

French immersion (FI) enrolment has increased in BC by 72% over the past 10 years. Overall enrolment has decreased by 8% over the same period. As of the 2013/14 school year, 49,000 students in BC were registered in the French immersion program (Figure 1), or 8.8% of the entire student body.

Figure 1. FI and Total Enrolment in BC Public Schools (2004/05—2013/14)



Source: BC Ministry of Education

We believe French programs are popular because they are widely recognized by parents as providing young students with the tools and experiences that will enrich their lives and help them prepare for the future. The life-changing benefits for youth in learning French as an additional language are well established.

However, this red-hot demand has placed capacity pressures on local school districts to create new and/or additional French immersion programs. Most notably, school districts indicate that limited physical classroom space, unique start-up costs, and the shortage of qualified French immersion teachers is hindering their ability to provide equitable access to this well established and life-changing language program to all students.

This year, CPF BC & Yukon conducted a survey and analysis to better understand the nature and the scope of the shortage and to identify best practices and suggestions for improvements for key decision-making bodies, partners, and post-secondary institutions.

A key finding: Eighty-six (**86**) percent of school districts indicated that it is “*very challenging*” or “*challenging*” to fill all available French immersion teaching positions with qualified teachers.

The nature of the challenge varies from district to district. **78%** indicated a lack of qualified applicants as a problem, **38%** indicated geographic location, **31%** indicated their inability to offer continuing contracts to candidates, and **22%** indicated teacher pay / cost of living.

Common best practices identified in training, recruiting, and retaining qualified French immersion teachers include:

- mentorship programs for new teachers,
- professional development opportunities in partnership with local post-secondary institutions,
- summer teacher exchange programs,
- offering new teachers continuing contracts early,
- signing and moving bonuses,
- promoting the need for qualified French teachers to current French Immersion students,
- creating incentives for native French speakers to move to BC to become teachers,
- increasing the geographic distribution of French teacher education programs,
- requiring all new teachers to take a minimum of one French methodology course, and
- standardizing teacher certification across provinces.

Core French Teacher Shortage

Nearly one third of all students in BC are enrolled in the Core French (CF) program. This proportion is largely a function of provincial legislation that requires all students in BC’s public education system to learn an additional language between grades five and eight. For a host of reasons, including financial incentives from the Federal Government, the language primarily offered is French.

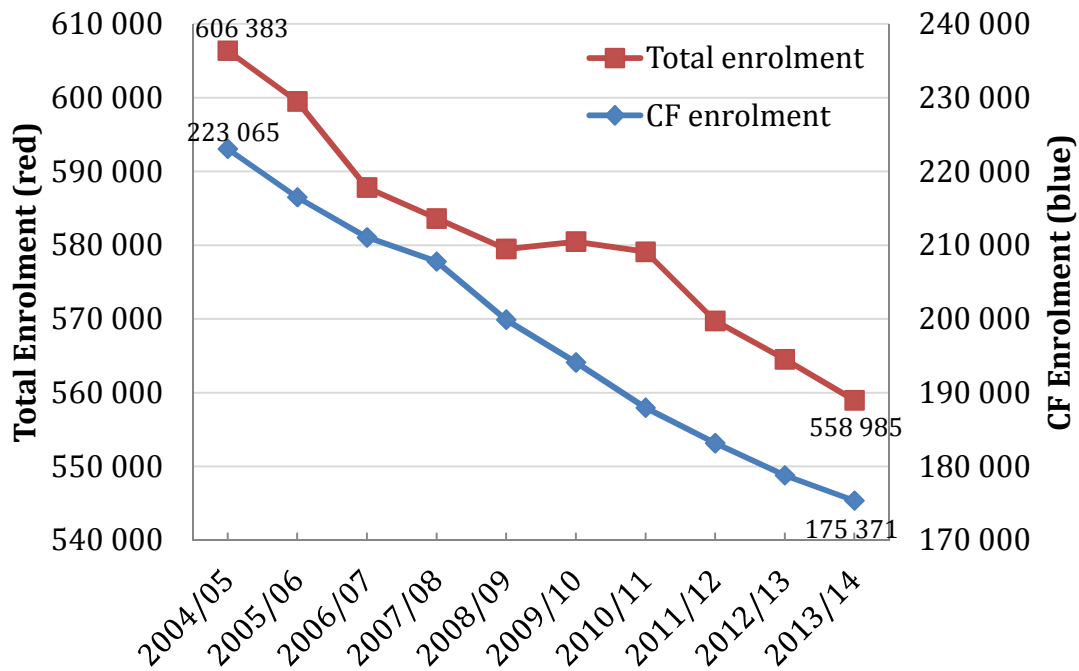
According to a 2007 study, **78%** of elementary school Core French teachers and **71%** of those in middle school do not feel comfortable speaking French.¹

¹ Carr, *Teaching*.

Strategies identified this year to improve and strengthen Core French instruction include:

- for the provincial government to create a specialist Core French teaching position for elementary and middle school,
- increasing teachers' language background and proficiency through access to language exchanges,
- providing more teaching resources, and
- building social cohesion amongst teachers.

Figure 2. Core French and Total Enrolment in BC Public Schools (2004/05—2013/14)



Source: BC Ministry of Education

Background

In the summer of 2013, CPF BC & Yukon conducted a survey to examine the challenges that school districts face and to identify the best practices that they have developed to enhance student enrolment and retention in French second language programs.²

The majority of surveyed school districts identified a lack of qualified teaching staff as a challenge to increasing student enrolment in French immersion (FI) programs and in providing quality instruction for Core French (CF) students. Therefore, CPF BC & Yukon focused the 2014 survey on challenges and best practices in teacher recruitment and retention.

Methodology

The survey was developed with input from individuals and institutions listed in the Acknowledgements section on page 24. The final list of survey questions (see Appendix A) was entered into a Google Form, and the link was sent by email to representatives from BC school districts and from Yukon.

Of the 60 school districts in BC, only the 46 that offered FI were targeted.³ For each district, we found at least three contacts. As much as possible, we tried to find individuals occupying the following three positions, or similar ones:

- French Coordinator,
- Director of Human Resources, and
- Director of Instruction.

Follow-up emails were sent and phone calls were made up to three weeks after the initial email.

Of the 154 district representatives who were emailed the survey, 49 of them completed it, representing an individual response rate of 32%. Of the 47 school districts (including Yukon) contacted, 45 of them completed the survey, amounting to a **district response rate of 96%**. Of the 45 school districts (including Yukon) who responded to the survey, 41 of them had only one respondent while four (including Yukon) had two respondents.

Responses to open-ended questions were grouped into categories. Responses to the “other” option in multiple-choice questions were also used to create new categories. The results were represented on graphs, and the more common responses are

² Luo, *French*.

³ The list of SDs without FI programs is provided in Appendix B.

discussed in further detail in this report. The following decisions were made in data analysis:

- BC and Yukon were treated together, out of convenience, although we recognise that there are important differences between the two jurisdictions.
- All districts with two responses had their responses merged into one, so that no school district was disproportionately represented on the graphs.
- If there were two responses for one SD that contradicted each other, the answer from the person with the higher or more relevant position was kept.
- Except when there was very clearly an error in responses, the answers have been treated as they were submitted.
- If the meaning of a comment could not be reasonably interpreted, or if it was not seen as relevant to the question, the comment was moved to the relevant question or it was disregarded.
- Where people clearly answered for their individual school, their answers were not included in the body of the report.
- For questions where respondents could select multiple responses, blank answers, "none," "n/a," and similar responses were not utilized because they did not answer the question.
- In categorising open-ended responses, some responses could fall under multiple categories. Moreover, categories may overlap. Categories are not always mutually exclusive.
- In ambiguous cases, the author's discretion was used.

Question-specific decisions, as well as raw data, can be found in Appendix D.

Disclaimers

Data Quality

Concerning the quality of the data, readers should be aware of four qualifiers. Firstly, respondents may have misunderstood the questions or the choices, as shown through discrepancies in the data and email exchanges following up with some respondents. More specifically, a number of questions (e.g. Q6, Q10, Q14, Q16) asked for "best practices" or "most effective methods," but it is possible that respondents simply reported methods they employed, regardless of the methods' effectiveness.

Secondly, there were some questions where respondents could choose multiple answers and add new answers under "Other" (e.g. Q6, Q7, Q9). We grouped some of these new responses together, into answers such as "online advertising." The number of SDs that reported these new responses is probably lower than the number that would have reported it if the response was in the original question, as respondents may not have thought of these new responses when answering.

Lastly, some respondents may have answered for an individual school rather than their school district.

Data Interpretation

Concerning the interpretation of the data, readers should be aware of two qualifiers. Firstly, given the incredibly high response rate, we feel very confident that the responses are a strong representation of all 46 BC school districts that offer FI and of Yukon, even though two districts did not respond.

Secondly, the figures do not take into account that certain districts have larger FI programs than others. The figures give equal weight to a district with over 5,000 FI students as to one with less than 100. Thus the graphs are an indication of how *common* something is, not how *serious* a challenge is or how *effective* a practice is. Even then, the visualisations only *roughly* indicate relative commonness, due to the problems with data quality stated above.

French Immersion Teachers

Shortage

Is There Really a Shortage?

The following section highlights selected answers from the survey that address the issue of the shortage of FI teachers.

Figure 3. Responses to Q5: “How challenging is it for your school district to fill all available French Immersion positions with qualified teachers?” (choose one answer)

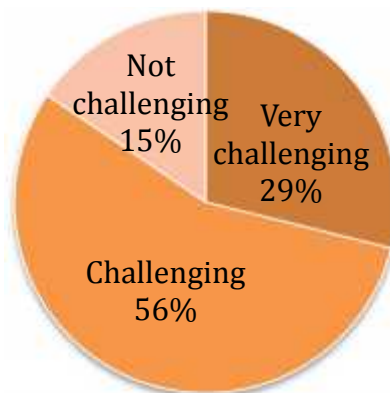


Figure 3 shows that the overwhelming majority (85%) of districts that responded found it “challenging” or “very challenging” to find sufficient qualified FI teachers.

Moreover, 35 school districts, or 78% of responding SDs, reported that “Lack of qualified applicants” was a challenge to FI teacher recruitment, making it the most common obstacle (Figure 6, on page 10).

According to Figure 9 (on page 13), 13 school districts or 29% of responding districts indicated that competition from other school districts constituted a challenge to FI teacher retention, making it the second most commonly reported challenge. However, if social factors, geography, job security, salaries, and workload are interpreted as areas in which SDs can compete upon, then competition becomes almost the only challenge to retention. High competition for candidates is the outcome of a lack of candidates.

A look at the obstacles to FI program growth shows that the “Lack of qualified teaching staff” is the second most serious reported challenge, with nearly half (49%) of all responding SDs selecting it as a challenge (Figure 4, on page 8). It is only out-competed by 2% by the “Lack of physical space.”

Although these numbers do not perfectly reflect the FI teacher job market in BC and Yukon, the data strongly shows that the FI teacher shortage is real, and it is serious.

These results corroborate observations by those involved in the sector:

From 2008 to 2012, Ms. [Janet] Stewart served as director of Make a Future – Careers in B.C. Education, an arm of the B.C. Public School Employers’ Association responsible for recruiting teachers for B.C.’s 60 school districts. “There is definitely a problem with supply compared to demand,” said Ms. Stewart.⁴

How Many Teachers Are We Missing?

Our survey questions do not allow us to quantify the shortage of FI teachers. However, other sources provide an indication:

B.C.’s two major universities – the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University – only produced a total of between 40 and 60 French-immersion-qualified teachers a year, according to Wendy Carr, director of the teacher education program at UBC and former French programs co-ordinator. In 2012 and 2013, B.C. had 234 and 245 postings for French immersion teachers, respectively. Put another way: While B.C. certifies a total of about 2,700 teachers a year – only a third of whom will be able to find work in B.C. – it produces about one-fifth of the French immersion teachers needed.⁵

⁴ Woo, 'B.C.'.

⁵ Woo, 'B.C.'.

Is the Shortage Limiting the Expansion of FI Programs?

Figure 4. Responses to Q28. “What challenges does your school district face in expanding French Immersion programs?” (choose all that apply). Asterisks (*) indicate responses aggregated from comments to “Other.”

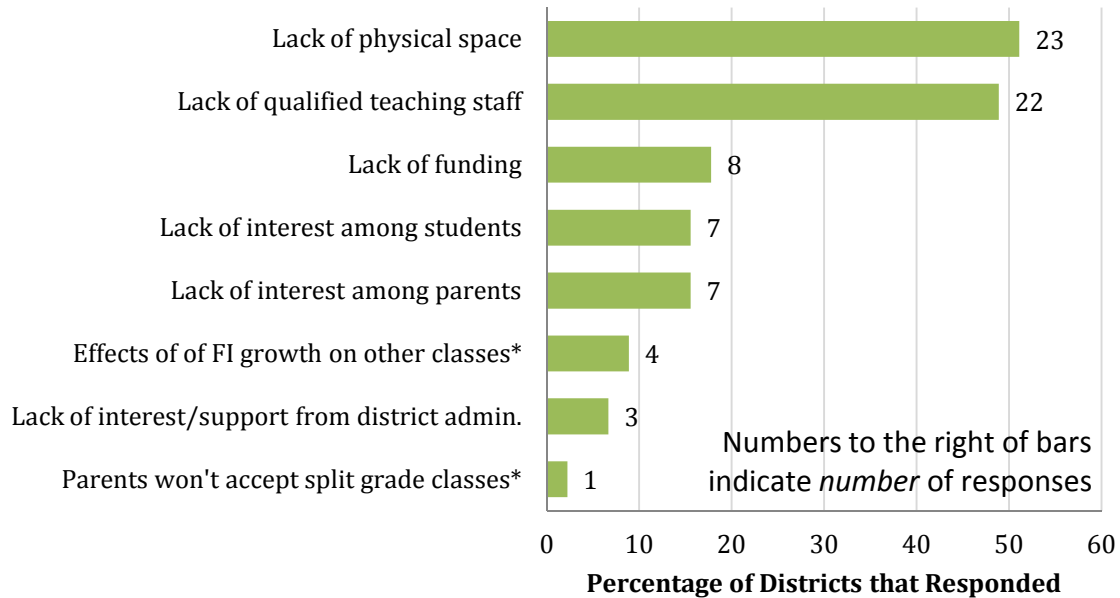


Figure 4 shows that the shortage of qualified FI personnel does indeed limit the expansion of FI programs. Almost half (49%) of all responding districts cited the shortage. However, it is not the only factor limiting FI expansion. The lack of physical space is an equally important factor, with more than half of SDs (51%) citing it. Other challenges include the lack of funding, lack of interest among students and parents, and the negative effects of FI programming on other programs and schools in the district. One survey response comment is particularly revealing:

Our challenges in opening new programs are first physical space in our over-crowded schools and secondly, community reaction, which rises up against opening new FI programs. Our regular program staff know that if we open another French program, then there are fewer jobs [for non-French-speaking staff], especially in 'desirable' schools, that is, higher SES [socioeconomic status] schools where parents are more likely to choose French Immersion. So these staff then contribute to the community reaction, by whipping up opposition among parents in the school. The result is that it's very difficult to increase capacity where requests for the program exist.

Figure 5. Responses to Q29. “What external support would be useful to enable the expansion of French Immersion programming in your school district?” (choose all that apply).

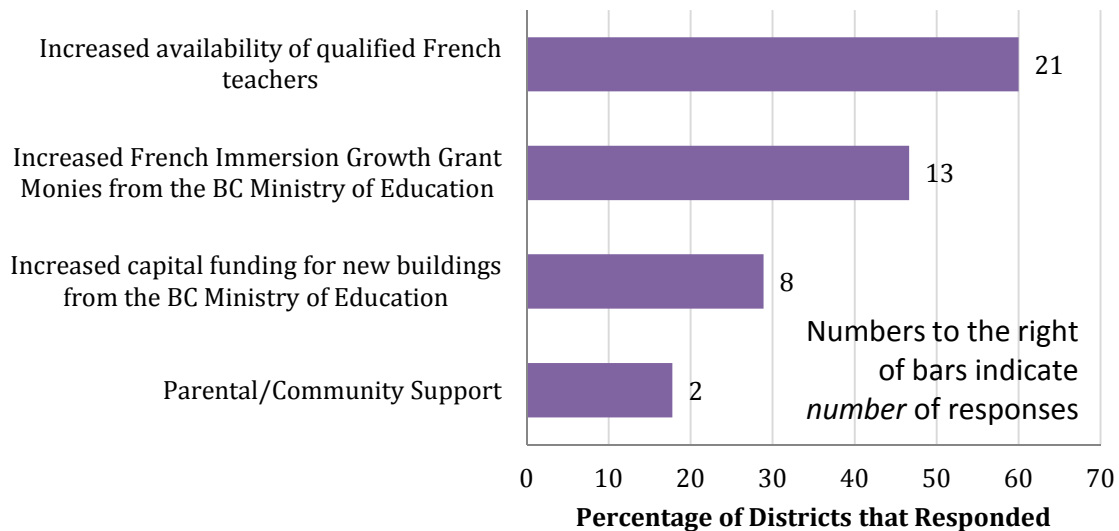


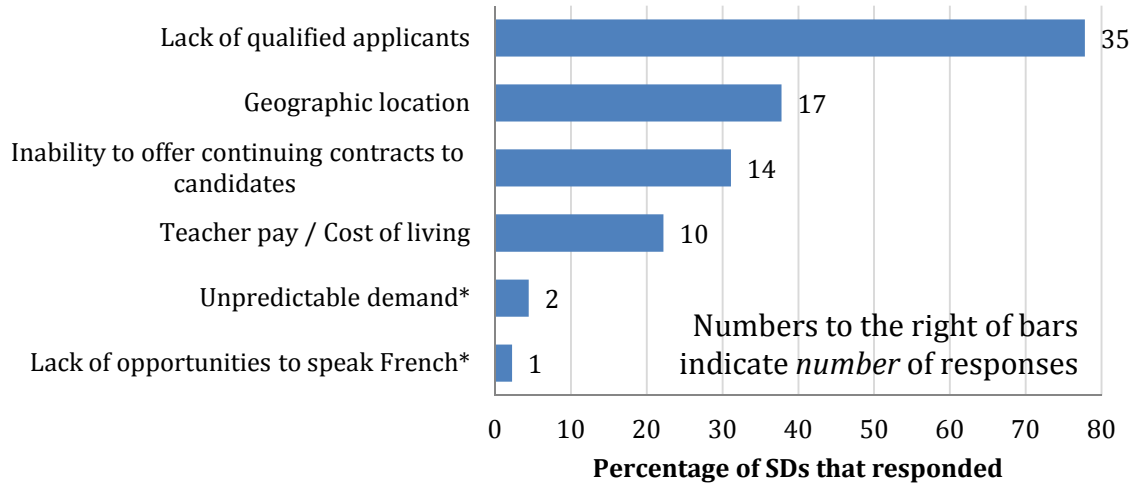
Figure 5 shows that “Increased availability of qualified French teachers” is the most commonly held solution to expanding FI programming, with 60% of responding SDs selecting it. The second most common reported solution was “Increased French immersion Growth Grant Monies from the BC Ministry of Education,” and the third was “Increased capital funding for new buildings from the BC Ministry of Education.” Both these solutions focus on increasing funding.

Therefore, our survey results show that the shortage of competent FI teachers is one among many challenges to FI program expansion. Other important factors include lack of physical space, lack of start-up funding, and lack of interest. While increasing the supply of FI teachers does seem like would enable the expansion of FI programs in several districts, more support is needed to incite growth in others.

Teacher Recruitment

Challenges

Figure 6. Responses to Q9. “What challenges does your school district face in recruiting French Immersion teachers?” (choose all that apply). Asterisks (*) indicate responses aggregated from comments to “Other.”



According to Figure 6, the most commonly cited challenge to FI teacher recruitment was the “Lack of qualified applicants,” impacting almost four-fifths (78%) of school districts, far ahead the second most common challenge, “Geographic location,” which only impacted half as many (38%) responding SDs. Both these two challenges are more common than financial constraints, such as “Inability to offer continuing contracts” (31%) or “Teacher pay” (22%).

One unexpected challenge in FI teacher recruitment was the unpredictable demand for FI teachers in the upcoming school year, cited by two SDs. One respondent provides a good illustration: “Some years we have increased need to hire because of a variety of staff leaves (maternity, illness, educational); while others years we have a surplus of teachers returning from leave and therefore fewer positions to offer new teachers.” It is likely that this challenge is more common than is reported, especially in SDs with smaller FI programs, where FI teachers cannot be moved between schools according to demand.

These results largely correspond to those of the 2013 survey which had a smaller sample size⁶ (18 SDs last year vs. 45 this year). In the 2013 survey, a lack of qualified applicants was the most common challenge, followed by the inability to offer continuing contracts. Geographic location seemed to be a more serious problem in 2014 than in 2013, and competition with other SDs, brought up in 2013, was not mentioned in 2014.

⁶ Luo, *French*.

Best Practices

Figure 7. Responses to Q6. “What have been the most effective ways for your school district to recruit French Immersion teachers?” (choose all that apply). Asterisks (*) indicate responses aggregated from comments to “Other.”

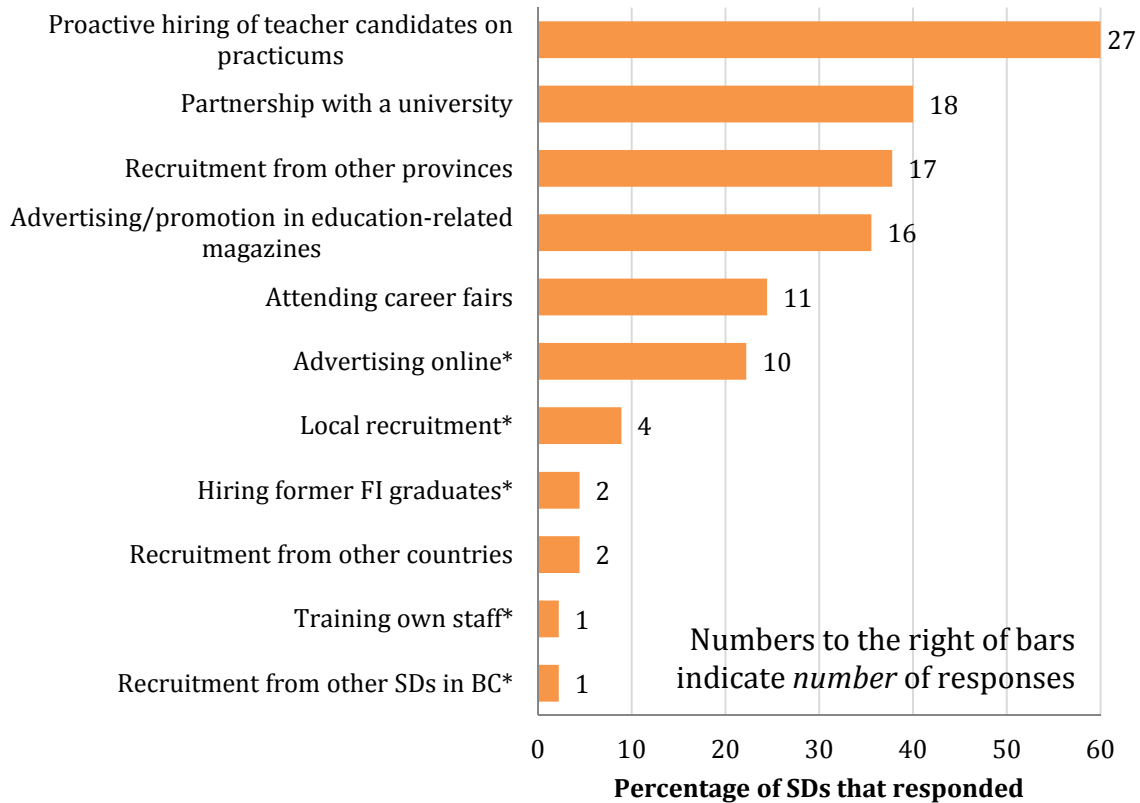
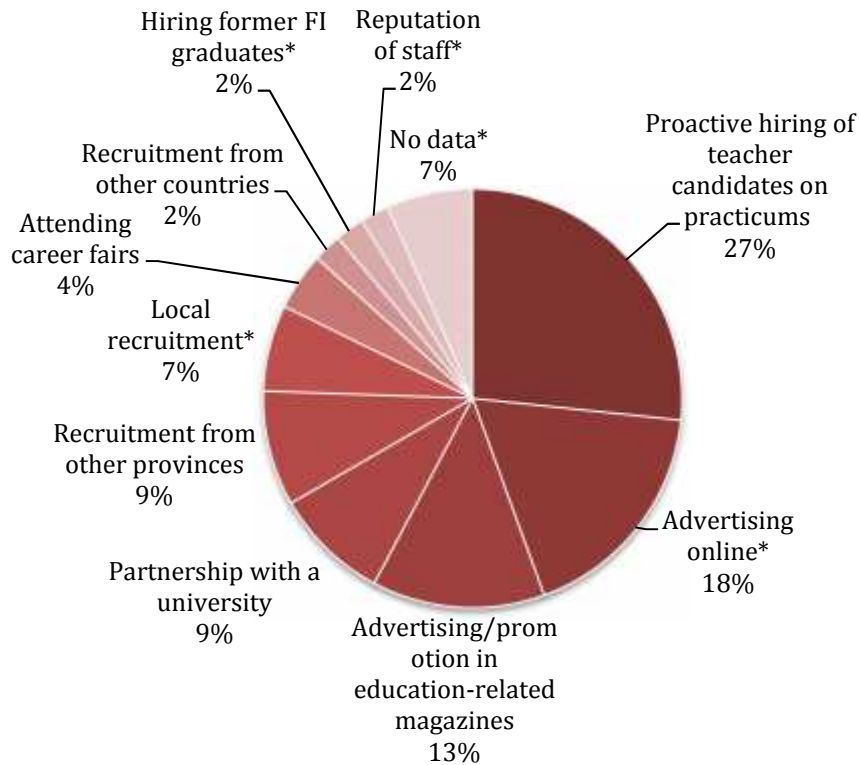


Figure 7 shows that the most popular FI teacher recruitment method is “Proactive hiring of teacher candidates on practicums,” with over half (60%) of SDs selecting it. This is followed by “Partnership with a university,” “Recruitment from other provinces,” and “Advertising/promotion in education-related magazines,” each one reported by over a third of responding SDs as best practises. Online advertisement consisted mostly of Make A Future.

These results mirror the 2013 survey results fairly closely.⁷ In 2013, the most common best practise for FI teacher recruitment was proactively providing classrooms to teacher candidates on practicums, followed by partnerships with universities. Responses in 2013 also included out-of-province recruitment, career fairs, and magazine advertisements.

⁷ Luo, *French*.

Figure 8. Responses to Q7. “What has been your single most successful source for hiring French Immersion teachers?” (choose one answer). Asterisks (*) indicate responses aggregated from comments to “Other.”



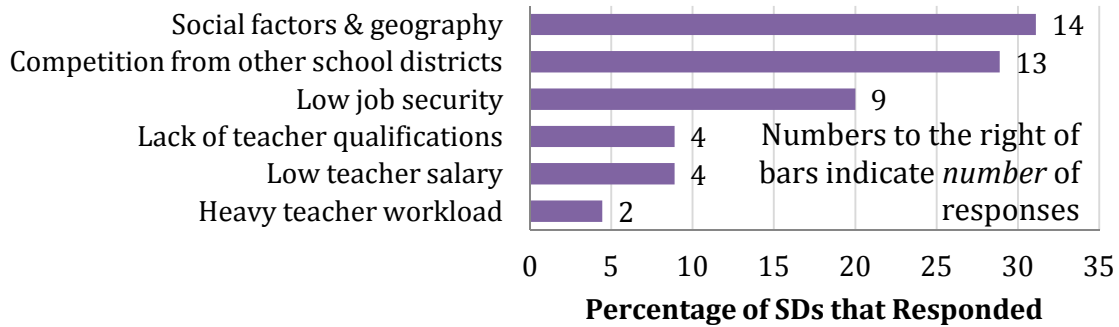
According to Figure 8, “Proactive hiring of teacher candidates on practicums” was the single most effective source of FI teacher recruitment for over a quarter (27%) of responding SDs. This is followed by online advertising, which is cited by 18% of responding SDs as their single most successful source. “Advertising/promotion in education-related magazines” is cited by a substantial 13% of responding SDs.

Note that in Figure 7, “Partnership with a university” and “Recruitment from other provinces” are the second and third most commonly listed best practises for FI teacher recruitment, yet these two methods drop to fourth and fifth place once districts have to choose their single most effective method in Figure 8. This suggests that these partnerships with universities and out-of-province recruitment are less effective than they are believed to be: while widely employed, they do not bring in many FI teachers. Moreover, the high ranking of online advertising in Figure 8 suggests that more SDs use it and find it effective than Figure 7 would lead one to believe.

Teacher Retention

Challenges

Figure 9. Responses to Q11. “What challenges does your school district face in retaining French Immersion teachers?” (open-ended)



Almost all challenges in with FI teacher retention are related to competition with other school districts for the limited stock of qualified FI teachers (Figure 9). Although competition is listed as the second most common challenge, it would be the first if other categories were considered as areas of competition. According to one respondent, “There are few qualified teachers and many job opportunities throughout the province, so they can easily move elsewhere to a preferred location.”

The most common aspect in which school districts compete with each other is in the domain of social factors and geography, affecting FI teacher retention in almost a third (31%) of responding SDs. This category includes distance from friends and family, moving away with a spouse that was re-posted elsewhere, a small community, geographic location, various kinds of leaves, retirement, lack of local ties, and lack of community among FI teachers. Several respondents shared the following observation: “Not all teachers like to live in an isolated area. Some come for the experience, for one year to discover and leave.” A few others expressed something similar to “A number of our teachers have spouses in the RCMP or military. When their spouses are reposted, we loose [sic] the teachers.”

The second most commonly cited (20%) domain of competition is job security, which includes the inability to offer full-time/continuing contracts and the inability to offer seniority in a shrinking SD, both exacerbated by the current system of lay-offs and seniority. The following quote is illustrative: “many of our French Immersion teachers can get larger contracts with ... other districts and end up leaving us, sometimes only very shortly after being hired.”

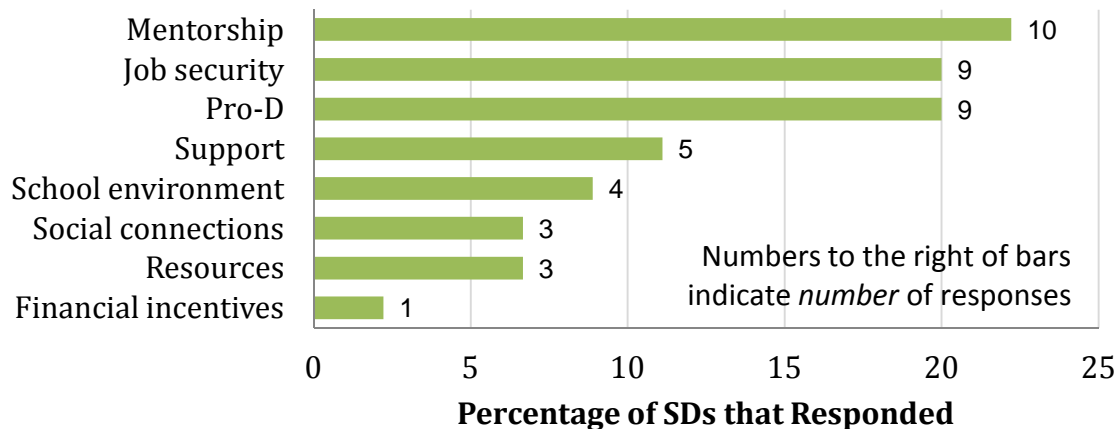
These results contradict the 2013 survey results,⁸ in which lack of job protection was the most common challenge in FI teacher retention, whereas it is only the third most common challenge in the 2014 results. While social factors and geography was

⁸ Luo, *French*.

the top challenge in the 2014 results, respondents to the 2013 survey did not mention social factors and only a few cited their remote location. However, the two sets of results are not perfectly comparable, since the 2013 survey only covered 18 SDs, while the 2014 one covered 45.

Best Practices

Figure 10. Responses to Q10. “What best practices does your school district use to retain French Immersion teachers?” (open-ended)



Mentorship was the most common best practice for retaining FI teachers (Figure 10), reported by mentioned by 22% of responding SDs. This category includes mentoring, coaching, shadowing, and in-service. More specifically, one SD gave new FI teachers the option of taking half a day in their first year to “observe other more experienced teachers at the same grade level or in the same content area.” Another SD has a “new career Teacher Mentoring project” which involves a partnership between the district, the local teacher's union, and a university (UBC). One SD has a “French Mentor teacher” designated to support FI teachers while in another SD, the FI District Facilitator coordinates an “Orientation session to welcome newly hired FI teachers and provide them with SD resources and district staff support.”

In a related vein, professional development activities were mentioned by a fifth (20%) of responding SDs as a best practice. One SD offered “continuing discussions with young teachers.” One SD collaborates with SFU to offer a program as part of the Graduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Studies in Education (GDE).

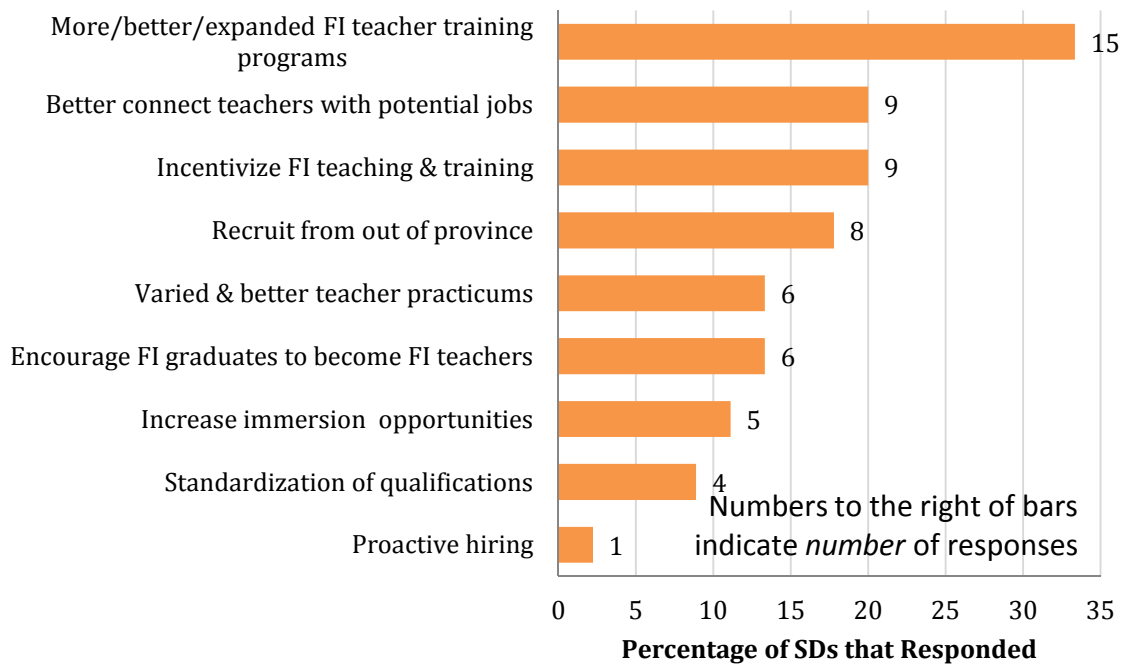
Increasing job security was also mentioned by a fifth of responding SDs as a best practice. A number of SDs provided a “continuing contract right away.” One SD categorized FI teachers as specialty teachers to prevent newer FI teachers from the lay-off/recall process. Another SD had “a limited number of qualified TTOC's” to allow new FI teachers to work daily “until they get their first contract.”

Several SDs mentioned creating an attractive school environment as a best practice to retain FI teachers. One in particular mentioned small class sizes.

These results mirror the 2013 survey results,⁹ in which professional development, mentorship, and job security stood out, with social connections being mentioned by a few respondents.

Recommendations

Figure 11. Responses to Q13. “What recommendations do you have to help address the shortage of qualified French Immersion teachers province-wide?” (open-ended)



The most common recommendations proposed by survey respondents to address the FI teacher shortage are discussed below (Figure 11).

1. Improve, expand, or offer different FI teacher training programs. This was the most common recommendation, proposed by a third (33%) of responding SDs. Concerning improvements, one respondent suggested that such a program offer “courses all delivered in French, and the program would include a semester in a Francophone location.” Two respondents suggested that programs bridge “recent FI grads ... seamlessly into French immersion education programs as they graduate so that they do not lose some of their French skills.”

As for the type of programs, Several suggested teacher training programs specifically for French Immersion teachers. One suggested sending students abroad for “teacher-training in a francophone country.” Alternatively, another suggests inviting francophone teacher candidates to be trained in BC so it is easier for them

⁹ Luo, *French*.

to “adapt to our education system.” Another respondent suggested “Online training that includes chat rooms and opportunities to meet.”

2. Better connect teachers with potential jobs. This was suggested by a fifth (20%) of responding SDs. These suggestions concentrate on advertising and linking universities with school districts. One respondent suggests “A department or person at Make a Future or even a ministry team dedicated to the recruitment and retention of immersion teachers.”

3. Incentivize FI teacher training and teaching. This was also recommended by a fifth (20%) of responding SDs. These suggestions include full-time contracts, legal protection from lay-offs, financial incentives, stronger connections between FI teachers, and provincial online teaching resources.

4. Recruit from out-of-province. Most recommendations mentioned advertising, although unusual suggestions include increasing pay, “negotiate with the union to offer fulltime TTOC positions to qualified out of province applicants,” and standardizing teaching qualifications.

5. Improve or offer different practicums. Recommendations include practicums in French-language classrooms, practicums in isolated communities, constant supervision of the program, and ensuring the quality of school associates who the practicum students work with. This recommendation can be seen as a more specific item under the first recommendation, to increase, improve, or expand FI teacher training programs.

6. Encourage FI graduates to become FI teachers. One benefit is that these teachers would be familiar with the BC school system. Several respondents recommend promoting FI teaching in high schools. Several respondents add that these FI grads would need to strengthen their French skills. This recommendation may be particularly promising since nearly 9% of BC public school students at the elementary or secondary level are enrolled in FI, and this percentage has been on the rise.¹⁰

7. Increase immersion opportunities. To clarify, this does not mean enrolling in French Immersion programs but immersing oneself in francophone communities. This recommendation can also be seen as a more specific item under the first recommendation, to increase, improve, or expand FI teacher training programs, although respondents imply that immersion opportunities can occur outside of teacher training programs.

¹⁰ Pan, 2014 Report.

Core French Teachers

Shortage

Is There Really a Shortage?

A majority (64%) of responding districts indicated a “Lack of qualified applicants” as a challenge in recruiting CF teachers, making it the number one reported challenge to CF teacher recruitment (Figure 12 on page 18).

Only two districts indicated competition for CF teachers from other school districts as a problem in retaining CF teachers (Figure 15 on page 21). This seems to indicate a small shortage, but there are two explanations why there might still be a large shortage. Firstly, most current CF teachers may be generalists rather than French specialists, so other school districts are not interested in them, so there is little competition. Secondly, CF programs may be less critical than FI in families’ decisions to attend a school, so school districts have no incentive to attract CF teachers from other school districts, even if these teachers are linguistically and methodologically prepared to teach French.

In BC, there are very few specialist CF teachers for the elementary and middle school grade levels (5-7). Our survey questions may have been ambiguous: “Core French teachers” could be taken as “specialist CF teachers” or “teachers who teach CF”, which would include generalist elementary and middle school teachers. If we take the first definition, the shortage of specialist teachers teaching CF is significant. Two respondents to the question on Figure 12 (on page 18) and six respondents to the question on Figure 15 (on page 21) expressed frustration about this situation. The extent of generalists’ low French abilities are illustrated thus:

Core French programs are struggling due to non-specialist "French teachers" providing a poor experience to students, which leads to them either dropping second languages, or choosing a different L2 in high school. Some high school French programs are thus shrinking or struggling to maintain numbers.

Therefore, yes, there is a shortage of CF teachers—not only of specialist CF teachers in high school, but also of teachers who can teach CF properly in elementary school and middle school.

Teacher Recruitment

Challenges

Figure 12. Responses to Q15. “What challenges does your school district face in recruiting Core French teachers?” (choose all that apply). Asterisks (*) indicate responses aggregated from comments to “Other.”

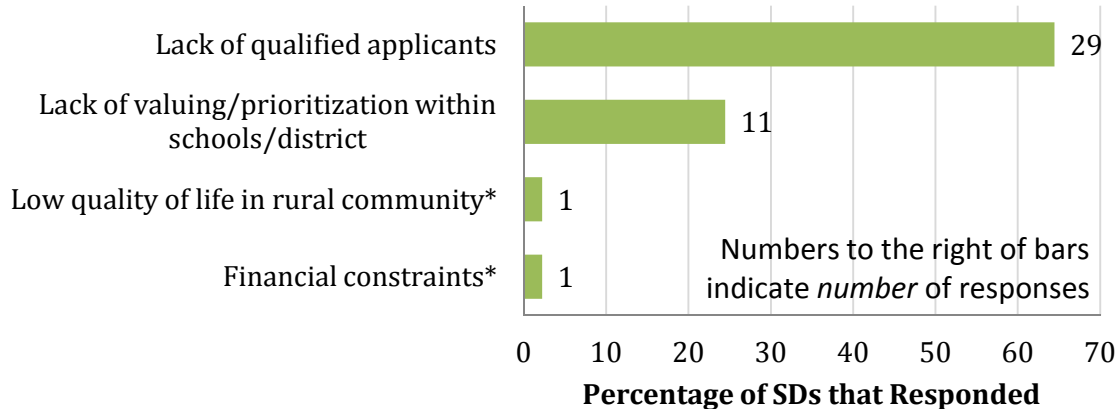


Figure 12 shows that the most common challenge in recruiting CF teachers is the “Lack of qualified applicants,” selected by nearly two-thirds (64%) of responding SDs. Judging from three comments, the lack of qualified applicants seems to be due to the fact that CF in elementary school is taught by generalist teachers, and their French is not good enough.

The second most common challenge is the “Lack of valuing/prioritization within schools/district,” selected by almost a quarter (24%) of responding SDs. There was no explicit explanation of this, although respondents could have meant the lack of CF specialist teachers from K to Grade 7, as it reflects a lack of prioritization of CF teaching. In that case this problem is not a separate problem but is one reason why there is a lack of qualified applicants.

In the 2013 report, the lack of qualified applicants was also the most common challenge to CF teacher recruitment.¹¹ Luo offers a description of how the generalist situation, lack of prioritisation, and low language proficiency might interact:

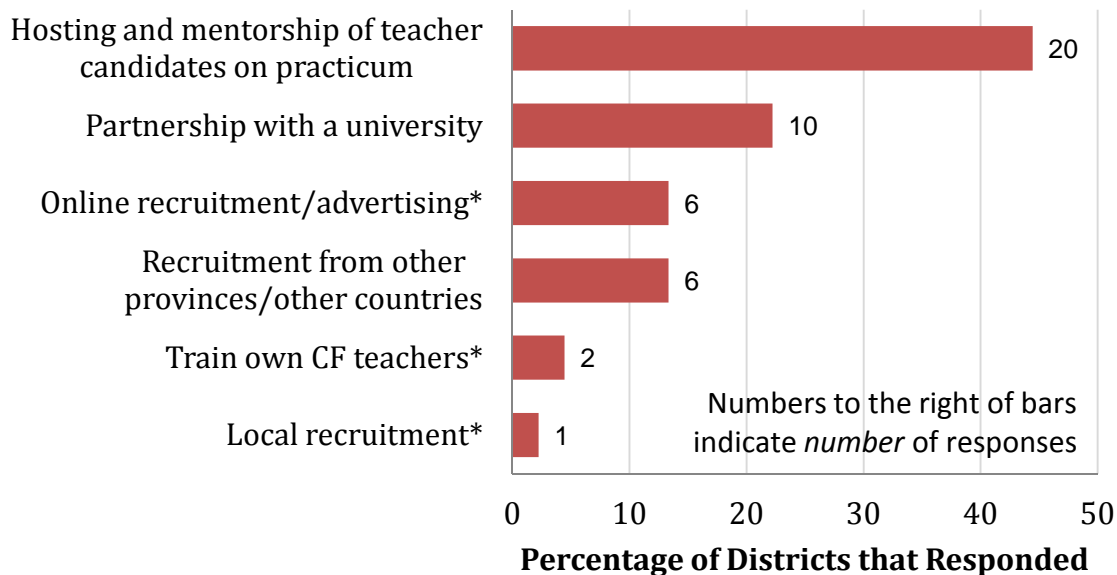
... most Core French teachers are not specialized at the elementary or middle school levels. Since they are expected to teach multiple subjects, many school districts do not consider these teachers to be Core French teachers, and many of these teachers do not consider themselves to be Core French teachers. This lack of specialization may result in lower expectations of language proficiency from both the school districts and the applicants.

¹¹ Luo, *French*.

The low language proficiency of CF teachers may also be explained in part by the course requirements for generalist teachers posed by teacher training programs in BC, which varies between universities.¹²

Best Practices

Figure 13. Responses to Q14. “What best practices does your school district use to recruit Core French teachers?” (choose all that apply). Asterisks (*) indicate responses aggregated from comments to “Other.”



As shown in Figure 13, “Hosting and mentorship of teacher candidates on practicum” singularly stands out as the most popular method for SDs to recruit CF teachers, with almost half (44%) of responding SDs selecting it. This is followed by “Partnership with a university,” used effectively by over a fifth (22%) of responding SDs. As for FI, the number of SDs that use online advertising to effectively recruit CF teachers are probably under-reported and constitute a popular recruitment method. One SD reported training their own CF teachers in a “local teacher education program” at the secondary school level.

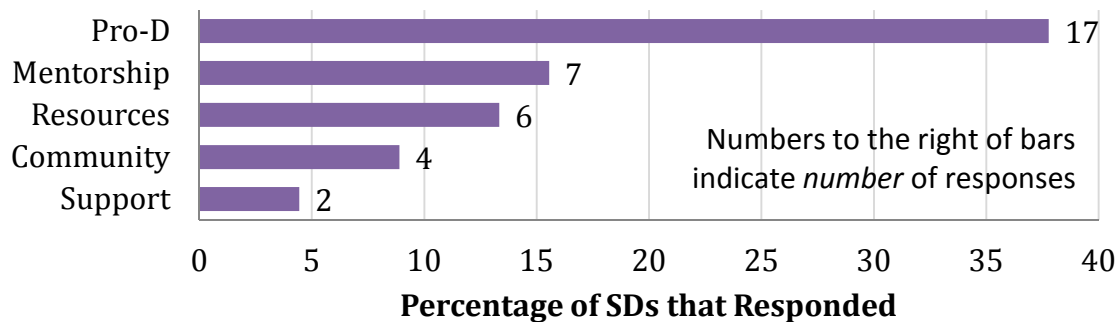
These results are similar to the 2013 survey results, in which providing classrooms to teacher candidates on practicums was the most common best practise in CF teacher recruitment, followed by partnerships with universities.¹³

Alternatively, instead of looking for qualified CF teachers, many SDs improve existing CF teachers’ French language skills.

¹² Appendix C contains a list of BC universities and their second language course requirements for non-specialist teachers.

¹³ Luo, *French*.

Figure 14. Responses to Q16. “What best practices does your school district use to develop the language competencies of your Core French teachers?” (open-ended)



According to Figure 14, the number one most popular method to develop CF teachers’ French language abilities is professional development, reported as a “best practice” by 38% of responding SDs. Two SDs fund teachers trips to Quebec for programs there. A number of districts send teachers to the Bootcamp FrancoFUN hosted by SFU. Other methods include French classes or “bursaries for those who enroll in immersion programs or intensive language classes.” One SD reported that placements of students participating in UBC’s B.Ed. French Teaching Program has been “extremely valuable.” Some CF teachers enroll in graduate coursework. Several SDs have had AIM workshops.

The second most common best practice is mentorship. Many SDs mention in-service. Other best practices include providing a significant amount of teaching resources, building connections with other language teachers, and support from others.

Mirroring this year’s respondents, many 2013 respondents cited professional development activities as ways to improve CF teachers’ language proficiency, and a few also mentioned mentorship, providing resources, building social connections, and providing support.¹⁴

Retention

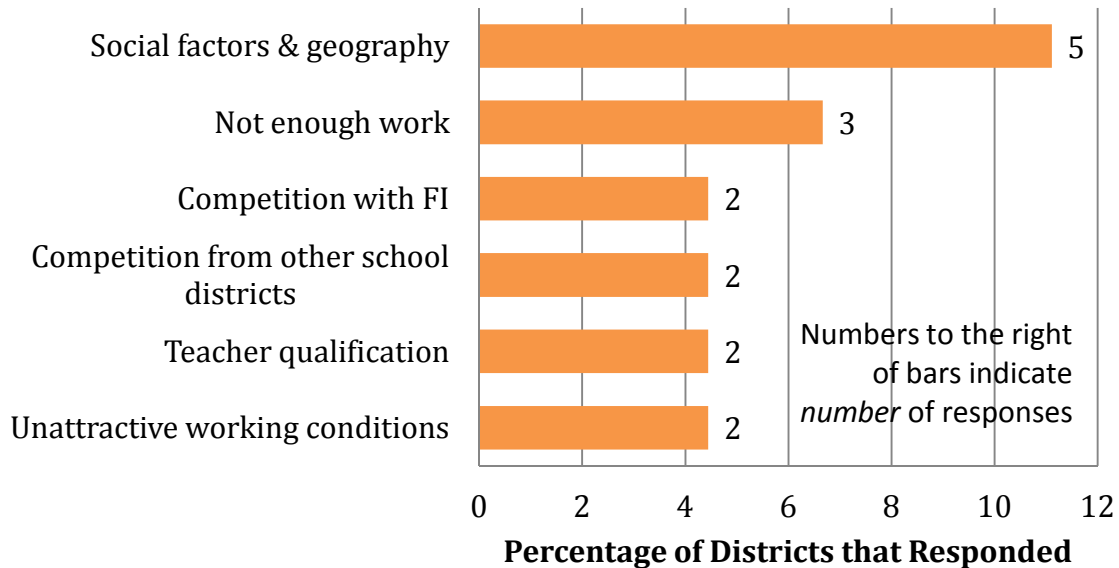
Challenges

The majority (69%) of responding SDs did not cite a challenge. Many SDs actually stated that CF teacher retention was not a problem, or implied that it does not apply to them since they do not have “CF teachers” but generalist teachers teaching CF. In fact, there were more SDs that disapproved of the generalist CF situation than SDs who cited the most common challenge (social factors and geography): 6 versus 5 SDs. The following comment illustrates this: “generalists are usually NOT comfortable teaching French in Gr. 5-7. We need to allow SPECIALISTS [sic] in those

¹⁴ Luo, *French*.

areas. Apparently, the Ministry doesn't approve this strategy, but it is the only one that makes sense.”

Figure 15. Responses to Q17. “What challenges does your school district face in retaining Core French teachers?” (open-ended)



Among the reported challenges in CF teacher retention (Figure 15), social factors and geography was the most common, just like for FI teacher retention. This category includes small communities, leaves, and moving with spouses.

One interesting challenge is competition with French Immersion, mentioned by two SDs. One respondent commented: "Any teachers who are qualified to teach French will end up in the immersion program mostly. So Core French teachers are generally less qualified. The demand is just too high to fill all these positions properly."

Overall, although there are challenges to CF teacher retention, it seems like the quality of CF teaching, caused by the lack of qualified French teachers, is a much more significant problem.

The 2013 survey results also mentioned social factors and geography as a common challenge, with respondents citing small communities, cold climate, isolation, and declining enrolment.¹⁵ Similar to this year, the 2013 respondents considered as a challenge the fact that Core French specialist positions were limited to the secondary school level.

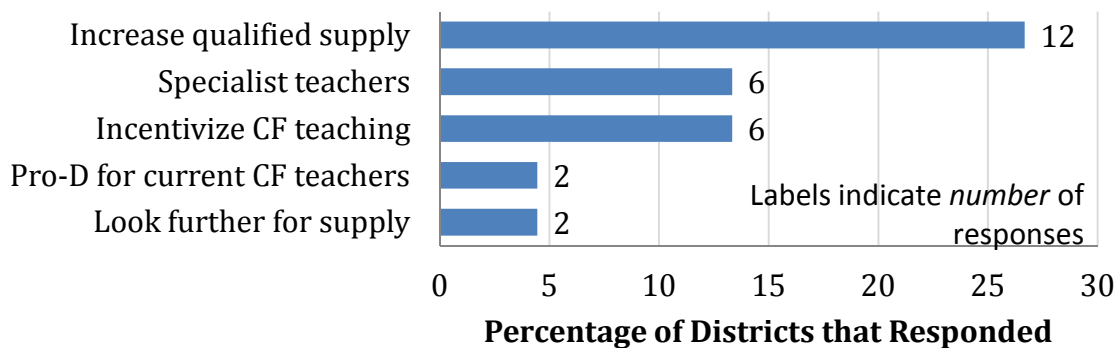
¹⁵ Luo, *French*.

Best Practices

Unfortunately, our survey did not explicitly ask for best practices for retaining CF teachers. It is difficult to derive answers from comments to other questions. However, since CF teacher retention does not seem to be a major problem (see “Challenges” section above), retaining CF teachers would not be relevant for most SDs.

Recommendations

Figure 16. Responses to Q18. “What recommendations do you have to help address the shortage of qualified Core French teachers province-wide?” (open-ended)



Note: a large number of respondents did not answer this question, hence the low response numbers.

The most common recommendations proposed by survey respondents to address the shortage of CF teachers discussed below (Figure 16).

1. Increase the supply of qualified CF teachers. Ideas include training native francophone teachers in BC, immersion in francophone environments, partnerships with universities, more French language and teaching courses for generalist teachers, mandating CF in secondary school to generate future supply, and online training.

2. Create a specialist teaching position for CF classes from Kindergarten to Grade 7. The respondents imply that this is needed for CF classes to gain the resources necessary for teaching it properly, such as classrooms, funding, and time slots.

3. Incentivize CF teaching. This includes dedicated classroom, more resources, higher wages, legal protection from lay-offs, financial incentives, and prioritization in schools.

Overall, there is a divide in opinion on how to best organize CF teaching at the elementary and middle school level: some respondents suggest training generalist teachers better while others suggest creating a specialist position.

Concluding Remarks

A popular recommendation is not always the most effective one. Decision-makers should weight different recommendations in many aspects. One aspect that should be considered is the effect of solutions on *both* FI and CF programs, since they compete for both teachers and students.

While the recommendations proposed here are wide-ranging, they are not the only solutions possible. Decision-makers should be open to considering other solutions when appropriate.

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We would also like to thank the 49 school district representatives for their participation in our survey.

While I have tried to stay as truthful to the information as possible, I may have made mistakes. Please do not hesitate to contact me at research@cpf.bc.ca to notify me of any inaccuracies or misrepresentations.

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Appendix A. Survey Questions

2014 School District French Programs Survey

Canadian Parents for French BC & Yukon is interested in learning more about school district best practices and challenges in providing French Second Language programs and recruiting and retaining French Immersion and Core French teachers.

Your responses can be anonymous and will help shape our 2014 State of FSL In BC/YK Report. Your feedback and recommendations will also be summarized and shared directly with stakeholders and key decision makers.

Your participation in this 15 - 20 min. survey (4 pages) is greatly appreciated. Please fill out as much as you can. If you are unable to respond please leave the question blank. Merci !

1. In which school district do you work?
Name or number (short response, the only mandatory question)
2. What is your first and last name? (short response)
3. What is your position(s)? (short response)
4. What is your work email address? (short response)

French Immersion Teacher Recruitment & Retention

In this section we would like to know a little more about your school district's experience with recruiting and retaining French Immersion teachers.

5. How challenging is it for your school district to fill all available French Immersion positions with qualified teachers? (single answer)
 - a. Very challenging
 - b. Challenging
 - c. Not challenging
 - d. Not sure
6. What have been the most effective ways for your school district to recruit French Immersion teachers?
You can choose multiple answers. (random ordering of choices, except for "Other")
 - a. Partnership with a university
 - b. Recruitment from other provinces
 - c. Recruitment from other countries
 - d. Advertising / promotion in education-related magazines
 - e. Proactive hiring of teacher candidates on practicums (continued...)

- f. Attending career fairs
 - g. Other: _____
7. What has been your single most successful source for hiring French Immersion teachers? (single answer, random ordering of choices, except for “Other”)
- a. Partnership with a university
 - b. Recruitment from other provinces
 - c. Recruitment from other countries
 - d. Advertising / promotion in education-related magazines
 - e. Proactive hiring of teacher candidates on practicums
 - f. Attending career fairs
 - g. Other: _____
8. How many new French Immersion teachers do you anticipate to hire in the next school year? (short response)
9. What challenges does your school district face in recruiting French Immersion teachers?
You can choose multiple answers. (random ordering of choices, except for “Other”)
- a. Lack of qualified applicants
 - b. Inability to offer continuing contracts to candidates
 - c. Geographic location
 - d. Teacher Pay / Cost of Living
 - e. Other: _____
10. What best practices does your school district use to retain French Immersion teachers? (long response)
11. What challenges does your school district face in retaining French Immersion teachers? (long response)
12. What is, roughly, the turnover rate of French Immersion teachers in your district? (short response)
13. What recommendations do you have to help address the shortage of qualified French Immersion teachers province-wide? (long response)

Core French Teacher Recruitment & Retention

In this section we would like to know a little more about your school district's experience with recruiting and retaining Core French teachers.

14. What best practices does your school district use to recruit Core French teachers?
You can choose multiple answers. (random ordering of choices, except for "Other")
- A partnership with a university
 - Recruitment from other provinces / other countries
 - Hosting and mentorship of teacher candidates on practicum
 - Other: _____
15. What challenges does your school district face in recruiting Core French teachers?
You can choose multiple answers. (random ordering of choices, except for "Other")
- Lack of qualified applicants
 - Lack of valuing/prioritization within schools/district
 - Other: _____
16. What best practices does your school district use to develop the language competencies of your Core French teachers? (long response)
17. What challenges does your school district face in retaining Core French teachers? (long response)
18. What recommendations do you have to help address the shortage of qualified Core French teachers province-wide? (long response)

Local Program Information

In this section we would like to know a little more about French programs in your school district.

19. Does your school district have an Early French Immersion program? (single answer)
- Yes
 - No
20. Does your school district have a Late French Immersion program? (single answer)
- Yes
 - No
21. Does your school district have an Intensive French program? (single answer)
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

22. What is your school district's French Immersion registration process? (single answer)
- First-come-first serve in person registration
 - Telephone registration
 - Online registration
 - Lottery
 - One of the above + interviews with families
 - Other: _____
23. Does your school district have a 'sibling policy' for French Immersion registration? (single answer)
- Yes
 - No
 - Other: _____
24. When is your school district French Immersion registration for September 2015? (short response)
25. Does your school district have a French Immersion Growth Plan? (single answer)
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
 - Other: _____
26. Does your school district have wait-lists for French Immersion (either local, regional, or district-wide)? (single answer)
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
27. If yes, roughly how many students are on the waitlist for French Immersion for this upcoming school year? (short response)
28. What challenges does your school district face in expanding French Immersion programs?
You can choose multiple answers. (random ordering of choices, except for "Other")
- Lack of interest among parents
 - Lack of interest among students
 - Lack of funding
 - Lack of qualified teaching staff
 - Lack of interest / support from district administration
 - Lack of physical space
 - Other: _____

29. What external support would be useful to enable the expansion of French Immersion programming in your school district?

You can choose multiple answers. (random ordering of choices, except for "Other")

- a. Increased availability of qualified French teachers
- b. Increased French Immersion Growth Grant Monies from the BC Ministry of Education
- c. Increased capital funding for new buildings from the BC Ministry of Education
- d. Parental / Community Support
- e. Other: _____

30. Does your school district have a French Advisory Committee (FAC)? (single answer)

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure
- d. Other: _____

31. If yes, does a representative from your local Canadian Parents for French chapter sit on your FAC? (single answer)

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure
- d. N/A

32. Does your school district have a modern language or French Immersion coordinator or consultant? (single answer)

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure
- d. Other: _____

33. If yes, does this individual occupy a part-time or full-time position?

- a. Part-time
- b. Full-time
- c. Not sure
- d. Other: _____

34. Do you have additional comments or recommendations about improving or expanding French programs? (long response)

Thank You / Merci !

(Respondents were allowed to change their responses after submitting the survey.)

Appendix B. School Districts without FI

The districts that do not currently offer French immersion (excluding SD 93 Conseil scolaire francophone) are:

- SD 10 Arrow Lakes
- SD 19 Revelstoke
- SD 46 Sunshine Coast
- SD 49 Central Coast
- SD 51 Boundary
- SD 53 Okanagan Similkameen
- SD 74 Gold Trail
- SD 78 Fraser-Cascade
- SD 81 Fort Nelson
- SD 84 Vancouver Island West
- SD 85 Vancouver Island North
- SD 87 Stikine
- SD 92 Nisga'a

Appendix C. Second Language Course Requirements for Non-Specialist Teachers

School	Requirements (Y/N) and Details
University of British Columbia	Y - all elementary and middle yrs generalist candidates required to take FSL methods course and EAL methods course; two French specialist cohorts for Immersion, Core, Intensive, Francophone--elementary and secondary ¹⁶
UBC Okanagan	Y – EDUC 407 - ESL/FSL Course in Elementary Teacher Education Program ¹⁷
University of Victoria	Y/N - In 4-year elementary B.Ed program, students required to take either ESL or Oral French class; no requirements for shorter programs ¹⁸
Simon Fraser University	N – students wanting to teach French must complete a French specialization ¹⁹
Vancouver Island University	Y/N – students in the B.Ed post-bacc program must complete either a research course or a second language acquisition course ²⁰
Trinity Western University	N - unless taking French specialization ²¹
Thompson Rivers University	Y – Second Language with Focus on French (EDSL 4200) ²²
University of the Fraser Valley	N ²³
University of Northern British Columbia	Y – in elementary B.Ed program, students required to take Curriculum and Instruction: Second Language (EDUC 351) ²⁴

¹⁶ University of British Columbia, Faculty of Education, Teacher Education Office, 'French'.

¹⁷ University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus, Faculty of Education, 'Elementary'.

¹⁸ University of Victoria, 'Uvic'.

¹⁹ Simon Fraser University, Faculty of Education, 'Programmes'.

²⁰ Vancouver Island University, 'Bachelor'.

²¹ Trinity Western University, 'School'.

²² Thompson Rivers University, 'Bachelor'.

²³ University of the Fraser Valley, 'Teacher'.

²⁴ University of Northern British Columbia, 'UNBC'.

Appendix D. Raw Survey Results

Responses that refer to specific districts or people have been made anonymous. Note that responses that are irrelevant to the survey question were not counted in making the graph. They have been included here nevertheless for transparency.

Table 1. “Other” responses to Q6. “What have been the most effective ways for your school district to recruit French Immersion teachers?”

Recruiting via Make a Future
Hiring our own former French Immersion students who have become teachers
Surrey attracts teachers
Post and Fill
Hiring our own FI graduates
Make a Future
we have not been very proactive in hiring since we have had to lay off teachers every year for the last few years
Make a Future website
Posting Canada wide
make a future
recruits from northern districts within BC
Make a Future
standing application on Make a Future
Hosting professional learning events that highlight our strengths in French Immersion
Local recruitment
Make A Future website
Luck
advertising on "Apply to Teach" [assumed to be "Apply to Education" ²⁵]
TOC lists
Training staff who are [local] residents or those who have lived in [northern districts] and know what it is like (moved from Q10)

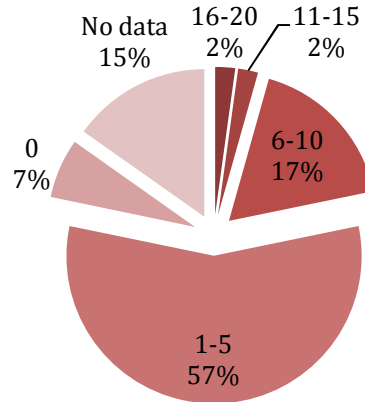
Table 2. “Other” responses to Q7. “What has been your single most successful source for hiring French Immersion teachers?”

Make a Future online applications
Hiring our own former French immersion students who have become teachers
No strategy has been particularly fruitful
Post and Fill
we have been hiring from our TTOC list
Make a Future
Posting Canada wide
none have been required at this time.
Make a Future
standing TOC posting
Reputation of collegial and supportive professional network
Local recruitment
Make A Future on-line
using "Apply to Teach" [assumed to be "Apply to Education" ²⁵]
TOC lists

²⁵ applytoeducation, 'Applytoeducation'. A job search website for teaching positions around the world.

In processing “Other” responses to Q7 into a graph, I assumed that both “Post and Fill” and “Posting Canada wide” is online advertising

Figure 17. Responses to Q8. “How many new French Immersion teachers do you anticipate to hire in the next school year?” (open-ended).



In processing comments to Q8 into a graph, the following decisions were made:

- Numbers do not distinguish between regular teachers and TOCs
- When reported values did not match categories, chose best fit

Table 3. “Other” responses to Q9. “What challenges does your school district face in recruiting French Immersion teachers?”

Being able to hire soon enough, often we must hire before we know whether we'll have openings or which ones we'll have. (moved from Q11)

Difficulty knowing what our needs will be for any given year. Some years we have increased need to hire because of a variety of staff leaves (maternity, illness, educational); while others years we have a surplus of teachers returning from leave and therefore fewer positions to offer new teachers. It's difficult to predict. (moved from Q11)

Lack of French speaking opportunities in the community and surrounding areas

secondary math/science

N/A

Table 4. Responses to Q10. “What best practices does your school district use to retain French Immersion teachers?”

Professional development

Usually have smaller class sizes so this is attractive, easier to get continuing contract

Our schools are great places to work and once we get them here, they generally stay.

Try to get them into temporary contracts as soon as possible

Maintain nearly full time work for them on the TTOC list

Having a French Mentor teacher allocated to support FIMM teachers

Small signing bonuses and/or relocation allowances after a year of successful teaching

Great support from admin

Lots of early support for new teachers. Mentoring program. Provision of ample professional development.

[The district] has pretty good retention, but little movement within the system - teachers tend to stay where they are for many years.

Put them in positions as soon as possible

In general, we have little difficulty hiring French Immersion teachers into classroom assignments simply through posting and filling. These teachers do tend to stay with us although often they will move to English classrooms once they have sufficient seniority.

Mentoring Program and community connections

Actually I am not sure we do anymore. We used to have literacy mentors, FI resource mentors and a lot of release time to aid new teachers. All of these resources are now being cut or underfunded.

Since we're a small district, we're able to offer personalized mentorship and continuing discussions with young teachers.

If they will take a contract without a guaranteed continuing contract they almost always stay with then district. Unfortunately we lose many to districts who will immediately give them continuing status.

Our program is quite large, so retaining teachers is not an issue.

We try to offer a lot of PD opportunities to our teachers as well as good benefits. However, we see that this is not enough to retain them when they are faced with yet another lay-off notice.

Try to retain successful FI Teacher Candidates in our own SD

Orientation session to welcome newly hired FI teachers and provide them with SD resources and district staff support (French Immersion District Facilitator coordinates this)

Support for new teachers to observe other more experienced teachers at the same grade level or in the same content area (release time for a half day to observe is offered to all new recruits in their first year)

French Immersion professional development sessions and graduate diploma cohorts offered [here]

We provide mentorship to new teachers as well as collaboration time beyond their regular prep time. We offer professional development in partnership with the teacher association. We have a buddy system to support new teachers.

Direct to continuing position, supporting through resource purchasing...

We have a small but wonderful programme in a remote and beautiful place.

Pretty much get continuing contract right away

- Lots of support from FI colleagues to get to know the community and people with same hobbies/passions

Continuing contract the first year.

* collaboration and coaching opportunities

* workshops for immersion teachers specifically

* robust support around resources and pro-d through Federal French

irrespective of best practices - the availability is very low

Excellent support for professional learning and collegial networking for our French Immersion teachers coordinated through our District Languages Coordinator. Also, effective new career Teacher Mentoring project partnership among our District, local teacher's union, and UBC.

- Quality teaching and learning conditions

- Geographic location

Immersion teachers for the past 3 years have been categorized as specialty teachers and therefore excluded from lay-off / recall process regardless of seniority. This creates stability.

I have been back in the French Immersion world only in April. It is from my past experience in [two other SDs] that the best method to recruit French Immersion teacher is right now advertising with MAKE A FUTURE.

Sometimes, when lucky, you get a teachers walking in the District unexpected.

We don't have a problem retaining FI teachers. It's recruiting them that's the problem.

Mentoring and coaching. Inservice.

[The municipality] is a desirable place to live so that in and of itself attracts a portion of our French Immersion Teachers. Circumstances such as having a limited number of qualified TTOC's allows our new French Immersion teachers daily work in the system until they get their first contract.

We attempt to offer part-time contracts and positions on our TOC lists if there are no permanent jobs available but we anticipate a need in the future. We also contact our local university education programs to ask if there are any French immersion candidates that would like a

practicum placement. We anticipate contacting Faculté Saint-Jean at U of A this Fall to request practicum students for next year in hopes of drawing French-speaking candidates to our district.

extra support in the classrooms

professional development opportunities

Our District French Language Coordinator works with teachers on a variety of professional development options. Teachers are given time to collaborate and improve their practice on a regular basis.

Respondent 1: Training staff who are [local] residents or those who have lived in [northern districts] and know what it is like.

Respondent 2: We try to support our new teachers by offering mentoring and support.

In processing responses to Q10 into a graph, I ignored things that SDs have little control of, like geography or federal funding

Table 5. Categories for Q10. “What best practices does your school district use to retain French Immersion teachers?”

Category	Items mentioned in responses
support	admin support
	support
	staff support
	support in classroom
resources	SD resources
	resources
pro-D	pro-D
	time to improve
	workshops
	discussions
mentorship	mentor
	shadowing
	coaching
	buddy system
	in-service
	orientation
	collaboration
	discussions
school environment	class size
	school environment
social connections	social connections
job security	contracts
	enough work
	positions
	legal protection
	limited TOCs,
financial incentives	financial incentives

Table 6. Responses to Q11. “What challenges does your school district face in retaining French Immersion teachers?”

leave requests
Lack of qualifications and experience.
Often don't have much seniority in a shrinking school district
Competition from neighbouring districts is a challenge.
Cost of living
Continuing contracts
FI teachers who come from eastern Canada who return to their home provinces
Our location and small community.
Workload, burnout, lack of connection to other French Immersion teachers, lack of replacement teachers.
Other districts approaching our teachers in an effort to entice them to move. Sometimes, the unionized system of lay-offs & seniority, and inability to offer full-time/continuing positions can be a challenge.
Qualified applicants
The biggest challenge is recruiting and retaining TTOCs. Since there are many job opportunities, keeping teachers on the TTOC list is difficult.
Lack of continuing jobs
Many candidates either lack the French skills, or if they are from out-of-province they are unfamiliar with the local school settings and find it difficult to adapt.
Also FI programmes in the [district] do not have enough resources, textbooks, access to French websites and videos and it is therefore very difficult for new teachers to build diverse lessons.
Being able to hire soon enough, often we must hire before we know whether we'll have openings or which ones we'll have.
See above
"If they will take a contract without a guaranteed continuing contract they almost always stay with then district. Unfortunately we lose many to districts who will immediately give them continuing status." (copied from Q10)
"Our program is quite large, so retaining teachers is not an issue." (copied from Q10)
As I said previously, our district has had to lay-off teachers every year and this includes French Immersion teachers. Although we end up rehiring them in August-September, they still are placed on a recall list and the instability drives some of them to look elsewhere.
Difficulty knowing what our needs will be for any given year. Some years we have increased need to hire because of a variety of staff leaves (maternity, illness, educational); while others years we have a surplus of teachers returning from leave and therefore fewer positions to offer new teachers. It's difficult to predict. We work closely with our school principals in the spring to determine the needs for the following year, but given the competitive nature of French Immersion recruitment, sometimes we lose good teachers to other school districts if we are not able to offer them full time, continuing contracts.
The inability to offer continuing contracts to new teachers.
We have retained all that we have hired.
Currently none.
[The district] is a small community. Lots of teachers come here to gather experience and then move to a bigger town
Location
Available jobs in larger communities. No all people want to live in small rural cities and towns.
Geographic location and cost of living
Competition with more attractive locales that continue to have need of FI teachers
* They are often far from family and friends
* Geographical location - rural in [the district]
none - we just need to find teachers with the language ability
Many of our recent French Immersion teacher hires are new career teachers and they may not

have settled down into a our specific geographic region yet. There are few qualified teachers and many job opportunities throughout the province, so they can easily move elsewhere to a preferred location, for cheaper housing opportunities, etc.

We are a small district with two larger districts in the region so many of our French Immersion teachers can get larger contracts with these other districts and end up leaving us, sometimes only very shortly after being hired.

- aging teacher demographics

High demand everywhere.

The competition around the Province.

A number of our teachers have spouses in the RCMP or military. When their spouses are reposted, we loose the teachers.

Our challenge is replacing FI teachers mid year for sick leave and maternity leaves or partial medical leaves. Because our bench of qualified applicants is small, we tend to run a little short by the end of each year and our specialists are not always keen to leave full time TTOC'ing for a one block secondary assignment or a part time elementary assignment.

We generally have no problem retaining them once we hire new teachers since we are experience growth in our program and we have several teachers who are expected to retire in the upcoming years.

the industries that are in our communities hire people on a temporary basis. Often the spouses of these industry workers become our French Immersion teachers.

As we live in a beautiful area, we do not face challenges. We have always been able to fill the few positions we need each year (these are due to program growth and maternity leaves!) A retaining challenge is that other provinces pay better.

Young teachers who marry and whose spouse finds work elsewhere. young teachers whi are having children a going on leave.

Not all teachers like to live in an isolated area. Some come for the experience, for one year to discover and leave.

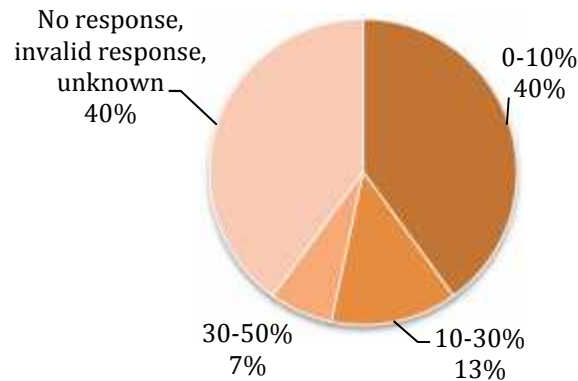
They dobn<t always have the proper training to teach in french Immersion.

Table 7. Categories created for Q11. “What challenges does your school district face in retaining French Immersion teachers?”

Categories	Items mentioned in responses
Teacher salary	Low salaries
	Cost of living
Social factors & geography	Far from family and friends
	Teachers move with spouses
	Lack of local ties
	No community among FI teachers
	Retirement
	Small community
	Leaves
	Geographic location
Workload	Too much work
	Lack of teaching resources
Teacher qualification	Lack of qualifications
	Unfamiliar with local school settings
Competition from other school districts	Competition from other SDs
Job security	Inability to offer full-time/continuing contracts
	System of lay-offs
	System of seniority
	Inability to offer seniority in a shrinking SD

When turning responses to Q11 into a graph, although some categories imply competition with other SDs, I only checked "competition" when it was explicit - because when people mention "competition" it means it's particularly noticeable.

Figure 18. Responses to Q12. “What is, roughly, the turnover rate of French Immersion teachers in your district?” (open-ended)



When compiling written responses to Q12 into a graph, I made these decisions:

- When no time period was given, I assumed they meant annual
- "Minimal" "low" "small" etc were all turned into "<10%"
- I chose the category of best fit

Table 8. Responses to Q13. “What recommendations do you have to help address the shortage of qualified French Immersion teachers province-wide?”

Ensure a quality practicum program placement and constant supervision of the program.
Help make connections between new teachers and school districts, help recruit substitute teachers so they can work in schools before making big commitments
Make it easier for teachers from Campus St. Jean to get qualified for BC. It is supposed to be easy but it is costly for them and a long slow process. Plus, BC won't give them a very good TQS level based on their education in Alberta but they are very good teachers for the most part.
Develop University programs that take our FIMM students in gr. 12 and support them through a significant university teaching program designed for FIMM teachers.
Career fairs set specifically for French Immersion teacher recruiting
A provincial clearinghouse where interested teachers from outside of BC would apply to
We need to produce our own home grown immersion teachers, people who know this province and are bilingual already. Offer pay incentive, moving expenses, etc.
Build a stronger association for French Immersion teachers.
Promotion of life in BC in French-speaking provinces. Ability to offer moving grants. Work with TQS to streamline qualifications to enable simple transfers of Canadian-trained teachers.
Encourage a greater breadth of universities to offer French placements in English PDP programs (e.g. UFV). Provide more opportunities for people with some French skills to spend significant time immersed in Francophone environments in order to improve their French skills/fluency.
Recruitment at the university level - offer more programs for francophiles for a year abroad in a francophone setting or teacher-training in a francophone country - this increases both language confidence and people who can identify as being "qualified" for Immersion. It's harder to recruit francophones to come here, let's make use of the tons of Immersion grads who are francophiles, but have them really sharpen their language skills by spending time abroad (or in Quebec) during their undergrads (or PDP).

Increase awareness at the secondary school level in FRIM programs for teaching as a viable career option.

A two-year university programme to ensure student-teachers come out with better skills. A province-wide initiative to offer online materials designed based on the curriculum. Saskatchewan and Alberta have such resources.

The challenge is not so much having candidates, but rather having excellent candidates. Frequently, teachers apply for FI positions who have pretty limited French, so we much interview 20 candidates to hire two. We now interview for French skills prior to interviewing for teaching skills.

Increased numbers of FI teachers being trained.

We really need to make sure that the student teachers who have French are being placed with excellent school associates while doing their practicum. They ALL need to be immersed in a French environment (Quebec) for a part of their student teacher practicum.

The Universities should strive to offer such a program. If they can go to Mexico for 6 weeks, why can't they go to Quebec or New Brunswick?

1) Better wages may make BC more attractive to teachers from Quebec.

2) Locally-negotiated clauses that protect French Immersion teachers from lay off might also help retain more teachers.

3) Partnership with French-speaking universities to make it easier for students to come to BC to complete their PDP and gain knowledge of the BC curriculum. Foreign teachers often find it difficult to adapt to our education system. It is therefore better if they can be trained here.

Continue to offer opportunities for French Immersion grads to enhance their French skills through grants and bursaries for French language exchanges. We are finding that our strongest recruits are often former FI students who have immersed themselves in work or studies in Francophone settings for sustained periods of time to enhance their language proficiency and knowledge of French cultures.

Continue to recruit and advertise outside of the province of BC and outside of Canada.

"Raise the quality of teacher training for French Immersion at the university level and vary the practicum opportunities so that teacher candidates can experience different learning environments.

Continue offering training opportunities for Core French (and French Immersion teachers) throughout the year." (copied from Q18)

Promote the need in University...

Honestly? I actually would recommend reducing the availability of the programme. I know that is counterintuitive, but until such time as supply equals demand, it is a capitalistic reality.

Starting to advertise in university outside of the province. This is how I ended up in BC. I completed my teaching degree in [a university in Quebec] over 20 years ago and wanted an adventure. There was one person from Western Canada who came and gather resume from those of us who were willing to make a move.

Our district doesn't:

Proactive hiring of teacher candidates on practicums

Partnership with a university

Attending career fairs

Recruitment from other countries

Recruitment from other provinces

They just do advertising.

Have one of the universities focus on a FI teaching program. The quality of teacher and not the number of applicants is our biggest challenge.

University programs offering a concentration in FI teaching

* A department or person at Make a Future or even a ministry team dedicated to the recruitment and retention of immersion teachers. The current scope of Make a Future is limited as far as reaching candidates country-wide.

* More effective use of social media in francophone areas

* a sponsored provincial program to place francophone education students in their final practicum - in BC schools - especially in the Northern districts.

Provincial language proficiency standards

Provincial standard with respect to language instruction (methods) re qualifications opportunities at Universities to pursue teaching in immersion

“We desperately need a French Immersion teacher education program on Vancouver Island to draw from for qualified human resources.” (copied from Q9)

As mentioned earlier, more French Immersion teacher education programs....we need one on Vancouver Island for example.

We have not experienced a shortage.

Make A Future

Create a partnership with Vancouver Island University and it's Faculty of Education Program. There is already a conversation undergo.

“Knowing that it is time sensible...I would encourage compensation to attract new French Immersion/Core FSL teachers. I know that some District have gone that road before.” (copied from Q18)

Financial incentives should be offered to students who apply for French Immersion Teacher Training.

Government support should be provided to Universities to help them establish proper French Immersion Teacher Training Programs....with the courses all delivered in French, and the program would include a semester in a Francophone location (Quebec, France, etc) to ensure that the level of French is boosted as much as possible.

More work at the high school level to inform FI graduates that they would need to continue to develop their French proficiency if they are considering a teaching career in FI.

Better connection with French immersion teaching programs

Hiring fair for French immersion teachers

If there was a way to negotiate with the union to offer fulltime TTOC positions to qualified out of province applicants it may be more desirable for them to move to BC

Create more French immersion teaching programs at universities so that teachers come not only with language competency but also with a knowledge of sound pedagogy for teaching in French immersion. Also, perhaps creating opportunities for our recent FI grads to bridge seamlessly into French immersion education programs as they graduate so that they do not lose some of their French skills upon completion of the immersion program.

Not sure

We understand the challenges in rural areas and larger centres, but as this has not applied to us, we have not given it much thought.

More intensive ad campaigns.

Online training that includes chat rooms and opportunities to meet.

Special certification to teach immersion with a pay raise included.

Make sure more universities are offering specialization in French Immersion. Encourage practicums to be done in isolated communities, once the new teachers see the way of living, they could be interested to make the decision to stay for longer periods.

Table 9. Categories created for Q13. “What recommendations do you have to help address the shortage of qualified French Immersion teachers province-wide?”

Categories	Low category
More/better/expanded FI teacher training programs	Online training
	Better teacher training program
	Train more FI teachers
	Specific FI teaching program
	Produce quality teachers
	Increase candidates' French skills
Encourage FI grads To become FI teachers	Encourage FI students to become FI teachers
	Turn FI grads into FI teachers
	Turn bilingual BC residents into FI teachers
	No gap between FI and FI teacher training
Varied & better teacher practicums	Better practicums
	Quality practicums
	Different practicums
	Practicums in isolated communities
	French practicums
Increase immersion opportunities	French practicums
	Immersion in francophone environment
Recruit from out of province	Easier inter-provincial qualification transfers
	Advertising in French-speaking provinces
	Train native francophone teachers in BC
	Recruit out-of-province and foreign teachers
Better connect teachers with potential jobs	More connections between teachers and SDs
	FI-specific career fairs
	Central provincial job agency for out-of-province applicants
	Provincial person/group responsible for recruitment and retention of FI teachers
	Better links between candidates and employers
	Partnership with universities
	Advertising
	Advertising in French-speaking provinces
Standardization of qualifications	Provincial standards for language proficiency and language instruction
	FI certification
	Easier inter-provincial qualification transfers
Incentivize FI teaching & training	Full-time contracts
	Legal protection
	Financial incentives
	Stronger connections between FI teachers
	Provincial online teaching resources
Proactive hiring	Hire teachers as substitutes first

When turning responses to Q13 into a graph, I checked " Better connect teachers with potential jobs" in all cases that applied, even if I had already checked "recruit from out of province."

Table 10. “Other” responses to Q14. What best practices does your school district use to recruit Core French teachers?”

Make a Future
nothing
None.
Post and Fill
we don't
We do not recruit, use expertise among existing staff
Advertisement, Our local Fi program is now producing core French teachers
regular posting/filling practices
postings
We are fortunate that we have been able to find specialist teachers for our core French programs in Grades 8 to 12. Perhaps because we are located on the South Island and our local teacher education program for secondary includes this specialization.
Local recruitment
Apply to Teach [assumed to be "Apply to Education" ²⁶]
haven't had to hire anyone new for years
FSL teachers have been here for a long time. I can not answer to this question. I know that there is some new teachers that can take on an FSL assignment if needed.
no elementary Core French teachers

Table 11. “Other” responses to Q15. “What challenges does your school district face in recruiting Core French teachers?”

n/a
Middle school teachers are strongly seen as "generalists" and French is not seen as a specialist skill
We need many more at the Elementary level - generalists are usually NOT comfortable teaching French in Gr. 5-7. We need to allow SPECIALISTS in those areas. Apparently, the Ministry doesn't approve this strategy, but it is the only one that makes sense.
we don't have this as a position
Again, our lay off situation prevents us from being proactive in hiring fresh from practicum
Difficulty finding qualified teachers within the staff
no turnover
quality of living in a rural community
not a real challenge
Our challenge is the same for many districts, I expect. Teacher education programs for generalist teachers at the elementary level do not seem to emphasize the importance of teaching French as a Second Language to beginners, even though it is an expectation at the grade 5 to 7 levels.
n/a
most elementary teachers don't speak French
We haven't faced many challenges recruiting Core French teachers
none
see above
"haven't had to hire anyone new for years" (copied from Q14)

²⁶ applytoeducation, 'Applytoeducation'. A job search website for teaching positions around the world.

Table 12. Responses to Q16. “What best practices does your school district use to develop the language competencies of your Core French teachers?”

Continued professional development
Coordinator shares resources but many core French teachers are not fully trained or do not make French a priority in their classrooms
We use Federal Grant funds to send them to Quebec for the summer programs there.
Not a huge challenge
Access to professional development funds
offering courses but not mandatory, therefor not taken
Helping teacher to support them.
We X
fund/facilitate attendance at Boot Camps
provide 8-part training series through BAFF/SFU annually
meet with middle school FSL teachers
meet regularly with secondary FSL teachers
facilitate networking & sharing of resources
Pro-D, SFU and UBC programs (SFU Franco-fun bootcamps, for example)
We do have a strong community of language teachers under the leadership of a district modern language coordinator.
we don't support French language competencies
We do not do a great job of this. We conduct district meetings all in French so there is some adult French in the school day. Once I retire, however, there will be no one in District administration with even a smattering of French, so things will decline.
We offer workshops to all interested teachers.
We offer French classes to teachers as well as bursaries for those who enroll in Immersion programs or intensive language classes.
In service and sharing sessions
Placement of candidates from the UBC French Immersion/Core French Cohort - this has been extremely valuable in supporting the competencies of our intermediate teachers who teach Core French
Support from French Immersion/Core French Facilitator
UBC Graduate Diploma and Masters programs
Workshops available during District Professional Development and outside of the district and connecting with the French Immersion coordinator.
In service for teacher with a passion for French.
Always encourage pro-d.
Many opportunities to see new resources.
Have had AIM workshops many times
* workshops every year - AIM, for example
* funding to attend the French language program in Quebec for teachers
* robust support of resources
Support for professional learning opportunities through our District Languages Coordinator and our Mentoring Project for new career teachers.
We offer many professional development opportunities to improve their french skills.
Personal professional development opportunities using a combination of personal and district funds.
FSL Resource Teacher shares resources and provides inservice to teachers grades 5 - 7 to help them teach their French. Secondary FSL teachers all have university coursework.
Being in my new assisment, since April, I can't answer this question with specifics. I am working on that for the Fall.
Any teachers who are qualified to teach French will end up in the immersion program mostly. So Core French teachers are generally less qualified. The demand is just too high to fill all these positions properly.

Inservice.
Most of our core French teachers are "home grown" graduates from our own French Immersion program and teacher education program.
This is an area that we are attempting to foci on next year by developing mentoring relationships between French immersion teachers and Core French teachers.
professional development opportunities
networks for French teachers
up to date teaching materials
Our district developed an extensive professional development program a number of years ago when introducing new resources. This was helpful in assisting teachers in successully delivering the curriculum
ongoing in-service and working groups

Table 13. Categories created for Q16. "What best practices does your school district use to develop the language competencies of your Core French teachers?"

Categories	Items mentioned in responses
Pro-D	Pro-D
	Immersion
	Pro-D with university
	Workshops
	Classes
	Meet with teachers
	University coursework
	Prof learning opportunities
Mentorship	Meet with teachers
	In-service
	Mentoring
	Working groups/collaboration
	Sessions to share experiences/practises
	Meetings in French
Support	Support
	Support of universities
	Support from facilitator,
Community	Networking
	Community
Resources	Resources

In compiling responses to Q16 into a graph, I checked all categories that reasonably applied.

Table 14. Responses to Q17. “What challenges does your school district face in retaining Core French teachers?”

n/a
lack of qualifications and experience.
Not enough work for them the have full-time employment
None, really. Recruiting is the issue.
N/A - hasn't been as much of an issue
our location
Funding.
The fluent ones get sucked into immersion programs, leaving few fluent FSL teachers in the core French programs.
Core French programs are struggling due to non-specialist "French teachers" providing a poor experience to students, which leads to them either dropping second languages, or choosing a different L2 in high school. Some high school French programs are thus shrinking or struggling to maintain numbers.
Our district is constantly looking to increase the number of choices it offers to students. This breadth is impacting enrollment in FSL classes.
We need many more at the Elementary level - generalists are usually NOT comfortable teaching French in Gr. 5-7. We need to allow SPECIALISTS in those areas. Apparently, the Ministry doesn't approve this strategy, but it is the only one that makes sense.
Little challenge. Again, keeping qualified FSL TTOCs can be a challenge because of the large number of job opportunities.
Teachers are placed based on seniority rather than French language and teaching skills
We have no difficulty with this, since we really don't hire Core French teachers below high school levels. Elementary schools use a classroom model, where classroom teachers teach their own French, no matter how little French they have. Our Core French outcomes are predictably poor, as a result, until high school.
Not a particular challenge for us at this time.
Because Core French is not taught through Prep Time in [our district], Core French is taught by regular classroom teachers. This is our challenge.
Att he middle school level, the high turn over in staff makes it difficult" Plus, we do not hire Core French specialist at the elementary (gr 5) or middle school level (gr 6-8), only at the high school level.
Most Core French programs are taught by regular intermediate teachers, most of whom do not speak French.
Limited knowledge of the Core French situation.
Some turnover of younger teachers.
We are actually doing pretty good with Core French Teachers over the last few years
Location
New teachers want to be in the big cities.
Their desire to move to larger communities.
Not an issue
* they often teach other areas - not specialists
*
We do not seem to have a challenge with retaining our Core French specialists.
We do not currently face any challenges filling our Core French teaching positions.
District does not require elementary teachers to speak French but Core French needs to be taught in grades 5 and up.
FSL- Core teachers are in demand. The competition in the province is a challenge for small Districts.
"Any teachers who are qualified to teach French will end up in the immersion program mostly. So Core French teachers are generally less qualified. The demand is just too high to fill all these positions properly." (copied from Q16)

In the past, this hasn't been a challenge
Same as French Immersion challenges
"Our challenge is replacing FI teachers mid year for sick leave and maternity leaves or partial medical leaves. Because our bench of qualified applicants is small, we tend to run a little short by the end of each year and our specialists are not always keen to leave full time TTOC'ing for a one block secondary assignment or a part time elementary assignment." (copied from Q11)
Core French teachers need more support in pedagogy and adequate professional development opportunities.
Core French teachers often have a wide spectrum of other assignments
We do not have any challenge at the middle or secondary level. A challenge for our elementary teachers is developing comfort with FSL teaching.
Small northern communities - isolation from large cities.
Same as for immersion
"Young teachers who marry and whose spouse finds work elsewhere. young teachers who are having children are going on leave." (Copied from Q11)

Table 15. Categories created for Q17. "What challenges does your school district face in retaining Core French teachers?"

Categories	Items mentioned in responses
Social factors & geography	Geography
	Leaves
	Move with spouse
Unattractive working conditions	Lack of support,
	Lack of Pro-D
	Lack of focus in work
Not enough work	Lack of work
	Lack of funding
	Seniority system
Teacher qualification	Lack of qualifications
Competition from other school districts	Competition from other SDs
Competition with other school programs	Sucked into FI
	Alternative languages/electives

Table 16. Responses to Q18. "What recommendations do you have to help address the shortage of qualified Core French teachers province-wide?"

n/a
Unsure
Encourage Grade 12 immersion students to pursue this area.
N/A
Don't get me started! First French should be mandatory in high school and especially for entry to university. Who would be expected to teach another language when you don't need to take it in high school. Specialists should be hired in elementary schools to teach it, just like music. Pro D as a core french should be mandatory. My fellow teachers will probably shoot me for this one.
Districts need to view French teachers as specialists & schedule French classes for students accordingly.
Same as for Immersion teachers.
"Recruitment at the university level - offer more programs for francophiles for a year abroad in a francophone setting or teacher-training in a francophone country - this increases both language confidence and people who can identify as being "qualified" for Immersion. It's harder to recruit francophones to come here, let's make use of the tons of Immersion grads who are francophiles,

but have them really sharpen their language skills by spending time abroad (or in Quebec) during their undergrads (or PDP)." (copied from Q13)

First, there have to be Core French jobs. The current classroom model means there is little incentive to train as a Core French teacher for anything other than high school. Then, the jobs have to be worth taking, i.e., dedicated classroom, so that there can be posters up and a French presence. This means that schools have to be built to accommodate this. The Itinerant Core French model is a difficult gig. Schools must have funds to resource these positions as well, so that there are fund DVDs and games for the classes to make French enjoyable.

Greater number of teachers being trained.

Same as for FI teachers

"1) Better wages may make BC more attractive to teachers from Quebec.

2) Locally-negotiated clauses that protect French Immersion teachers from lay off might also help retain more teachers.

3) Partnership with French-speaking universities to make it easier for students to come to BC to complete their PDP and gain knowledge of the BC curriculum. Foreign teachers often find it difficult to adapt to our education system. It is therefore better if they can be trained here." (copied from Q13)

Same as French Immersion (see above)

"Continue to offer opportunities for French Immersion grads to enhance their French skills through grants and bursaries for French language exchanges. We are finding that our strongest recruits are often former FI students who have immersed themselves in work or studies in Francophone settings for sustained periods of time to enhance their language proficiency and knowledge of French cultures.

Continue to recruit and advertise outside of the province of BC and outside of Canada." (copied from Q13)

Continued development of resources that can be used by classroom non-specialists

Continue offering training opportunities for Core French (and French Immersion teachers) throughout the year.

useful student teacher placements.

None at the moment

* Funding for specialist FSL teachers at the elementary level. Regular classroom teachers unable to deliver on this.

Teacher education programs that effectively address French Second Language learning at the intermediate grades for generalist teachers.

Our unique geographic setting makes it difficult to offer relevant suggestions for others.

To create a partnership with Vancouver Island University and Faculty of Education.

- Knowing that it is time sensible...I would encourage compensation To attract new French Immersion/Core FSL teachers. I know that some District have gone that road before.

recruit teachers who graduated from FI in high school

Core French teachers for elementary would benefit with more mandatory French courses as part of an undergrad requirement.

Stronger Core French methods courses in teacher education programs and a greater emphasis on the importance of second-language development in schools.

Not sure

Same as for immersion

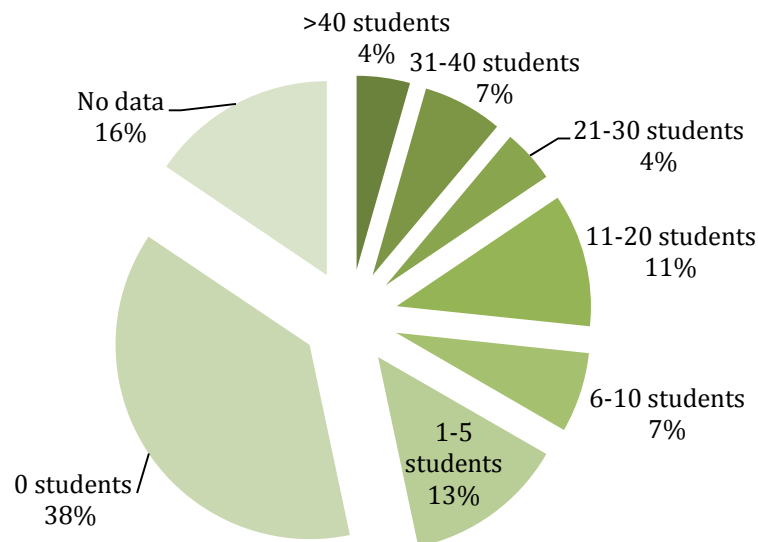
"Online training that includes chat rooms and opportunities to meet.

Special certification to teach immersion with a pay raise included." (copied Q13)

Table 17. Categories created for Q18. “What recommendations do you have to help address the shortage of qualified Core French teachers province-wide?”

Categories	Items mentioned in responses
Increase qualified supply / train more	Encourage FI grads to become CF teachers
	French mandatory in high school
	French mandatory for entry to university
	Immersion
	Train more
	Train francophones in BC
	Better training for generalist teachers
	Partnership with university
Look further for supply	Recruit out of province
Improve current CF teachers	Mandatory Pro-D for CF teachers
	Pro-D
Incentivize CF teaching (to increase supply)	Better working conditions (classroom, resources)
	Higher wages
	Legal protection
	Resources
	Financial incentives
	Prioritization in schools
Specialist teachers	Specialist CF teachers in elementary and middle school
	Student teachers

Figure 19. Responses to Q23. “If [you have a waitlist], roughly how many students are on the waitlist for French Immersion for this upcoming school year?” (open-ended)



When converting written responses to Q23 into a graph, I made these decisions:

- For districts with no waiting list, I interpreted it as 0 students on the list
- “No data” means they do have a waiting list but didn’t provide a number

- It is not clear whether these numbers are for districts or for schools
- Some numbers are for both LFI and ELI, some are just for one of them
- Some numbers are approximate
- I put numbers into best category – I tended towards the lower category if I needed to choose between two categories

For Q23 “What challenges does your school district face in expanding French Immersion programs?” one SD (8) reported no need to expand, one SD (54) reported no notable challenges to expansion.

Table 18. “Other” responses to Q28. “What challenges does your school district face in expanding French Immersion programs?”

community reaction, which rises up against opening new FI programs. Our regular program staff know that if we open another French program, then there are fewer jobs, especially in 'desirable' schools, that is, higher SES schools where parents are more likely to choose French Immersion. So these staff then contribute to the community reaction, by whipping up opposition among parents in the school. The result is that it's very difficult to increase capacity where requests for the program exist.

Not necessary at this time, Parents won't accept split grade classes

One site is strongly favoured

potential depletion of our TTOC list of qualified applicants

Retaining students already enrolled in the program

ghettoization of the regular programs

Our French Immersion program growth continues to be strong.

a long term facilities plan

for next year? Lack of space. But we are looking at opening a Late Immersion Program grade 6 for September 2015 at [one of our FI schools]

Table 19. Responses to Q34. “Do you have additional comments or recommendations about improving or expanding French programs?”

Our challenges in opening new programs are first physical space in our over-crowded schools and secondly, community reaction, which rises up against opening new FI programs. Our regular program staff know that if we open another French program, then there are fewer jobs, especially in 'desirable' schools, that is, higher SES schools where parents are more likely to choose French Immersion. So these staff then contribute to the community reaction, by whipping up opposition among parents in the school. The result is that it's very difficult to increase capacity where requests for the program exist.

More advertisement about the advantage of graduating with a bilingual degree.

Help for SEA's - more hours for them to work with kids in French classes and more French speaking SEA's and Level B testing for assessing learning challenges in Early Immersion.

This is unrealistic in a school district of [a few hundred] kids.

Encouragement or incentives to districts with French Immersion to support the growth of the program, especially in these times of financial restraint.

We appreciate the CPF support for the French Programs (i.e. Film Festival, parent sessions, CAO).

There is very possible growth in our community for French Immersion Programs. [Our district] will need financial support like Immersion Growth Grant to be reestablish if we want to offer a successful program. I have already communicated that to the Misnistry [name deleted]

We need to continue our conversation with Vancouver Island Unviversity and it's Faculty of Education to develop and mentor our own BC French Immersion teachers. Teachers from Quebec, France Algeria, Africa.... are not always the only and/or best answer.



Proud of Two Languages
Nos deux langues, notre fierté