

EIPS Questions and Answers

FRENCH IMMERSION PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: SPRING 2023

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Q&A: FRENCH IMMERSION PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) is in year two of a three-year public engagement initiative to enhance programming offered throughout the Division. One of the programs EIPS is looking at is French Immersion. Specifically, it's exploring ways to enhance programming, increase retention at the junior high and senior high levels, address anticipated enrolment pressures in Ardrossan and balance enrolment at the elementary level. Before EIPS makes any decisions about French Immersion programming, it's conducting public consultations with school families, students and community stakeholders to ensure a solution that's in the best interest of all students. The following are answers to questions the Division has received about its French Immersion engagement effort. EIPS will update the document as new questions come forward.

General

Q1: Why is EIPS consulting with the French Immersion school community?

A: As part of the Division's reporting requirements to Alberta Education, EIPS reviews programs, enrolment transitions and boundaries regularly. When areas of concern are identified, the Division determines how best to resolve the issue. In the case of French Immersion, EIPS wants to find ways to enhance the program, increase retention at the junior high and senior high levels, address anticipated enrolment pressures in Ardrossan and balance enrolment at the elementary level. To determine the best solution, EIPS is seeking input from the French Immersion school community.

Q2: What's the history of EIPS' French Immersion program?

A: As background, EIPS has offered French Immersion programming since forming in 1995. For most of its history, programming was offered at Ardrossan Elementary, Ardrossan Junior Senior High, École Campbelltown, École Parc Élémentaire and Sherwood Heights Junior High. There was a period when a junior high program was offered in Fort Saskatchewan. And, before EIPS was established, there was a brief period, when senior high French was offered at Bev Facey Community High, run by the Strathcona Education Board.

A sixth school was added in 2020, Heritage Hills Elementary. As background, École Campbelltown was facing considerable enrolment pressures in early 2019. The Division was worried it wouldn't be able to accommodate all students wanting to enrol in French Immersion. So, the EIPS Board of Trustees conducted a review looking at possible solutions to ensure long-term program access. Through the review, it determined Heritage Hills Elementary—a new school still under construction at the time—could accommodate dual-track programming, regular English and French Immersion programming, with space available for two classes per grade in each program. Fast forward three years, Heritage Hills Elementary French Immersion program is currently undersubscribed, operating only one French Immersion class for each grade of kindergarten to Grade 3, one Grade 4-5 split class and one Grade 5-6 split class. Ideally, the Division wants more balanced enrolment in the elementary French Immersion program.

Q3: What is the vision for EIPS' French Immersion program?

A: Using the feedback from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the public engagements, and evidence-based research about immersion language programming, EIPS developed a vision for French Immersion:

VISION

Elk Island Public Schools' French Immersion program offers robust, high-quality, linguistically and culturally rich learning environments where students, kindergarten to Grade 12, are engaged in becoming highly proficient in Canada's two official languages. Students who graduate from the program are well-prepared to be active and engaged citizens in a bilingual and multicultural Canada.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- To best achieve the program goals, French Immersion students are encouraged to remain in the program until the end of Grade 12.
- Maximizing the amount of French language spoken in the learning environment is essential.
- Robust enrolment, more than one class a grade, enhances teaching quality and student learning.
- Embedded cultural activities and opportunities are essential to the program's effectiveness.
- Reducing the school transitions, offering depth and breadth of programming, multiple choices in subject offerings and extracurricular activities is important to retention.
- Families play a key role in promoting immersion programs and supporting their child in achieving the program's goals.
- The Division advocates for the program, its accessibility and sustainability.
- The Division develops ongoing strategies to recruit and hire the best possible staff.

Q4: Does EIPS have a dedicated French Immersion team or consultant?

A: Yes. EIPS' Supports for Students department employs a French Immersion Consultant who works with administrators, teachers and educational assistants to build capacity and ensure all students enrolled in the French Immersion program develop high-functioning skills in speaking, reading, writing, listening and communicating in French by the end of Grade 12.

Q5: What's the difference between French Immersion and the francophone program?

A: French Immersion programming is offered by English-language school divisions and open to all students, K-12. The program is specifically designed for children whose first language isn't French. And, through the program, they acquire fluency in speaking, reading, writing, listening and communicating in French. Children start the program in kindergarten or Grade 1 with the curriculum taught entirely in French. By Grade 3, teachers begin introducing English language arts. The program goal: For students to become functionally fluent in French, develop an appreciation for French culture and achieve all the same learning outcomes as the regular programs of study. On the other hand, the French francophone program, is offered through the Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest school division and is only open to learners with a parent whose first language is French.

Engagement Efforts

Q6: How is EIPS using the feedback collected from the French Immersion engagement efforts?

A: To date, EIPS has reviewed all the feedback collected from Phase 1 and Phase 2 engagement efforts. Using that feedback, it created a vision for the program and developed a possible draft solution, which it will share at the next public consultation on April 13. Then, at the next consultation session, EIPS will collect more information from the French Immersion school community about the potential solution's strengths, challenges and how to improve it.

Q7: Why have there only been French Immersion public engagement sessions in Sherwood Park?

A: The decision to hold the public engagement session in Sherwood Park was based on how to get the best turnout. Sherwood Park is a central location for most French Immersion school families.

Q8: [Who is EIPS seeking feedback from for the French Immersion engagement efforts?](#)

A: For the French Immersion engagement effort, EIPS wants to hear from all French Immersion staff, students, families and community members. All groups are encouraged to take part in each engagement phase and share their thoughts.

Q9: [Can EIPS hold the next public engagement meeting virtually?](#)

A: No. The next public consultation takes place on April 13. The format for that session is not conducive to a hybrid or virtual model. However, following the meeting, EIPS will launch a survey to allow anyone who couldn't make the meeting a chance to provide their input. If an opportunity arises to offer a virtual public consultation, EIPS will notify all relevant parties to ensure they are aware.

Q10: [Will EIPS include French Immersion feedback in its advocacy for the Three-Year Capital Plan?](#)

A: It's possible. Every year, the Board establishes its advocacy strategy to inform its annual work plan and bases the Division's Three-Year Capital Plan on need.

Programming

Q11: [Where is French Immersion offered within EIPS?](#)

A: Currently, French Immersion is offered at six EIPS schools. Each school follows the Alberta curriculum and provides a range of educational courses and extracurricular classes to enhance the growth and success of all students. Visit each school's website for specific program details.

ELEMENTARY (K-6)

[École Parc Élémentaire](#) – single-track program

[Ardrossan Elementary](#) – dual-track program

[École Campbelltown](#) – single-track program

[Heritage Hills Elementary](#) – dual-track program

JUNIOR HIGH (7-9)

[Ardrossan Junior Senior High](#) – dual-track program

[Sherwood Heights Junior High](#) – dual-track program

SENIOR HIGH (10-12)

[Ardrossan Junior Senior High](#) – dual-track program

Q12: [What are the requirements for French Immersion?](#)

A: The French Immersion program requirements and learning outcomes are the same as the regular program. The only major differences: The grade English language arts is introduced and the time allotments for specific subjects. French Immersion students are taught entirely in French from kindergarten to Grade 2. Then, in Grade 3, English language arts is introduced. After that, French remains the primary language of instruction for most of the school day—all except English language arts. At the junior high level, French language arts, mathematics, science and social studies are taught in French—all other subjects in English. In senior high, it changes to French language arts, social studies, some sciences and mathematics taught in French. Alberta Education's programs of study are the same for each subject, regardless of the language of instruction. A complete list of program requirements is available in Alberta Education's [Guide to Education](#).

Q14: If EIPS changes any French Immersion program locations or attendance boundaries, can affected students be grandfathered into their current school?

A: At this point, it's too premature to answer that question. Typically, the Board makes decisions about grandfathering when it reviews the final recommendation from administration, which has yet to happen. If there is a change in the boundaries, EIPS will contact all families to inform them about the details, including information about grandfathering, timelines, the registration process and student transportation implications.

Q15: Other provinces offer French Immersion differently than EIPS. Is the Division looking at different pedagogical models for its French Immersion program?

A: No. EIPS' French Immersion program is based on the curriculum and achievement outcomes determined by Alberta Education. EIPS uses evidence-based pedagogy practices that are known to support and enhance the quality of second-language teaching and learning.

Q16: Why can't EIPS offer a French Immersion senior high program in all three communities—Ardrossan, Fort Saskatchewan and Sherwood Park?

A: It's simply not viable. The capacity to offer French Immersion in each community EIPS serves is currently out of reach because of the program's enrolment numbers. It's imperative EIPS continues offering a fulsome senior high French Immersion program. Providing it within all communities requires sufficient funding and resources—EIPS has a fiduciary responsibility to operate all programming at sustainable levels. Given current enrolment, the more locations the Division offers senior high French Immersion reduces the available resources to support programming.

Q17: Can EIPS offer senior high French Immersion programming to a small group at a senior high in all three communities—Ardrossan, Fort Saskatchewan and Sherwood Park?

A: It's simply not a viable option. The only time EIPS does this is if it's piloting a new program. In year 1, the new program can operate as a small group. After that pilot year, if feedback is positive and enrolment increases to sustainable levels, the program continues as a large-group program. If it doesn't, the Board reviews the program and determines if it's viable and if it should continue. For French Immersion, there aren't the student numbers to offer small-group French Immersion in each community long term. Doing so would reduce its ability to offer fulsome programming and deplete resources to support other programming.

Q18: Can students pick just one or two French Immersion courses, and still stay in the program?

A: No. EIPS is required to follow the guidelines and outcomes listed in Alberta Education's programs of study for French Immersion. That means there is no deviation from those guidelines. The French-to-English ratio is as follows:

Kindergarten Grade 2: All subjects are taught in French.

Grade 3: All subjects other than English language arts are taught in French—80 per cent French, 20 per cent English

Grades 4 to 6: 70 per cent of subjects are taught in French and 30 per cent taught in English.

Grades 7-9: French language arts, mathematics, science and social Studies are taught in French; all other subjects are taught in English.

Graded 10-12: French language arts, social studies, some sciences and mathematics are taught in French. All other subjects are taught in English.

Q19: How does EIPS measure the program’s success?

A: There are several ways to measure a school program’s success. Short term, school divisions look at metrics such as attendance and achievement scores. Long term, divisions look at graduation rates, retention, post-secondary readiness and the Rutherford Scholarship eligibility. There are also financial viability measures, program requirements and ongoing [reviews](#) the Division abides by.

Q20: Do all French Immersion schools have staff fluent in French?

A: All EIPS French Immersion teachers are fluent in French, and every school offering the immersion program has one French-speaking administrator. EIPS also tries to hire French-speaking support staff—educational assistants, secretaries and library technicians. However, it’s not always feasible.

Q21: How does EIPS ensure administrators support French Immersion programming at their school?

A: Under *Education Act*, administrators have a responsibility to provide instruction consistent with the courses and programs of study prescribed, approved and authorized by Alberta Education. They are responsible for making sure students can meet the standards in the French Immersion curriculum. This in turn, ensures principals are supportive of all school programs they oversee. Additionally, using feedback from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the French Immersion public engagement effort, and evidence-based research on immersion language programming, EIPS developed a new vision and guiding principles for its French Immersion program. Going forward, all EIPS administrators will use both to inform their school’s French Immersion operations. Collectively, this will ensure robust, high-quality, linguistically and culturally rich second language learning environments.

Enrolment Pressures

Q22: What enrolment pressures does EIPS face?

A: For EIPS, it has two main areas of concern: Fort Saskatchewan and Strathcona County. In Fort Saskatchewan, EIPS anticipates enrolment pressure issues in most of its schools for the foreseeable future. Schools within the city are 81 per cent utilized. Four are above 87 per cent utilized, and two are expected to exceed 108 per cent by 2027. That, in turn, puts enrolment pressure on underutilized schools within EIPS. That, mixed with new developments underway in the Industrial Heartland, such as the Fort Saskatchewan Hydrogen Hub, EIPS anticipates further population growth for the region for the foreseeable future.

In Strathcona County, four new residential developments are underway—[Ardrossan East, Cambrian Crossing, Bremner and Hillshire](#). For French Immersion, Ardrossan East is a concern. As it develops, it will create enrolment pressures at both Ardrossan schools. In fact, by 2027, the Division projects enrolment to increase by 182 students at the two schools, with a utilization rate of 99 per cent. That, coupled with an influx of students from the Cambrian Crossing, Bremner and Hillshire developments, will create even more enrolment pressures on schools in Strathcona County.

To alleviate some of the anticipated enrolment pressures, EIPS has requested new and replacement schools through its [2024-27 Three-Year Capital Plan](#). However, the province needs to approve funding for these, which is years away. As such, EIPS must use existing infrastructure to balance school enrolments among overcrowded and under-used schools.

Q23: Where do most students live who are enrolled in the French Immersion program?

A: Most students enrolled in EIPS’ French Immersion live in Sherwood Park—elementary, junior high and senior high. On Page 6 is a high-level breakdown of where most students in French Immersion live. For more detailed information, see the [2022-23 French Immersion Student Heat Map](#), as of Sept. 29, 2022.

SECTOR OF RESIDENCE	STUDENT TOTALS
Sherwood Park	621
Strathcona County	370
Fort Saskatchewan	331
Lamont County	16
County of Minburn	0
Out of Division	30
TOTAL STUDENTS	1,368

Q24: Why doesn't EIPS just increase class sizes and hire more EAs?

A: Increasing class sizes isn't a realistic solution. All schools have capacity limits, set by the province. Annually, Alberta Education reviews each school's capacity number using a formula that considers the building's available instructional space, area per student and grade configurations. At Ardrossan Elementary, the school capacity is 628. At Ardrossan Junior Senior High, it's 913. Already, Ardrossan Elementary is 93 per cent utilized and Ardrossan Junior Senior high is 92 per cent utilized.

Q25: If there is space at Bev Facey Community High or Salisbury Composite High, why doesn't EIPS make the solution moving the program to one of those schools?

A: At this point, it's too premature to answer that question. However, EIPS has reviewed all the feedback collected from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the engagement effort. Using that feedback, it has put a potential solution together, which it will present at the next public consultation on April 13. At that session, EIPS will collect input from the school community about the potential solution's strengths, challenges and ways to make it better.

Q26: Why is French Immersion impacted when the issue is regular program enrolment pressures?

A: Last year, EIPS developed a Three-Year Engagement Strategy to address student accommodations divisionwide. The plan identifies four projects EIPS needs to explore to improve operations to best serve students. The French Immersion program is one of the projects, with multifaceted concerns.—secondary program retention, balancing elementary enrolment and addressing anticipated enrolment pressures in Ardrossan.

In terms of enrolment pressures, the main concern is growth from the new Ardrossan East development. EIPS expects 77 new students to reside within the Ardrossan East development by 2027. At full buildout, EIPS expects more than 715 school-aged children to reside within the development area. In addition to Ardrossan East, Ardrossan itself continues to grow. In fact, between 2016 and 2022, Ardrossan Estates and Ardrossan Subdivision II added an additional 144 students to EIPS' student enrolment.

As Ardrossan East expands, it will create enrolment pressures at both Ardrossan Elementary, Ardrossan Junior Senior High, which both already have more than a 90 per cent utilization rate. So, the anticipated enrolment pressure will make offering dual-track programming—the regular English program and French Immersion—at both schools challenging. Under Alberta's *Education Act*, it states: "Where a board establishes an attendance area for a school, a resident student of a board who resides in the attendance area for the school must be given priority over a student who does not reside in the area." As French Immersion is an alternative program that enrolls students from attendance areas across the Division, when space issues become a concern, the location of the alternative program needs to be reviewed.

Q27: Why can't EIPS build a new school to house the anticipated influx of students?

A: EIPS has several replacement schools listed as key priorities in its [2024-27 Three-Year Capital Plan](#)— including, a grades 7 to 12 school to replace Rudolph Hennig Junior High and Fort Saskatchewan High, a kindergarten to Grade 6 school to replace James Mowat Elementary and a new school in Cambrian Crossing. However, the province has yet to approve funding for any of these capital requests. Recently, it did approve a replacement school in Sherwood Park, which was a priority on the capital plan for more than 10 years. Funding approval generally takes years, as does the actual construction after approval is granted. So, EIPS needs to find solutions now to address its student accommodation issues.

Q28: What schools within Sherwood Park can accommodate Ardrossan-based and Fort Saskatchewan-based secondary French Immersion students?

A: Bev Facey Community High. Currently, the school has sufficient space, with a 67 per cent utilization rate, and ample classroom space for careers and technology courses.

Q29: How does EIPS offer other programs with low enrolment?

A: Other than specialized programming, such as GOALS, Impact and PLACE, EIPS doesn't offer small-group programs. It can't, as it's not a viable option. The only time EIPS does this is if it's piloting a new program. The Division will allow it to operate for one year to test the program. After that year, if enrolment increases to a sustainable level and the feedback is positive, it continues as a large-group program. If it doesn't, the Board reviews the program and determines if it's viable and if it should continue. For French Immersion, there simply aren't the student numbers to offer small-group French Immersion in each community long term. Doing so would reduce its ability to offer fulsome programming and deplete resources to support other programming.

Q30: What determines the maximum number of students EIPS can put in a classroom?

A: A grade class size depends on the space and complexity of student needs within the program.

Program Retention

Q31: How is program retention an issue at the French Immersion junior high and senior high levels?

A: In terms of retention, fewer students are deciding to stay in the program at the secondary level. For example, as of Sept. 29, 2022, EIPS has 129 Grade 6 students enrolled in French Immersion. But, in Grade 9, there are only 85 students enrolled in French Immersion. And, in Grade 12, only 37 students enrolled. Based on historic trends, the two grades with the lowest retention rates are Grade 7, 86 per cent, and Grade 10, 69 per cent. Such a significant drop in students at the senior high level makes providing robust programming challenging.

Q32: How many students are enrolled in the French Immersion elementary and secondary program?

A: The below table shows EIPS' French Immersion enrolment, as of Sept. 29, 2022.

School	Grade												Total		
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		12	
Ardrossan Elementary	27	26	22	33	26	27	34								195
École Campbelltown	50	42	60	54	57	54	47								364
École Parc Élémentaire	48	40	50	35	40	29	33								275
Heritage Hills Elementary	21	23	25	22	19	16	15								141
Sherwood Heights Junior High									49	49	39				137
Ardrossan Junior Senior High									38	45	46	57	33	37	256
GRADE TOTALS	146	131	157	144	142	126	129	87	94	85	57	33	37	1,368	

Q33: Why are students leaving the secondary French Immersion program?

A: What EIPS learned through Phase 2 of the French Immersion public engagement efforts is there are a few key factors influencing program retention. One, is the student's [proximity to French Immersion programs](#). The other has to do with academic achievement—if a student is struggling in French Immersion, they often transfer to the regular program. Another relates to school transitions, the fewer transitions the better. There's also a desire for more robust programming, that comes with a larger student base. And, finally, another factor is a general lack of motivation to continue to learn French as children grow older.

Q34: How does EIPS's program retention compare to other school divisions?

A: EIPS doesn't have access to French Immersion retention rates for other school divisions.

Q35: Can EIPS hire a consultant to work with families to keep students in the program?

A: EIPS currently has a full-time French Immersion consultant who works with schools to ensure high-quality programming and new strategies to enhance programming. Some of that work includes piloting the new Oral Communication Project, a capacity-building initiative to strengthen student oral communication, various professional learning sessions and the development of a new French literacy resource tool for staff.

Q36: Is the current secondary French Immersion program sustainable?

A: Yes. EIPS offers a sustainable program at Ardrossan Junior Senior High. However, the program would be more robust with more students.

Q37: Why does EIPS want to grow the program if it's a sustainable program?

A: EIPS wants to grow the secondary French Immersion program because of its value statement: "[EIPS'] French Immersion program offers robust, high-quality, linguistically and culturally rich learning environments where students, K-12, are engaged in becoming highly proficient in Canada's two official languages" There's significant demand for French Immersion at the elementary level. That's not the case at the senior high level. So, finding a solution to improve program retention will ensure the Division can provide robust, linguistically and culturally rich learning environments for students, K-12, long term.

Q38: Can EIPS offer a French Immersion senior high program in Sherwood Park, Fort Saskatchewan or in both communities, instead of in Ardrossan?

A: Currently, EIPS offers a sustainable program at Ardrossan Junior Senior High. There aren't enough senior high students enrolled in senior high French Immersion to offer it at a second site.

Q39: How does EIPS plan to address the barriers people have around continuing with French Immersion at the secondary level?

A: What EIPS learned through Phase 2 of the French Immersion public engagement efforts is there are a few key factors influencing program retention. One, is the student's [proximity to French Immersion programs](#). The other has to do with academic achievement—if a student is struggling in French Immersion, they often transfer to the regular program. Another relates to school transitions, the fewer transitions the better. There's also a desire for more robust programming, that comes with a larger student base. And, finally, another factor is a general lack of motivation to continue to learn French as children grow older.

Using that feedback, the Division has put a potential solution together, which it will present at the next public consultation on April 13. At that session, EIPS will collect information about what the French Immersion school community likes, potential challenges and ways to improve the solution. The goal: To develop a community-derived solution that alleviates the anticipated enrolment pressures and encourages more students to remain in the program.

Q40: Are students who move to an Edmonton-based French Immersion, or a Francophone school included in the retention?

A: EIPS includes them in the drop-in retention rates. However, the Division does not track where students enrol after they leave an EIPS school.

Q41: Can EIPS advertise more to attract more students?

A: Yes. EIPS promotes all Division Alternative Programs equally—language, academic, Christian and outreach programming. Communication and promotion of the French Immersion program, and its benefits, is part of the potential draft solution. Schools can also highlight the program using other channels and networks—all promotional efforts must meet [EIPS' brand identity standard](#). Before publishing any advertising materials, submit for final approval to [Communication Services](#).

Solution Considerations

Q42: What are the possible options EIPS is exploring?

A: EIPS has reviewed all the feedback collected from Phase 1 and Phase 2 engagement efforts. Using the feedback heard, it has put a possible solution together, which it will present at the next public consultation on April 13. At that session, EIPS will collect information about what the French Immersion school community likes, potential challenges and ways to improve the solution.

Q43: Is EIPS considering moving the secondary French Immersion program out of Ardrossan Junior Senior High? And, if so, where will it move to?

A: EIPS will share a potential solution at the next public feedback consultation on April 13. The solution presented is not set in stone, but instead a starting place. From earlier engagements, the feedback was clear. People want a possible solution presented to provide feedback on what they like about it and what they find challenging.

Q44: What will happen to Ardrossan Junior Senior High programming—core, optional and career pathways—if the French Immersion program moves?

A: At this point, it's too premature to speak about a French Immersion site-location change. A decision hasn't been, and won't be, made until further public consultations take place. That said, if the Board-approved decision is to move the secondary French Immersion program, EIPS would put a transition plan in place. The plan would involve consultations with students, school council groups, school administration, staff and EIPS senior administration. EIPS would also ensure balanced school enrolments among overcrowded and under-used schools and increase access to programs for all EIPS students to ensure a smooth transition for all involved.

Q45: What's the timeline?

A: At this point, it's still too premature to speak about the specific solution timeline until future public consultations take place. However, EIPS will present the Board with report on the French Immersion engagement effort to date at the Board meeting on June 15. If changes are approved, they would take effect in the 2024-25 school year or the 2025-26 school year, at the earliest.

Q46: If EIPS plans to share a recommendation report at the Board meetings in June, are French Immersion families allowed to attend?

A: Yes. All EIPS board meetings are open to the public. The meeting will take place in the EIPS board room on June 15, at 10 a.m. EIPS will also livestream the meeting on the [EIPS YouTube channel](#).

Supports

Q47: Does EIPS have a list of tutors for families to contact if their child requires extra support?

A: Yes. Schools have a tutor list. The best thing to do is contact your child's school directly.

Q48: What supports and services do schools offer to French Immersion families?

A: French Immersion students are afforded all the same supports and services as students enrolled in the regular English program. Finding ways to provide added support for a child enrolled in the French Immersion program is sometimes challenging. It's important to remember, EIPS has no requirement or expectation for families to speak or understand French to support their child enrolled in French Immersion. Instead, teachers and staff at all EIPS schools work together to assist students with any questions they may have. That allows families to support their child at home the same way they would in the English program—by asking questions, engaging in learning activities, and establishing regular routines for completing homework and reading.

That said, there are many resources available for families. To access these, simply contact your child's school and tell them you're looking for French Immersion support resources. Most resources are available online and focus on literacy, numeracy and career planning.

Q49: Can EIPS offer opportunities to build parent capacity in French learning?

A: Yes. In fact, it does this already. Throughout the year, EIPS offers building capacity sessions to support regular program and French Immersion families to engage with their child or several topics, including literacy, numeracy, health and wellness, career pathways and early learning. For more information contact [Communication Services](#).

Busing

Q50: How will busing work for students requiring transportation services?

A: EIPS provides an enhanced transportation service for both eligible and ineligible riders. So, anyone who wants to access existing Student Transportation can do so by requesting busing services during the new or returning student registration process in February. Families simply indicate on the online form busing is required for their child. Before the end of the school year, the family will receive their child's tentative busing information, including the associated fees.

Q51: How are families charged for busing?

A: EIPS offers enhanced transportation services for students, using the below fee structure.

Eligible Fee: Riders who attend their designated French Immersion school and live more than 2.39 kilometres from that school. For 2022-23, the eligible fee is \$121 per year.

Ineligible Fee: Students who attend a non-designated French Immersion school or live less than 2.4 kilometres from their French Immersion designated school. For 2022-23, the ineligible fee is \$346 per year.

Q52: Is it possible to offer direct busing for all senior high French Immersion students?

A: No, not currently. A direct-bus ride time is much longer for students attending Ardrossan Junior Senior High than it is routing students on transfer-site bus routes.

Next Steps

Q53: If any changes are made, when will they come into effect?

A: In June 2023, EIPS will present the Board of Trustees with a report about the French Immersion engagement efforts. Any Board-approved changes will take effect in the 2024-25 or the 2025-26 school years, at the earliest. Before making a decision, the EIPS Board will review all relevant data and the feedback gathered through the engagement efforts. EIPS is committed to keeping the community informed about the process and will provide information as it becomes available.

Q54: If EIPS does make a change to French Immersion programming, how will the Division support the transition for students?

A: At this point, it's premature to speak to a transition plan. EIPS hasn't determined a solution or made a decision. Furthermore, the Board won't make any decision until it reviews the community input from all public engagement efforts. That said, anytime changes are made to attendance boundaries, EIPS puts a transition plan in place. The plan involves consultations with students, school council groups, school administration, staff and EIPS senior administration. The goal: To ensure a smooth transition for all students.

Q55: Can students register at a French Immersion school that's different from their designated French Immersion school?

A: Yes. Families wanting their child to attend a non-designated school, or school of choice, must make the request during the returning student registration process. The only exception: students who move into the Division from outside the geographic area, or another community within the Division, after the returning student registration closes. The Division contacts all families who apply to a non-designated school to advise if they can attend the school in the upcoming school year. Acceptance is based on available space.

Q56: If EIPS changes any French Immersion program locations, can siblings of affected students continue attending the same school?

A: Yes, if the older child currently attends a school and will attend the school at the same time as the younger child. In this scenario, the sibling clause applies—simply register to attend the school during the returning student registration process in February.