



École Mountainview

School Growth Plan 2018-2019

I. School

Mission Statement

“École Mountainview seeks to create a challenging learning environment in a French language setting that encourages high expectations for success. Our school promotes a safe, orderly, caring and



Image 1. École Mountainview, Terrace, British Columbia

supportive environment wherein all students are given equal opportunities to succeed. École Mountainview respects and recognizes the individual needs of children and emphasizes the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of each child.”

Educational Programs

École Mountainview is a single-track French Immersion school – and the only one of its kind within Coast Mountains School District 82. We offer a quality bilingual education from kindergarten to grade six and accept families from Terrace and the surrounding areas. As we are a *school of choice* with no catchment area, all families are welcome and are afforded the same opportunities to have their children educated in a rich French environment by an incredible staff of passionate and dedicated professionals. Instruction is given largely in French though, at times, English may be used to help ensure comprehension at the primary and kindergarten level.

Program Highlights

In addition to boasting Terrace’s *only* single-track French Immersion program, delivered by a compliment of highly skilled and dedicated teachers and learning professionals, diligently leading and guiding their pupils through each of the Core Competencies, EMV also provides a rich music program as well as Band for Grade Six students. In keeping with the “*First People’s Principles of Learning*”, EMV is proud to augment curricular experiences by enlisting the help of CMSD 82 Role



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Models; preparing and participating in Traditional Feasts; and exploring the Tsimshian Seasonal Rounds.

Life experiences outside the classroom are not overlooked as few things compare to “learning by doing”. Salmonid in the classroom; field trips to suit every taste and interest; extra-curricular sports teams as well as student-led leadership clubs, lunchtime supervision and recycling programs all help our students to learn the value of hard work, respect and the satisfaction of doing a job well.

Our school library is home to thousands of engaging French books, accessible to all levels of readers from Kindergarten to Grade Six. In addition to the French texts, EMV also has an impressive – and growing – collection of English novels that students are also encouraged to borrow by our French-speaking Librarian, and “emergently-bilingual” pair of Library Assistants.

Helping our school grow and meet the need of our expanding population, EMV is currently seeing a revitalization of sorts with our already incredibly supportive PAC. Attendance at monthly meetings is markedly increased over last year and many more events – some even becoming “regular” – being planned every month. From fundraisers, to hot-lunch, to helping out when we’re a little short on hands, PAC has proven repeatedly that they are very invested in the successful future of EMV.

Student Demographics

École Mountainview welcomes, accepts and enrolls students from varying socio, cultural and economic backgrounds. At present, there are 198 students enrolled at École Mountainview, an incredible 11% increase from last year. Currently, our Indigenous population makes up 17% of our total enrollment which is also a slight increase from last year.

We are proud to host ten divisions this year, with little room for new students due to the growing popularity of the program. At the Primary level, we have a pair of Kindergarten classrooms as well as a Kindergarten-Grade One split class; a full Grade One class; a Grade Two class; a Grade Two-Three split, and finally a straight Grade Three class. At the Intermediate level, we have a Grade Three-Four split class joined by straight Grade Five and a Grade Five-Six split class.

In addition to our fully bilingual teaching staff, we are also able to provide students with 0.400 FTE Learner Support in French as well as 26 hours of Educational Assistant. Our Librarian is also able to offer instruction in French and often collaborates with teachers in small group activities.

Facilities



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Thanks to the incredible hard work of the CMSD82 Maintenance Department, École Mountainview has seen many changes and upgrades to its facilities this year. Improved lighting in the main hallway as well as a lighter colour scheme on the walls has helped brighten the school as a whole. The “purple racing stripe” around the building, as well as our new painted “feature wall” to help reinforce community by visually tying all the classrooms together and serves to remind everyone that we are all working *together* towards a common goal.

Our gymnasium has also undergone changes intended to improve the safety of staff and students. The climbing wall has been removed, and with it, the large metal beams and brackets once stored on the gym floor. The equipment room itself has been completely re-thought and many old, neglected and forgotten pieces of equipment have been properly disposed of. The old shelving, salvaged from the Kiti-K'Shan library before transferring campuses, has been removed and in its place new large, sturdy steel shelving units which afford more storage.



II. Scanning

Evidence of Achievement

École Mountainview students have the benefit and additional challenge of enjoying their foundational elementary education in a vibrant French Immersion environment. Students not only receive instruction and experience the curriculum in a second language, but they also profit from the rich French-Canadian cultural events and presentations afforded by our hard-working staff, generous funding from CMSD 82 and the Federal government, and collaboration between community partners.

EMV student progress is currently tracked regularly via four distinct collection methods: annual teacher reviews and report cards, our GB+ school-wide reading program, and information accumulated examining “communication orale générale”, general oral communication skills, as well as identifying “presence de la première langue”, the presence and frequency of the use of students’ first language – English, in particular. Through the utilization of these different tools, teachers, support staff, parents and students themselves have been able to adjust our teaching and learning strategies, identify potential weaknesses as well as strengths in terms of oral communication skills and reading proficiency. In addition to our own in-house data collection methods, student achievement is also measured, statistically at least, by means of FSA and DMA assessments.

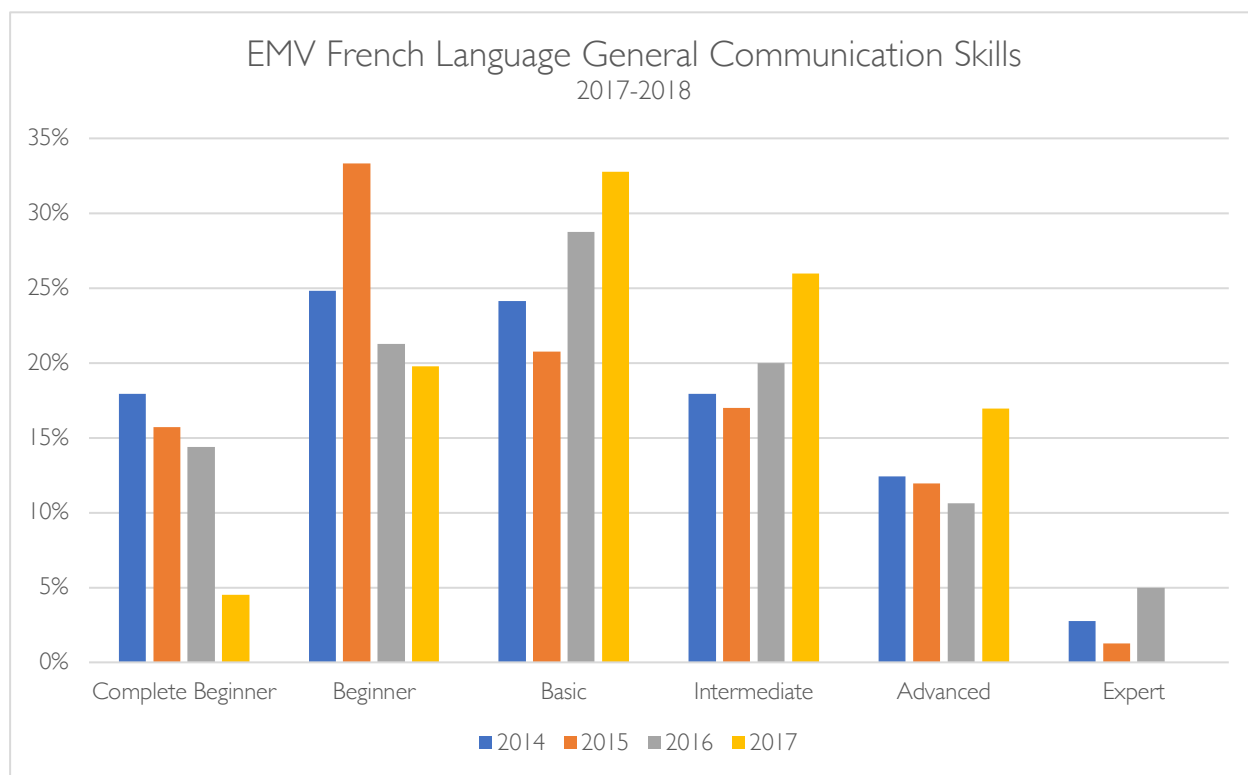


Chart 2. EMV student achievement - Spoken French

i. Spoken French

Data collected over the past four years shows a gradual and continued improvement in *all* learners spoken French language proficiency. The number of “Complete Beginners” and “Beginners” are readily declining whereas the number of students ranked at “Basic” and “Intermediate” are on the rise. The dramatic increase in “Advanced” communication skills is refreshing to see while the number of students rated as “Expert” is not surprising in the least. (Teachers have commented that the requirements of the “Expert” level would be unlikely attained by many people even at the Secondary level.)

While the number of students meeting oral language expectations is increasing but still not where we want it to be. There are still challenges in this area that need to be met, such as increasing the amount of spontaneous French that is spoken by our students with their peers, adding to the level of French vocabulary that the students are using, and increasing the amount of French vocabulary students are exposed to.

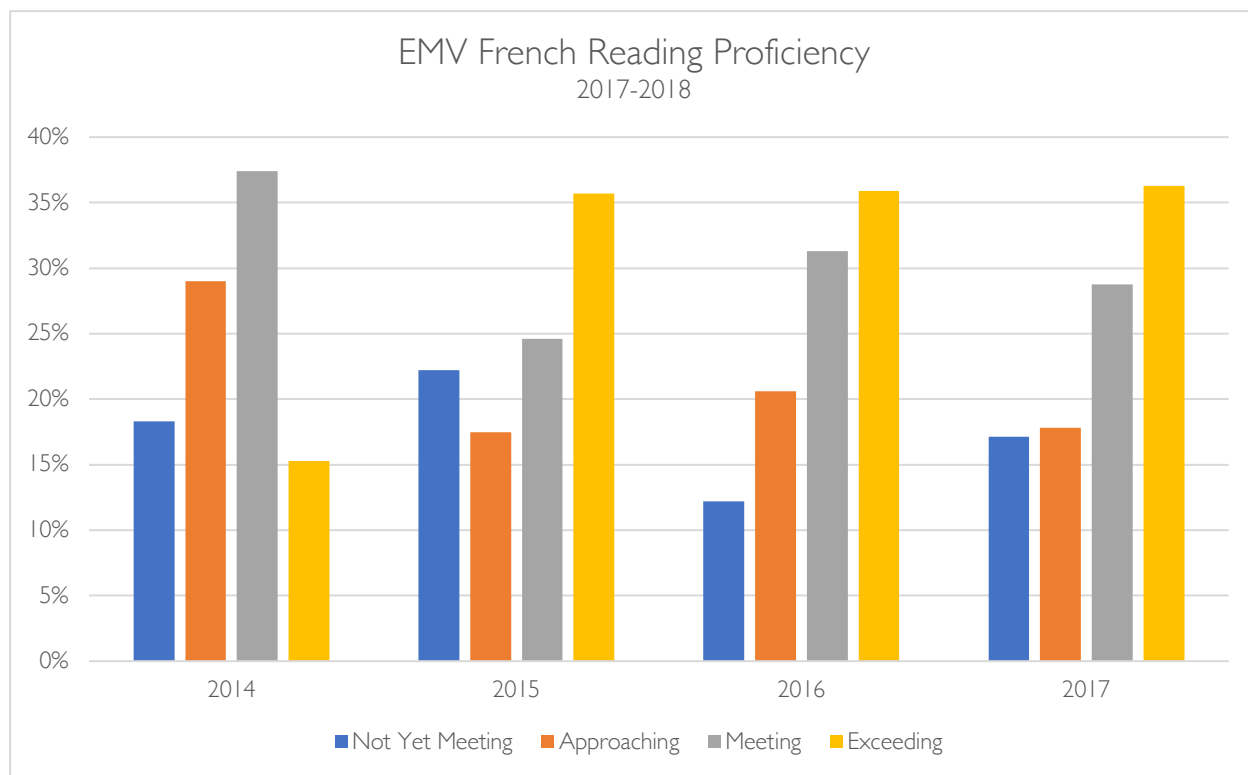


Chart 2. EMV student achievement - Reading

ii. Reading

Based on the data collected using the in-house rubric developed by the Staff of École Mountainview over the course of the past four years, a steady improvement in student success is clearly visible. An *astounding* 72% of our students are either meeting or exceeding reading expectations. More impressively however, there has been a decrease in the number of students assessed as being “Not Yet Meeting” expectations is reading fluency from 37% to just 15%!

While results from the 2017 FSA do not mirror these results, scoring only 15% of our Grade Four population as “Fully Meeting” or “Exceeding” expectations, it is worth mentioning that, at the time of participating in the FSAs, students had only been formally instructed in English, the language in which the FSAs are administered, for a few weeks.

The data discussed illustrates that while there is a strong number of students who are meeting expectations in speaking and reading, there are still a significant number of students in our school who are struggling to meet expectations. For all of our students, we are continuing to move towards:



-an increased use of French by all students-fewer students at the zero level on the oral language evaluation tool;

-an increase in the spontaneous use of French by students-student-teacher and peer-peer;

-an increase in the reading abilities of all our students-overall the number of students reading (with comprehension) within their grade level to increase.

Student Responses

Anecdotally speaking, students were quite candid during our Student-Led forums hosted in February about the different elements in and about École Mountainview that aid and detract from their learning. There wasn't a single classroom that didn't list "Great teachers" as a tool present in the building to afford quality educational experiences and the usual "noisy neighbours" was similarly a constant detractor. While classroom

discussions are central to learning and sharing of ideas, the noise levels of students travelling throughout the halls is somewhat problematic. The Staff at EMV acknowledge this fact and will look to raise expectations of student behaviour in the future.

Students also made mention that they didn't feel as though EMV, as a community, doesn't do enough things together as a whole. While interaction between classes does exist, it remains minimal and almost seasonal in nature – occurring only a handful of times a year. In keeping with the First People's Principles of Learning in that "learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)", it is essential that students are afforded increased opportunities to interact, both formally and informally, with other students. As such, following the guidelines established in during this year's "Jeux Olympiques" activities, students will be organised into teams of which they will be a member throughout their entire career at EMV allowing for the interaction and fostering of positive relationships to develop and grow. A student will join a given team in Kindergarten as the most junior member and by the time they reach Grade Six, will be the leader of the very same team.

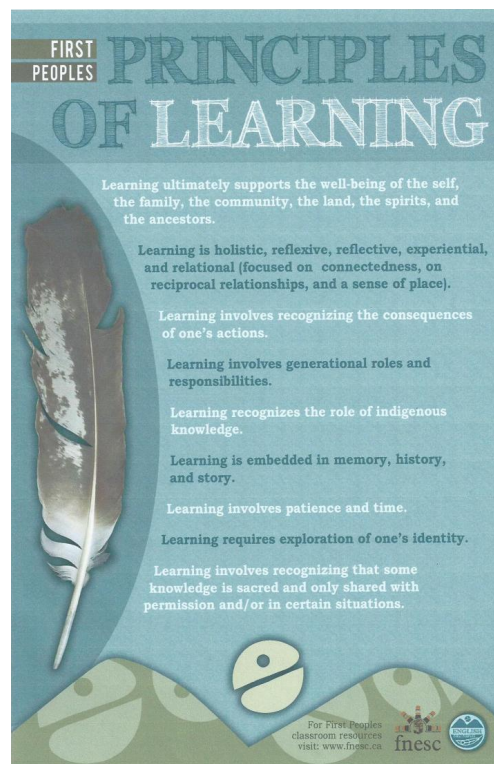


Figure 1. Principles of Learning



III. Focusing

Shifting Focus

The gains and advancements made by Staff and students since the establishment of EMV as a single-track French Immersion school have been incredible. With a persistent and continued focus on improving student's reading and communication skills the results have been impressive to say the least. (Figures 1, 2.) While not looking to abandon the hard work and strategies employed in order to reap the academic improvements of all of our learners, the Staff at École Mountainview feel that it is time to add an additional academic goal to further enrich our students' experiences and broaden their grasp, understanding and utilization of the French language.

Inquiry Question

"While continuing to encourage students to speak and read in French, staff and students of École Mountainview will look to focus on the writing component of the literacy pyramid, adopting a more holistic approach to engage the learner and the French language. Therefore, to what extent will the improvement in students' French speaking and reading abilities translate into increased proficiency in writing original French texts?"

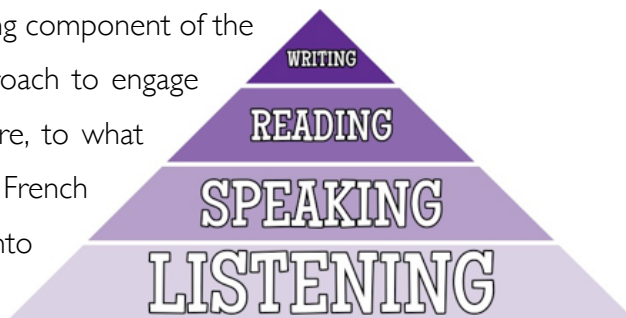


Figure 2. Literacy Pyramid

Justification

École Mountainview has had noticeable improvement in our students' spoken language due to the single-track school environment. There is pride in speaking French as well as the support from all teachers speaking French. We continue to establish our identity within the Terrace area and within the School District. Through the data collected, EMV staff and parents see the need to continue to focus on improving students' language skills. We feel that if our students have a solid oral language and reading abilities that these skills will work in tandem to help improve their abilities to communicate in written form. To this end we are focusing on both oral language and reading abilities. We are putting a focus on French vocabulary development with our primary students. We believe this will give them the ability to communicate better in French. Due to the fact that our students are second language learners and that we are the conduit by which they learn this language. We need to provide them with as much experience with the language as possible in as many different ways as possible. We are already using a whole school reading program (GB+), with a guided reading approach; as well as other reading resources such as The



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Daily Five, Jolly Phonique and l'Alphabet de la forêt. It is important that our students continue to become excellent readers with continuous improvement in comprehension and communication strategies as a foundation for all other learning throughout their education.

The Staff of École Mountainview are proud of the students' success and dedication to learning in an immersive French environment. Students' collective attitudes and work-ethics – as evinced by responses during *Student-Led forums*, indicate that not only do they welcome the challenge of learning in French, but that they embrace and enjoy it. In the eight years since opening its doors, École Mountainview has *always* stressed the need to establish a strong fundamental knowledge base on which to help build and shape students' understanding of the French language. While the job is certainly far from over, we feel it is time to expand our horizons and issue a new learning challenge to our students by applying their strong reading and communication skills in an effort to improve the quality of their written work.

By continuing to support learners in their communicative skills with their teachers – as well as through the relentless pursuit of authentic, meaningful spontaneous French interactions with their peers – the Staff at EMV hope that this more holistic and *fully* immersive approach will continue to yield positive results from our students. In addition to looking to raise the literacy levels for all of our learners, EMV endeavours to enhance learner engagement, opportunities and choice through continued joint efforts with community partners and developing meaningful, and reciprocal, relationships with alumni at Skeena Middle School and Caledonia Secondary.



IV. Developing a Hunch

Previous Practices

We believe that when learning in a second language, some students' struggling with meeting expectations in oral language and reading abilities can be attributed to the fact that by entering a French Immersion program, students are not only learning the basics of reading, writing and mathematics but they are learning all this in a second language. In learning a new language, students first need to learn French vocabulary before learning to read. If students do not have a strong foundation in vocabulary words, speaking French and reading in French is more challenging. In turn, without abilities to recognize and decode words makes the transfer of knowledge to creating sentences and paragraphs of their own highly improbable. EMV recognized the need to allocate additional resources to students who are struggling in this area and provide educators with new and innovative strategies for addressing language skills and reading abilities. Particular attention should be focused on providing strategies to educators of Grades 1-3 to encourage a strong foundation in reading and speaking early on. Our resource teacher regularly has a primary language development group to work with. As well, our Educational Assistant works both in the classroom with the teachers and with groups of students to augment the students' oral abilities.

Living in an English community, with the majority of parents as English speakers, impacts students' exposure to the French language and French vocabulary. Although this in itself is not something that educators can alter, it is a factor that needs to be recognized so that strategies can be put in place to assist learners to incorporate the French language and culture that they learn in school to their home and social activities.

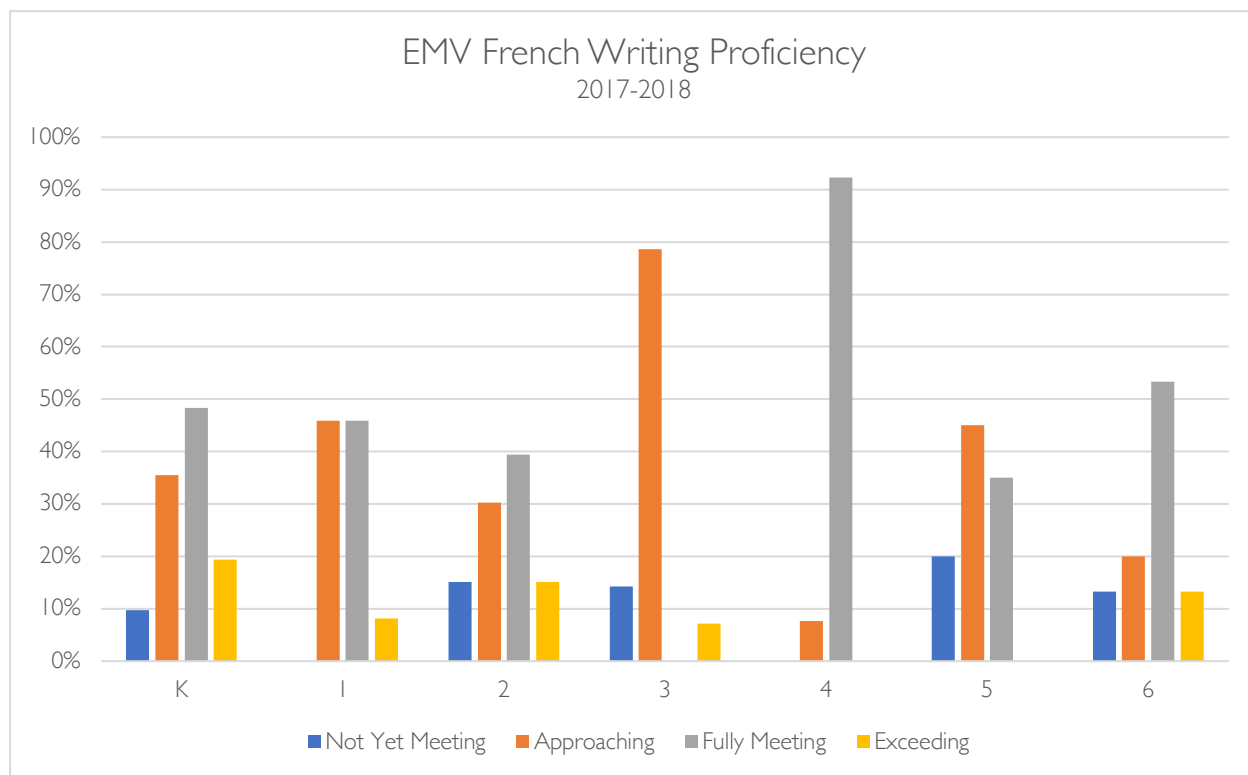


Chart 3. EMV student achievement - Writing

New Focus

There is a marked difference in our learners' abilities in terms of writing when compared to their communication and reading skills. At all grade levels – apart from Grades Three and Four - students' abilities are scattered in nearly perfect *Normal Distribution* pattern. With dedicated practice and time, results will, hopefully, begin to shift away from the normal distribution and be skewed similarly to our students' Reading and Communication skills.

Pursuant to addressing and meeting the needs of our students in terms of the creation of original compositions and essays, more time will be dedicated in classrooms to the often “reverse nature” of French when compared to English and the structure of coherent and well-crafted sentences in the Primary classrooms whereas the intricacies and nuances of French grammar as well as the conjugation of verbs in the “passé composé”, “present”, and “future simple” tenses will be explored at the Intermediate level.

Many of our students presently have difficulty spelling correctly, opting instead to spell phonetically to make themselves understood. While the use of classroom “dictées” has shown some improvement in some students' abilities, the vocabulary selected for these spelling quizzes (dictées) must be at an appropriate level for, and meaningful to, the learner to be able to use in context



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outside of simply being able to spell the word correctly. Therefore, high-frequency words should be selected and promoted in lieu of more novel and seldom used vocabulary.



V. Professional Learning

Learning Professionals

The teachers and staff in our building are continuously developing their strategies for building the capacity for our students' use of oral French language as well as the evaluation of these abilities. We were using two sections from the "Référentiel de compétences orales": "capacité globale à communiquer" (General Communication Skills) and "degré de présence de l'anglais" (Presence of First Language). We have decided as a staff that this fits with our school and our students. Additionally, we have created our own oral language evaluation tool based on the référentiel de compétences orales. We felt that while the Référentiel de compétences orales was a good starting point for us it needed to be refined to make it more applicable to our students. We created an evaluation tool that was not too unwieldy and connected better to what we saw for our students.

Our in-house GB+ rubric has undergone a number of adjustments and fine-tuning to better reflect the abilities and increased expectations our Teaching Staff have of our learners. There is not a standardized conversion chart for the GB+ reading evaluation. We used our professional judgement at the time to create one. We have also found documentation permitting for the direct transfer of reading scores from our School-wide GB+ reading program to that of the PMB scores used across the CMSD82 district.

Resources

Presently the Staff at EMV are utilizing the BC Writing Performance standards to help direct and inform instruction. With an increased focus on writing at all levels, there will no doubt be a need to expand our toolkits and resources. There are several "Trait Crates" in the Intermediate levels, the signage and materials found within these resources are all in English and require extensive retooling to be meaningfully used in a French lesson as our over-arching School-wide goal remains to learn French *in* French.

Opportunities

While it continues to be a struggle to find available professional learning opportunities for our staff that focus on French Immersion, there is a renewed sense of unity and comradery amongst French Immersion teachers. As the New French Immersion Coordinator for CMSD82, I am looking to encourage and assist in more frequent and regular opportunities for French Immersion Staff to meet, discuss and collaborate with colleagues.



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In deciding to redefine our focus for the upcoming, and subsequent few years, there was a palpable energy in the Library as our Staff meeting drew near its conclusion. The Staff was energized and invigorated to accept and meet this newly issued challenge we had just set for ourselves. Talk was already beginning between colleagues about how to meet the needs of learners and, as a Staff, *teachers* expressed great interest in collaborating with one another during the Curriculum Implementation Day to take place on September 4th, 2018. Furthermore, conversations have continued and EMV is now looking to extend the invitation to collaborate on teaching and learning to write in French to colleagues at *Kildala Elementary* in Kitimat and *Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary* in Hazelton.

French Immersion Coordinator Initiatives

With the proposed digital sharing spaces afforded by CMSD82's Information Technology Department, I am, as French Immersion Coordinator, presently seeking to create online sharing and collaboration spaces for FI teachers across the district to work together, host and distribute resources, and exchange anecdotes. Furthermore, I am presently assessing the levels of interest – and feasibility – of instituting a shared FI resource library similar in nature to our First Nations Resource Centres insofar as large amounts of shared resources could be safely catalogued, curated and distributed from one central location, EMV, to FI classrooms across the District. As FI resources tend to be quite expensive, it seemed as though allocating funding to the purchase of fewer class-sets of books and resources that could then be borrowed and returned using the CMSD82 Mailbag System is a more fiscally responsible alternative to every school buying copies of identical materials.



VI. Taking Action

Rationale

Oral language development and reading abilities have been our focus for the past few years. Satisfied with the results – though with no intent of abandoning the practices that garnered these improvements – the Staff of École Mountainview are looking to broaden our expectations and focus on the final dimension of learning a new language: writing. As educators we believe that our students need a firm oral language basis in French as they are learning in this second language. Our goals remain on promoting the use of oral French with the additional focus on the connection between oral language and reading comprehension and ultimately the creation of original and authentic writing pieces. All the members of our Staff are confident that the impressive, yet still developing, reading and speaking abilities of our students bodes well for this new chapter.

Interventions

We want to catch the oral language concerns early to be able to structure in timely interventions as a strong foundation in conversing and reading in French are instrumental in learning to write. We generally speak to our students in French as well as with each other so that we are modeling for the students. Our Learning Assistance Teacher regularly takes small groups of students to work on vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, and reading skills. There are many different methods that the staff use to assist in the oral language development-speaking, visual and oral together, kinesthetic and oral together, and modeling to name a few. Fortunately, our Educational Assistant is also fluently bilingual and works in conjunction with the Classroom Teachers and Learning Assistance teacher.

QED

Classrooms schedules will need to be amended - though hopefully not too intrusively – to allow for increased practise and opportunities for students to write; whether it be through guided-writing exercises, creative storytelling or personal journaling. Sentence-starters will likely be prevalent in the initial stages though it is expected that most students will be able to create and record their own thoughts given sufficient exposure to the medium.

It is much easier to experience the changes and growth that have occurred in the past regarding student achievement in the use of oral language than it will be to fully and immediately grasp their growth in their writing. Bulletin boards that line the hallways could be used to proudly display the latest student compositions. Student-created blogs could easily showcase student growth and



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would be accessible even at home, foregoing the need to physically be on campus to see student work.

In addition to simply *reading* the work of students, several of the Intermediate classrooms have historically written short stories and put on small dramatic productions for the younger grades to enjoy allowing them to be engaged in the language short of being able to read all of the words. Likewise, all of our Intermediate students participate every year in CPF's "Concours d'art oratoire" French Language speech competition wherein students are required to first write their speeches on topics of interest before memorizing and performing them for their classmates and peers.



Image 2. Grade Six students reading original material to Grade Four class



VII. Checking

Schedules & Adjustments

The goal moving forward for the Staff and students of École Mountainview is to improve the quality of written French language output. The often counterintuitive nature of the language poses problems for learners who have not yet been sufficiently exposed to it. Everyone involved in the process will do well to remember that we are in the infancy of this new academic pursuit and that patience, practice and time will be essential in much the same way they were as we worked to improve our students' speaking and reading abilities.

The strong collaborative nature of our Staff will likely play a significant role in the early stages of the implementation of our Growth Plan. Teachers of similar grades are regularly and informally looking to one another for ideas, resources and strategies to reach students who are not meeting their perceived potential. The Staff at École Mountainview are wholly and passionately dedicated to providing the finest French Immersion education we can.

Continuous dialogue, continuous checking and revising what we are doing, and looking at the big school picture is important for the success of this plan.

School Principal Signature

School Planning Council Signature