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Why choose **L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion (LNFI)**?

- Celebrating our 25th year, LNFI started in 1996 with only 3 classes (K & 1). Currently we have 400+ students enrolled Pre-K through 5th grade.
- We offer full day Pre-K and program entry in Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd grade
- LNFI is the first school/phase of the Pre-K to 12th French immersion program in the St. Paul School District. Students continue to Ramsey Middle School (6 - 8) and Central High School (9 - 12) for the full immersion pathway. At Central, they complete the French Language International Baccalaureate coursework/testing and may earn a French Immersion Certificate of Accomplishment.
- All classroom teachers are native French speakers or fluent French speakers from around the globe. Most teachers have studied or lived abroad for extended periods of time. Native countries of our staff include France, Cameroon, Canada, Togo, Laos, Costa Rica and Vietnam.
- We welcome a diverse student body: African American 18%, Asian 8%, Hispanic 14%, Mixed 15%, White 45%, and ELL (English Language Learner) 14%.
- LNFI has strong standardized test scores on the MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive-Assessment), exceeding both district and state averages.
- We are a STEAM school (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math), offering Makerspace programming and robotics at each campus as well as a licensed Science specialist.
- Our program is a highly rigorous curriculum that aligns with and enriches Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) and Minnesota State Standards.
- Interns from France and other French-speaking nations enrich the classroom by sharing their native language and culture with the students thanks to PTO funding and family support.
- Our Artist in Residency programs include Theater, Dance and Art instruction.
- In 4th and 5th grade, students compete in the SPPS Spelling Bee and National Geo Bee. Fifth grade students compete in Le Grand Concours, a National French language Competition and the Immigration Essay. Previous students have won both chapter and national awards.
- Lego League and Student Leadership are part of our afterschool program. We also offer a variety of programs through Community Education, including Choir and Soccer in French.
- Overnight field trips with French enrichment activities in Grades 4 & 5 to Deep Portage.
- Students have the opportunity to participate in an exchange program to France in 5th grade.
- Annual French Summer Enrichment camps are sponsored by SPPS each summer and are offered on site at our school.
- LNFI has a very involved and active Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) that embraces a collaborative partnership and builds a strong parent community.
- Discovery Club provides before and after school care from 6:30 AM - 6 PM.
- We are a city-wide option school offering free bussing within St. Paul.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is French Immersion Education?

“French Immersion” means classroom instruction is entirely in French. Students learn the entire Saint Paul Public Schools curriculum while learning French. A city-wide option, L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion School (pronounced: lay twal dew nor), is open to all Saint Paul residents.

Why is immersion education an exciting option for my child?

A second language is a wonderful gift to give your child. Immersion education is a proven means of stimulating learning that cuts across boundaries of language, socio-economic class, and ethnic groups. Students master grade-appropriate subject content, become fluent in the target language, develop English-language skills at or beyond standards set for English-only programs, and learn to understand and appreciate world cultures.

Why French?

French is the second most frequently taught language, worldwide, after English. A global language, it is used for communication on five continents. French is spoken by tens of millions of Africans and Asians, and is the primary language of France as well as several other European countries, much of Canada and the Caribbean.

French literature is a world treasure, and France itself is the most visited nation on earth with nearly 70 million visitors a year. French is the second most prominent language in the business world. And the French language is also just fun to speak and hear.

How is academic achievement assessed?

Continuous assessment is an integral part of classroom instruction. Content taught in French is assessed in French. District-wide standardized testing is administered in English.

What about teaching English language skills?

English reading and writing instruction begins in the second grade. While students' reading in English may be below grade level in the beginning of the year, the skills they have been acquiring in French transfer to English.

By the end of the year, most students are reading at grade level, and by the end of fifth grade, many students are reading well above grade level.

Do children need a background in French to enroll?

NO! The program is designed for non-French speakers. Most students entering the program in kindergarten and first grade have little or no prior French language experience.

Beyond the first grade level, students seeking admittance need to pass an entrance evaluation. They are expected to be proficient in French appropriate to their grade level.

How do the students learn if the teacher doesn't speak English?

Young children are naturally adept at learning languages. To ensure understanding in the classroom, teachers infuse their lessons with visual, musical and dramatic techniques. The students themselves begin by speaking in English, but as new vocabulary is introduced, they are encouraged to use more and more French. By second grade, French is the primary means of classroom communication.

Will my child fall behind in English?

Abundant research shows that learning in a second language actually enhances the child's first language ability. In the early years, immersion students may lag behind their peers on standardized tests given in English, but this is natural, since all classroom instruction is in French. By the end of fifth grade their English scores typically climb to equal or surpass their non-immersion peers.

Will I as a parent have to learn French too?

Only if you want to! The program assumes that the family is not French speaking, and teachers take this into account when they send notices or work home. But many parents enjoy sharing their child's progress with a second language.

For some immigrant families, the French language is also a valued way of passing a cultural heritage from parent to child.

How can I be involved in my child's education if I don't speak French?

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's education as much as possible - taking advantage of enrichment opportunities, and spending time reading together in English. Homework can be a learning experience for the whole family, since many students enjoy sharing the work they are doing in school, performing stories, poems and songs they have learned, and teaching their parents how to pronounce their spelling words correctly.

There are many volunteer opportunities at school. Many parents enjoy spending time in their child's classroom as well, helping the teacher with "behind the scenes" classroom projects and special events, and volunteering in the library and at PTO functions.

Does the school offer full-day Pre-Kindergarten?

Yes! The all-day pre-k program allows students' language skills to develop more quickly. In this way, students are more prepared for academic subjects and still have plenty of time for play and social interaction. Full day kindergarten is also offered.

Can I enroll my child if I don't live in the school district?

Yes. L'Etoile du Nord is open to all K-5 children in the metropolitan area. However, preference is given to students who live in the SPPS district. Pre-K is open to St Paul residents only.

Learn more

- Our School frenchimmersion.spps.org
- Discovery Club spps.org/discoveryclub
- Parent Teacher Organization lnfi-pto.org
- Enrollment apply.spps.org
- Take a Virtual Tour <https://forms.gle/tyxHRT7DqgfhmAjE6>