

Core Principles for the Maine French Heritage Language Program
Augusta and Auburn, Maine
Fall 2012

1. Classes are held in French only. Instruction should be at least 80-90% in French from the first day forward. The idea is to immerse the children in a French-only classroom so that they learn to function in basic activities in French, while learning more about Franco-American culture and French-speaking cultures around the world.
2. The program is for all children in the state of Maine. As inhabitants of Maine, we pay homage to the rich Franco-American traditions as they existed historically and as they have evolved today. It is our hope that children of Franco-American heritage, whose background makes up one third of the population of the state of Maine, will benefit alongside children of diverse backgrounds.
3. Where possible, the content will be regionally-based, that is, North American and more specifically New England or Maine Franco-American culture.
4. The teachers will be experienced professionals of native or near-native French speaking ability, with a preference for those who have experience with North American French. All teachers will be familiar with Franco-American history, culture and language variants and be open to learning more from the community and the students alike.
5. The language is an inclusive French, meaning that the teacher will speak in his or her natural way, taking care to encourage other forms of pronunciation and word choices. The teacher will continually show that a variety of forms does not mean one form is any better or worse than another. The teacher will present equivalent ways of expressing ideas if and when possible, and must show an extreme sensitivity to local language practices in Maine and teach this sensitivity and openness to the students.
6. The classes will be taught by teaching duos or trios, to assure that classes continue, despite illness, weather, or other personal issues. There will be a teacher, a cultural associate, and an apprentice. It is our goal that as many members of the teaching team as possible have experience with North American French and are knowledgeable about Franco-American culture.
7. We hope to engender a deep respect in the students for North-American French, in particular as it is spoken in Maine, as well as a better understanding of Franco-American culture. In addition, they will leave the program understanding that there is a multiplicity of French variants in the world, with North-American French holding an important place, even though it has in the past often been overlooked or discounted.
8. Ideally, the children will come to sense on an intuitive level how language and culture are tightly intertwined, and that, by learning a language, we come to learn and value the culture as well.

To learn more about the program, please visit our websites:

<http://www.francocenter.org/aboutmfhp/>

<http://www.uma.edu/mfhp.html>