

Provincial Assessment Results 2019-20 Grade 12 French Second Language Oral Proficiency

Background

The *Provincial Grade 12 French Second Language Oral Proficiency Assessment* (OPI) is administered each year to provide students with their proficiency level and to track system progress. Students are assessed either at the end of the first or second semester.

Trained evaluators conduct one on one interviews with students. They elicit a language sample which is rated using the *New Brunswick Oral Proficiency Scale*, (see appendix). Students receive a certificate indicating their oral proficiency level.

Proficiency Targets

The minimum French second language (FSL) oral proficiency target is the Intermediate level of the *New Brunswick Oral Proficiency Scale*, or B1.1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference Scale*.

Who participated?

Analysis of the 2019-20 results included examination of two new variables. The first variable was the COVID-19-related school closure beginning March 2020. The second was the potential impact of this year's cohort of Early Immersion students who were the first to have started their immersion experience in Grade 3 rather than Grade 1. Findings related to this will be discussed later in this document.

COVID-19-Related Impact

In previous years, participation in the Grade 12 OPI was mandatory for Grade 12 students enrolled in a minimum number of French second language courses, depending on their French second language program. Other Grade 12 students could participate voluntarily. For the 2019-20 school year, second semester participation was voluntary due to COVID-19-related school closures. Testing in semester 1 was conducted via in-person interviews. Students who participated in the semester 2 assessment did so through phone or video conference interviews.

A total of 1288 students participated (semester 1 or 2). The table below indicates participation by FSL program. It also indicates the percentage of semester 2 students who normally would have been required to take the assessment who chose to participate. Overall, 64% of the 479 students who ordinarily should have participated in semester 2 did. This percentage was impacted significantly by the low participation rate of students in the Post-Intensive French program (19%).

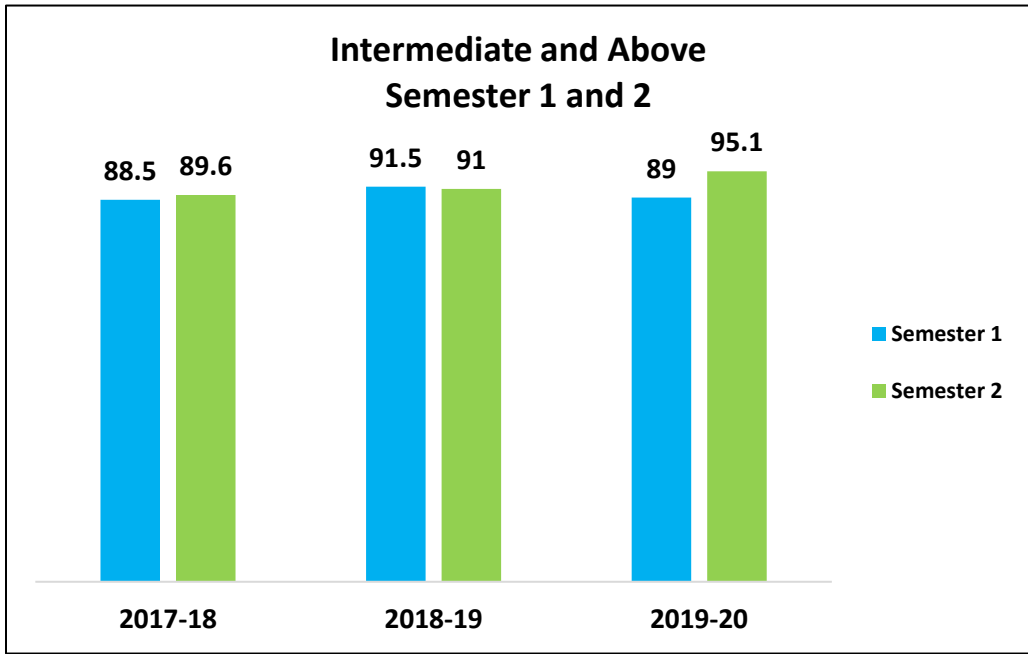
Grade 12 OPI Participation in 2019-20

Program	Total Students Participating (Sem. 1 & 2)	% of Sem. 2 "Mandatory" Students Choosing to Participate
Early French Immersion (registered from Grade 3 to Grade 10)	657	74%
Late French Immersion (registered from Grade 6 to Grade 10)	339	77%
Post-Intensive French (registered from Grade 5 to Grade 10)	68	19%
Other (students who transferred programs or from out of province, etc.)	224	-
Total	1288	64%

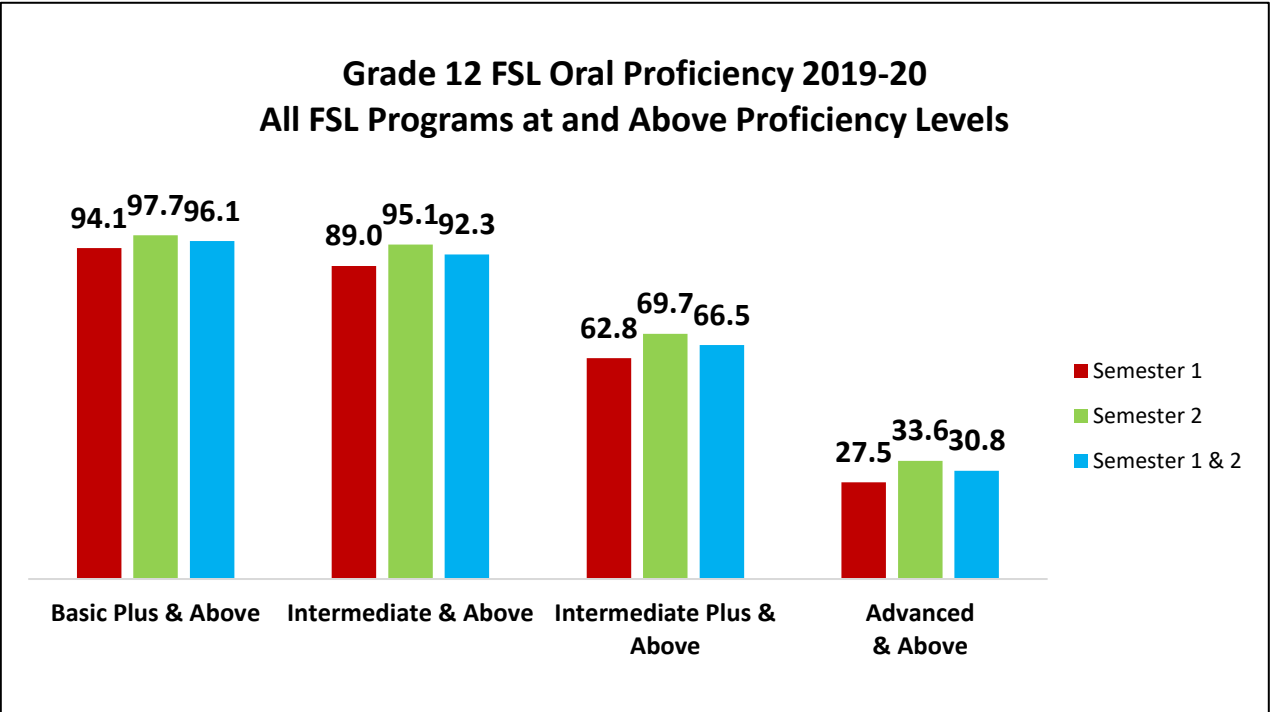
Overall Results by Proficiency Level

Given the voluntary nature of the 2019-20 semester 2 participation, semester 1 and 2 results were compared to ensure comparisons with previous years would be valid.

Based on the graph below, it appears that, under normal circumstances, the timing of testing does not impact success rate, however, last year's unusual selection process in semester 2, resulted in a higher success rate in semester 2.

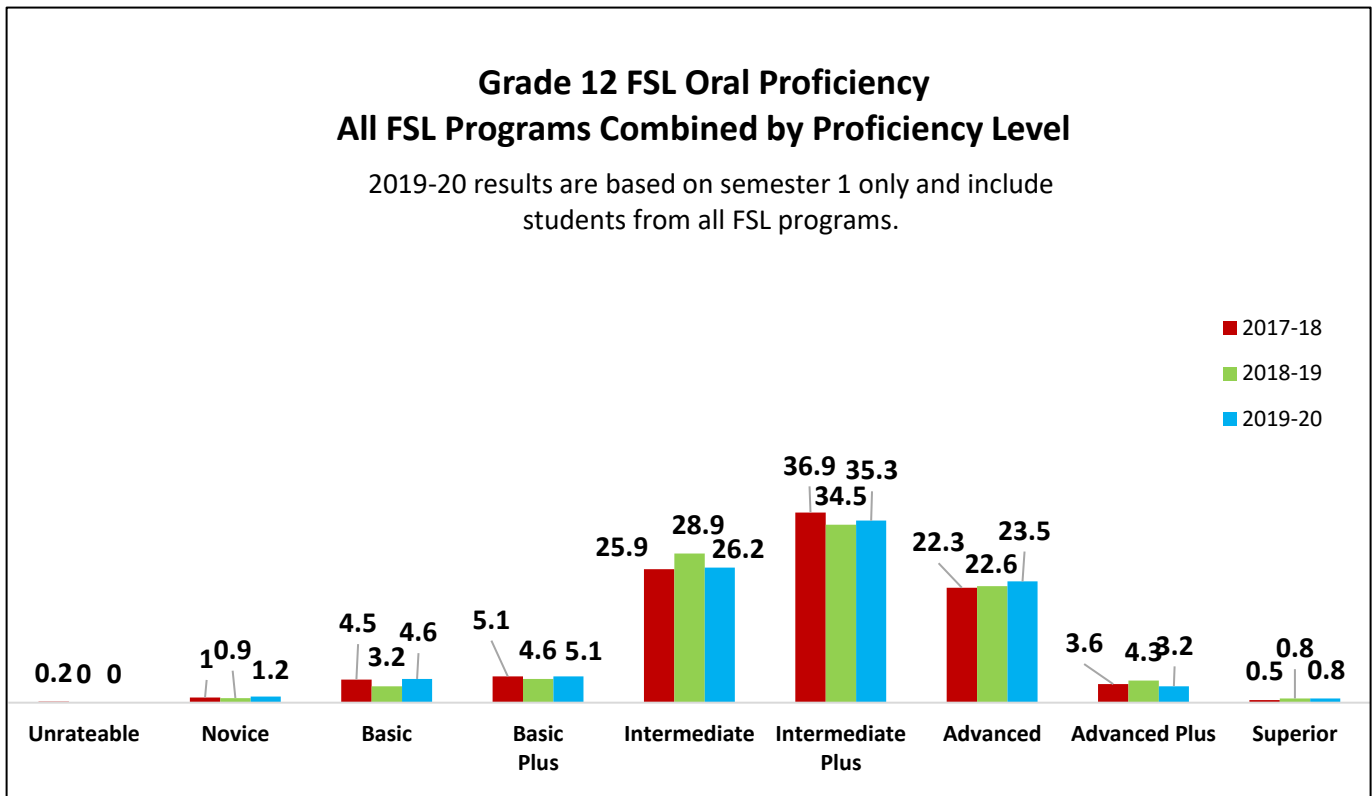


The graph below further illustrates the difference between semester 1 and 2 results in 2019-20. For example, in semester 1, 27.5% of students attained Advanced or above whereas in semester 2, 33.6% of students attained this level.



Note: Based on the difference introduced due to student self-selected participation in semester 2, results in this document are based solely on semester 1 wherever the 2019-20 school year is referenced, unless otherwise indicated.

For example, the graph below indicates the proficiency levels of *all* students assessed in 2017-18 and 2018-19, but for semester 1 students only in 2019-20.



In summary, 89% of students assessed in semester 1 in 2019-20 attained the proficiency target of Intermediate or higher. This is comparable to the two previous years (2017-18 = 89.2%; 2018-19 = 91.1%)

Results by Program

Early French Immersion

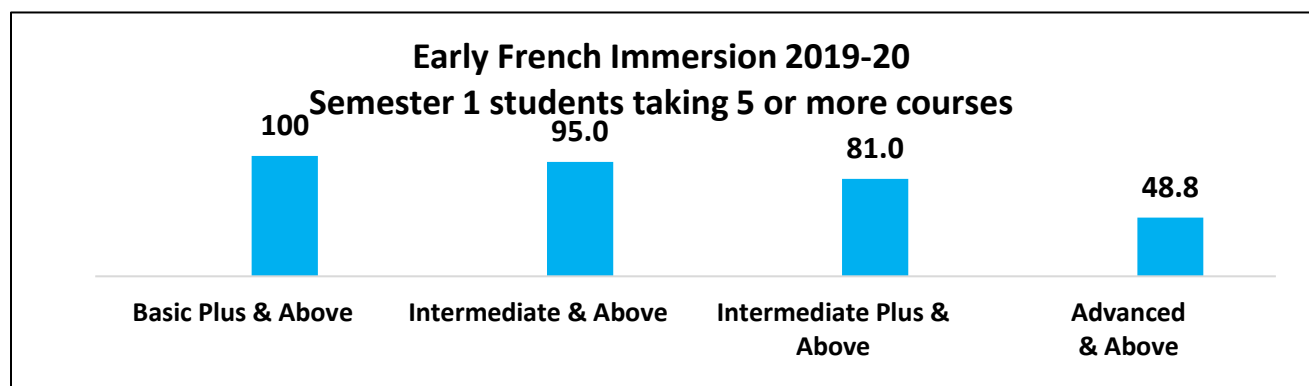
This year's Grade 12 Early French Immersion students represent the first cohort to begin French Immersion in Grade 3 rather than Grade 1.

Instructional time in French provided to students in this program:

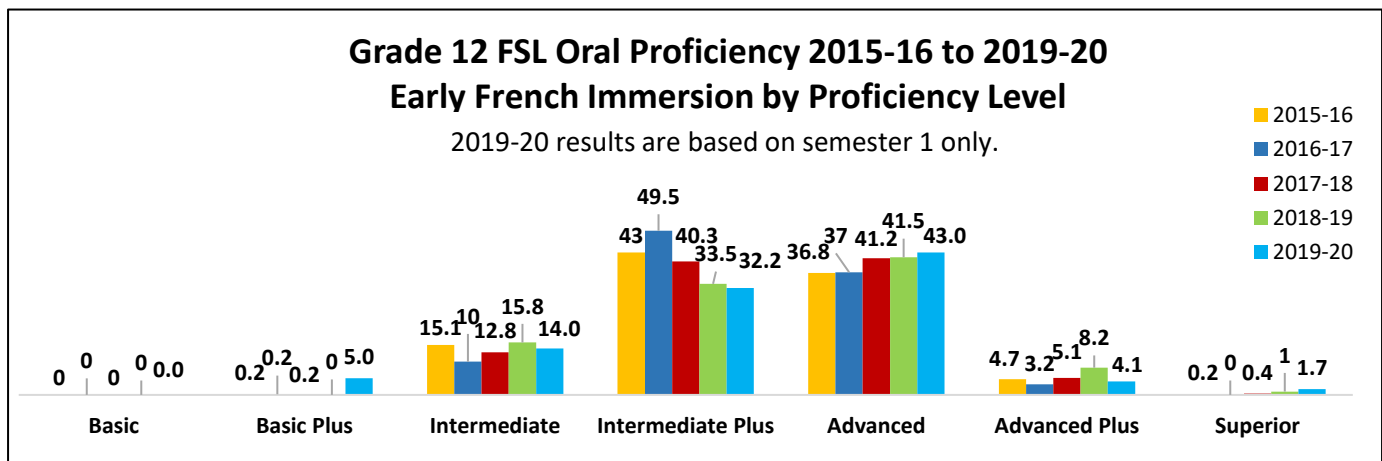
- Grades 3 to 5: 80%
- Grades 6 to 8: 70%
- Grades 9 and 10: 50%
- Grades 11 and 12: 25%

The graphs below represent the results of semester 1 Grade 12 Early French Immersion students (121 students). Results include only students taking five or more French courses in their Grade 11 or 12 year. This is due to the policy requirement that students take at least 25% of their instruction in French in order to be classified as immersion students (see Policy 309 – *French Second Language*). These will be referred to as “mandatory” students in this document.

Of these students, 100% attained Basic Plus or above, 95% attained Intermediate or above, 81% attained Intermediate Plus or above, and 48.8% attained Advanced or above.



The graph below provides the results in further detail and includes historical comparisons from 2015-16 to 2019-20. In 2019-20, 5% of students attained Basic Plus, 14% attained Intermediate, 32.2% attained Intermediate Plus, 43% attained Advanced, 4.1% attained Advanced Plus, and 1.7% attained Superior.



Grade 3 vs. Grade 1 Program Entry-Related Impact

It is premature to draw conclusions about the effects of moving the Early Immersion program entry from Grade 1 to Grade 3 based on a single year of results. Preliminary comparisons are summarized in the table below. Results over the past five years indicate that the overall percentage of students attaining the Intermediate proficiency level or higher is lower this year (95%), however, the percentage at the higher levels (Advanced or above) is comparable to last year and better than previous years (48.8%).

**Comparison of Early French Immersion Results Over Time
Percentage of Students at Two Proficiency Levels**

Year	Intermediate or Above	Advanced or Above
2015-16	99.8	41.7
2016-17	99.7	40.2
2017-18	99.8	46.7
2018-19	100.0	50.7
2019-20*	95.0	48.8

* Semester 1 results only

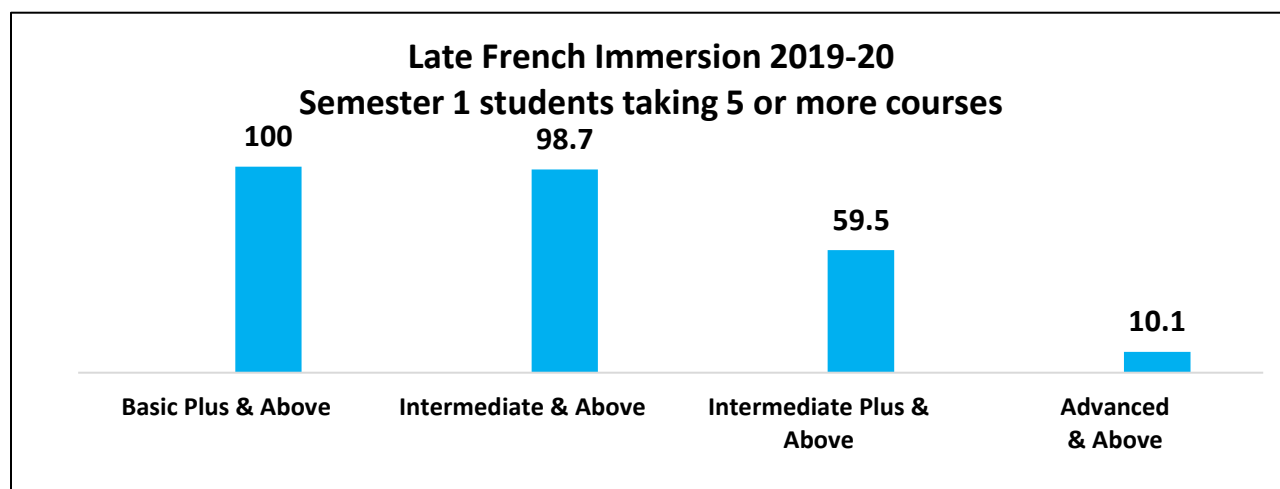
Late French Immersion Results

Seventy-nine semester 1 students were interviewed. Results include only students taking five or more courses due to the policy requirement that students take at least 25% of their instruction in French in order to be classified as immersion students (see Policy 309 – *French Second Language*). These will be referred to as “mandatory” students in this document.

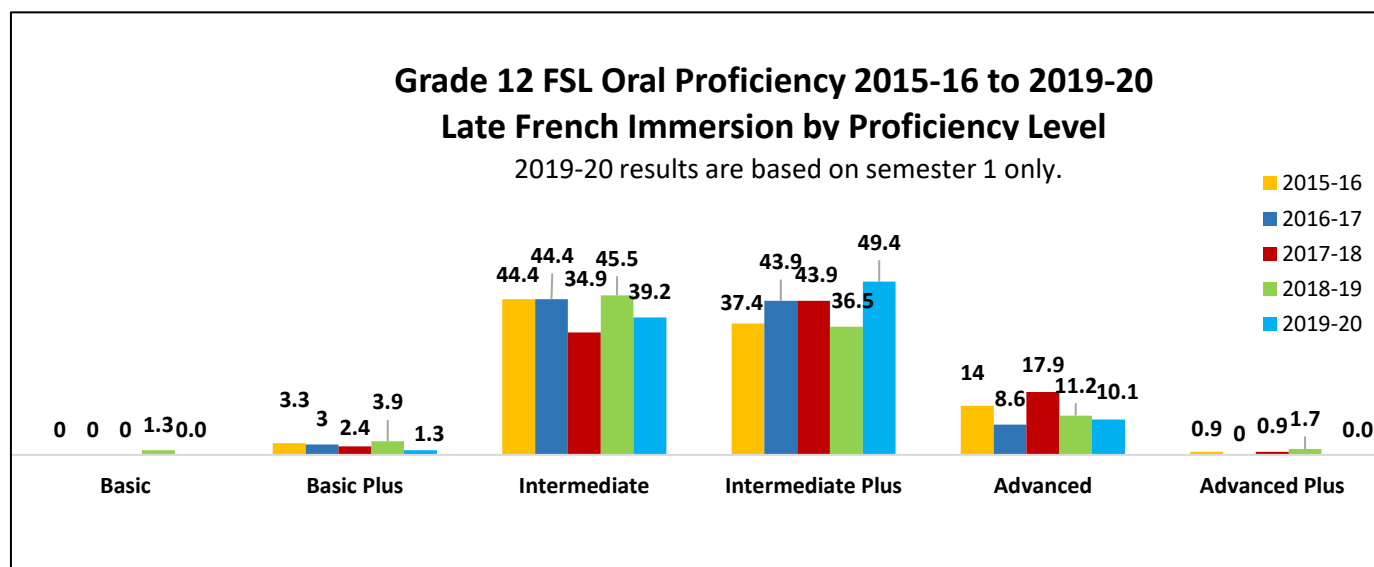
Instructional time in French provided to students in this program:

- Grades 6 to 8: 70%
- Grades 9 and 10: 50%
- Grades 11 and 12: 25%

Of these students, 100% attained Basic Plus or above, 98.7% attained Intermediate or above, 59.9% attained Intermediate Plus or above, and 10.1% attained Advanced or above.



The graph below provides the results in further detail and includes historical comparisons from 2015-16 to 2019-20. In 2019-20, 1.3% of students attained Basic Plus, 39.2% attained Intermediate, 49.4% attained Intermediate Plus, and 10.1% attained the Advanced proficiency level.



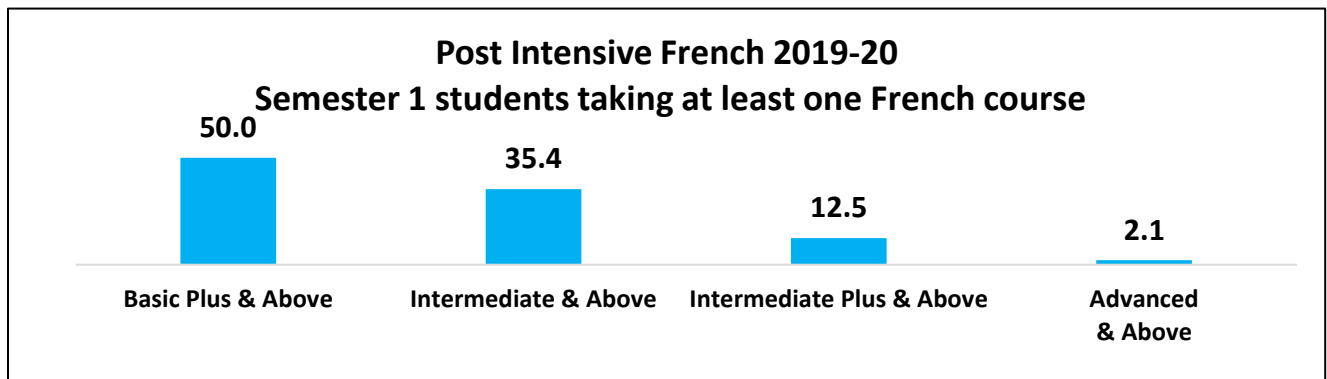
Post Intensive French Results

This year, 49 semester 1 students were interviewed. Results include only students taking one or more French courses in Grade 11 or 12. These students will be referred to as “mandatory” students in this document.

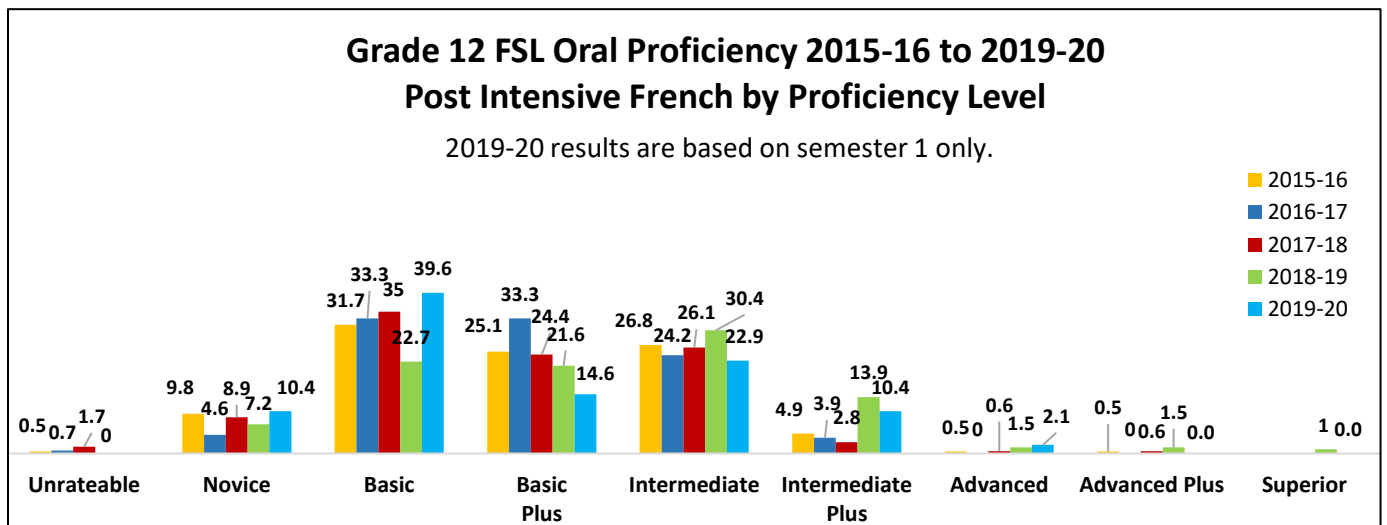
Instructional time in French provided to students in this program:

- Grade 4: 150 minutes (9%) per week
- Grade 5: 1,000 minutes per week in one semester; 150 minutes per week in the other
- Grades 6-8: 200 minutes (12%) per week
- Grades 9 and 10: one French course (10%)
- Grades 11 and 12: optional

Of these students, 50% attained Basic Plus or above, 35.4% attained Intermediate or above, 12.5% attained Intermediate Plus or above, and 2.1% attained Advanced or above.



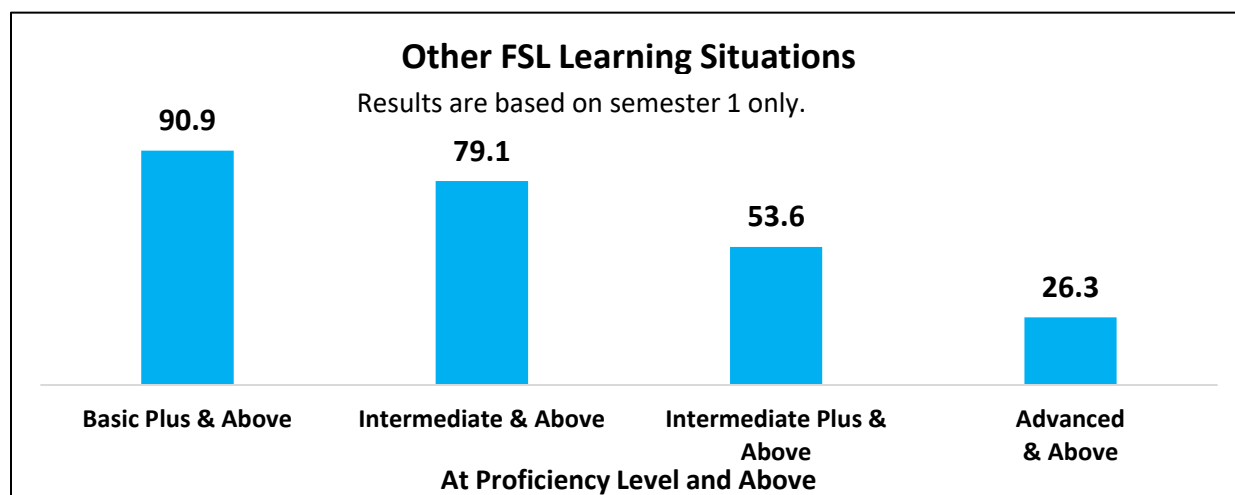
The graph below provides the results in further detail and includes historical comparisons from 2015-16 to 2019-20. In 2019-20, 10.4% attained Novice, 39.6% attained Basic, 14.6% attained Basic Plus, 22.9% attained Intermediate, 10.4% attained Intermediate Plus, and 2.1% attained Advanced.



Results for students from other programs

Of the 1288 students assessed in 2019-20, 110 students from other French learning situations participated in the assessment in semester 1, (e.g., students who transferred from another jurisdiction, from another program, from one language sector to the other).

The graph below indicates the percentage of Grade 12 students in this category at proficiency level and above.



Results by Program – Summary

The following table presents semester 1 results for 2019-20 by program. Only students for whom the assessment was mandatory are included.

Percentage of Semester 1 Students at Proficiency Levels by FSL Program 2019-20

Program	Basic+ or Above	Intermediate or Above	Intermediate+ or Above	Advanced or Above
Early Immersion (Grade 3 Entry)	100	95	81	48.8
Late Immersion (Grade 6 Entry)	100	98.7	59.5	10.1
Post-Intensive French	50	35.4	12.5	1.2

APPENDIX

New Brunswick Second Language Oral Proficiency Scale Performance Descriptions

UNRATEABLE	No functional ability in the language.
NOVICE ≈ A1.1	Able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed phrases. No real autonomy of expression, flexibility, or spontaneity. Can ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy but only with memorized phrases. Vocabulary is very limited.
BASIC ≈ A1/A2.1	Able to create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements. Can satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face interaction with native speakers accustomed to dealing with second language learners. Almost every utterance contains fractured syntax and grammatical errors. Vocabulary is adequate to express most elementary needs.
BASIC PLUS ≈ A2	Able to initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy limited social demands. Shows some spontaneity in language production, but fluency is very uneven. There is emerging evidence of connected discourse, particularly for simple narration and/or description, but range and control of language structures are limited.
INTERMEDIATE ≈ B1.1	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in school/work settings. Can provide information and give explanations with some degree of accuracy, but language is awkward. Can handle most common social situations, including introductions and casual conversations about events in school and community; able to provide autobiographical information in some detail. Can give directions from one place to another; can give accurate instructions in a field of personal expertise. Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to converse simply, with some paraphrasing. Accent, though often quite faulty, is intelligible. Uses high frequency language structures accurately, but does not have a thorough or confident control of grammar. In certain situations, diction would probably distract a native speaker.
INTERMEDIATE PLUS ≈ B1.2	Able to satisfy the requirements of a broad variety of everyday, school, and work situations. Can discuss concrete topics relating to special fields of competence as well as subjects of current public interest. Normally does not have to grope for words. Often shows a significant degree of fluency and ease in speaking, yet, under pressure, may experience language breakdown. May exhibit good control of language structures, but be limited in overall language production; or, conversely, may demonstrate ample speech production, but have uneven control of structures. Some misunderstandings will still occur.
ADVANCED ≈ B2.1	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal, and in all informal conversations, on practical, social, and academic or work-related topics. Can describe in detail and narrate accurately. Can discuss abstract topics and ideas as well as events; can support opinions and hypothesize. Accent may be obvious but never interferes with understanding. Control of grammar is good and speech is fluent. Sporadic errors still occur, but they would not distract a native speaker or interfere with communication.
ADVANCED PLUS ≈ B2.2/C1	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural and lexical accuracy that participation in conversations in all areas poses no problem. Accent may be noticeable and the speaker occasionally exhibits hesitancy, which indicates some uncertainty in vocabulary or structure.
SUPERIOR ≈ C1	Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to personal situation (academic, social, work-related). Can understand and participate in any conversation within the range of personal experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary. Accent is good, but the speaker would not necessarily be taken for a native speaker.