

## **Delta School District: Early French Immersion**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Is it necessary for my child to know some French before enrolling?**

No. Students are not required to have any background in French prior to entering either the Early or Late French Immersion program.

#### **What if English is not our first language?**

Evidence indicates that English Language Learners enrolled in French Immersion perform as well as their Anglophone counterparts, and ELL students who come to French Immersion having already developed literacy in their home language often perform even better than Anglophone students (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007).

#### **When is English taught?**

From Kindergarten to Grade 2, students are taught only in French. Formal English instruction begins at Grade 3.

#### **Will my child learn the same things as students in English classes?**

Yes, the curriculum is created by the Ministry of British Columbia. Students work toward the same academic goals regardless of the language of instruction.

#### **Will my child's level of achievement be adversely affected if instruction is in the French language?**

Most children who receive their education in French are able to achieve the same levels of competency in all core subjects as those children who have had all their instruction in English.

#### **If I teach my child to read in English, will this be confusing for my child?**

If you notice that your child is confusing some letter sounds while reading in English, teach your child about the differences of certain letter sounds in French and English by making a chart or diagram. Usually, the initial confusion will be short-lived and your child will have the benefit of discovering that they are readers not only in French, but in English as well! The key is not to panic.

#### **What are the benefits of French Immersion?**

A student who has successfully completed the K-12 French Immersion program will:

- Participate easily in conversations in English and French
- Have an increased appreciation of another language and other cultures
- Be able to take post-secondary courses with French as the language of instruction
- Accept employment where French is the language of the workplace
- Receive a bilingual designation on their secondary school diploma, which can enhance their employment and post-secondary learning opportunities

### **What resources are available to support my child and I?**

Help always starts with your child's classroom teacher. Contact your child's teacher and the school's administrative team as they can suggest ways to support your child. Your child will receive the same support regardless of the fact that they are in French Immersion.

### **Will classes be smaller in French Immersion?**

No, class size is the same as in English: 20 students in K, 22 in Grade 1 to 3, 30 students in Grade 4 to 12.

### **Will my child(ren) have bussing available?**

No, bussing will not be provided to families.

### **Can my child enter French Immersion in Grade 1 instead of Kindergarten?**

French Immersion is designed as a K-12 program, and Delta offers two entry points into French Immersion: Early French Immersion in Kindergarten and Late French Immersion in Grade 6.

Ideally students enter in Kindergarten, however, under unique circumstances, a small number of students do enter in Grade 1, at the discretion of the school principal. This is most typically students who have moved into the area during Kindergarten.

If any Grade 1 spots do become available at a Delta school, priority goes to:

- (1) Students who are already in a French Immersion program (either in another Delta school or other district)
- (2) Students new to Delta who haven't applied before
- (3) Delta students who were offered a spot in Kindergarten but chose not to take it

### **Is there before and after school child care for French Immersion students available?**

No. However, schools or their Parent Advisory Committee may be able to provide support in this area.

### **If I do not speak French, how will I help my child?**

Students will experience increased success in French Immersion as they are able to engage, self-motivate, and initiate practice on their own. There are a number of ways you can support them is this:

- You can help your child by helping them develop good study habits such as regularly practicing reading and speaking, re-reading homework questions, and answering questions in complete sentences. You can also help by having your child read orally to you and they can summarize what was said.

- Be appreciative and encouraging of your child's effort to work and play in a new language.
- Continue reading to them each day in English to increase vocabulary and strengthen literacy skills. Reading regularly with your young child at home is important to promote a love of reading. A child exposed to a language-rich environment usually performs well in the French Immersion setting.
- Keep in contact with your child's teacher. Attend parent-teacher-student interviews and keep in contact with your child's teacher to discuss progress. Your teacher can direct you to helpful websites, amazing mobile apps or resources and give you additional information about specific assignments.
- Set-up homework partners with the help of your child's teacher, as then your child can contact their partner for support.
- Provide an environment rich in experiences, such as visits to the nature centre or swimming pool. Talk about these experiences afterwards.
- Listen to French music or television shows or movies with your child.
- Attend a French community activity with your child, contact the [Canadian Parents for French](#).
- Consider learning some french alongside your child!

## Parent Questions from Parent Question and Answer sessions

**1. I think our biggest concern is the social and friend making aspect of school for our son. He is definitely on the shyer side and we worry that with the added challenge of a new language it would perhaps take away from his ability to form connections. For instance if he started to talk to a classmate in english would this be discouraged by the teacher?**

All children starting to go to school vary in their comfort level with other students, and their ability to form friendships isn't in any way hindered by the fact that they are learning to speak a new language. Teachers will support all students in making friends and building a safe and positive social environment.

**2. If we were accepted into the French immersion program are we able to change our minds before it starts?**

Yes, you may change your mind before the program starts. However, when you accept a French Immersion spot, the English spot at your catchment school is made available to other students. So, depending on the timing of your decision, you may risk that your local catchment English school may not have space for your child. We will work to get you into a Delta school, but it might not be possible at your catchment school.

**3. We are in Ladner, if we just wanted to apply to the Ladner Elementary French Program (and not do it if it is in North Delta) is that okay?**

Yes, it is fine to apply at just one French Immersion school.

However, applying to other schools means you have other options to enter the Delta French Immersion Program. If you accept a spot at another school, this sets you up for possibly moving back to your first choice school, should a spot open up in the future. If a student doesn't enter Kindergarten when there are spots available at other Delta schools, this greatly reduces any future opportunity to enter French Immersion.

**4. Are the classes online or do they do it in school?**

Classes are in school. However, currently due to the COVID pandemic, some students have chosen to enrol in our district transition program (HomeQuest) with some French oral support.

**5. Do you have no French background students enrolling into the EFI program?**

Yes! It is assumed that all students in the French Immersion program do not have a French background. If parents and children speak French then they should register into the Commission Scolaire Francophone and not Delta's French Immersion. EFI is meant for non-French speakers.

**6. What type of help/resources are available for children coming from non-French speaking families/backgrounds?**

French Immersion is designed to be a program that is primarily done only at school. Teachers find that students become very resourceful on their own and learn to help each other. A strategy that teachers use frequently is pairing up students both in class and at home to help each other with homework. However, there are resources available such as Sound of the Day videos which teachers sometimes send home to help parents practice fundamentals with their child. As well, parents have access to resources and tutoring through Canadian Parents for French to help parents support their child's learning at home.

**7. Do children struggle when it comes to learning how to read in English in Grade**

### **3? Or is it up to the parent to teach the child how to read in English?**

As in all classrooms, children all come into Grade 3 at different levels of English, and teachers will start with where the students are at. As well, we know that students are still immersed in English outside for school, and so will continually be developing their English reading and writing.

It is not up to the parents to teach their child how to read in English. However, supporting your student's love of literacy routine at home will always benefit all learners, regardless of what program they are in.