

6 more schools to offer early French immersion this fall

Description

Early French immersion will be offered at six additional schools in September, Premier Brian Gallant announced in Minto on Thursday.

The six anglophone schools that will now offer French immersion, starting in Grade 1, are: Blackville School, Nelson Rural School, North & South Esk Elementary School, Keswick Ridge School, Minto Elementary Middle School and Montgomery Street Elementary School.

A total of [67 schools](#) across the province will offer early French immersion, and many will be able to accommodate interested students from neighbouring schools, said Gallant.

About 1,800 students have registered, he said.

‘Studies show that when it comes to learning a second language, earlier is better.’ – Brian Gallant, premier

In addition, French-language pilot projects will be launched at one rural school in each of the four anglophone districts that may have insufficient numbers to create an immersion class, he said.

The pilot projects will provide extended opportunities for students to learn to speak, read and write in French, according to a statement.

No details about the pilots have been released, but the schools offering them will share best practices, participate in peer-mentoring and be monitored to see how such programs could be expanded to other schools, the statement said.

- [French immersion returns to Grade 1 early entry](#)

Restoring the entry point for French immersion to Grade 1 instead of Grade 3 follows through on a high-profile pledge in the Liberals’ election campaign in 2014.

“Studies show that when it comes to learning a second language, earlier is better,” Gallant said in a statement. “We are pleased to restore French immersion to Grade 1 and give more families the opportunity to enrol in the program, especially in rural New Brunswick.”

The new Grade 1 program has been strengthened based on the most recent research on French learning, according to the news release. Improvements include a stronger literacy focus, with an emphasis on oral language, and will include “authentic French-language experiences,” it said.

Grade 1 students will receive less than 10 per cent of instruction in English in courses such as phys ed and music, where the teacher may not speak French.

The former Liberal government of Shawn Graham changed the entry point from Grade 1 to Grade 3 in 2008. Then-education minister Kelly Lamrock said early immersion starting in Grade 1 was creating a two-tiered system in anglophone schools.

In 2011, the government commissioned a review, which recommended the entry point be restored to Grade 1.

Of the 67 schools offering early French immersion this fall, 22 are in the Anglophone West School District, 17 in Anglophone East, 17 in Anglophone South and 11 in Anglophone North.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/early-french-immersion-new-brunswick-school-grade-1.4069251>

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