

French Immersion

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.

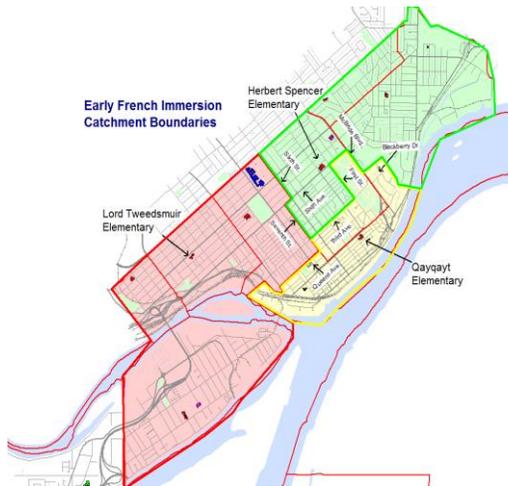
Research has shown that students in French Immersion have equal or greater student achievement to those in the English program, and in addition, can study, work and travel in French.

French Programs in New Westminster

Early French Immersion programs are located at École Herbert Spencer, Qayqayt and Lord Tweedsmuir Schools. The students carry on to École Glenbrook Middle School and New Westminster Secondary School.

Late French Immersion begins at grade 6 in École Glenbrook Middle School and carries on to New Westminster Secondary School.

Early and Late Immersion streams are integrated in grade 8 at Glenbrook.



Student Achievement

Students in French Immersion follow the same curriculum as students in the regular program. After about grades 4 to 6, students' achievement is the same or better than that of comparable students in the regular program. Initially, teachers 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 and then can go on to another skill because of the transfer between languages.

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. 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.

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. Students who leave the program return to their catchment school, but may apply to return to the French Immersion School through the cross-boundary process.



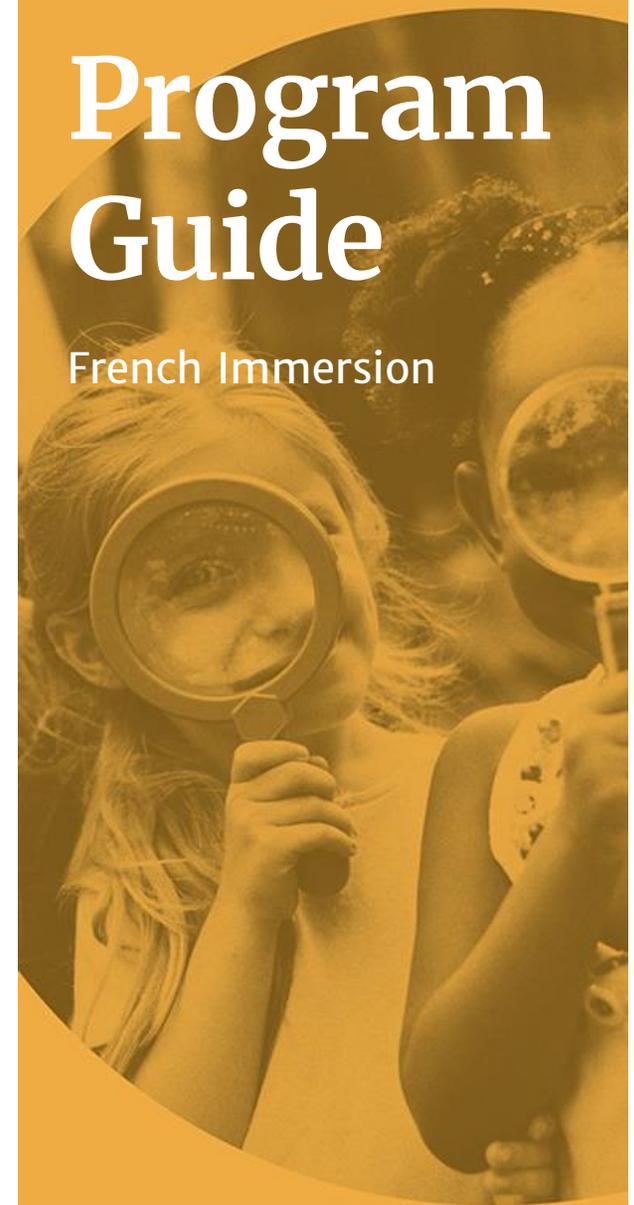
New Westminster Schools recognizes and acknowledges the Qayqayt First Nation, as well as all Coast Salish peoples, on whose traditional and unceded territories we live, we learn, we play and we do our work.

New Westminster School District

School Board Office School District No 40
811 Ontario Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 0J7

Program Guide

French Immersion



Program Benefits

- Students become functionally bilingual in Canada's 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 study and job opportunities
- French can make travel easier in more than 70 Francophone countries and Quebec
- French can help students access certain university programs and scholarships
- Students who take French Immersion in high school can earn a bilingual Dogwood

Why start French in Kindergarten?

Young children who begin school in French think that school in French is normal! They don't know any different. Teachers speak French right from the beginning, but add some English where necessary for safety and to ensure that the students are comfortable.

Students have a period in their language learning where they develop an understanding before they can speak French. This is normal.

After Christmas of the Kindergarten year students begin to speak in French. They will begin with single words, and some French chants or songs. Just like learning English, they move through phrases to sentences, and by mid-way through grade 1 are normally speaking in short sentences. Individual differences will occur and are normal.

What is the learning structure?

- Kindergarten to grade 3 is 100% in French, though safety aspects and some small aspects for comfort are communicated in English. In some schools, Music and Library may be in English.
- In grade 4 English language arts is added to the curriculum. In grade 6–8 Exploratories and Career and Health may also be offered in English.
- There is a gradual increase in English language instruction as students proceed through the grades.

When can students begin?

Students normally begin French Immersion in Kindergarten. Some may also join in September of grade 1.

After that, it is difficult for the child to begin, unless they already have some French fluency. An individual assessment is required.

Late French Immersion is available at grade 6 only for children who have not begun in Kindergarten.

What if I don't speak French?

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
- Read to your child every day, in English or your home language
- Listen to your child read in French, and ask questions about what they have read
- Get a good French/English dictionary
- Count with your child in French
- 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

How to apply

- 1) Parents register at the child's regular catchment school for Kindergarten starting the second Monday of January.
- 2) Parents complete an application for your Early French Immersion catchment school available on-line 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 for Programs of Choice form 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 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 who are in-catchment of the Program of Choice school;
- 3) Students who reside within New Westminster School District and are out-of-catchment of the Program of Choice school;
- 4) Students who reside within New Westminster School District and applied after the Programs of Choice application date;
- 5) Students whose residence falls outside the District.

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. All waitlist are dissolved September 30 each year.

See our webpage for further information and for school catchment information. Parent resources also available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/CPFNewWest/>