

New French immersion enrollment numbers decline sharply

Description

FREDERICTON • Enrolment numbers show 32 per cent fewer students will enter early French immersion program.

New figures provided by the Department of Education show before Christmas break, 1,548 renewed early bilingual education program. That is 679 fewer students than the 2,120 who current 2016-2017 school year.

Gary Crossman, the Opposition education critic, said the much-anticipated numbers do not their discomfort with a change to the structure that left them with too many questions.

“What the numbers are saying in my mind is parents are willing to hold off until the Grade 6 don’t know the answers they need to make this decision,” he said.

Crossman said he attended school information sessions in his Hampton riding and watched because details like classroom composition, teacher resources and curriculum changes were

The Tories have maintained that until there is a measurement of the success or lack thereof those students graduate in a few years, then there is no comparative available to determine first class to be offered Grade 3 are in Grade 9 now.

“There has been a lot of unnecessary stress put on young parents and teachers because of Crossman said.

But the province is encouraged by the interest, and believes numbers will continue to rise.

“Enrolment numbers indicate a strong interest in early French immersion,” said communication Cormier.

She said the sharp decline cannot be attributed entirely to disinterest. There are 363 fewer translates into a smaller pot of students to sign up for Grade 1 French immersion from the government

Education minister Brian Kenny was not available for an interview, but said last month a lot allow the department to prepare for the transition.

~~The province had asked parents to make the decision by Dec. 20, earlier than usual, so it could~~

Page 1 teaching staff and funding for curriculum adjustments in time for the coming fall’s school start

The Liberals' decision to reinstate early French immersion to Grade 1 has never budged from sitting of the legislature began Nov. 2.

In a breakdown of the enrolment figures, in the east district 431 students have committed (23151 from the north (down 42 students), 539 in the west district (196 less students), and 427

"We expect these numbers to increase as the remaining parents make their decisions and as said in an email. "We know that the earlier children are exposed to and begin to learn a second language use it later in life and we are pleased to offer this opportunity to students."

Crossman said nothing positive can be said of a 32 per cent reduction in early French immersion

While both south and west school districts wrote to the government this fall asking for a halt to the program, the east and west districts remained silent on the issue.

Harry Doyle, chairman of the Moncton region's east district, which runs from Petitcodiac to Sorel, said he was taken aback by him by surprise when reached by the press Tuesday afternoon.

"I'm not disappointed because it's a parent's decision but I wasn't expecting these results. I wish they hadn't happen," he said. "I respect whatever a parent decides is best for their children."

He said when his DEC meets on Jan. 17, it will be able to start talking about the numbers and what adjustments likely have to make as many adjustments to ensure enough French immersion teachers are available. He said the news is positive.

The Shawn Graham Liberals made the controversial decision to shift French immersion to Grade 1 last year. Opposing Tories didn't like it at the time, new leader Blaine Higgs has been relentless in his criticism of the program in the classroom and another change shouldn't be made at this time. He said the right solution is to stick with the current change to make a necessary improvement to poor test scores New Brunswick students receive.

A return to Grade 1 French immersion was a political promise Premier Brian Gallant made two years ago. He said his government intends to keep.

Crossman said he has no doubt school districts, school administrators, teachers and parents will be consulted. He said they shouldn't be forced into a decision they are not ready to make.

"If we're going to make a change, let's make it once and let's make it right," he said.

<https://www.telegraphjournal.com/telegraph-journal/story/49867349/new-french-immersion-enrolment>

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