

Description of the Saskatchewan-Québec Student Exchange Program

The Saskatchewan-Québec (SK-QC) Student Exchange program is a reciprocal program where high school students from Saskatchewan are twinned with high school students from Québec. The Québec student stays in Saskatchewan from September until the end of November. They live and study in their twin's host family and school. The Saskatchewan student then travels to their counterpart's home in Québec to live and study for three months from February until the end of April.

The program is available to Saskatchewan high school students who will be in Grade 10 or 11 during the exchange year and are currently studying the French language whether it be in French Immersion, Core French or Post-Intensive French. **Application to participate takes place in Grade 9 or 10 in order for the student to participate in the exchange in their Grade 10 or Grade 11 year.**

Notes on COVID-19 and the 2021-22 SK-QC Student Exchange Program

Please note that the SK-QC Student Exchange program may have an altered schedule in the 2021-22 school year or may be cancelled if one of the following conditions arises as a result of COVID-19:

- Quarantine in Québec and in Saskatchewan is mandatory upon interprovincial travel;
- There is a ban on entering the Québec territory or Saskatchewan, and there are government orders to avoid all non-essential travel in any province;
- The Québec Ministry of Education or Higher Education or the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education decides to cancel the program;
- There has been a significant increase in the number of cases in Québec, in Saskatchewan, or in Canada;
- Schooling is not mainly in person in Québec or in Saskatchewan;
- The situation does not allow the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education or our Québec partner in the exchange, Éducation Internationale, to offer a secure exchange (ex. chaperoning);
- The exchange is not reciprocal; and,
- The number of cancellations is too significant.

Objectives of the Program

The program is designed to give the participating students an opportunity to:

- improve their knowledge of the French language;
- learn about the Québécois culture;
- experience a new school system; and,
- experience personal growth in social skills and independence.

General Time-Line of the Program

Year One (Application to program in Grade 9 or 10)

- December 4, 2020– Deadline for School Divisions to submit the *Request to Participate* Form
- February 22, 2021 – Deadline for schools to submit the completed student applications
- April/May 2021 – Students are notified if they've been selected to participate
- June 2021— Orientation webinar

Year Two (Participation in Grade 10 or 11)

- September 2021 – Québec students arrive in Saskatchewan
- End of November/Beginning of December 2021 – Québec students leave Saskatchewan
- End of January/Beginning of February 2022– Saskatchewan students depart for Québec
- End of April 2022 – Saskatchewan students return to Saskatchewan

Participation

Students who satisfy the criteria may apply for participation provided that:

- the school recommends the student and agrees to participate in the program;
- the student is prepared to make a suitable commitment to the program;
- host family residents provide a satisfactory criminal record check; and,
- their parents or guardians give their consent.

Criteria for the Selection of Students

- Consent and approval from the liaison teacher;
- Consent and approval from the school, the school division, and the parents or guardians;
- Sincere interest and firm intention on the part of the student and family;
- Ability to provide the incoming exchange student with suitable accommodation, family life, and a social setting;
- A very good or excellent academic record and suitable participation in and active in school community;
- Ability of the student to adjust and reorganize their time-table for a three-month absence if necessary; and,
- Personal qualities which include:
 - Motivation;
 - maturity and sense of responsibility;
 - good health;
 - sense of humour;

- adaptability and acceptance of others' differences; and,
- openness to another family's surroundings and culture.

Costs

- Registration Fee: Participating families must pay a non-refundable \$300 registration fee to the Minister of Finance in October 2021 during the mid-term evaluation meeting. A refund may be issued only if the program should be cancelled entirely due to COVID-19.
- The Ministry of Education of Saskatchewan will assist with remaining travelling expenses to and from Québec. There should be no additional school expenses in Québec.
- If a participating student insists on returning home before the end of the exchange period, for a reason unacceptable to the Ministry of Education (e.g., homesickness, inability to adapt, alcoholic beverages or other intoxicants, difficulty with the law, sporting events), **the parents will be responsible for any additional travel costs.**

Note: Students are responsible for their own spending money during their stay in Québec.

Deadline for Submission of Application

School divisions must submit a *Request to Participate* form to the Ministry of Education of Saskatchewan by **December 4, 2020**. Completed student applications must be submitted by **February 22, 2021 (including criminal record checks for residents of host family 18 years of age or older)**.

Information for School Divisions about the Saskatchewan-Québec Student Exchange Program

1. Saskatchewan students cannot participate in this program without the consent and approval of the school authorities. The signature of the principal and a program liaison teacher is required on the student's application form.
2. A school which chooses to participate in this program agrees to:
 - a) Appoint a member of the teaching staff, who is fluent in French, to be the Saskatchewan Liaison Teacher (this individual is usually, but not necessarily, the teacher of French).
 - b) Accept Québec exchange students within the school for the three-month exchange period and waive school fees and other school costs for these students.
 - c) Provide special counselling or assistance as required by the Québec student in order to adjust to the new school.
 - d) Release the Saskatchewan Liaison Teacher for one day for the mid-term evaluation whereby all expenses are to be covered by the employing School Division.
3. A teacher appointed as a Saskatchewan Liaison Teacher agrees to:
 - a) advise students about the program;
 - b) obtain application forms for use by students;
 - c) submit a *Request to Participate* form by **December 4, 2020**;
 - d) accept completed application forms from students;
 - e) conduct in-home interviews with the parents of student applicants; and,
 - f) rank the student applications and send them to the Ministry of Education of Saskatchewan by **February 22, 2021**.

NOTE: The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education trusts that the liaison teacher and the school will be most careful in the selection of applicants. Any doubtful applications should not be considered.

- g) provide assistance to the host families in understanding and translating information received about the Québec student;
- h) obtain counselling and assistance for Québec exchange students while they are in the school, if necessary;
- i) coordinate the progress reports to be issued to the Québec students; and,
- j) attend the mid-term evaluation of the program.

Information for Students and Parents About the Saskatchewan-Québec Student Exchange Program

Information for students

- 1.1 Participation in this program requires a major commitment from the beginning to the end of the exchange on the part of the student. Students not certain of their interest or of their commitment should not apply for this program.
- 1.2 **Application does not ensure participation:** Not all applicants will be successfully matched. There will be a screening process, based on the criteria listed on pages one and two. It is very important that application and interview forms be accurately completed.
- 1.3 Students participating in the program must be prepared to respect house rules in their host homes in Québec (e.g., curfews, smoking limitations, house chores).
- 1.4 Trouble with the law, especially in regard to the use of alcohol or drugs means **immediate termination of the exchange and return home at parental expense.**
- 1.5 Saskatchewan students hosting Québec students **must** give high priority to their responsibilities as hosts. If they have part-time work, they must ensure that it does not interfere unduly with their hosting responsibilities.
- 1.6 Only one member per family may participate in this program in any given year.
- 1.7 A participating student will be away from regular school for three months. This requires special planning of the school programs for the year.
- 1.8 The selection and matching of Saskatchewan and Québec students usually occurs in March and April. After a match is proposed, the Saskatchewan student and their family are advised of it and are given information about the Québec student. They are then asked to accept or not accept the match.
- 1.9 When the proposed match has been accepted by both sets of students and parents, families will be notified. The students are expected to contact each other before the Québec students' arrival in the fall. Since the Québec student comes to Saskatchewan first, the Saskatchewan student should make the first contact and assure the Québec student that they will be welcomed on arrival in September.

Information for Parents

- 2.1 Participation by a student in this program also requires a major commitment from the beginning to the end of the exchange on the part of the parents. It involves the hosting of a Québec student for three months as well as the acceptance of a three-month absence of their child.
- 2.2 To obtain information about the home and to assess the commitment of students and parents, an **in-home interview** will be conducted by the school liaison teacher.
- 2.3 It is essential that every member of the family be receptive to the exchange student and be willing to contribute to the success of the exchange.
- 2.4 There must be space in the home for another adolescent. A separate bedroom is not essential but may be desirable. A separate bed is essential.
- 2.5 Parents will be asked to meet incoming Québec students at the airport closest to their residence and to return them to these points for their departure to Québec.
- 2.6 **All adults over the age of 18 residing at the host family residence are to provide the coordinator with a satisfactory criminal record check (CRC), with a vulnerable sector search, at the time of the application.** 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 Ministry of Education makes the final decision on a positive CRC. Should changes occur to CRC status during the Saskatchewan-Québec exchange, the individual will be required to advise the coordinator within 2 days of the change.
- 2.7 It is hoped that Saskatchewan host families will provide suitable cultural and recreational experiences to Québec exchange students. This might include some travel within the province. There are no minimum expectations in this regard and individual families should plan to do only what they might wish to do.