

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM



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School District No. 38
RICHMOND
British Columbia, Canada

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Cowichan Valley International Student Program
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subject focus

High schools in Canada

High schools in Canada have an established tradition of accepting international students into their classrooms and students can expect high standards of course and accommodation provision.

The international secondary school sector is relatively well developed in Canada, thanks in part to the country's worldwide reputation for safety and wholesome outdoor activity. Increased demand from students has also led to an increase in the types of programmes on offer over the last decade.

Sandy Prentice, International Program Coordinator at School District #8 in Nelson, BC, says that their international programme has grown organically from small beginnings nine years ago. "We started because students heard about our school and our community and they contacted us to ask if they could come to a school in our district," she says. "After many requests we finally said yes and it has been fantastic ever since."

School District #8 consists of six high schools and 11 elementary schools and Prentice relates that course provision for international students has developed according to the needs of their growing international community. "First we started with full immersion," she explains. "Then we added ESL [classes] to support students with their homework." A number of formal English language classes and programmes followed, including "English courses designed to be a bridge between ESL and academic English", says Prentice. Finally, the school district now offers tutorial support in the classroom and during the lunch hour at some of its schools.

A steady progression towards meeting the needs of international students is a common trend at many state secondary schools in Canada and a number of school districts now offer programmes that consist of formal language training and academic preparation programmes. At School District #42 in Maple Ridge, BC, specific courses for international

PHOTO: LAURENTIAN ACADEMY IN VALMORIN, QB



students have been part of the curriculum for 10 years and now the range includes university preparation, high school diploma, Toefl preparation and high school preparation programmes among others. Kathren Clarke, Supervisor for International Education, says that student demand has led to the development of more unusual courses. "We have developed a Hotel Operations Co-op Program [for study and work]," she relates, "as well as aviation programmes [for students]."

At River East Transcona Schools in Winnipeg, MAN, Birgit Hartel says that they have "fine-tuned" their courses for international students over the eight years that the international sector has been served. This means looking at course delivery methods for both the language-specific and mainstream classes. "Our teachers do their very best to differentiate instruction and structure in their classes to accommodate our international students so they gain the most educationally and also culturally," she says.

International students in Canada also have the option of studying in one of a number of private schools throughout the country. Laurentian Academy in Val-Morin, QB, started life as an outdoor education camp for young people and has operated as an international language centre for over 20 years, according to Michael Averill, Headmaster at the school. "The current incarnation, as a full-fledged international school offering secondary and pre-university training, came to be in 2000," says Averill. "We have the good fortune of being organisationally and physically contained within a French private boarding school. This permits our kids to engage in sports and other activities in French."

The ability of international students to mingle with their Canadian counterparts in the classroom and at home is part of the appeal of studying overseas and schools report that accommodation is an important part of any international programme package. Residential and homestay options are the most common for secondary students and at Nancy Campbell Collegiate Institute in London, ONT, demand for each is evenly split, according to John Pammer at the school. Both have an appeal for different reasons, he says. "[Residential accommodation] helps to give the students independent living skills, preparing them for university," he explains. "Homestay is a great way to... get to know a Canadian family."

At Sedbergh School in Montebello, QB, all international students live in boarding accommodation with Canadian students. Joanna Hoad at the school says that this helps students feel part of the school body. "We are able to ensure that students are assigned roommates of different languages and cultures," she says. "In addition our meals are eaten in a family-style where students are assigned tables. [This helps students integrate] with those from other countries and grades." During half-term when all students leave the school, international students have the options of staying with another local student or finding a homestay through a private organisation.

At River East Transcona Schools, Hartel emphasises that host families are rigorously screened and monitored by staff "who are employed by our school district solely for this purpose". She adds, "We do take this aspect of the international experience most seriously. We know it is a huge decision on the part of the natural parents to send their son or daughter so far away from home, especially for an extended period of time. We know that they want to be assured there will be individuals there who will authentically care for and support their children."

Location	Name of school	Range of international programmes	Min age of int. students	Min. language proficiency	Lang. support?	Accom. options
Bethany, ONT	Bethany Hills School	ap,e,sh	12	n	✓	r
Coquitlam, BC	Coquitlam School District no. 43	ap,e,s,sap,sh	-	n	✓	h
Delta, BC	Delta School District	ap,e,s,sap	12	b	✓	h
Edmonton, AB	Edmonton Public Schools	e	-	n	✓	h
Fort Erie, ONT	Niagara Christian Community of Schs.	ap,e,s,sap,sh	12	v	✓	h,r
Halifax, NS	Halifax Grammar School	e	15	a	-	h
Kamloops, BC	Kamloops School District no. 73	ap,e,sh	-	b	✓	h
London, ONT	Nancy Campbell Collegiate Institute	ap,e,s,sap,sh	9 (sh)	n	✓	h,r
Maple Ridge, BC	School District no. 42	ap,e,s,sap,sh	8 (sh)	b	✓	h
Mill Bay, BC	Brentwood College School	ap,e,s,sh	12	i	✓	r
Montebello, QB	Sedbergh School	ap,e	12	n	✓	r
Nelson, BC	School District no. 8	ap,e,s,sh	10	e	✓	h
Ottawa, ONT	Ottawa-Carleton District Sch. Board	ap,e,s,sap,sh	13	b	✓	h
Rigaud, QB	Collège Bourget	ap,e,s,sh	12	n	✓	h,f,r
Rosseau, ONT	Rosseau Lake College	ap,e	12	e	✓	r
Saltspring Island, BC	Gulf Islands Secondary School	ap,e,s,sh	13	b	✓	h
Sidney, BC	School District no. 63	ap,sh	13	e	✓	h
St Catharines, ONT	Ridley College	ap,e,s,sap	10	l	✓	r
Stanstead, QB	Stanstead College	ap,e,s	12	b	✓	r
Ste Adele, QB	College Northside	ap,e,s	16	n	✓	r
Toronto, ONT	Braemar College	ap,e,s,sap,sh	12	n	✓	h,f,r
Vancouver, BC	Richmond School District	ap,e,s,sap,sh	13	n	✓	h
Vancouver Island, BC	Cowichan Valley School District	ap,e,sh	11	b	✓	h
Val-Morin, QB	Laurentian Academy	ap,e,s,sh	12	n	✓	r
Victoria, BC	Victoria Int. High School Progs	e,s,sh	13	b	✓	h
Windsor, ONT	Academie Ste Cecile Int. School	e,s,sap	10	n	✓	r
Winnipeg, MAN	River East Transcona Sch. Division	ap,e,sh	11	n	✓	h
Winnipeg, MAN	St John's - Ravenscourt School	e	13	i	✓	r

a advanced ap year-long ac. prep. b beginner e exam f flatshare h homestay i intermediate n none r residential s summer activity sap summer ac. prep. sh short-term v varies - info not supplied