

Saskatchewan-Québec Student Exchange Participant Handbook



School Division Edition

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Job Description of Responsible Parties.....	3
2.1	The Liaison Teacher	3
2.2	The Principal	4
2.3	Saskatchewan Ministry of Education	4
2.4	Step by Step Application Process	4
2.5	Requirements Once the Student is Accepted.....	6
2.6	Safety Protocol.....	7
3.0	Before the Exchange	8
3.1	Withdrawal.....	8
3.2	Suggestions for Planning the Exchange Year Timetable for the Saskatchewan Student	8
3.3	Details to Consider When Planning the Twin's Timetable	10
4.0	During the Exchange	10
4.1	October to November	10
4.2	December to January.....	11
4.3	February to April.....	11
5.0	After the Exchange	11
5.1	Maintaining New Language After Returning to Saskatchewan	12
6.0	Promoting and Advertising the Program	12
Appendices		13
Appendix I – Education in Québec		13
Appendix II – Québec School System		14

1.0 Introduction

The school division edition of the *Saskatchewan-Québec Student Exchange Participant Handbook* is designed for schools currently participating in the Saskatchewan-Québec (SK-QC) Student Exchange Program, as well as those considering future participation.

The SK-QC Student Exchange Program is a reciprocal exchange program. A francophone student from Québec lives with a Saskatchewan family for two months and attends a Saskatchewan high school. Later in the school year, the student from Saskatchewan lives with the Québécois family for two months and attends a Québécois high school. The program is available to Grade 10 and 11 Saskatchewan students who are studying the French language. The application to participate is completed in Grade 9 or 10 and participation occurs the following year, in Grade 10 or 11.

In any given year, there are limited placements for Saskatchewan students in this program. An application from an individual student will not be considered without school involvement and support. It is important to note that application does not ensure the participation of any one student.

This handbook will inform participating school divisions about the exchange. Information for the student, host family and the host school is outlined in a timeline format. Before, During and After the Exchange Period are seen as major section headings.

A student and family edition of the handbook is available on the Government of Saskatchewan's [Saskatchewan-Québec Student Exchange Program](#) website page.

Please note: The Québec exchange student will be hereinafter called “twin.”

2.0 Job Description of Responsible Parties

2.1 The Liaison Teacher

Before a student in a school can participate in this exchange program, the school administration must make a formal decision about the school participating in the program and must appoint a suitable person to serve as liaison teacher.

The appointed liaison teacher should be:

- fluent in French;
- knowledgeable about this exchange program and activities;
- available to the Saskatchewan student, twin and parents;
- willing to listen; and,
- a good communicator and distributor of information to staff and administration.

Ideally, the liaison teacher will be a teacher of French as a second language or a guidance person who has the complete support of the principal. The liaison teacher is expected to:

- act as a liaison person between the student, their family and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education;
- announce the exchange program to all students enrolled in a French class or program;
- conduct home interviews for each applicant in March;

- submit the interview forms (this may be done by the liaison teacher or by a committee consisting of the liaison teacher, principal and school counsellor);
- inform applicants that application does not guarantee participation;
- provide assistance to the host family in understanding and translating information received about the twin;
- inform the Provincial Coordinator at the Ministry of Education of any change of family status (e.g., relocation and significant other); and,
- ensure all school personnel are informed of the twin's arrival date in the Saskatchewan school.

Further responsibilities of the liaison teacher will be outlined in other parts of this handbook.

2.2 The Principal

It is important that the principal:

- support the program in discussions with staff;
- approve the applications of recommended students who wish to participate in the program by filling out their Principal and School Division Approval Form;
- ensure the student and parents have assistance in timetable planning;
- promote the program;
- officially welcome the twin to the school;
- help mediate difficulties at the school level;
- support the liaison teacher in their decisions and actions;
- waive school rental (e.g., musical instrument, uniform, textbook fees and other student fees for the twins); and,
- accept the attendance record of the Saskatchewan student while in the Québec school.

The principal may wish to become involved in the interviewing of the candidates and the ranking of applicants before recommending to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.

2.3 Saskatchewan Ministry of Education

At the provincial level, the Ministry of Education:

- coordinates and administers the program;
- promote the programs on a provincial level;
- communicates to various parties;
- sends information to liaison teachers and principals;
- accepts and processes applications; and,
- assists with the matching process and finalizes all matches.

2.4 Step by Step Application Process

Before a student is selected to participate in the exchange, there are multiple steps, as follows:

1. Register Online

Any qualifying student can apply to participate as a Saskatchewan student. Review the Student and Family Edition of the handbook for eligibility. To register visit the Government of Saskatchewan's website page at [Saskatchewan Quebec student-exchange-programs](#).

As part of the online registration process the following forms are available online and must be completed and uploaded. The forms must be completed online in a single session. Please ensure the below documents have been uploaded before closing the registration for:

- [Principal and School Division Approval Form](#)
- [Parent/Guardian Approval Form](#)

The application must also include:

- **Letter of Introduction:**
Students must include a five to six paragraph letter (maximum 5000 characters) in French for their future exchange partner and family to read. The letter should include:
 - why the student wants to participate and what they want to accomplish in the program;
 - their ideal future student exchange partner;
 - their own personality, strengths and areas of improvement;
 - their family;
 - their preferred activities and hobbies; and,
 - their typical school year (activities, school structure, classes, etc.).
- **Images:**
 - a recent head and shoulders colour photo of the student;
 - a colour photo of their family;
 - a colour photo of the student with friends/pets; and,
 - two colour photos of the student doing activities they enjoy (skiing, dancing, music, etc.).

Important: A completed [Interview Questionnaire](#) is also required. It must be submitted by the liaison teacher directly to the Provincial Coordinator at prog.fedprov@gov.sk.ca.

Deadline to apply: **March 20, 2026**

The Provincial Coordinator will send the student an email confirmation within three business days.

2. Review Proposed Twin

Once the student is selected and matched with a twin in Québec, the school and liaison teacher will receive a message indicating if a match has been found. The match proposal will be sent to the school by secure email from the Provincial Coordinator no later than six weeks after the submission deadline.

Once the proposal has been accepted by the school and liaison teacher, the Provincial Coordinator will send it to the student and his or her family for final acceptance.

In the case of refusal: if the proposal is refused by the school, the student or their family, a new proposal could be formulated, depending on the number of applications available.

Important: a similar process is followed by the partners in Québec for the processing of the application of the student. The match will be confirmed once accepted by all parties.

3. Consent and Confirmation Form

The student and his or her family must be aware of the conditions of participation set out in the normative framework of the program. Please consider the expectations in section 1.5 Requirements Once the Student is Accepted before applying.

To confirm this, a confirmation of participation form must be signed by the student and his/her family for consent to the conditions of participation. The school must also sign the form and send it to the Provincial Coordinator to accept the twin match.

4. Criminal Record Checks

To finalize placement in the program, anyone 18 years of age or older residing at the host family residence are to provide the coordinator with a criminal record check (CRC) and a vulnerable sector search (PIC-VS). With the individual's consent, CRC results will be subject to disclosure to the Québec counterpart agency.

In the event of a positive CRC, the application will be considered on a case-by-case basis. As the administrator of the program, the Ministries of Education (Québec and Saskatchewan) make the final decision on a positive CRC. Should changes occur to CRC status during the exchange program, the individual will be required to advise the provincial coordinator within two days of the change.

Criminal Record Checks will be sent to by adult family member to the Provincial Coordinator at prog.fedprov@gov.sk.ca.

5. Notification of Status

All applicants will be notified of their status by mid-May. Candidates who were not matched should discuss alternative programs with their liaison teacher.

2.5 Requirements Once the Student is Accepted

Pre-departure Training

Training is mandatory for all participating students and parents/legal guardians. Organized by the Ministry of Education, this training prepares families for the exchange experience. Those in charge of exchanges within the schools are also invited to participate.

Documentation and Identification

- **Required documentation:** The ministry will inform the student of the documents to be obtained. Schools are responsible for ensuring documentation is complete and compliant.
- **Identification:** A copy of a valid travel ID must be submitted to the Provincial Coordinator through a secure email. The student must submit one of the following:
 - a passport valid for at least six months after the date of return;
 - a government-issued photo ID (federal or provincial) showing the student's full name and date of birth; or,
 - two pieces of official identification issued by a federal or provincial government.

Logistics

- The Provincial Coordinator, the school and the ministry will jointly determine the logistics of travel related to the outbound and return flights. The files required to ensure the safety of the students will be sent to the chaperones.
- The plane ticket, purchased by Ministry of Education, will be sent directly to the student by the ministry by secure email. The school is also informed of the route.
- **Important:** The meeting point for groups travelling together is communicated by the ministry, as well as the instructions to be followed during the trip.

2.6 Safety Protocol

The Ministry of Education places a high priority on the students' safety. Should the student find themselves in a situation which puts their safety or wellbeing at risk, the following steps outline the procedure to follow.

2.6.1 Persons to Contact

1. The Liaison Teacher

After parents and family, the liaison teacher should be one of the first people the students meet upon arriving in Québec. The liaison teacher is the first contact for anyone wishing to report an incident.

The role of the liaison teacher is to:

- listen to the student's complaints and inform them of their rights listed in section 2.6.2;
- inform the student of any available services, such as school counsellors;
- recommend the appropriate immediate measures in the student's best interest for their security, such as medical attention or change in housing;
- identify with the student the type of action desired: a simple intervention, a report filed with police or another option;
- help the student write up a police report, if requested; and,
- complete an incident form to be supplied by the host school, if necessary.

The liaison teacher will notify the school principal and the Official Languages Programs Coordinator at the Ministry of Education to follow up on the situation as soon as possible.

2. The Police

In the event of an emergency in Saskatchewan or Québec, contact 9-1-1. If it is not an emergency, but the student would like to file a complaint, they must contact the non-emergency line.

2.6.2 Rights of the Complainant

A complainant has the right to:

- be treated fairly and promptly;
- seek other recourses of action;
- receive all information pertinent to the report or complaint process;
- obtain the appropriate support following the report or complaint; and,

- the complainant may, at any time, stop the complaint process. However, this does not take away the obligation of the school to ensure the security and integrity of the staff and students.

Confidentiality

All reports are stored in a confidential manner and are solely used for tracking and reporting incidents, as well as improving prevention and protection measures for students.

2.6.3 On-Going Support

During the exchange, monitoring is carried out by the schools, with the support of the ministry as needed. Directives concerning the reception of counterpart students will be shared by the ministry.

3.0 Before the Exchange

When the Ministry of Education notifies the student in May of the matching results, the Saskatchewan liaison teacher will receive a letter notifying the successful candidate and a copy of the proposed twin's file or a letter notifying the unsuccessful candidate. At this point, the liaison teacher can assist by:

- offering suggestions and support to the Saskatchewan student when correspondence begins with the twin and their family;
- planning the exchange year's coursework and timetable with the Saskatchewan student and family;
- communicating any changes in address, family breakup, household members or social habits of the Saskatchewan student to the Ministry of Education; and,
- ensure that all school personnel are informed of the twin's arrival date in the Saskatchewan school.

3.1 Withdrawal

Should a withdrawal occur, the Provincial Coordinator at the Ministry of Education must be notified promptly in writing. Should it be possible to rematch the twin with another Saskatchewan student, priority will be given to finding an appropriate match among the unmatched applicant pool.

3.2 Suggestions for Planning the Exchange Year Timetable for the Saskatchewan Student

Planning of the Saskatchewan student's timetable for the exchange year should begin shortly after the student is notified of a successful match, normally in May. The timetable should be completed before the end of June. The onus for the timetable rests with the student, who should consult with the school administrators, teachers, guidance personnel and the Saskatchewan liaison teacher, as required.

While the onus rests with the student, the Saskatchewan liaison teacher should double-check that:

- the student's timetable is satisfactory and completed on time;
- the teachers and administrators are supportive of the exchange; and,
- the academic progress of the student will be as normal as possible under the circumstances.

A major consideration in timetabling is that the Saskatchewan student will be away from the Saskatchewan school for two months. While away, the student will have a full program in the Québec school and will not realistically be able to continue the Saskatchewan school work. The time in Québec is to be devoted to full participation in the life of the Québec family, school and community.

While the Québec timetable will be designed to duplicate the Saskatchewan timetable as much as possible, academic progress in Saskatchewan courses may be delayed by language difficulties, course availability and the adjustments required in Québec. For more information on the Québec school system, please see Appendices I and II below. For attendance purposes, the attendance in the Québec school will be considered as attendance in the Saskatchewan school.

A great deal of personal growth and academic learning will occur in Québec. However, the academic learning will not necessarily be the same as what would have occurred in Saskatchewan during the same time. This requires understanding by Saskatchewan teachers and administrators and careful planning of the Saskatchewan timetable. With planning and school support, the Saskatchewan student should be able to progress normally through Grade 10 or 11. If the student needs courses or credits, some options include:

- summer school before or after participation in the program;
- online courses; and,
- an application to receive a special project credit for the exchange.

Note: The special project credit is a student-designed initiative. The Special Project Proposal Template, found within the [Special Project Credit Policy](#), must be completed and approved by the principal and school division superintendent (or designate) **prior** to the student beginning the project and prior to their departure for Québec.

For the planning of the Saskatchewan student's timetable, the following is recommended for a Grade 9 student applying to go on exchange in Grade 10:

- Core courses should be finished in the first semester.
- French 10 should be completed before departure in February, if possible.

For the second semester, the student may register in:

- French 20;
- Social Studies 10 or any other course in which the subject matter is not sequential; and,
- electives such as Physical Education, Art, Music, etc. Electives should be selected on the basis of personal competence in these areas, so missed assignments can be made up more easily after returning to Saskatchewan.

Generally, 20 level courses, other than French 20, should not be taken in the second semester.

For the planning of the Saskatchewan student's timetable, the following is recommended for a Grade 10 student applying to go on exchange in Grade 11:

- Core courses should be finished in the first semester.
- French 20 should be completed before departure in February, if possible.

For the second semester, the student may register in:

- French 30;
- Social Studies 20 or any other course in which the subject matter is not sequential; and,
- electives such as Physical Education, Art, Music, etc. Electives should be selected on the basis of personal competence in these areas, so missed assignments can be made up more easily after returning to Saskatchewan.

Generally, 30 level courses, other than French 30, should not be taken in the second semester.

In February, a chaperone will accompany the Saskatchewan student to Québec and will visit the school to help arrange and verify the student's timetable. While the school in Québec will attempt to meet the student's requests regarding course selection, this is not always possible. The main goal of the program is language-learning in the cultural environment. This will require the student's full attention.

3.3 Details to Consider When Planning the Twin's Timetable

While in Saskatchewan, the twin is expected to carry a full Saskatchewan school program. When the twin arrives in school in October, the liaison teacher must take time to meet with them, show them the school and plan a timetable. Realizing the restrictions of each school's timetable, the following suggestions may be helpful:

- register the twin in a full, balanced timetable;
- two or three option classes (e.g., Drama, Art, Home Economics and Industrial Arts) give opportunities to meet and communicate with other students in a more relaxed atmosphere;
- Drama and Physical Education often provide excellent socializing and language learning situations;
- the twin may appreciate options not offered in Québec; and,
- unless the student's ability in English is excellent, it may be advisable to register the student in a Social Studies class rather than in an English class. The twin may provide an interesting perspective to discussions on history in the Social Studies class.

Intramural sports and clubs may provide variety in the twin's school life and offer opportunities to meet other students.

4.0 During the Exchange

4.1 October to November

The twin will arrive in Saskatchewan at the beginning of October and will leave at the end of November or beginning of December. During this period, the liaison teacher should:

- remind all staff of the arrival of the twin;
- arrange an appointment for course selection;
- assist with course selection;
- welcome the twin to school during daily announcements on the day of their arrival;
- provide the twin's teachers with the evaluation form and ensure that this form is completed prior to the student's departure in early December;
- maintain close contact in September with students, as this is a time when difficulties may occur;
- work with the students and family to solve any problems that may arise;
- contact the Provincial Coordinator at the Ministry of Education if there are any serious problems;
- ensure that reports for Québec are sent to the Saskatchewan Provincial Coordinator by the specified dates;
- assist the Saskatchewan student in obtaining written arrangements with teachers, as needed, to ensure all parties understand how missed schoolwork will be covered as much as possible (this should be done prior to departure);
- communicate student's course requests with Québec liaison teacher (e.g., Music and Computer Science, if available); and, participate in the October mid-term evaluation meeting. All expenses are to be borne by the employing school division.

The role of the liaison teacher is crucial during the stay of the twin in Saskatchewan. The twin must feel they can share any issues, difficulties and successes with the teacher. Without the usual support group, the twin will need the help of the Saskatchewan student, family and liaison teacher.

A regular weekly scheduled meeting with students is strongly recommended. It is important to provide at least five minutes with each student. Experience has shown this will reduce problems and establish a solid base for communication. The students should be urged to use direct communication with each other. The liaison teacher must maintain the confidence of each student.

Teachers must be supportive and made aware the twin is to be treated as any other student (e.g., write all tests, exams, essays and give presentations) within reasonable limitations in regard to teacher expectations. When the twin returns to Québec, the Saskatchewan school may wish to present the twin with mementos, such as a school pin, crest, sweatshirt, etc.

4.2 December to January

The Saskatchewan student will require attention and support during this time as the student's departure is quickly approaching and they may begin to suffer from anxiety. It is recommended the liaison teacher:

- check and reassess the student's personal goals at the beginning of the exchange;
- discuss types of subjects desired in Québec and share with the twin and Québec liaison teacher;
- discuss Saskatchewan course work completion (what, when and how will schoolwork be completed);
- remind the student of exchange commitments for the second phase;
- discuss language learning in an immersion setting to prepare the student (e.g., cultural differences); and,
- ensure all of next year's applicants have been interviewed for upcoming year.

4.3 February to April

It is recommended the liaison teacher:

- verify the student knows how the missed schoolwork will be covered.
- remind staff why the student is away (the student is to be reported as present during the period of their stay in the Québec school); and,
- correspond regularly with the student while they are in Québec to discuss how they are adjusting to their new classes and communicate about schoolwork in Saskatchewan.

5.0 After the Exchange

The student who has returned from the exchange will go through another adjustment process, requiring support if they feel they no longer fit in. The liaison teacher will need to be understanding of the student at this time, listening to their adventures and making suggestions when necessary, regarding Saskatchewan courses and catch-up schoolwork.

To help the student in this period, the liaison teacher may:

- remind the student of schoolwork to complete and help to draw up a schedule;
- invite the student to discuss their experiences in Québec in French with senior level French classes, as this validates their exchange experience;

- coordinate meetings with next year's successful candidates;
- arrange a meeting (dinner or attendance at a board meeting) with school board officials so they may be informed of the student's experience; or,
- organize an alumni group of past participants of the exchange program (students and parents) if none exists.

5.1 Maintaining New Language After Returning to Saskatchewan

It is important the student receives options to maintain and improve their new language skills. Their confidence and ability will fade rapidly once they've returned to their routine in their Saskatchewan school. Once the current level of fluency is achieved, the initiative to continue to listen, speak, read and write French is maintained. While considering options, some of the following suggestions may be helpful:

- consider summer employment with a local tourist office or a national park where French would be an asset;
- assist in a childcare centre, nursery school or kindergarten where French is the language of communication; or
- volunteer to help at a summer language camp.

Summer work and study programs exist, as do year-long programs of study abroad. Inquiries may be directed to appropriate agencies, the Ministry of Education or Canada Manpower. Be sure to discuss these possibilities.

To help the student investigate some of the above suggestions more closely, the liaison teacher could recommend the following websites regarding language bursary programs, such as Explore and Odyssey and other exchange programs:

- [Explore - Official Languages Programs OLP-PLO](#)
- canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/exchanges-canada

Investigation of various options offered by post-secondary institutions will also provide more opportunities to improve the student's French language skills. This may be a worthwhile inquiry for the student as they consider their choice of post-secondary institutions and programs.

6.0 Promoting and Advertising the Program

Application forms and promotional material for this exchange program are available each year. Presentations can be organized through the Promotion Agent with the Ministry of Education from September to May. Any questions about the SK-QC Student Exchange Program can be directed to the Provincial Coordinator at the Ministry of Education by email at prog.fedprov@gov.sk.ca or phone at 306-787-6048.

Appendices

Appendix I – Education in Québec

In Québec, school attendance is compulsory between the ages of six and sixteen. After six years of elementary school (seven for students with learning disabilities), students begin five years of secondary schooling if they are pursuing a general education leading to a secondary school diploma. The duration of time spent in secondary school varies depending on whether students are enrolled in a work-oriented general education program (applied general education) or in a program leading to a vocational studies diploma.

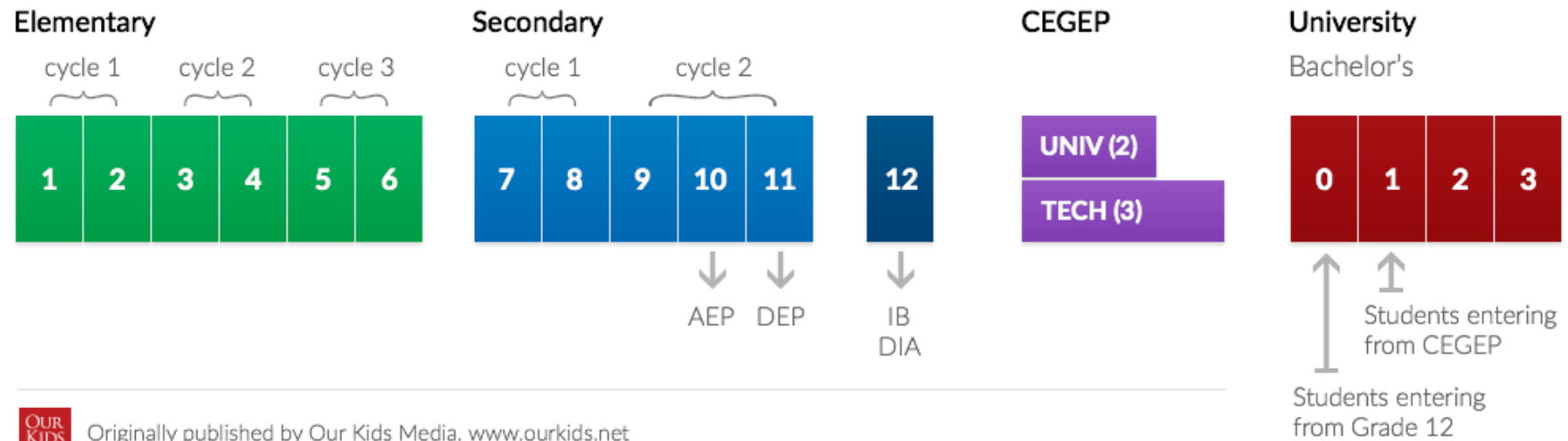
The five-year secondary school program is divided into two cycles. Cycle One is comprised of the first two years at the secondary level and its primary focus is on basic subjects. As of the third year, the timetable leaves room for elective courses. In Cycle Two, students can pursue a general education while using electives to explore various avenues before going on to college studies, or they can take vocational training if they want to find employment in a particular trade. Starting in the fourth year of secondary school studies, it is possible for students to begin an educational program leading to a diploma in vocational studies.

Québec is unique in Canada in that it is the only province that requires 11 (rather than 12) years of study in order to earn a high school graduation diploma. Students may apply for college entrance with that diploma. Students who intend to enroll at university must attend two years of college, known as Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEP) and earn a Diploma of College Studies (*diplôme d'études collégiales – DEC*) in addition to their high school diploma.

Resources:

- [OUR KIDS – Learning in Québec](#)

THE QUEBEC SCHOOL SYSTEM



AEP = Skill Training Certificate

DEP = Diploma of Vocational Studies

IB = International Baccalaureate