

What is French Immersion?

In French Immersion students learn in French. The same subjects are taught as those in the English program but in French. Research has shown that students in French Immersion have equal or greater student achievement to those in the English program, and in addition, can study, work and travel in French.

When can students begin Late French Immersion?

Late French Immersion is available at grade 6 only for children who have not begun in Kindergarten. They are not able to enter at any other grade unless they already have considerable fluency, otherwise students would be too far behind the students who began in grade 6. Early and Late Immersion streams are integrated in grade 8.

Why start French in Grade 6?

At this time in their lives, students can think more conceptually about learning a second language. They understand why they are choosing to learn the language and what advantages it may have for them. Students have a period in their language learning where they develop an understanding before they can speak French. They will begin with single words, and some French phrases or short sentences. Just like learning English, students move through phrases to sentences, and by mid-way through grade 6 are normally speaking in short sentences. Individual differences will occur and are normal. Students learn to read and write French as they learn to speak it.

What are the benefits of French Immersion?

- Students become functionally bilingual in our second official language
- Second language instruction develops students' thinking skills, creativity and coping skills
- Learning a second language helps develop deeper understanding of the first language—English has 10,000 French root words
- Learning a second language makes learning a third and fourth much easier, especially if it's also a Romance language, like Spanish or Romanian
- Students develop greater emotional IQ and sensitivity to other cultures
- French can open additional study and job opportunities, even if French is not the language of work in that setting
- French can help students access certain university programs and scholarships
- Students who take French Immersion in high school can earn a bilingual Dogwood diploma

What if I don't speak French at home?

Most French Immersion parents/guardians don't speak French! Teachers know that and communicate with parents in English. You can still help your child. Here are some things to do:

- Listen to what your child has learned in school—ask them about their day
- Encourage your child to read every day, in English, French and your home language
- Listen to your child read in French, and ask questions about what they have read
- Get a good French/English dictionary
- Keep in touch with your child's teacher
- Set a regular time of the day for homework and have a space cleared to do it
- Help the child organize their work and materials, but let them do the actual writing by him/herself
- Attend information sessions and parent/teacher/student conferences and interviews

Student Achievement in French Immersion

Students in French Immersion follow the same curriculum as students in the regular program. Their achievement, after an initial period, is the same or better than that of comparable students in the regular program. Of course, initially they will use easier reading materials in French while covering the same concepts and content as those in the regular program.

Students' English language skills are not harmed by learning in French—in fact, they're often improved because students can compare and contrast two languages. Students also learn some things, like organizing writing, in one language, transfer it to the other language, and then can go on to another skill.

What if French Immersion isn't the right program for my child?

Language learning requires patience—so sometimes we have to give the child a bit of time. A commitment to Late French Immersion is a commitment for three years, as there may not be room in the regular program at École Glenbrook Middle School to allow a transfer at any given point. However, if a student does need or want to move out of the French Immersion program, it is better to make this adjustment at the beginning of a new school year. It's best to plan this with the teachers, principal and district staff. Students who are not from the Glenbrook catchment return to their catchment school if they leave French. Be prepared however: the child may not do much better in English. Studies have found that most students have similar levels of achievement regardless of the language of instruction.

What percentage of the school day is in French?

- In grade 6, all instruction is in French except Explorations and Career and Health Education
- In grade 7 and 8, all instruction is in French except English Language Arts, Exploratories and Career Education
- In grades 9-10, 50% is in French
- In grades 11 and 12, there are three courses in French
- Students in the Early and Late French Immersion streams are mixed at grade 8; teachers make allowances for the different skill levels in French from then to grade 12.

How do I apply for my child to enter French Immersion?

- 1) Parents register at Glenbrook Middle school for Grade 6 starting the second Monday of January **ONLY** if your child does **NOT** attend a school in New Westminster.
- 2) Parents complete an application for Programs of Choice (LFI) available on-line for 3 weeks starting the third Monday of January (9 am). It is the parents' responsibility to keep contact information current and to indicate that the younger child has a sibling already in the program.
- 3) Submit the on-line application by the second Friday in February. An e-mail will be sent to all applicants confirming their application has been received by the third Friday of February. Parents should email programsofchoice@sd40.bc.ca if they have not received notification by the last Friday of February. Applications received within the district's established registration timelines will be grouped by priority category as outlined below;

Applications received will be grouped by priority order as outlined below:

1. Students who reside within New Westminster School District and who have a sibling already in the program in the same school when the younger child enters the program;
 2. Students whose residence falls within the New Westminster School District;
 3. Students who reside within New Westminster School District and applied after the Programs of Choice application date;
 4. Students whose residence falls outside the District.
- 4) A randomized, supervised draw process will be used to determine student placements conducted the first Monday after the last Friday of February. All other applicants will be placed on a waitlist. Students new to immersion are not accepted into the program after September 30.