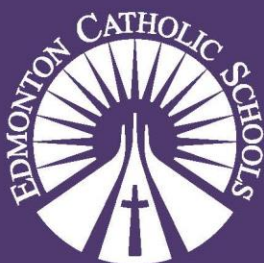


WHAT WE HEARD

French Immersion Expansion Engagement



December 2025

Executive Summary

Families from St. John XXIII Catholic Elementary/Junior High School expressed strong and consistent support for French Immersion (FI) programming at Mother Margaret Mary (MMM) Catholic High School.

Edmonton Catholic Schools received responses from 450 families between November 7 and November 20. Survey results show strong interest in full French Immersion; with many families indicating they would “definitely” enroll if it were available. At the same time, parents noted that a partial French Immersion program would still meet the needs of most students and help retain enrolment. Across responses, families highlighted proximity to home, Catholic identity, program continuity, and quality teaching as the most important factors in their decision making.

Key findings include:

- 398 families support French Immersion being offered at MMM. This is 88% of all respondents.
- Grade 9 families (66 total) are the most urgent group, as they face immediate transition decisions.
- Transportation is critical for FI retention.
- Parents expressed frustration with past promises about FI at MMM and emphasized the need for clear, transparent communication and certainty that any new program will be fully implemented and sustained.

This report synthesizes quantitative survey results and qualitative themes to provide a comprehensive picture of community priorities.

Synopsis

Parents and guardians of students at St. John XXIII School were invited to share their perspectives on expanding FI programming at MMM. The Division received 450 responses and the feedback demonstrates strong demand for full FI.

Key insights from the questionnaire included:

- Proximity to home and the availability of a French Immersion program are the most important factors for families when choosing a high school.
- 39% of families are intending to attend MMM for high school, while 56% are still unsure.

- 88% of respondent families said they would continue if a French Immersion program were offered at Mother Margaret Mary.
 - Of those, 83% of respondents said they would continue if a full French Immersion program were offered, and
 - 72% of respondents said they would continue if a partial French Immersion program were offered.
 - 46% of families indicated they would continue in FI at MMM regardless of the program structure.
- 34% of families say that proximity to home is one of the most important factors influencing their decision to enroll at Mother Margaret Mary Catholic High School.
- 31% of families say that the availability of a French Immersion program is a key factor in their decision to attend Mother Margaret Mary Catholic High School.

Here's a grade-level breakdown of students in Grades 6 to 9 whose families indicated they would continue in French Immersion at Mother Margaret Mary:

Grade Level	# of Students Supporting FI at MMM
Grade 6	66
Grade 7	83
Grade 8	74
Grade 9	66

These numbers show the potential “feeder” students who would help launch and sustain a French Immersion program at Mother Margaret Mary in the coming years.

Families emphasized:

- Proximity to home as the most important factor.
- The need for continuity from elementary/junior high FI into high school.
- The importance of Catholic identity alongside FI.
- Concerns about long bus rides and limited options.
- Requests for experienced French teachers and diverse course offerings.

Engagement Objectives

- Gauge interest in FI programming at MMM.
- Understand family priorities when choosing a high school.
- Identify barriers to continuing FI into high school.
- Gather suggestions for equitable expansion across ECSD.
- Ensure transparency and responsiveness to community needs.

Engagement Process

- Survey distributed to families with children in French Immersion at St. John XXIII Catholic Elementary/Junior High School.
- The survey was open from November 7 to November 20, 2025.
- Questions covered: current grade levels, FI enrolment, likelihood of attending MMM, interest in full/partial FI, factors influencing high school choice, and open-ended feedback.
- Quantitative analysis used for Questions 1 to 6.
- Qualitative thematic analysis applied to Questions 7 to 9.

Engagement Results

Grade Levels of Respondents

Families across all grades participated, with the largest groups in Grades 7–9. These grades represent the most immediate “feeder” students for a potential French Immersion program at Mother Margaret Mary.

Grade of Respondents Children	Number of Students
Grade 6	76
Grade 7	91
Grade 8	71
Grade 9	92

Current French Immersion Enrolment

Most families have one or two children in FI, showing broad but distributed demand.

Children in FI	# of Respondents
1	205
2	194
3+	51

Intentions to Attend MMM

Families are divided:

- 175 intend to attend MMM
- 25 do not
- 250 remain unsure

This uncertainty reflects the importance of program availability and clear communication.

Interest in FI at MMM

- Full FI: 352 families said “definitely yes,” with only 8 saying “no.”
- Partial FI: 256 families said “yes,” though 130 remain unsure.
- Overall, 398 families (88%) support FI at MMM in some form.

Factors Influencing High School Choice

Families consistently emphasized:

- Proximity to home
- Availability of FI
- Catholic identity
- Quality teaching and diverse course offerings
- Transportation as a critical enabler

Thematic Insights

Across open-ended responses, several themes emerged:

- Proximity & Accessibility: Families want local options to avoid long commutes.
- Program Continuity: Strong desire for seamless FI pathways from elementary through high school.
- Catholic Identity: Faith-based education remains a priority alongside FI.
- Quality & Equity: Requests for experienced teachers, diverse courses, and equitable access across ECSD.
- Frustration & Urgency: Families expressed impatience with past delays and emphasized the need for transparent, sustained implementation.
- Transportation: Busing remains a major concern for retention and access.

Conclusion

Families are clear:

- Expansion of FI high schools in Southwest Edmonton is urgent.
- Without it, families will either leave the Catholic system or abandon FI.
- The strongest motivators are proximity, continuity, and Catholic identity, supported by demands for quality teachers and equitable access.
- Transportation is critical for FI retention.
- Parents see expansion as long overdue and essential to stop attrition.