

**French Immersion  
In the  
Edmonton Catholic Schools**

**June 2003**

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## History

### French Instruction : 1 hour a day

French as a language of instruction has been taught to French speaking students and to students of French origin since 1888 when the Catholic School System was established. French was then taught 1 hour per day.

1888 French was taught one hour a day.  
1905 Eleven schools taught French to Francophones.

Summary till 70's

School	Years	Comments	Curriculum
St. Francis	1905 - 1966	Started by missionaries	ACFA
Sacred Heart 1-9	1914 - 1973	1-6 bilingual moved to Grandin	ACFA till 1971
Grandin	1914 -	7-9 moved to Academy Assumption and college St Jean in 1965	Alberta Education
St. Edmund	1914 - 1969		ACFA
St. Thomas Aquinas	1949 -		ACFA till 1972
Our Lady or Lourds	1954 -		ACFA till 1973
St. Luke	1955 - 1966		ACFA till 1966
Académie Assumption	1965 - 1972	*Académie Assumption and College St Jean amalgamated and moved to form J.H. Picard at present site of Maurice Lavallée.	ACFA
College St Jean	1965 - 1972		ACFA
Holy Cross	1967 - 1971		ACFA
J. H. Picard	1972 -	See above *	Alberta Education

### Bilingual Education : Changes to the Government Regulations

Prior to 1968 Department of Education regulations permitted instruction in French for all but one hour to grades 1 & 2 and then only two hours of French instruction in grade III and only one hour from grades IV on.

1968 the Alberta School Act was amended to allow up to 50% instruction in French from grades III on.  
1968 Alberta School Act also brought into being a profound change - bilingual program could now be offered to Anglophone students as well as to Francophone students.

1970 Edmonton Catholic Schools modified their policy to admit non Francophone students to the bilingual classes.

1971 District Policy stated that "Any student who must go out of the local boundary receives a free bus pass.

Schools in 1972/73	Enrolment	Comments
<b>Elementary</b>		
Grandin	218	Two streams for bilingual education: the first for francophone with those Anglophones who attended French kindergarten, the second for Anglophones with no prior French experience.
St. Thomas Aquinas	201	
Notre Dame de Lourdes	119	
Sacré Coeur	106	
<b>Secondary</b>		
J. H. Picard	546	The program is overall a bilingual program with variants between grades. Example: Grade 7 = 70% French while Grade 12 = 40% French instruction.

## French Immersion

1973 The first group of Immersion students at Grandin and St Thomas of Aquinas

1974 A French as a Second Language program was recommended for the 62 elementary schools(grades 4 - 6), the 27 jr. high and the 7 high schools. With a pilot *study* of 11 FSL classes and 2 Bilingual to begin in the fall of 1974.

1975-6 Anglophone regulation provided instruction in French up to 80% of the school day.

Objectives of the programme.

1. To promote bilingualism and biculturalism
2. Allow Canadians, who wish, the right to acquire equal competency (oral and written) in both official languages.
3. To establish better communication and understanding between both ethnic groups. (French and non French)
4. Prepare competent & fluent bilingual students in both official languages who will later have key jobs whereby they can exert leadership on a federal, provincial, municipal and local level.
5. Beginning in September 1978, a Grade 4 French Immersion program could be offered to non-French speaking children. Centres will be determined later depending on registrations.

Religion is taught in English to Anglophones, however in some classes, where students understand French very well, religion may be taught in French and/or English.

Health, and all other subjects are taught in French.

School	Year	Comment
Grandin	-	Retained the same student population while the program shifted from bilingual to the Immersion model
St. Angela	1991	Begun as an Immersion model
Father Leo Green	1977	Begun as an Immersion model
St Stanislaus	1976	Begun as an Immersion model
Frère Antoine	1980	Begun as an Immersion model
Holy Cross	1983	Students from Notre Dame de Lourdes transferred to Holy Cross as Notre Dame is closed.
J. H. Picard Elementary	1984	Student transferred from St. Thomas of Aquinas as that school is closed down. Picard become K-12 centre
St. Cecilia		The Immersion Programme was added to the existing English Junior High.

## Francophone Education: Its origins within Edmonton Catholic Schools

1984 At the request of Francophone parents, Edmonton Catholic Schools begins offering Francophone education to a Francophone only population.

School	Year	Comment
Maurice Lavallee	1984	J.H. Picard is moved to the old St. Mary's site.
Notre Dame de Lourde	1989	Re-opened as a Francophone school .
Père Lacombe	1992	Re-opened as a Francophone school .
Ste Jeanne d'Arc	1991	Re-opened as a Francophone school .

In 1994 the four francophone schools obtain the legal right to open their own School Division. The four francophone schools leave Edmonton Catholic Schools to form the "Conseil Francophone du Nord".

## French Immersion in Edmonton Catholic Schools Today

Currently, French may be used as the language of instruction in kindergarten and grade one up to 100% of the instructional time. In grades two to twelve inclusive, **French may be used as the language of intruction up to a maximum of 80% of the instructional time.**

Admission into French Immersion program or the bilingual program in intenational languages shall occur at the kindergarten or grade one level unless otherwise approved by the principal.

School	2003 Enrolment	Program description
Grandin	219	K - 6 dual track French Immersion & Spanish bilingual (no Engl prog)
St. Angela	243	K - 6 dual track English only and French Immersion
Father Leo Green	237	K - 6 dual track English only and French Immersion
St Stanislaus	214	K - 6 single track French Immersion program. (Immersion Centre)
Frère Antoine	414	K - 6 single track French Immersion program. (Immersion Centre)
Holy Cross	495	K - 9 single track French Immersion program. (Immersion Centre)
J. H. Picard Elem.	612	K - 12 single track French Immersion program. (Immersion Centre)
St. Cecilia	106	7 - 9 dual track English only and French Immersion
St. F. X.	83	10 -12 dual track English only and Modified French Immersion
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2623</b>	

## **Characteristic Features in Edmonton Catholic Schools**

### ENROLMENT

The tradition of promoting French Language Learning in Edmonton Catholic Schools has resulted in a **remarkably consistent enrolment** for the past **13 years!**

Since 1990 the **French Immersion enrolment** has accounted for

- **8.4 to 8.8%** of the **total School District enrolment**
- **12 to 14%** of **total enrolment** at the **elementary level**.
  
- This year there are **88 students** graduating from **grade 12**. (65 in a full immersion centre),
- **285 students** attending **grades 10 – 12**. (202 in a full immersion centre).
- Total enrolment has sat between 2650 and 2700 students for the past 5 years.

**FSL begins at the grade four** level in **95%** of our elementary schools.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

The following program settings are currently offered

- **Full** single track French **Immersion centres**
- Dual Track **French** Immersion with **English** Program
- Dual Track **French** Immersion with **Spanish** Bilingual Program
- **Full** immersion **High School Centre**
- **Modified** Immersion **High School**

And as of September 2003

- **Late Immersion** beginning grade 7

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Edmonton Catholic Schools uses **Federal Grants** for direct support to **French Language program;**

- Hiring two French **Immersion consultants**
- One **.5 FLS Consultant**
- One **.5 secretary** for French Language Teacher Training
- Purchasing of school based **resources**
- Purchasing of centrally accessible **resources**
- **Publicity**

In addition the school District financially supports the program through,

- centralized publicity campaigns,
- program reviews
- supporting bussing

## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The support for Official and International languages is manifest at three levels:

Trustee, Central Office Administration and School Administration.

- Administrators of French Immersion Schools meet monthly to review practices, and share successes and concerns.
- At least one Central Office Administration is represented at each French Immersion Administrators' meeting.
- Program Health is ensured at these meetings through constant work done on
  - Program reviews,
  - New initiatives,
  - Resources,
  - Program Promotion,
  - Staffing practices

## IMMERSION RESOURCES

**Many resources have been created** through staff development which are now accessible across the province

- Available through LRC are 12 documents: FLA une réorganisation par tâche.
- A list of guiding reading kits for grades 1 to 3
- Over 400 books into leveled readers for Guided Reading.
- A series of Schematic organizers corresponding to each of the Performance tasks in the FLA Program of Studies. Grades 1 – 6
- An English translation of the program of studies prepared as a report card ready version, complete with letter to parents.

Through Work with MERFIP a regional consortium of 8 districts

- A French wordwall kit for each for grades 1,2,3
- Currently working on a French series of lessons for Making Words

## INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES

In addition to the Official Language programs the District has long promoted a wide spectrum of **program options** in **international language** learning

- Cree Language and Culture grades 1-9, 10-12?
- Italian Language and Culture, grades 1-6, 7-9, 10-12
- Japanese Language and Culture 10-30
- Latin 10-30
- Polish Bilingual K-6
- Polish Language and Culture 10-30
- Spanish Bilingual k-3
- Spanish Language and Culture 7-9, 10-30
- Ukrainian Bilingual K-6, 7-9, 10-12
- Ukrainian Language and Culture 10-30

## **CONCLUSION**

The uniqueness of Edmonton Catholic Schools' French Immersion Program lies in its longstanding commitment to and tradition of promoting Official and International Languages by offering a broad variety of program settings and by providing the support necessary to ensure their success.