



**COAST MOUNTAINS BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT 82**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING**

VIRTUAL VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

**MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2026
4:30 P.M.**



**COAST MOUNTAINS BOARD OF EDUCATION SCHOOL DISTRICT 82
SPECIAL REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2025 - 4:30 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

A G E N D A

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TERRITORIES & CALL TO ORDER			
2. DECLARATION OF QUORUM			
3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA	Motion		
4. CORRESPONDENCE 4.1 Letter from Pacific Northwest Music Festival (PNMF) dated February 22, 2026	Information	Attachment	Pages 2-5
5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES 5.1 Canadian Parents for French – Hazelton Chapter (Letter & Survey) 5.2 Hazelton French Immersion Program Review: Follow-Up to Trustee Questions	Information Motion	Attachment Attachment	Pages 6-1 Pages 11-22
6. QUESTION PERIOD			
7. ADJOURNMENT			



MEETING AGENDA ITEM #4.1

Action:		Information:	X
Meeting:	Regular	Meeting Date:	March 30, 2026
Topic:	Letter from Pacific Northwest Music Festival (PNMF) dated February 22, 2026		

Background/Discussion:

The Board has received correspondence from the Pacific Northwest Music Festival (PNMF), dated February 22, 2026, regarding the use of the R.E.M. Lee Theatre for festival performances.

The letter outlines the significance of the PNMF as a longstanding community event that supports student participation in music and performing arts, contributing to student growth, confidence, and overall development. The festival, now in its 59th year, involves a large number of student participants, including many from School District.

The correspondence notes increasing operational costs associated with hosting the festival and requests that the Board consider options to reduce or subsidize theatre rental fees, particularly for School District student groups.

This item is provided for the Board's information and consideration.

Recommended Action:

For information only; no action required.

Presented by: Board Chair



22 February 2026

School Board Trustees
School District 82
c/o Margaret Warcup, Board Chairperson
margaret.warcup@cmsd.bc.ca

Dear School District 82 Trustees,

I am writing on behalf of the Pacific Northwest Music Festival (PNMF) to discuss the issue of costs related to using the R.E.M. Lee Theatre for festival performances. The Pacific Northwest Music Festival is an important cultural and educational event in our community. It provides students of all ages with the opportunity to perform, grow in confidence, receive professional adjudication, and experience the performing arts in a meaningful and inspiring environment. For many participants, this festival represents months of preparation and a significant milestone in their physical, emotional and cognitive development.

The Pacific Northwest Music Festival's mission statement is:

"To provide an opportunity for music and performing arts students to share their talents and skills with the community through performance and friendly competition, and to encourage them to continue to strive for excellence through learning from their peers and adjudicators".

This aligns with the School District's mission and strategic plan with a focus on learner engagement, support and raising literacy/numeracy. We know that music and movement are key for student development and success in all aspects of their lives.

This festival celebrates its 59th year in 2026. It is one of the largest amateur arts festivals, with the greatest number of disciplines, in all of British Columbia. As a non-profit organization run solely by volunteers, we support hundreds of performers; the majority of whom are between the ages of 5 and 18 years old (see "Addendum Notes" p. 3). Many of the performers from past festivals are now teachers, accompanists, parents (and grandparents) of present-day performers. This festival has inspired generations of young people to have the confidence to work hard to achieve their goals and to "pay it forward" for future generations.

The PNMF relies on generous donations from community members, businesses, festival patrons and donors but it is increasingly challenging to meet the increasing costs of putting on this festival (venue costs, adjudicators, travel and accommodation costs). We have tried to keep entry costs low, however we have had to consider passing more costs onto participants (solo and group) to break even.

The R.E.M. Lee is a key venue for many performances during the festival. It will be the location for five full days of dance (morning, afternoon, evening), Classroom Music, Band and Choral (2 full days), Music Theatre (3 evenings and one afternoon) and Choral Speaking/Shakespeare within the Speech Arts Category. The R.E.M Theatre also hosts Scholarship Night (which showcases the best of the festival) and the final Gala Evening. This works out to 10 full days and 1 evening of theatre time.

We respectfully ask the Board of Trustees to consider options that would help lower or subsidize the costs associated with using the R.E.M. Lee Theatre. Specifically we would ask you to consider offering the theatre at a lower or no-cost rate specifically to the School District groups; band, choral, choral speaking and classroom music. Any assistance provided by School District 82 would directly contribute to maintaining the affordability and sustainability of this long-standing community event.

Supporting the Pacific Northwest Music Festival aligns with the district's commitment to arts education, student enrichment, and community engagement. By helping ensure the festival's continued success, the Board would be investing in the artistic growth and educational experiences of countless students.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lori Janzen', written in a cursive style.

Lori Janzen
PNMF Committee Member

lori@cedarriverphysio.ca

ADDENDUM NOTES RE: PNMF PARTICIPATION

2026 Total Registered Performances all disciplines = 2598

The following are some 2026 statistics for participation at the R.E.M. Lee Theatre:

Band – total participants 722

School District 82 groups = 11; total student participants = 300

School District 52 groups = 7; total student participants = 189

Choral – total participants = 139

School District 82 Groups = 3; total student participants = 64

Choral Speaking – total participants = 305

School District 82 Groups = 4; total student participants = 112

Classroom Music – 14 groups with 205 participants

Vocal Music Theatre - Solo and Group Performances = 80 with 188 participants

Dance – total participation = 536

These performances are free to attend (although donations are appreciated) which makes this festival accessible for anyone to attend and to be inspired.



MEETING AGENDA ITEM #5.1

Action:	Information:	X
Meeting:	Special Board Meeting	Meeting Date: March 30, 2026
Topic:	Hazelton – Canadian Parents for French - Letter and Survey	

Background/Discussion:

The attached letter dated March 10, 2026, and survey were submitted by the local Hazelton chapter of the Canadian Parents for French (CPF). Below is a synopsis of their submissions.

Enrolment & Outreach

- Ongoing parent communication via CPF Facebook and preschool/Starting Smart outreach. Meetings with Gitanmaax & Hagwilget—both support continuing FI.
- Spring & Summer FI family events planned.
- Print ads prepared for regional promotion.
- Enrolment survey was completed by 10 of 28 families.

Advocacy

- Monthly coordination with AFFNO (Association des Francophones et Francophiles du Nord-Ouest)
- Letters underway to Minister of Education, Attorney General, and Anti-Racism committees.
- Meetings with MLA, MP, and CBC North (supportive engagement).
- Letters in progress to local governments for official support and inclusion in community plans.
- Secured in-kind community space for FI activities.

Sustainability & Funding

- Active network of 100+ FI parents & graduates.
- Grant applications and donor outreach in progress.
- Western LNG approached for future funding.
- Discussions ongoing with District PAC.

Conclusion

While community partners, Indigenous governments, families, and regional organizations continue to engage in advocacy and planning, long-term stable enrollment remains uncertain with only 10 out of 28 families committing to the program as shown through the survey responses.

Recommended Action:

THAT the Board reviews the letter and accepts it for information.

Presented by: Secretary Treasurer

March 10, 2026

French Immersion Enrolment Efforts in the Hazeltons:

- Consistent updating of [CPF Facebook page](#) for parent reference.
- We have emailed Indigenous Education Council representatives for promoting FI registration to band membership and letters to the School Board. We have met in-person with Gitanmaax (**Pansy Wright-Simms and Shannon Ridsdale**) and Hagwilget Education Coordinators-both of whom want to see French Immersion continue in the Hazeltons.
- Spring and Summer BBQs planned to bring together FI parents, families and new parents and families interested in the program (April/June 2026).
- Communication to preschools and Starting Smart programs in surrounding areas to promote FI Enrolment.
- Draft ad ready to be placed in the Bulkley Browser and Northword Magazine (10,000 print copies distributed from Prince George to Haida Gwaii every quarter) to announce FI Enrolment dates and to promote French Immersion in the Hazeltons
- Ongoing communication with **Liz Navarro** from Canadian Parents for French-BC and Yukon about targeted marketing and recruitment throughout our region.
- Survey about French Immersion sent to all current FI families.

French Immersion Community Support Efforts:

- Meetings with AFFNO re: advocacy of the Hazelton FI program are scheduled monthly.
- To better understand the feelings of parents in Hazelton, we have done our own survey among French parents. Attached you will find a separate report with the results of the survey.
- Draft letter in progress to be sent to **the Minister of Education, Lisa Beure**, to advocate for funding of rural FI programs, as well as a planned potential in-person meeting on April 23-24.
- Draft letter in progress to the Attorney General of BC, **Nikki Sharma** Provincial Committee of Anti-Racism chair **Hasan Alam** and the Anti Racism Data Committee **Chair Dr. June Francis** about equity for rural and remote Indigenous communities and French Immersion and exemptions from funding formulas where there is an explicit urban bias and numbers-based outcomes.
- Meeting with **MLA Sharon Hartwell** and Canadian Parents for French board president in February. MLA to write a letter of support for continuing French Immersion.
- Scheduled meeting with **MP Ellis Ross** and Canadian Parents for French board president in March.

- Scheduled meeting with **Carolyna de Ryk, CBC North**, Prince Rupert about French Immersion in Hazeltons in March.
- In the process of writing to the mayor of the **District of New Hazelton, Gail Lowry Village of Hazelton mayor, Julie Maitland**, and Regional District of Kitimat Stikine Area B representative, **Cyra Yunkws** to include the French Immersion program in their official community plans and to write letters of support for the continuance of the French Immersion program. This attracts professionals and families to move to the Hazeltons.
- In the process of drafting a cross-ministerial letter for **Minister Adrian Dix Francophone Affairs, Minister of Education, Lisa Beare, Minister of Rural communities, Brittany Anderson** about the history of the FI Immersion program in the Hazeltons.
- Secured an in-kind donation of space, Senden Agriculture Resource Centre and Farmhouse where extracurricular French language activities and events can be held and where fundraising dinners and lunches can be held for the French Immersion program and language exchanges in Quebec and France.
- Ongoing communication with **Michel Pouliot Executive Director, Canadian Parents for French-BC & Yukon Branch** about recruitment strategies for FI program and advocacy for FI in rural and remote, Indigenous and northern communities.

Accomplishments and plans, timelines, and working structures for long-term sustainability:

- Mentorship with **Andrea Vickers**, long time Canadian Parents for French past board member and community member.
- Two parents of French Immersion students have given presentation to the School District about the need to continue the French Immersion program in the Hazeltons
- Ongoing communication between families and former graduates of FI (a network of 100+ FI immersion supporters in the Hazeltons).

Funding initiatives:

- Canadian Parents for French representative approached **Western LNG Canada** at a meeting in New Hazelton on March 8, 2026 to request funding for French Immersion and French language activities. Follow up when the Western LNG office opens in New Hazelton.
- Canadian Parents for French actively seeking grants and donations to supplement the French Immersion program (including BV Foundation, BV Credit Union, Northern Development Initiative Trust, Northern Health, Vancouver Foundation, Seabridge Gold Community Fund, Newmont, Province of BC Community Gaming Grants: Arts and Culture, BC Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, private donors and sponsors.)
- In the process of talking to District PAC about potential funding

Parent Survey Summary

Introduction

A short survey was distributed to parents of students currently enrolled in the French Immersion program in Hazelton. The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback about families' intentions to remain in the program, their long-term goals for their children's education, and their perspectives on the strengths and challenges facing French Immersion locally.

A total of **10 parents responded** to the survey.

Intent to Continue in French Immersion

Survey results indicate **strong commitment to the program among current families.**

- **90% of respondents (9 out of 10)** indicated their child **plans to continue in French Immersion next year.**
- **10% (1 respondent)** indicated they are **undecided.**
- **0 respondents** indicated they plan to leave the program.

The undecided respondent noted that uncertainty about the future of the program in Hazelton has created hesitation:

“Uncertainty with the program in Hazelton continuing. Lack of faith in the School Board to support Hazelton with the program consistently.”

Despite these concerns, the results demonstrate that the vast majority of families currently enrolled in French Immersion **intend to remain in the program.**

Long-Term Educational Goals: Dual Dogwood Diploma

Parents expressed **unanimous support for bilingual graduation goals.**

- **100% of respondents (10 out of 10)** indicated they **plan for their child to graduate with a Dual Dogwood diploma.**

This indicates strong long-term commitment to bilingual education and suggests that families value the opportunity for their children to graduate with recognized bilingual credentials.

However, one parent noted that instability in the program could affect this goal:

“But probably not now either [given] the current state of the program.”

Perceived Benefits of the French Immersion Program

Parents consistently highlighted the **academic, personal, and future opportunities** provided by French Immersion.

Development of Bilingual Skills

Many parents emphasized the importance of learning a second language and the long-term benefits it provides.

“Kids like learning another language that can be used in many places around the world.”

“Great opportunity for my child to develop a multi-lingual brain.”

Future Opportunities

Families see French Immersion as providing meaningful opportunities for education, employment, and travel.

“We are excited about the future where she could use her second language — for school, work or travel.”

Student Engagement and Learning Environment

Parents noted that the program attracts motivated students and creates a positive learning environment.

“Having like-minded classmates who want to be there and actively participate.”

Confidence and Life Skills

Opportunities associated with the program also help students build confidence and skills.

“Learning another language and the extra opportunities the program provides that build life skills and confidence.”

Community and Program Culture

Parents also spoke positively about the program’s sense of community.

“The unity.”

Concerns Identified by Parents

While support for the program is strong, parents identified several concerns. Most concerns relate to **program stability and support**, rather than dissatisfaction with the program itself.

Program Stability and Long-Term Commitment

The most frequently mentioned concern was uncertainty about the future of French Immersion in Hazelton.

“Impending crisis — will French immersion continue or not?”

“Just that it ends is an issue.”

Several parents also expressed concern that the program requires ongoing advocacy from families.

“Only the fact that we continue to have to fight for the program. The school district should be recruiting for us, not the parents.”

Teacher Recruitment and Support

Parents also noted concerns about ensuring adequate staffing and resources.

“I worry about whether we have enough teachers.”

“I feel like the teachers need more support from administrators.”

“Not enough support for the teachers and children.”

Program Delivery

A few parents raised program-specific suggestions:

- One parent felt there is **too much English used in the elementary immersion setting**.

- Another suggested that the **Concours format may not suit all students**, recommending a more flexible approach.
-

Appreciation for Teachers

Parents consistently expressed appreciation for the dedication of the French Immersion teaching staff.

“The teachers are very dedicated and a wonderful asset to the program.”

Overall Findings

The survey results demonstrate **strong parent support for the French Immersion program in Hazelton**.

Key findings include:

- The majority of families **intend for their children to remain in the program**.
- All responding families **aspire for their children to graduate with a Dual Dogwood diploma**.
- Parents see French Immersion as providing **significant academic, cognitive, and future opportunities**.

At the same time, parents expressed concerns about:

- **Long-term stability of the program**
- **Teacher recruitment and support**
- **Clear commitment from the school district**

Overall, the feedback indicates that families value the French Immersion program highly and hope to see it **supported, strengthened, and sustained for future students in Hazelton**.



MEETING AGENDA ITEM #5.2

Action: X Information:
Meeting: Special Board Meeting Meeting Date: March 30, 2026
Topic: **Hazelton French Immersion Program Review**

Background/Discussion:

Overview

The French Immersion (FI) program in the Hazelton region, delivered at Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary (MGA) and Hazelton Secondary School (HSS), is experiencing significant enrolment decline, staffing instability, and financial pressures. These factors collectively threaten the long-term viability of the program, particularly at the secondary level.

The attached document provides responses to the follow-up questions raised by Trustees at the previous Board meeting held on February 25, 2026. It also outlines refined options for the Board's consideration.

Enrolment & Trends

- Current Enrolment: MGA (K–7): 28 students and HSS (8–12): 7 students (6 attending)
- Seven-Year Trend: ~49% decline in enrolment; further decreases expected.
- Graduation Outlook: 10 graduates since 2021–22, 5 more expected over the next three years.
- Demographics: Regional youth population is flat or declining, limiting future FI intake.

Operational Challenges

- Secondary FI Unsustainable:
- Only 7 students across five grades; grade-specific courses cannot be offered.
- Requires multigrade classes, reduced electives, and rigid timetabling.
- Current structure does not meet Ministry expectations for program integrity.
- Staffing Constraints:
- Loss of FI teacher at HSS → no Semester 2 FI courses.
- Recruitment of qualified FI teachers remains difficult.
- Program Structure at MGA:
- Three strands (English, Gitksan, FI) increasingly difficult to sustain without larger cohorts & stable staffing.
- Online/Hybrid FI:
- Necessary for course access but reduces oral proficiency and increases attrition.

Financial Snapshot

- Annual Cost: \$374,825
- Annual Funding: \$276,084
- Annual Shortfall: ~\$98,700
- 2026–27 Plan: Staffing reduction from 3.6 FTE to 2.572 FTE to mitigate costs.

Conclusion

The FI program faces declining enrolment, staffing shortages, financial deficits, and demographic limitations that collectively undermine its sustainability. Without structural changes and/or increased enrolment, the long-term viability of FI in the Hazelton region—especially at the secondary level—remains at significant risk.

Recommended Action:

THAT the Board reviews the recommended options and render a decision.

Option 1:

Relocate the K–7 French Immersion Program to New Hazelton Elementary School, with secondary French Immersion (Grades 8–12) delivered through online programming while the program is gradually phased out as currently enrolled secondary school students (Grades 8-12) complete the program.

Option 2:

Relocate the K–7 French Immersion Program to New Hazelton Elementary School, with secondary French Immersion programming (Grades 8–12) delivered exclusively through online instruction.

Option 3:

Relocate the K-7 French Immersion Program to New Hazelton Elementary School, with secondary French Immersion programming (Grades 8–12) delivered through hybrid and online courses, enabling students to pursue a Dual Dogwood Diploma.

Presented by: Secretary Treasurer

**French Immersion Program Review: Follow-Up to Trustee Questions
March 25, 2026**

Following recent Board discussions regarding French Immersion programming in Hazelton, Trustees have identified several questions to support their review of program sustainability and long-term viability.

1. Please confirm current French Immersion enrolment by grade at Majagaleehl Gali Aks (K-7) and Hazelton Secondary School (8-12).

Current enrolment by grade is outlined in the 2025-2026 row. For additional detail, please review to page 22 of the [Regular Board Package - February 25, 2026](#), within the *Hazelton French Immersion Review Report February 19, 2026*.

HISTORICAL ENROLMENT PATTERNS in Hazelton including current enrolment

Grades/school year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2018-2019	7	13	7	6	6	6	4	8	8	2	2	2	1	69
2019-2020	11	6	12	6	5	5	6	4	8	8	2	1	3	77
2020-2021	3	6	3	9	2	2	3	5	3	6	8	1	1	54
2021-2022	9	7	6	4	9	4	3	3	2	1	7	6	0	61
2022-2023	5	10	8	7	4	10	4	1	3	0	1	5	5	63
2023-2024	8	4	12	4	7	4	8	4	3	3	0	1	4	62
2024-2025	4	9	5	10	3	6	4	5	2	2	2	0	1	53
2025-2026	2	3	4	2	7	3	5	2	2	2	1	2	0	35

2. Please confirm the number of students currently enrolled in French Immersion at Hazelton Secondary School by grade (8-12).

Last semester there were 7 students attending grades 8-12 French Immersion at HSS.

3. Was French Immersion offered in Semester 1 but not Semester 2 at HSS this year? If so, what are the operational reasons?

French Immersion was only offered in Semester one for the 2025-2026 academic year.

In the Spring of 2025, a French teacher requested a change in assignment to the English stream for the 2025-2026 academic year. This left the program without a qualified French teacher. The principal was able to recruit a qualified French Teacher for the first semester only.

4. What have enrolment numbers been over the past five years (K-12)?

Grades/school year	0
2018-2019	7
2019-2020	11
2020-2021	3
2021-2022	9
2022-2023	5
2023-2024	8
2024-2025	4
2025-2026	2

Looking ahead to the 2026–2027 school year, there are currently two children registered for Kindergarten in the French Immersion Program. Historical Kindergarten registration data is provided in the table below. During the review process, it was suggested that enrolment numbers may have been impacted by the COVID-19 period and by the announcement of the French Immersion Program Review.

5. What are the attrition rates between:

Grades 7 and 8:

- Looking at the graph above, you will see that the attrition rates vary significantly from year to year. For example, the grade 7s going into grade 8 in 2019/2020 had a 0% attrition rate, however the next school year it was 25%.

Grades 8–12:

- Looking at the graph provided, this fluctuates as well. For example, in grade 8 in 2021/2022 there were 2 students, by the next school year 0, therefore a 100% attrition rate. Looking at the grade 10s in 2021-2022, there were 7 students in Immersion, but by their grade 12 year only 4 remained. That is an attrition rate of 43%.

The following table below is based on the attrition in Hazelton across K-12 over a 7-year span.

 **Calculated Attrition (or Growth if positive)**

(Positive % = growth, Negative % = attrition)

From Year → To Year	Change	Rate
2018–19 → 2019–20	+8	+11.6% growth
2019–20 → 2020–21	-23	-29.9% attrition
2020–21 → 2021–22	+7	+13.0% growth
2021–22 → 2022–23	+2	+3.3% growth
2022–23 → 2023–24	-1	-1.6% attrition
2023–24 → 2024–25	-9	-14.5% attrition
2024–25 → 2025–26	-18	-34.0% attrition

From Year → To Year	Change	Rate
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Overall, the 7-year attrition rate: ~49% decline

6. How many French Immersion graduates have there been annually over the past five years, and how many are projected over the next three to four years?

Since 2021/2022, HSS has graduated 10 students from French Immersion.

The projected number of graduates for the next three years is 5 students.

7. Is the absence of Grade 12 students this year part of a longer trend?

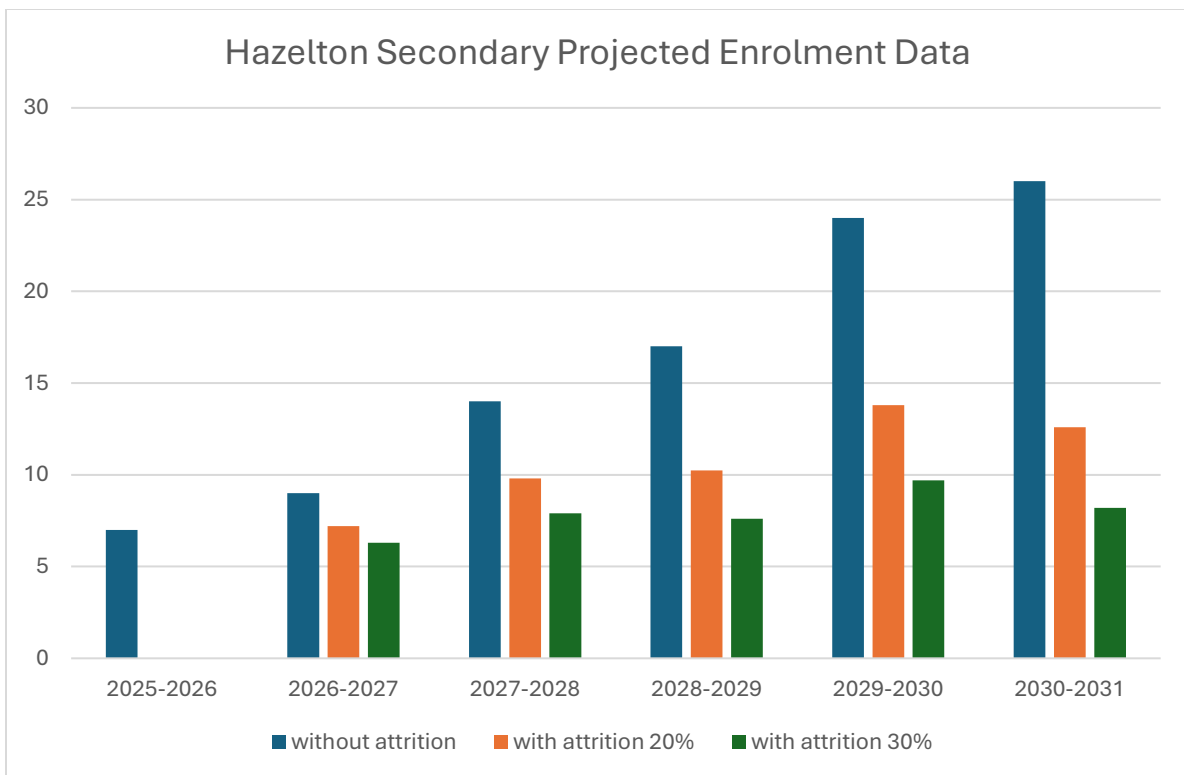
Current data indicates that enrolment in the French Immersion Program has been declining since the 2018-2019 academic year. The current review focused on the most recent eight years of available data, as the educational landscape and context have changed significantly during this period, including shifts in enrolment patterns, program offerings, and the availability of qualified French teachers.

8. Please provide projected enrolment for the next three to five years under scenarios of:

- No attrition
- 20% attrition
- 30% attrition

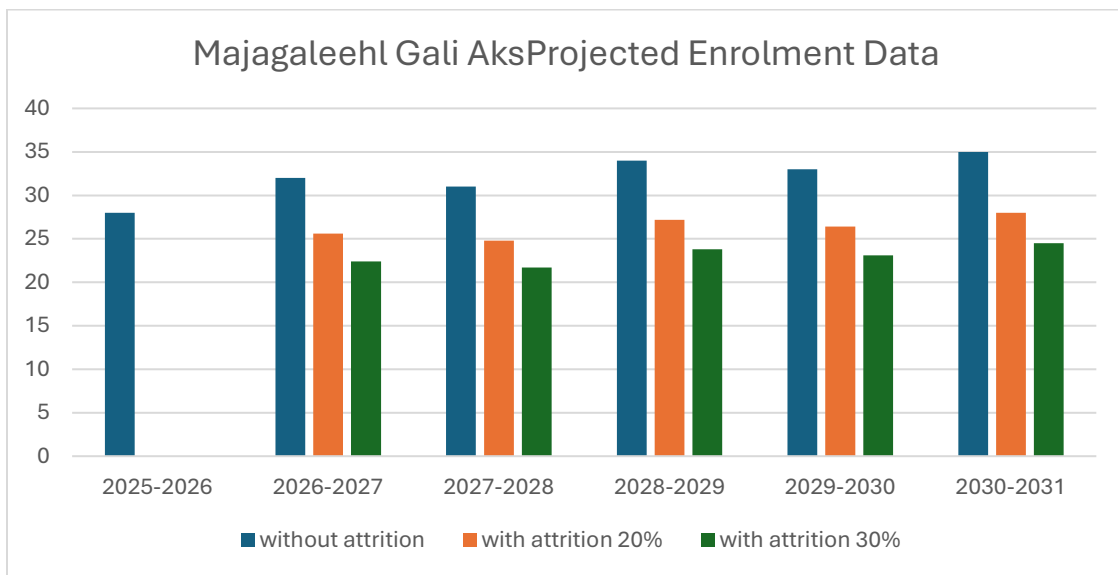
Hazelton Secondary School Projected Enrolment

HSS Projected Enrolment	without attrition 0%	with attrition 20%	with attrition 30%
2025-2026	7		
2026-2027	9	7.2	6.3
2027-2028	14	9.8	7.91
2028-2029	17	10.24	7.6
2029-2030	24	13.8	9.7
2030-2031	26	12.6	8.2



Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary School Projected Enrolment

MGA Projected Enrolment	without attrition 0%	with attrition 20%	with attrition 30%
2025-2026	28		
2026-2027	32	25.6	22.4
2027-2028	31	24.8	21.7
2028-2029	34	27.2	23.8
2029-2030	33	26.4	23.1
2030-2031	35	28	24.5



Enrolment Projection Data for MGA was calculated based on a five-year average of kindergarten registrations which equaled 6 students. Please note that attrition levels are much lower in elementary schools than in high schools.

9. What is the minimum enrolment required at elementary and secondary levels to sustain viable programming?

Ideally, the district would like a minimum of 15 students registered in each class. However, we are guided by maximum numbers under the Collective Agreement: K- 20, K/1 -16, 1-20, etc. Once students are in grade 4, split grades cannot exceed 25.

10. What data exists regarding student achievement in French Immersion, including oral proficiency and literacy benchmarks?

This past year, a team of teachers and the District Principal developed a Kindergarten to Grade 6 French literacy screener for the district. The tool was implemented for the first time in June 2025, and the current school year represents the first full year of its use.

At the Kindergarten level, the Ministry requires the use of a literacy screener; therefore, the district implemented Acadience (French) for Kindergarten classes this year.

In addition to the district-developed literacy screener, students participate in several other assessments, however, the majority of these assessments are completed in English. Schools administer a school-wide writing assessment and a numeracy assessment. Students in Grades 4 and 7 participate in the provincial Foundational Skills Assessment (FSA). At the secondary level, students complete the Grade 10 Literacy and Numeracy Assessments. Students pursuing the Dual Dogwood Diploma must also complete a French literacy assessment in Grade 12.

Beginning next school year, the district plans to implement DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) as an additional measure of French language proficiency.

11. What assessment measures are used to evaluate French proficiency, and are students meeting provincial expectations?

Currently, the grade 12 assessment would be the only assessment written in French. FSAs in grades 4 and 7 are completed in English as are the numeracy and literacy assessments in grade 10. It is the districts goal to complete the DELF in grades 5, 8, 10, and 12.

12. What information do we have regarding post-secondary outcomes of French Immersion graduates?

Provincial Data:

Dimension	French Immersion (BC)	Regular Program (BC)
Academic Achievement (English subjects)	Performs as well or better than regular peers [www2.gov.bc.ca]	Baseline for comparison
French Proficiency	Very high; bilingual by Grade 12	Minimal; Core French only
Cognitive & Social Benefits	Enhanced cognitive flexibility and social development [www2.gov.bc.ca]	Not language-enhanced
Identity & Belonging	Stronger linguistic identity; heightened awareness of peers' language backgrounds [summit.sfu.ca]	Little or no French-speaker identity
Curriculum Language Distribution	80–100% French early years → 25–75% in secondary	Mostly English; limited French exposure
Long-term bilingualism	Higher bilingual rates; limited workplace use overall (Canada-wide) [www12.statcan.gc.ca]	Lower bilingualism rates
Program Challenges	Higher attrition; access issues; staffing limitations [cpf.ca]	Lower attrition; more widespread access

No data is available for how many students from the Coast Mountains School District French Immersion program have attended post-secondary over the past five years.

13. With current secondary enrolment levels, is the existing structure operationally sustainable? How does low enrolment impact timetables and course elective access?

A. Is the Current Structure Operationally Sustainable?

Short Answer:

No— The current enrolment levels make the existing structure operationally unsustainable.

A French Immersion (FI) cohort of only 7 students across five grade levels (8–12) is operationally unsustainable in a secondary timetable that must comply with:

- Graduation Program requirements (English Language Arts and other mandatory courses)
- FI Program Requirements (Français 8–12, Socials 8–10 in French, plus minimum French-taught percentages at higher grades)
- Collective Agreement staffing rules
- Ministry expectations for authentic immersion delivery

To meet FI requirements, a secondary FI program must offer multiple courses delivered in French each year. With only seven students distributed across five grade levels, you are unable to offer:

- Grade specific French Immersion language courses- (e.g., Français 8, Français 9, Français 10, etc.)
- Required subject-area courses delivered in French (e.g., Social Studies 8–10, Sciences Humanities, etc.)
- Senior French Immersion electives or Français Langue 12 as a viable class

Courses are already being merged across grade levels and delivered through multi-grade, online, or hybrid structures in order to maintain the program. These measures reflect the operational strain created by very small cohort sizes and do not represent a sustainable approach to delivering a secondary French Immersion program. As a result, the existing structure is operationally fragile and increasingly reliant on significant scheduling adjustments and exceptions each year.

B. How Does Low Enrolment Impact Timetabling?

Low enrolment levels create several cascading problems:

i. Very Small Cohort Sizes Limit Viability

Secondary schools typically require approximately 15–28 students to run a course efficiently. With 7 FI students across all grades, no single FI course reaches a viable enrolment level.

ii. Forced Multigrade Course Grouping

To run FI at all, courses must be offered in formats such as:

- Multi-grade Français classes (e.g., 8–10 together)
- Merged content courses (e.g., Social Studies 8/9/10 in one block)

Multi-grade grouping significantly complicates:

- Assessment
- Curriculum coverage
- Pacing
- Classroom management
- Meeting diverse learning needs across multiple ages and grade levels

This also contradicts the intended model of “progressive, cumulative acquisition of French” on which immersion programs are designed.

C. Timetable Locking and Loss of Flexibility

A school with only 7 FI students must schedule all FI courses in *very specific blocks*, which:

- Reduces schedule flexibility
- Creates timetable conflicts with required English program- courses
- Causes students to lose access to desired elective courses
- Forces administrators to build the entire timetable around a micro-cohort -in which FI blocks become fixed elements, restricting the timetable scheduling of more than 400 students in the English program.

D. Impact on Elective Access

i. FI Students Lose Access to Mainstream Electives

Because FI students need multiple FI specific courses, they:

- Have fewer available elective slots
- Often face timetabling conflicts (e.g., Français 11 conflicting with Art 11 or Robotics 11)
- May be unable to complete elective pathways such as senior sciences, trades, or arts sequences.

ii. Indirect Impacts on English Program Electives

Even though the English program has approximately 400 students, the need to fit in FI blocks:

- Forces administration to protect FI blocks, reducing timetable flexibility
- Creates ripple effects that limit how English electives can be distributed across blocks
- May result in low enrolment English electives -being cancelled to accommodate FI scheduling constraints

iii. Staff Workload & Preparation Issues

Running multi-grade FI classes requires:

- Additional teacher preparation
- Mixed level- assessment
- Multiple curricula delivered within a single block

This strain contributes to long term sustainability issues and -increases instructional complexity.

E. Operational Risks of Maintaining the Structure

i. Staffing Vulnerability

- Hard to recruit/retain FI qualified teachers for less than 1.0 FTE across fragmented assignment
- If even one teacher leaves, the entire program may collapse

ii. Compliance Risks

There is a risk of failing to meet FI program requirements if:

- Courses are not offered in sufficient number
- Curriculum expectations cannot be met in combined classes
- Students cannot accumulate sufficient FI language- credits to earn the bilingual diploma

iii. Student Retention Risks

Families may exit the FI program due to:

- Perceived “watered-down-” immersion
- Lack of peer group
- Limited course selection
- Reduced extracurricular or French language- culture opportunities

This can push enrolment even lower, leading toward program dissolution.

Summary: Operational Reality

With 7 secondary FI students compared to more than 400 English program students, the program is:

- Educationally fragile
- Timetabling -disruptive
- Not sustainable under typical operational standards
- Limiting student elective access
- Dependent on multi-grade, non-ideal delivery models

The only sustainable options at this level of enrolment would be:

- Significant program restructuring (e.g., regional FI consolidation)
- Hybrid/online FI course supplementation
- Transitioning FI students into another pathway
- Formal program wind-down with protected student transition planning

14. What has been the impact of online or hybrid delivery at the secondary level?

Negative Impacts (Most Strongly Evidenced)

- Reduced oral proficiency development due to fewer opportunities for spontaneous communication.
- Lower motivation and participation in French during online classes.
- Increased attrition, with families questioning the viability of an online FI program.
- Inconsistent access to quality instruction is due to technology barriers and variation in teacher readiness.

Potential Positives (When Hybrid Models Are Well De-signed)

- Greater flexibility, supporting students with diverse needs.
- Strong asynchronous materials can enhance grammar and vocabulary acquisition.
- When limited, in-person time can become more intentional and collaborative, potentially increasing its instructional value.

Most Critical Limitation

- FI requires sustained real-world exposure to French; fully online delivery cannot replicate the immersion environment, making hybrid models generally preferable- to fully virtual methods.

Please Note: Research literature on online and hybrid learning environments indicates that both positive and negative outcomes may occur depending on factors such as program design, technology access, teacher preparedness, and opportunities for interaction.

15. Please confirm the total annual cost of operating French Immersion (K-12), Ministry funding received specific to French Immersion, and the estimated net subsidy from general operating funds.

1. Enter TOTAL OLEP funding as per the Ministry website .	
School District TOTAL in 2025-26:	\$ 132,781.00
2. Divide total funding above into projected allocations for each category.	
Staffing and Recruitment	\$ 61,000.00
Cultural Activities	\$ 9,500.00
Teacher Retention and Professional Learning	\$ 15,000.00
Student Learning and Academic Achievement	\$ 31,000.00
Program Growth and Student Retention	\$ 16,281.00
Total	\$ 132,781.00
Allocations	\$ 132,781.00

In previous years, money was allocated under different categories. Typically, around \$70,000 was allocated for French Immersion, \$15,000 for Core French, \$18,000 for technology, \$15,000 for learning resources, \$7,500 for professional development, and \$2,500 for cultural. The province moved to the model listed in the graph this current school year.

Based on current staffing costs (calculated on actuals instead of averages) for the French Immersion program in Hazelton, the total expenditure for this school year is \$374,825.

Using the Ministry’s funding rates of \$9,015 per full-time K-7 student and \$9,015 per 8-12 student for eight blocks, the projected funding for the 35 students enrolled in September is calculated as follows:

Funding Calculation

- K–7: 28 students × \$9,015 = \$252,420
- Grades 8–12: 7 students × 3 blocks × (\$9,015 ÷ 8) = \$23,664

Total Ministry Funding: \$252,420 + \$23,664 = \$276,084

With staffing costs at \$374,825, this results in a funding shortfall of \$98,741 for the French Immersion program.

The OLEP funding covered 0.1 FTE for literacy support at MGA, provided schools with budgets for their classroom teachers, organized a cultural event, supported concours at all three levels, in-service on training teachers with our assessment tool and Acadience, as well as French literacy resources.

16. What is the staffing plan for 2026–2027, including current FTE assigned at MGA and HSS?

Our plan is to reduce the teaching FTE from 3.6 to 2.572. This would reduce the cost of the program to \$317,076.

17. What recruitment efforts have been undertaken specific to Hazelton French Immersion, and what challenges have been encountered?

The district collaborated with a recruitment specialist specifically focused on the Hazeltons two years ago. In addition, the district works with Make a Future to promote the district and support teacher recruitment. District staff have also attended several recruitment fairs in Ontario, New Brunswick, Quebec, Alberta, and online in an effort to secure French Immersion teachers for the district.

However, in the Hazeltons, this has not been necessary, as certified teachers have filled all French Immersion positions for the past five years. In addition, several French-speaking educators currently teaching in English program roles in the community could potentially teach in French if they chose to do so.

To support student recruitment, the district organized a Kindergarten Open House to assist families with registration and provide information about French Immersion in the district. The District Principal was present at Majagaleehl Gali Aks (MGA) from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. to meet with families. The event was advertised on the Hazelton Community Page and the MGA Facebook page; however, no families attended. In addition, French Immersion brochures were created and distributed within the community.

18. What are the demographic projections for Hazelton over the next five years, and how might these impact program viability?

Impact on Program Viability (Especially French Immersion)

A. Declining or Flat Youth Population → Fewer FI Entrants

With fewer children under 20, FI enrolment is unlikely to increase meaningfully. Hazelton already struggles with very small FI cohorts (e.g., 7 students in Grades 8–12), and demographic trends indicate that this challenge will worsen.

B. Smaller Intakes at Elementary → Collapsing Secondary Pathway

FI viability depends on strong early grades (K–3) feeding into upper levels. The age profile shows small young-child cohorts, which reduces the pathway into secondary FI.

C. Aging Community → Reduced Demand for School Programs

With a growing older adult population, the community’s age structure reduces the overall proportional demand for K–12 programming, intensifying enrolment pressure.

Please find the 2021 Stats Canada demographic data for Hazelton and the surrounding area:

Community	Children 0-17
Hazelton	35
New Hazelton	145
Kispiox	160
Glen Vowell	60
Kitwanga	155
Gitanyow	125

Currently, only students from Kispiox, New Hazelton, and Hazelton attend the districts French Immersion programs. Students from other communities would be required to travel by bus with high school students.

D. Financial and Operational Pressures Increase

Programs with:

- very small cohorts,
- limited recruitment potential,
- multi-grade scheduling challenges,

become extremely difficult to sustain in a community with limited projected youth population growth.

E. Strategic Planning Documents Reflect Concern

The Hazeltons’ Economic Development Strategic Plan notes that lower youth numbers and out-migration may continue. This further undermines the long-term viability of enrolment-dependent programs. [\[hazelton.ca\]](http://hazelton.ca)

Conclusion

Based on available demographic data and reasonable forward projections, Hazelton is likely to experience:

- Flat or slowly declining population
- No meaningful growth in the school-aged population
- Continued demographic aging
- Ongoing risk for under-enrolment in programs like French Immersion

Impact on French Immersion Program Viability

These demographic realities strongly suggest that program viability will continue to erode, with *no demographic evidence* indicating upcoming growth in FI enrolment over the next five years.

19. Is operating English, Gitxsan immersion, and French Immersion strands within the same elementary school operationally sustainable?

This is dependent on several factors. For example, should MGA offer a Kindergarten class that provides exposure to all three languages (English, French and Gitxsan) and then allow families to choose a stream in Grade 1, it may support both programs more effectively. However, without this, it may be difficult for two immersion programs in the same school to operate effectively. At this time, it may not be advisable to introduce a new program structure.

Operating English, Gitxsan immersion, and French Immersion together is *possible*, but it may not be sustainable over time. It is not inherently sustainable.

Operational sustainability becomes more difficult when:

- Cohort sizes are very small
- Qualified staffing is limited or unstable
- Timetabling flexibility and instructional resources are limited,
- Community language revitalization priorities and expectations require more concentrated support than the school can provide within the existing structure, and
- Classroom space is limited.

Given the documented staffing demands for French Immersion, the capacity needs for Gitxsan language revitalization, and best practice requirements for immersion models, a tri-strand school requires substantial and stable resourcing to avoid compromising program quality.

If anyone strand becomes significantly under-enrolled or under-staffed, the overall structure becomes increasingly fragile.

[[Gigyees 1...RESOURCES](#)], [[www2.gov.bc.ca](#)], [[participat...arning.com](#)]

20. For each option presented to the Board, could you outline operational feasibility, financial implications, staffing impact, and sustainability considerations?

OPTION 1:

Relocate the K–7 French Immersion Program to New Hazelton Elementary School, with secondary French Immersion (Grades 8–12) delivered through online programming while the program is gradually phased out as currently enrolled secondary school students (Grades 8-12) complete the program.

Core change:

The K–7 French Immersion program would be relocated to New Hazelton Elementary School (NHE) and operate as a dedicated French Immersion program. This would focus on strengthening the sustainability of K–7 programming. The high school portion would be phased out once the current

Grade 8 cohort completes high school. This online option would be supported for one block per semester. No new students (Grades 8-12) enter the FI program.

Why it's viable:

- This approach provides a clearer program structure and a more sustainable pathway for the elementary program.
- NHE would serve as the primary location (“hub”) for the French Immersion program, with the potential for improved program identity and enrolment stability.
- Current secondary students would continue to be supported in completing their Dual Dogwood, while the secondary program (Grades 8-12) would gradually phase out.

Why it stands out:

- Predictable scheduling may help reduce attrition.
- Maintains access to Dual Dogwood completion regardless of cohort size.
- Supports oral proficiency through:
 - local facilitation
 - centralized FI expertise
 - planned in-person intensives

OPTION 2:

Relocate the K–7 French Immersion Program to New Hazelton Elementary School, with secondary French Immersion programming (Grades 8–12) delivered exclusively through online instruction.

Core change:

The K–7 French Immersion program would move to New Hazelton Elementary (NHE). Grade 8–12 FI students would be supported through online programming.

Why it is viable:

- It provides a coherent and potentially sustainable K–12 French Immersion strategy.

Why it stands out:

- Moving K–7 FI to NHE may strengthen enrolment stability by placing the program in a more centralized elementary setting.
- Improves program identity and visibility.
- Reduces space and timetable pressure at the current site (especially with Gitxsan Immersion growth).
- Creates better long-term- cohort stability—critical in rural FI.

OPTION 3:

Relocate the Kindergarten to Grade 7 French Immersion Program to New Hazelton Elementary School, with secondary French Immersion programming (Grades 8–12) delivered through hybrid and online courses, enabling students to pursue a Dual Dogwood Diploma.

Core change:

K–7 FI program relocates to NHE, while Grades 8–12 FI shift to a high-quality hybrid/online model with s-support and scheduled synchronous blocks.

Why it's viable:

- Preserves a full K–12 FI pathway.
- Avoids the high staffing burden and instability of running in-person secondary FI for very small- cohorts.
- Aligns with Ministry direction: maintain bilingual pathways while ensuring operational sustainability.
- Relocating K–7 FI to NHE strengthens early-years cohorts, improving long-term- FI viability.

Why it stands out:

- Removes the fragility of very small in-person- secondary FI classes.
- Maintains Hazelton's competitiveness by keeping a Dual Dogwood pathway available.
- Staffing becomes far more manageable (secondary FI teachers are extremely difficult to recruit).
- Supports retention when combined with:
 - structured synchronous blocks
 - Part-time bilingual facilitation
 - periodic in-person- speaking intensives (DELFL prep, cultural activities)

Program Enhancement Options:

Include at least two in-person FI days per term to support strong oral proficiency- and student engagement.

- Allows collaboration without requiring perfect timetable alignment.
- Structured Add-On:
 - Provide two FI enhancement blocks (one per semester) for:
 - conversation practice
 - online course support
 - cultural and project-based activities

Summary of Options:

Option 1:

Relocate the K–7 French Immersion Program to New Hazelton Elementary School, with secondary French Immersion (Grades 8–12) delivered through online programming while the program is gradually phased out as currently enrolled secondary school students (Grades 8-12) complete the program.

Option 2:

Relocate the K–7 French Immersion Program to New Hazelton Elementary School, with secondary French Immersion programming (Grades 8–12) delivered exclusively through online instruction.

Option 3:

Relocate the Kindergarten to Grade 7 French Immersion Program to New Hazelton Elementary School, with secondary French Immersion programming (Grades 8–12) delivered through hybrid and online courses, enabling students to pursue a Dual Dogwood Diploma.

OPTION	DELIVERY MODEL	STUDENT PATHWAY	LONG-TERM OUTCOME
Option 1	K–7 French Immersion relocated to New Hazelton Elementary (NHE). Secondary FI (Grades 8–12) delivered online while the program is gradually phased out as currently enrolled students complete the program.	Current secondary students continue through online courses until graduation. No new students enter secondary FI.	Secondary French Immersion is phased out once the current cohort graduates. Elementary FI continues at NHE.
Option 2	K–7 French Immersion relocated to New Hazelton Elementary (NHE). Secondary FI (Grades 8–12) delivered exclusively through online instruction.	Students may continue in French Immersion through online secondary courses.	Maintains K–12 FI access through online delivery.
Option 3	K–7 French Immersion relocated to New Hazelton Elementary (NHE). Secondary FI (Grades 8–12) delivered through hybrid and online courses with support.	Students may pursue a Dual Dogwood Diploma through hybrid delivery and local facilitation.	Maintains a full K–12 French Immersion pathway with a modified delivery model.