Local and statewide participation in the French movement reached a new level during last week and continues today as Louisiana students from 36 cities and towns fly across America on route to a five-week adventure in Quebec.

Some 150 Acadians from the state ended a five-day celebration Friday in Poitiers, France to mark the 200th anniversary of the return of Acadian communities in the Poitiers region of Central France.

Lafayette Mayor Kenny Bowen led a 130-member delegation that included 68 members of the Rayne High School band. The visitors took part in historical and economic discussions with Poitiers civic leaders.

The state students are participants in the fifth annual summer study program arranged by the governments of Louisiana and Quebec that is coordinated by the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana in cooperation with the Academic Advisory Board. The AAB is made up of the heads of the foreign language departments of Louisiana's colleges and universities.

The study and vacation program earns the student six hours of college credit and is underwritten in part by the provincial government of Quebec. CODIFIL has provided full scholarships to 14 winners of Louisiana high school French rallies for the Quebec summer program.

With the departure today from the New Orleans International Airport, Louisiana has now dispatched more than 600 young people to Quebec in the people-to-people program that is having a major impact on the state's campaign to develop a bilingual society.

"The summer study program has had a profound effect on the students not only at the classroom level but in cementing the ongoing relationship between Louisiana and Quebec," said CODIFIL Chairman James Domengeaux who has just returned from France where he negotiated for additional French elementary teachers for the state.