



Pembina Hills Regional Division No. 7

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RE: French Immersion Programming in PHRD

The purpose of this letter is to ensure that parents are fully informed about the French Immersion Programs in Pembina Hills Schools.

Pembina Hills supports the provision of French Immersion programs in Westlock Elementary School, R.F. Staples Secondary School, Barrhead Elementary School and Barrhead Composite High School. These schools therefore have dual programs: An English program and a French Immersion Program.

Parents who live outside the attendance boundaries of the four designated dual-program schools and want their children to be enrolled in French Immersion programs, can choose to enter into a Parent Provided Transportation Agreement with the School Division as described in AP 50-01 – School Attendance Area.

Like programs delivered in English, French Immersion programs follow the provincial Programs of Study and reflect the expectations described in Alberta Education's Guide to Education.

The viability of dual programs is re-assessed on an annual basis by the school administration in consultation with the School Councils at these schools. Viability of French Immersion programs is based on the following criteria:

- Population of students enrolled in FI must be sufficient to ensure financial viability of the program without impacting the English program; as determined by the school administration in consultation with the Secretary Treasurer, the Superintendent and the School Council Chair.
 - Combined grade level class groups do not exceed two grade levels in a single classroom grouping.
- Ability to effectively meet the French Immersion programming requirements as defined in the Guide to Education. (The required amount of instruction in French varies from grade to grade).
 - Availability of teachers trained and skilled in the delivery of instruction primarily in French.
- Availability of school financial resources to support maintenance of student and teacher instructional resources.

In Westlock Elementary and Barrhead Elementary, the French Immersion program has traditionally been viable for Kindergarten through grade 6.

In RF Staples Junior-Senior High School and Barrhead Composite High School, The French Immersion program concludes by the end of grade 9. Historically, the low population of students in French Immersion in junior high has caused these schools to reduce or conclude the programs at earlier grades. The grade 9 population has rarely met the requirements of a grade 9 Immersion program although sometimes the school has offered a few core classes in French in an effort to sustain students' French Language skills. A higher population of French Immersion students in Junior High could support a more extensive French program. Therefore, as stated earlier, viability of the French Immersion program is assessed annually.

Students who have remained in French Immersion through most or all of junior high are invited to challenge the French as a Second Language 10, and sometimes FSL20, and thereby have opportunity to achieve some high school credits. Historically these students have been successful in their challenge of these courses. ("Challenging a course" means that a student is provided an opportunity to demonstrate competence and knowledge without having to engage in the typical 125 hours of instruction. All course challenges are at the discretion of the teacher and school principal.)

It has not been practice in PHRD to maintain French Immersion courses in High School. In addition, we have not offered instruction in French Language Arts in High School. However, French as Second Language 10, 20 and 30 can be offered through a variety of delivery methods dependent on the demand and interest level of students.

PHRD encourages parents of French Immersion students to become members and supporters of Canadian Parents for French. Please contact your child's French Immersion teacher or the school Administrator for information.

So welcome to French Immersion programming in Pembina Hills and thank you for supporting Dual Programs in our schools.

Sincerely,

Principal