

Learning French

Opening a world of opportunities



Are you considering French immersion for your child?

You're not alone. There are over 3,300 students enrolled in French immersion in our division. Research has shown there are measurable benefits to learning a second language in five specific areas:

- increased intellectual potential;
- higher overall academic achievement;
- higher achievement in first language competency;
- heightened sense of respect for and valuing of cultural diversity; and
- improved career opportunities.

Goals of the French immersion program

It is important for parents to have a clear understanding of the goals of French immersion programming. The Government of Saskatchewan has identified the following goals:

- Students become functionally bilingual—in other words, after completing the 12-year program, they are able to communicate easily in French and English.
- Students are capable of pursuing post-secondary education and training in French and English.
- Students are capable of undertaking employment in French and English.
- Students have met or exceeded the expectations of the curricula of the province whether courses are taken in French or English.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is French immersion for everyone?

At Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, our programming is based on the belief that all children are learners. Parents who have questions about their child's learning needs, and whether French immersion is suitable, can contact Brian Boutin, French language consultant, at 306-659-7082 or bboutin@gscs.ca.

Do I need to speak French for my child to enrol?

No, you do not need to speak French or have a francophone background for your children to register. Teachers, or even fellow students, are available for support if needed.

How much French is taught in kindergarten?

French is the language of the instruction for the immersion kindergarten program. The children will rarely hear French outside the classroom, so it is important they hear French as much as possible at school. English can be used in situations of personal safety (like fire drills) or emotional upsets, but in general, French is spoken whenever possible.

How is French taught to young children?

In kindergarten, your child will learn French in the same stages s/he learned English. As the years progress, teachers will increase the amount of French used so it becomes the main language of instruction. Children quickly associate the sounds of French phrases with regular parts of classroom routine. Initially, they learn a lot through songs, rhymes and stories.

Will the French immersion kindergarten program adequately prepare students for Grade 1?

Children at this age learn new languages very quickly. By the end of the year, they will be ready to advance into Grade 1. The kindergarten program is aimed at developing the whole child to his/her full potential so that s/he can become a proactive participant in the journey of life-long learning.

Will my child's English language development be affected?

There is a lot of independent research that indicates performance in English, science and mathematics is not affected by a concentration on French language development. Most studies reveal that any short-term lags in acquisition of these skills in an immersion environment are made up within three or four years.

After elementary school, students may continue with French immersion at Bethlehem, Bishop James Mahoney, Holy Cross or St. Joseph high schools.

Information is adapted from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's *Handbook for Leaders of French as a Second Language (FSL) Programs*.