

# **School District of Bayfield Ojibwe Immersion Program**

## **Family Information**

**2024-25**

# Welcome Letter

August 2024

Dear Immersion Families,

Boozhoo!

Welcome to the Ojibwe immersion program at the School District of Bayfield. We are proud to offer an Ojibwe Immersion program alongside our English program. This information is solely to address the uniqueness of language immersion. Please refer to the [Elementary Schools Handbook](#) for information on our district policies and procedures.

## Why language immersion?

Being bilingual or multilingual creates many social and professional opportunities, and develops an understanding of other cultures. Many research studies on the benefits of immersion education suggest the following:

- Academic performance is at or above the same level as peers in English-only classrooms
- Advanced levels of functional proficiency in the second language are acquired in comparison to traditional language programs
- Demonstration of high levels of cultural awareness, identity, and competency
- Gains in additional cognitive, academic, and employment benefits
- Demonstration of more mental flexibility
- Increased sensitivity to others, heightened awareness, receptivity and appreciation of language
- Exhibition of many cognitive benefits like increased problem solving skills and the ability to think creatively
- Language & culture revitalization (Ojibwemowin specific)

Sincerely,

Dr. Beth Paap District Administrator	Mike Peterson Elementary Principal	Haley Jo Hyde Ojibwe Immersion Kindergarten teacher
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## Program Overview

Beginning in kindergarten, the goal of language immersion is to provide high quality educational experiences that support academic and linguistic development. Multilingualism and multiculturalism strengthen students' own cultural identity, helps students understand others of different backgrounds, while also showing the district's strong commitment to value Ojibwe language and culture. Our program provides a unique opportunity for advancing the recognition of Ojibwemowin as the local Indigenous language and participation in the revitalization of the Ojibwe language and culture.

## Program Scope

The vision of the School District of Bayfield is to offer K-5 immersion programming at the classroom level with direct English Language Arts instruction being included beginning in grade 3. Given current capacity, our plan is to develop and maintain a strong K-5 program with a future secondary component for language maintenance and/or continued growth. At the K-3 level, class size is no larger than 18 students due to Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) WI SS 118.44.

This table shows the *intended* expansion timeline for the immersion program, dependent on teacher availability and enrollment capacity.

Year	Ojibwe Immersion
2024-25	Kindergarten
2025-26	K-1st Grade
2026-27	K-2nd Grade
2027-28	K-3rd Grade
2028-29	K-4th Grade
2029-30	K-5th Grade

## Program Guidelines

### Immersion Program Expectations

We actively encourage all interested students to participate in immersion programming. Students are eligible for admission between kindergarten and first grade. Acceptance after first grade is determined by immersion program leadership and may include a language proficiency assessment.

**The following factors may be considered when determining whether immersion program continuance is appropriate for struggling students:**

- ❖ **Completion of all necessary enrollment documents as outlined in the initial application and enrollment process**
- ❖ **Participation in the full immersion program experience**
- ❖ **On-going display of a positive attitude towards and active engagement with the target language**
- ❖ **Demonstration of growth towards grade level expectations in the target language**

- ❖ **Consistent positive attendance of at least 90% with minimal tardiness**
- ❖ **Consistent engagement and participation in class activities and lessons**
- ❖ **Daily reading with family for at least 20 minutes in English (see below)**

No student shall be denied access to an immersion program because of their race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

## Parent Involvement Opportunities and Expectations

In order to provide our students the best language immersion experience possible, we ask families to fully commit to the entire K-5 program. Learning a language is an ongoing process and the more years spent learning Ojibwe the higher the level of bilingualism and biliteracy our students can achieve.

- Families are highly encouraged to read with their child 20 minutes daily in English. Appropriate reading materials/activities will be shared with every family to support their child's growth in reading.
- Attendance at bi-weekly family education programming.
- Invitation for participation on the Advisory Board
- Minimum 10 volunteer hours annually:
  - Classroom helpers
  - Field Trip & Special Event chaperones or planning group

## Immersion Program Removal Process

We actively encourage all interested students to participate in our immersion program, while also recognizing that occasionally students have the potential to be more successful in an English speaking classroom. When there is a concern regarding a student's ongoing success and continuance in an immersion program, the program's leadership team will intervene as necessary in order to support the student. If a student continues to struggle despite rounds of interventions, a student may be removed from the program. *(See Immersion Program Expectations for removal concerns)*

### **A student with documented ongoing struggles may be removed from continued participation in optional immersion programming with the following steps:**

- 1) Teacher communication (email with a phone call follow up) with family noting concerns/reasons for possible program discontinuance.
- 2) Family meeting with all involved parties to discuss the concerns and create a written plan for success plan.
- 3) If the reason(s) for concern does not improve, a second family meeting will occur with written notice of the final team decision.
- 4) If the student has a disability, a determination of the student's misconduct/concern is not a manifestation of the disability.

No student shall be removed from an immersion program because of their race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

\*\*\*Students removed from an immersion program will be re-enrolled in the English speaking classroom.

If a family determines the Ojibwe Immersion Program is not a fit for their child, a meeting with the Immersion teacher and/or Elementary Principal will occur. After which point they must submit a written request for a transfer to the English classroom at the end of semester one or end of the school year. The transfer will be contingent on class sizes due to Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) restrictions (18 students max per classroom). Switching between programs poses specific challenges for students, teachers, and classmates. For this reason the district doesn't allow students to switch back and forth between programs.

## Curriculum and Instruction

The Ojibwe Immersion Program will use the current School District of Bayfield established standards, outcomes, and assessments. Curriculum is aligned with Wisconsin Academic Standards. However, the materials and approaches used are specific to the Ojibwe language and program.

Staff collaboratively create local units of instruction and specific learning materials that incorporate the WI standards into culturally-based learning. All content is taught through the target language of Ojibwe in which teachers use differentiated instruction to meet the language and curriculum goals through gestures, songs, dance, routines, rhymes, and repetition. The district adopted materials are often directly translated into Ojibwemowin, with culturally-specific adjustments made when necessary. Local assessments are collaboratively created for assessing content specific skills and knowledge.

## English Language Instruction

Formal English instruction begins in 3rd grade for students. Research has shown that immersion students perform at the same level or better than their non-immersion peers on state standardized tests by 5th grade. The English teacher is responsible for teaching WI state standards to students in grades 3-5 for 45 minutes daily. This instruction ideally takes place outside of the immersion classroom to better separate target language instruction from English instruction.

### **Instruction time in Immersion Language**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Ojibwe</b>	<b>English</b>
K-2	90%	10% (Specialists only-Music, PE, Art, & Media)
3-5	80%	20% (Specialists & English Language Arts Specialist)

## Assessment

Immersion students participate in the district's NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)/Pearson aimswebPLUS assessments three times each school year in English. Students are screened in the target language to measure progress in their language of instruction and once in English, in the spring. Curriculum based assessments are more frequently utilized in the target language to measure student growth in all content areas. Once students reach grade 3, they also take the Wisconsin Forward Exam in English.

## Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) in an Immersion Setting

Instruction is delivered within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). Content is delivered daily through the target language, as well as during literacy interventions. Enrichment, extension activities, and special education services are provided in English. Beginning in grade three, instruction in literacy is provided in both the target language and in English. To preserve the target language in the classroom, English is taught by a separate teacher.

Families receive ongoing communication about how to support their student(s) in an immersion learning environment and are provided with resources and strategies. The Ojibwe Immersion program offers parent/family engagement nights to foster communication and a partnership of student support between the school and families.

## Application Process

Applying to the School District of Bayfield Ojibwe Immersion Program is quick and easy. Families can print, complete and return the [Ojibwe Immersion Program Enrollment Form](#) to our Elementary office. Families can also fill the form out in person at our Elementary office. If you have any questions, please reach out to Lucy Meierotto at 715-779-3201 ext 142 or [lmeierotto@bayfield.k12.wi.us](mailto:lmeierotto@bayfield.k12.wi.us).

## Transferring Students/Re-entry

A transferring student is defined as a student requesting to enter the immersion program mid-year, or into 2nd grade or higher.

- In addition to the above application process, the Lowell Administrative Assistant will request the student cumulative file from the student's previous school.  
*\*\*\*Receiving information on IEPs and a student's cumulative file prior to student attendance is helpful for planning accurate placement.*
- Students requesting entry into an immersion program at grade 2 or higher will be assessed for language proficiency and academic level prior to acceptance into the program. Students not scoring at a sufficient level of speaking, listening, reading and writing proficiency will be denied acceptance.

## Special Considerations for Student Receiving Special Services

- 1) Special services and immersion staff will review students with established IEPs or other documents indicating additional support may be needed to be successful in the selected immersion program. Staff will determine what appropriate accommodations or modifications can be made within the context of the immersion program to which they are applying.  
*\*\*\*\*Use of the target language remains a priority for all immersion students. Due to scarcity of language speaking support staff, this is known limitation for providing extra support in immersions programs*
- 2) After review of accommodations/modifications, staff will meet with parents to explain what can be accomplished in a full language immersion setting and discuss advantages/disadvantages to enrolling the student in a language immersion program.
- 3) Special Services Staff and Immersion Program Staff will prepare necessary materials, training, etc., to ensure the student's IEP can be met in the context of a language immersion program.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who Do I Contact When I Have A Question About Things?

<p><b>Classroom Assistant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Family engagement nights</li> <li>-Field trips</li> <li>-Culturally specific learning opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Classroom Teacher:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Academic progress</li> <li>-Behavior updates</li> <li>-Newsletter</li> <li>-Daily classroom activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Elementary Secretary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attendance</li> <li>-Meal account(s)</li> <li>-Enrollment /registration</li> <li>-School wide activities/events</li> </ul>	<p><b>Elementary Principal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attendance letter questions</li> <li>-Behavior response questions</li> <li>-Building level communication</li> <li>-Transportation questions</li> </ul>