

# FRENCH IMMERSION

## Program Implementation Costs



### A Fact Sheet for Parent Advocates

This information is designed to help you to encourage your school or school district to implement new or additional French Immersion (FI) classes. It outlines steps which should be completed before making such a request and identifies the costs associated with a French Second-Language (FSL) program that would not normally be incurred in the implementation of an English-language program.

It is important to remember that most costs associated with French Immersion programs are identical to those of regular English programs. For example, teacher salaries, space and scheduling – the largest education costs – are required for English programs as well, as are items like interactive white boards, furniture, operations and maintenance. These expenditures ought not to be considered French Second-Language start-up costs.

*Continued next page →*





## Before Approaching Your School or School District

**1 Provide parents with information about student achievement as well as the cognitive, academic, and employment benefits of learning French as a second language.**

You can find answers to frequently asked questions at: [http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol10/may2007\\_parentsten.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol10/may2007_parentsten.html)

**2 Determine the following:**

- a. Parental demand.
- b. Which type of French Second-Language program is preferred and the instructional hours required by the program. You can find brief descriptions of various programs on the Canadian Parents for French website: [http://cpf.ca/en/files/03\\_FI\\_When\\_and\\_Why\\_E.pdf](http://cpf.ca/en/files/03_FI_When_and_Why_E.pdf)
- c. How many students are needed to ensure a self-sustaining program?
- d. How many students are needed for the introductory year? This is discussed in greater detail in the "Special Considerations" section that follows.

**3 What school has available space?**

- a. What is the capacity of the school? What is the school boundary attendance area?
- b. What is the current school population?
- c. How many classrooms are available? For example, a minimum of five classrooms may be required for a fully established FI program from Kindergarten to Grade 8
- d. What is the proximity of the proposed school to other schools with French Immersion programs in the district and in other school districts?
- e. Also consider its proximity to after-school activities and to middle and secondary schools to which elementary immersion students will progress.

**4 Are transportation arrangements needed to bring students to the program school?**

This is a very important consideration. Without transportation, the program will not reach its potential – costs will stay high and enrollment will stay low or reach a ceiling. This is discussed in greater detail in the "Special Considerations" section, that follows.

**5 How many French Immersion teachers will be needed? Are qualified teachers available?**

**6 What special education support services will be provided?**

**7 Determine the sources of provincial/territorial and federal revenues available to support the French immersion program.**

*For more information, see Federal and Provincial/Territorial Funding section that follows.*





## Determine French Immersion Program Costs

Remember that most start-up costs will be identical to English program classes. For that reason they should not be included in calculating FI program costs. These costs include:

1. **Teacher salaries**
2. **Space**
3. **Scheduling**
4. **Furniture**

### Costs exclusive to FI programming

(Note that these costs will be spread over a number of years as the first FI students progress and additional grades are introduced.)

1. French-language library materials will cost approximately \$10,000 per grade.
2. French cultural activities will cost approximately \$2,000 per classroom.
3. Instructional materials and resources will cost approximately \$10,000 - \$12,000 per grade.

### Identify sources of revenue (grants) available to offset French Immersion program costs

**1. Provincial Funds.** Most provinces have a base instruction funding grant for each eligible student, as well as transportation and special education grants. Contact your provincial Ministry of Education to learn about the current funding allocations in your province/territory.

*For example:*

- Alberta funding rates are located in the Funding Manual for School Authorities 2014 -2015 School Year.
- BC funding rates are located in the 2014-15 Operating Grants Manual and Overview of the 2014-15 Operating Grant Allocation Formula.
- Ontario funding rates are located in the Education Funding Technical Paper 2014-15.

**2. Federal Funds.** In most provinces, school districts and private schools offering French Immersion programs receive annual grants determined by student enrollments

and hours of instruction in French for all French Second-Language students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. These grants, administered by the province, are federal funds — part of Canada's Official Languages in Education Program (OLEP) funding.

This funding is meant to offset supplementary costs incurred in offering French-Language programs, including special education services. These supplementary costs include French-Language library start-up and maintenance, teacher in-service, orientation, recruitment, cultural and linguistic activities and events, program coordination and supervision and transportation (the portion not covered by provincial grants).

In some provinces/territories, federal financial assistance is available to school jurisdictions, institutions and organizations to defray up to 50% of the additional costs of the French-Language projects.

You will find the latest OLEP agreements for your province/territory on the Canadian Heritage website: <http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1357334094352/1357334201823>.





## Special Considerations

The smaller the class size the greater the program cost as less revenue is generated by the basic instruction grant which accompanies each eligible student. The cost of transporting students to a central location may be less than undersized classes.

**1. Class size.** A French Immersion or alternate core French program may divide the students attending a school into two populations which may result in smaller classes in both French immersion and English programs.

While it would be ideal to secure sufficient student enrollment to support full-sized classes, it is important to remember that class size may well be lower, especially in the start-up years. Note that:

**a.** Federal Official Languages in Education (OLEP) funding is intended to support lower core and immersion class sizes, especially at startup. These funds also support smaller class size and higher per pupil costs in rural and isolated jurisdictions.

**b.** As school district promotional efforts and word-of-mouth recommendations from parents continue, French Second-Language enrollment will increase.

**Contact your school district for current policies regarding upper and lower class size limits.**

**2. Transportation.** Refers to the cost of gathering students into groups large enough to create viable enrollments.

**a.** While transportation is often considered to be an additional cost, the reality is that all English and FSL program students outside of urban areas must be transported — these costs would be incurred as a matter of course and offset by provincial/territorial transportation grants.

**b.** In urban areas, expanding the catchment area and providing transportation can increase class size and lower per pupil costs by gathering students into groups large enough to create viable enrollments.

**c.** Transportation costs depend on local school district policies and distances from school. Contracts with bus companies differ depending on whether their charges are based on the size of the bus or not. It will be important to keep ride times down, so a larger number of smaller buses is often a more cost effective arrangement. Larger buses are cheaper per student but not always suitable for collecting students over a sparsely populated area.

**Contact your school district for information about transportation grants.**

