



News Release

February 5, 2004

Surrey School District to become first in B.C. to offer new “intensive” French program

The Surrey School District is pleased to be the first school district in B.C. to offer an innovative, new French program for Grade five students beginning the next school year (2004-05).

Called Intensive Core French (ICF), the program was developed after a three-year, provincially and federally funded research project in Newfoundland that concluded in 2001. The study was aimed at improving French language learning and communication abilities of students taking French as part of the regular, core curriculum. The study found that in order to learn to communicate in French, students must use French in real conversations for extended periods of time. Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan have implemented the ICF program.

“Research and experience with the Intensive Core French program has demonstrated it to be very effective in teaching young students to converse in and write French quickly and accurately in a very short period of time,” says Surrey School District Director of Instruction, Sharon Cohen. “I’m proud that the Surrey School District is again leading the way in introducing the best in educational programs for our learners.”

The Surrey School District is conducting public meetings over the next month (attachment) to provide opportunities for parents to learn more about Intensive Core French, as well as to gauge interest in order to determine in which schools to implement the program.

ICF provides intense instruction in French for the first five months during grade five in order to boost communicative skills quickly. Each day, students in the program receive about 80 per cent of their instruction in French for the first half of the year, while the rest of the curriculum (except for Mathematics) is completed in the remaining half of the year. Also, for the second half of grade five and into grades six and seven, students continue to receive one hour of French instruction per day.

The keys to success are the intensity of French instruction and concentrated exposure to the language. It has been demonstrated that the most efficient way of learning another language is concentrating the time spent using it. One hour a day for three months is not as effective at learning French as spending four hours a day over three weeks, even though the number of hours is the same.

ICF offers another choice for parents that want to see their child become communicatively fluent in French. Research has also found learning a second language increases the overall literacy competency of students. Experience in school districts offering ICF shows that students demonstrated greater self-esteem, confidence, initiative and responsibility. Further, teachers reported students were more apt to use dictionaries, reference works and the Internet to find information and were more autonomous in their work habits than teachers had experienced with students in a regular curriculum.

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For more information, please contact:
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Surrey School District

Intensive Core French: Public Information Meetings

All meetings are from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 12, 2004 at Morgan Elementary: 3366 – 156A St. Surrey

Tuesday, March 2, 2004 at Frost Road Elementary: 8606 – 162 St. Surrey

Thursday, March 4, 2004 at Don Christian Elementary: 6256 - 184 St. Surrey

Tuesday, March 9, 2004 at Dogwood Elementary: 10752 – 157 St. Surrey

Thursday, March 11, 2004 at Brookside Elementary: 8555 – 142A St. Surrey