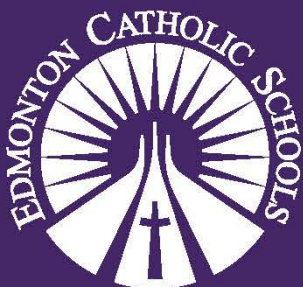


WHAT WE HEARD

OUR LADY OF THE PRAIRIES FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM PATHWAYS



December 2025

Executive Summary

On November 27, 2025, Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD) hosted an in-person information session with French Immersion families at Our Lady of the Prairies Catholic Elementary School (OLOP). The session outlined details of the planned relocation of the French Immersion program from OLOP to Holy Cross Catholic Elementary/Junior High, beginning in September 2026.

- Attendance: 43 parents/guardians and 11 children
- Follow-up questionnaire: Open November 27–December 5, 2025, with 94 respondents. Families unable to attend were notified via SchoolMessenger on November 28.

This school level information session followed division wide sessions in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, during which French Immersion families across ECSD provided feedback about the French Immersion program. Specifically, in the Fall 2023 questionnaire, 7% of respondents indicated their child(ren) attended OLOP. Additionally, in the Spring 2024 questionnaire that was distributed to all French Immersion families in ECSD, 8% of respondents selected OLOP as the school their child(ren) are attending. Feedback from the 2023 and 2024 Division-wide engagements was used by Division leadership in making decisions about the French Immersion program consolidation from OLOP to Holy Cross.

Feedback from the November 2025 session and questionnaire revealed strong concerns about transportation, community disruption, and lack of perceived benefits. While a small minority identified positives such as increased French exposure and continuity into junior high, the overwhelming majority viewed the move as a loss. Families consistently requested support around transportation, childcare, program stability, and transparent communication. Repairing trust emerged as a critical need.

Synopsis

- Dominant concerns: Transportation times (80% of responses), continuity/community disruption (60%), communication gaps (40%).
- Perceived benefits: 70–75% of families reported “none” or “zero benefits.” Only ~10% saw potential for stronger French engagement, and ~5% noted continuity into junior high.

- Support requested: Transportation guarantees (≤ 45 minutes), expanded childcare/OSC, full-day kindergarten, teacher retention assurances, and transparent communication.
- Conditional willingness: A majority (73%) indicated conditional willingness to attend Holy Cross, contingent on supports.
- Feedback tone: Families were shocked, frustrated, expressing skepticism about ECSD's rationale and often perceived the decision as financially driven than student focused.

Information Session Objectives

- To understand parent and family perspectives on the relocation of French Immersion from OLOP to Holy Cross.
- To identify concerns, perceived benefits, and support needed for a smooth transition.
- To inform ECSD's communication and transition planning with authentic parent feedback.
- To ensure alignment between Division priorities (retention, sustainability, program quality) and family needs (transportation, community, trust).

Feedback Process

- Division-wide engagement sessions (Fall 2023 and Spring 2024): Questionnaires and in-person sessions with French Immersion families, staff and students across ECSD to involve the French Immersion community to inform future program planning, understand why families and students choose French Immersion, identify barriers that affect continued participation in the program and to gather suggestions to strengthen the French Immersion pathway from kindergarten through grade 12.
 - 7% (total 149) of respondents in the Fall 2023 engagement indicated their child(ren) attended OLOP. Read the [What We Heard](#) from the Fall 2023 engagement here.
 - 8% of respondents (total 1,222) who participated in the Spring 2024 engagement indicated OLOP as the school their child(ren) attend. This engagement was a questionnaire about ECSD's French Immersion program. Read the [What We Heard](#) from the Spring 2024 engagement here.

- School-level information session (Fall 2025):
 - Information Night at OLOP (Nov 27, 2025): Presentation and Q&A with families.
 - Online questionnaire (Nov 27–Dec 5, 2025): Distributed to OLOP families; 94 responses collected.
 - Notification: Families unable to attend were informed via SchoolMessenger letter on Nov 28.
 - Analysis: Responses themed into categories (transportation, continuity, community, staffing, program quality, communication).
- Communications plan: Letters, FAQs, website updates, and coordinated social media posts to inform families and staff.
- Data sources: Parent survey raw data (Nov 2025), themed analysis of long-answer responses, communications plan deliverables, and ECSD website materials.

Questionnaire Results

Key Themes

1. Transportation & Distance
 - Most frequent concern (~80%). Parents cited bus rides of 45–90 minutes, safety for younger children, and loss of family time.
 - Support requested: commute caps at 45 minutes, more buses, early release of schedules.
2. Continuity & Community
 - Families fear dismantling a thriving French Immersion community at OLOP.
 - Concerns about friendships, routines, volunteer networks, and school culture.
 - ~60% of responses emphasized continuity as essential.
3. Communication & Trust
 - Parents felt blindsided and unheard.
 - ~40% cited lack of transparency and frustration with process.
 - Requests for clearer rationale, data sharing, and a single point of contact.
4. Teachers & Staff Considerations
 - Anxiety about losing valued teachers.
 - Requests for assurances that FI teachers retain positions.
 - ~25% of responses raised staffing concerns.
5. Program Quality & Resources
 - Questions about class sizes, supports, and whether Holy Cross offers equal or better resources.
 - ~20% raised program quality issues.

6. Childcare & Kindergarten

- ~25% highlighted OSC and kindergarten alignment as critical.
- Strong requests for full-day kindergarten and out of school care that aligns with bus schedules.

7. Emotional Adjustment

- ~10% acknowledged stress and disruption for families and children.
- Parents asked for recognition of the burden and transition supports.

Perceived Benefits

- No benefits: ~70–75% of families.
- French language/cultural opportunities: ~10%.
- Continuation pathway (elementary → junior high): ~5%.
- Uncertainty/conditional benefits: ~10%.
- Institutional benefits (Holy Cross only): ~5%.
- Conditional willingness: 73% of respondents indicated they would go to Holy Cross or were unsure, with decisions dependent on transportation, childcare, teacher continuity, and school culture.

Cross-tab Findings

- Transportation concerns strongly predicted “no benefits.”
- Continuity/community concerns are mapped directly to rejection of benefits.
- Teacher and communication concerns reinforced skepticism.
- Positive mentions were rare.

Conclusion

The questionnaire revealed a clear disconnect between ECSD’s stated rationale (retention, sustainability, enriched programming) and parent perceptions (loss, disruption, logistical burden). Families overwhelmingly see risks outweighing opportunities.