

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO 58 (NICOLA-SIMILKAMEEN)  
MERRITT

2021/2022



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS  
ABOUT THE  
FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM  
AND  
CORE FRENCH PROGRAMS

## FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM

### WHAT IS THE PROGRAM'S OBJECTIVE?

It is to enable students to become functionally bilingual. For example:

- Participate easily in conversation.
- Be able to take further education with French as the language of instruction.
- Accept employment using French as the working language.
- Understand and appreciate the emotional attitudes and values held in common by members of the French speaking community.

### WHERE IS IT AVAILABLE?

The kindergarten, grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are housed at Collettsville Elementary School.

Grades 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 attend Merritt Secondary School.

### WHO CAN ATTEND?

The program is voluntary. At present there is no program in the Princeton area.

Any child in School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) may enter the program, providing that a space is available.

Most children entering kindergarten know very little or no French. Children may also enter at the grade 1 level with little or no French. After grade 1, each child who enters the program is dealt with on an individual basis, with consultation between the parents and district staff.

## CORE FRENCH (FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE)

### WHAT IS THE PROGRAM'S OBJECTIVE?

It is to enable the student to develop an appreciation of the French language and culture, and to learn an introductory French vocabulary.

### WHERE IS IT AVAILABLE?

All elementary schools in School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen) introduce Core French at the grade 4 level in Merritt, at the grade 5 level in Princeton. The average time spent in Core French is 90 minutes per week (20 minutes per day).

Core French is mandated by the Ministry of Education in grades 5-8, unless another language is taught in those grades or a student is on an Individual Educational Program (I.E.P.).

At the secondary level, students have 1 block (12.5%) in each year. In grades 9-12, Core French is an elective.

### WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

COLLETTVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Phone: 378-2230
Principal: Mr. René Aubin	
DIAMOND VALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Phone: 378-2514
Principal: Mr. Kevin McGifford	
MERRITT BENCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Phone: 378-2528
Principal: Mrs. Carmella Mathieu	
MERRITT CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Phone: 378-9931
Principal: Mr. Dan Duncan	
NICOLA-CANFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Phone: 378-2172
Principal: Mr. Burt Bergmann	
MERRITT SECONDARY SCHOOL	Phone: 378-5131
Principal: Mr. Leroy Slanzi	

## FRANCOPHONE PROGRAM?

The Francophone Program is meant for students of Francophone origin. This program has not been offered in School District No. 58 since the 2001 school year.

All responsibility for offering Programme-Cadre is now with the new Francophone Authority. Programs are offered in Kamloops and Kelowna.

## WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

Line Vachon Phone: 378-2230  
District French Coordinator - S.D # 58(Nicola-Similkameen)

### COLLETTVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. René Aubin Phone: 378-2230

### MERRITT SECONDARY SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. Leroy Slanzi Phone: 378-5131

## TRANSPORTATION?

Elementary French students will be transported from the school nearest them. Secondary students within city boundaries will not be transported.

## HOW MUCH FRENCH IS USED?

French is used as the language of instruction for approximately the following percentages of the school day.

Kindergarten	100% (English is used somewhat at the onset to establish routine.)
Grade 1	100%
Grade 2	100%
Grade 3	80% or 100%
Grades 4-6	80%
Grades 7-8	65%
Grade 9	50%
Grade 10	50%
Grade 11	25%
Grade 12	25%

## DO CHILDREN READ AND WRITE IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH?

French instruction, including reading and writing begins as early as kindergarten. Formal instruction in English Language Arts begins in grade 3 or 4 at approximately 20% of instruction time.

## **IS TRANSFER TO AN ENGLISH CLASS POSSIBLE?**

A transfer can be arranged from a French class to an English class if parents and teachers are concerned with the students' progress, or for other reasons. However, this should not be done without consultation between the teacher, parents and administration. If a student is experiencing some difficulty, learning assistance may be available. Please try to discuss the situation with the French Support Teacher before transferring the student.

Very few transfers have been found necessary during the years the program has been operating in Merritt.

## **DOES THE CHILDREN'S GENERAL PROGRESS SUFFER?**

Research carried out in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Manitoba has resulted in very similar findings to those of DR. STAN SHAPSON and MS. ELAINE DAY of S.F.U., who have conducted ongoing studies of French Immersion programs in B.C. The assessments conducted by the Ministry of Education in 1987/88 substantiate these findings.

The main findings are:

- Children in French Immersion kindergarten are as well prepared for grade 1 as children in the regular English program.
- Children learning mathematics in French make progress equal to that of children learning it in English.
- While there is a lag in English language arts in grade 1 and 2, once the students are introduced to English language arts in grade 3, they quickly catch up.
- By the end of grade 4, most students in Immersion are equal in all aspects of English language arts with children in the regular English program.
- By the end of grade 6, most students in Immersion do better in English language arts than their counterparts in a regular English program. Researchers feel that being able to compare and think in a second language will actually enhance the first language.

## **HOW MUCH FRENCH DO THE CHILDREN LEARN?**

Comprehension of French comes amazingly quickly in kindergarten. The ability to speak comes much more slowly, particularly fluent speech in sentences. However, during grade 1, children begin to communicate spontaneously with one another in French. Children, who would have had difficulty learning to read English, have had difficulty learning to read French. It is generally the actual reading skills that these children find difficult rather than the language used. A bilingual remedial teacher helps children having difficulty in French or English Language Arts and Arithmetic.

## **DO THE CHILDREN IN FRENCH IMMERSION CLASSES LEARN THE SAME THINGS AS THOSE IN ENGLISH CLASSES?**

The general curriculum is very similar. Often the materials used in regular English classes are available in French (e.g., mathematics texts and science guides). At times the teacher can use materials provided for English classes for lessons in French (e.g., social studies pictures). However, more reference is made in French classes to French-Canadian culture, including songs and the celebration of festivals. Ministry of Education Curriculum Guides K-12 for Immersion classes is used. Prescribed materials are available in the same way as materials for English classes.

## **HOW DO I ENROL MY CHILD IN THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM?**

Children turning 5 years old on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> may attend school September 1<sup>st</sup> of that year. Parents who wish to register their children for other grade levels should phone the French Co-ordinator, or the School Principal involved, for an interview. Please try to register before the March 12<sup>th</sup> deadline.