

NOVA SCOTIA- QUÉBEC EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Program Information

- **What is the Exchange program?**

The Exchange program is a reciprocal program pairing students from Nova Scotia and Québec. It offers the possibility for French second-language students to truly live a full-fledged immersion experience and to improve their fluency in the French language. The cultural component is also a major asset as it is one of the most difficult outcomes to meet within a second-language classroom environment.

- **Is the Exchange program a new initiative?**

The program has existed for over 30 years and has facilitated exchanges between students from Québec and all other Canadian provinces. Since 2006, the program has been successfully implemented in Nova Scotia.

- How does the Exchange program ensure a safe experience for participating students? The Exchange program is closely and continuously monitored in each participating province in order to ensure the security and compatibility of the twinned students. A very detailed step-by-step guide is available to assist all parties involved. Each participant and family are visited at home for an assessment prior to the submission of the student's application to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. A network of contacts at the schools and Regional Centres for Education level is established in order to address any issues relating to the exchange and to support the students and host families participating in the exchange.

- **How long does the Exchange program last?**

The program lasts six months:

Québec students live with an English-speaking family and attend school in the host community in English Canada for three months, usually between September and December.

English students, in return, attend a French school and live with the French-speaking family of their twinned Québec student also for a period of three months, usually from February to April of the same school year.

- **How does the Exchange program affect the education of the participants?**

The issue of missed curriculum is addressed prior to the student's departure for the host community. The student and his or her family must be committed to the exchange program. The student must discuss with his/her teachers how missed work will be covered. Experience has shown that on average, approximately 12 hours of dedicated work per subject is required to address subject content missed during the three months out-of-province.

The student must be willing to work during the Christmas Break and to put in additional hours of study upon his or her return in order to meet all curriculum outcomes. Students are encouraged, if possible, to

complete the most taxing courses in the first semester prior to their departure for Québec. No credit for courses taken in Québec

will be given to Nova Scotia students. However, a certificate is awarded for participation in the program. Participants may also obtain a new grade 12 credit. Additional tasks are required to meet the outcomes of this credit. Please contact your school's guidance counsellor for more information.

- **Who can participate in this program?**

Participants must be grades 10, 11 or 12 French second-language students and be between 15 and 17 years of age

by September 1 of the participating year.

No student participant may be more than 17 years of age during the period of their stay in Québec.

- **What is the cost for participating in this program?**

The Nova Scotia Department of Education is responsible for the cost of return air travel from Halifax to the exchange site in Québec for student participants. Students are accompanied by an adult chaperone during the Halifax-Québec-Halifax flights.

Host families assume all costs for visiting students (school lunches, transportation, etc.)

Students should have pocket money for sports, movies, etc. Typically, it is recommended that students set aside a budget of \$500.00 for the 3-month stay.

There will be a non-refundable registration fee of \$100 for participating students if their application is approved.

- **How many students can participate in the Exchange program?**

For the 2020-2021 school year, the Exchange Program will be open to twenty Nova Scotia students. Every Regional Centre for Education is invited to participate, and the number of participants will be based on enrolment in French second-language programs at the senior-high level in each Regional Centre for Education.

TIMELINE

THE SELECTION PROCESS

September to March

- schools apply to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to be involved in the exchange
- Liaison Teacher is identified

- French second language teachers promote the program in their classrooms using the information from the FSL website
- Student application forms are available online
- The Program coordinator will visit the Regional Centres for Education upon request, to answer questions from interested schools and families
- schools begin the selection process
- schools conduct in-home interviews of potential candidates

End of March

- maximum of 20 high quality applications are submitted to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (additional copies of each application must accompany the original digital copy)

April

- processing and matching of student files
- pairing of eligible candidates done by provincial coordinators

May

- selected participants and schools are notified
- The families of Nova Scotia students receive the Québec student files

June

- correspondence/communication begins between Nova Scotia and Québec families (by letter, email, social media, telephone, etc.)

July and August

- continuing communication between Nova Scotia and Québec families
- NS families and schools are advised of Québec students' arrival times

THE EXCHANGE

September

- Québec students arrive in Nova Scotia

October

- Midterm evaluation interviews conducted by Québec teachers (by phone)

November

- Québec students' report cards are completed by NS schools

December

- Québec students return home
- NS students prepare for their trip to Québec

January

- NS students ensure that they are caught up and/or are prepared to catch up on schoolwork which will be missed while on exchange

February

- NS students leave for Québec
- Visits to participants by Program coordinator in Québec schools
- settling in period for student

March

- By the first week, the Program Coordinator checks in with the Nova Scotia students

End of April

- NS students return home