
4. IMPLEMENTATION OF A FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM

The establishment of a French Immersion Program represents a long-term commitment. Any school division making this commitment must be able to provide the necessary resources for the program as a whole from Kindergarten through Grade 12; otherwise, the objectives of the program are seriously compromised.

4.1 PLANNING

Rational planning must be undertaken, for it is important to:

- make school enrolment projections for the Immersion Program over a five-year period
- make available appropriate facilities for the grouping of students according to the instructional organisation type — intensity, length and school environment — deemed most likely to ensure the attainment of the objectives of the French Immersion Program
- provide, at each step of the Program's implementation, the number of teachers required and ensure that they have the necessary skills and expertise.

Consultation with teachers and parents within the school division will also be an important part of planning for the Program and for the pedagogical approaches necessary to its delivery.

4.2 RESOURCES

Within a reasonable time frame, the school division must provide the following resources in French:

- human resources (administrative, teaching, and support staff, teaching assistants and specialists)
- material resources (print and non-print)
- resources related to information technology, including distance education.

Judicious use of a broad variety of suitable resources, including a good library, is essential if students are to learn in French. They need to be able to read and do research in French in all subjects that are taught in French.

4.3 STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Teachers in the Immersion Program must have:

- the training and/or in-servicing necessary for the grade level and the subject areas in question
- the training and/or in-servicing in immersion teaching (or experience in this Program)
- an excellent command of the language in which they will be teaching, French or English, and a working knowledge of the other language.

Some members of the administrative staff for a French Immersion Program must be fluent in French and in English and must have training in the immersion approach (or experience in this Program). They will, therefore, be in a position to assume the leadership and the co-ordination of the pedagogical aspects of the Program.

In addition, the administrators of an immersion school, an immersion centre, or a dual track school as well as the divisional consultants or co-ordinators must encourage the teaching staff to participate in professional development activities, especially those given in French.

4.4 LANGUAGE OF ADMINISTRATION AND CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The type of school model chosen for the French Immersion Program must offer a special educational environment in order to allow students to acquire the highest degree of language development possible. This environment is created within a school context where the language of administration and communication for the program is French. The language used to communicate with parents, however, is English or, whenever possible, in their own language.

All activities relating to the implementation of the curriculum are the responsibility of the school division, the school, and the teachers themselves. This implementation process must be conducted in French.

4.5 SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

Special needs students are capable of learning another language. In view of this, every school offering a French Immersion program must provide the human and material resources to meet special needs requirements (remedial, counselling, and other specialised services), in the same way as schools offering the English program. These services must be available to the students in both English and French.