

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE TO THE BOARD

March 10, 2026, Public Board Meeting



International Education Board Update

The International Student Program (ISP) continues to grow steadily and remains an important part of the district's educational and cultural offerings. The program helps international students studying in Chilliwack schools while also providing meaningful benefits to local students, families, and the broader community.

Program Growth

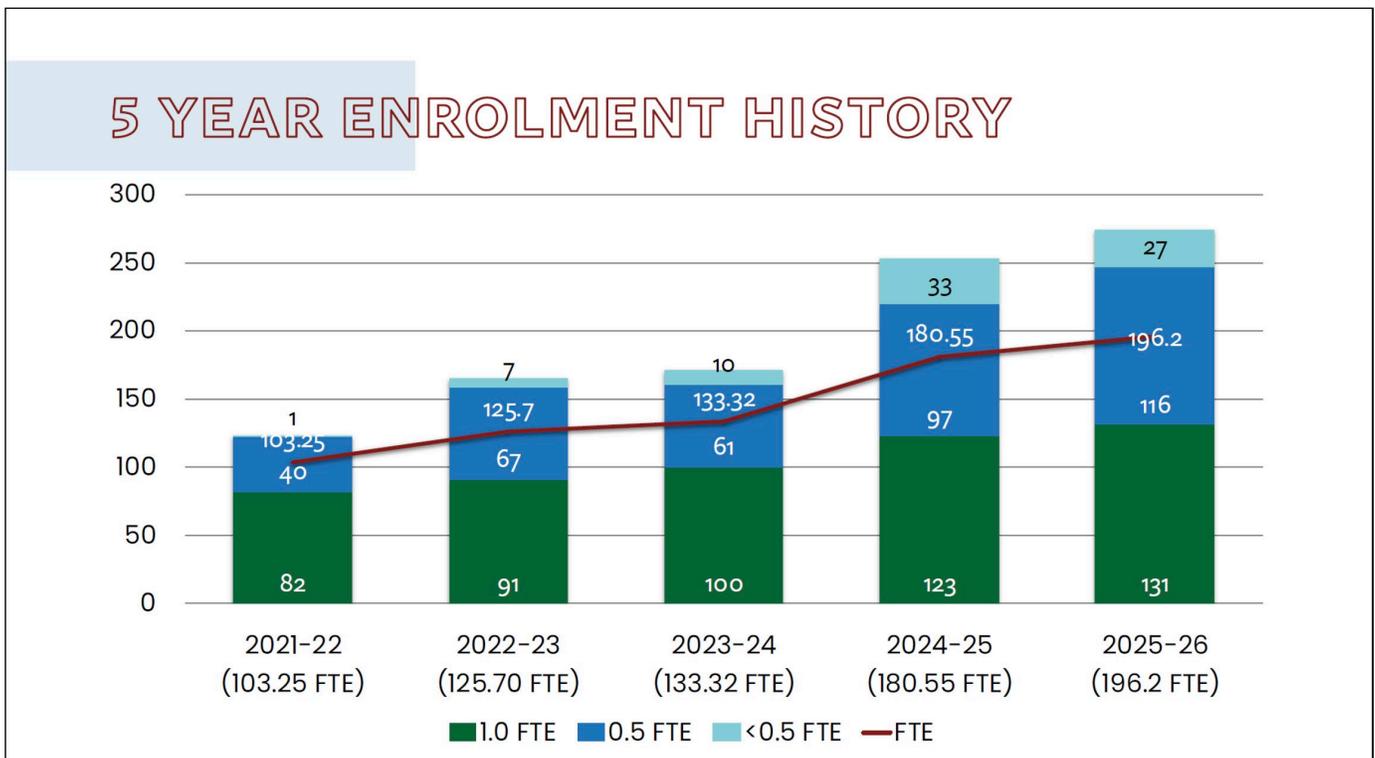
Over the past five years, the ISP has experienced significant growth. Key trends

- Approximately 47% increase in FTE enrollment
- Approximately 55% increase in the number of students
- Growth driven by:
 - Positive student experiences
 - Strong relationships with international agents
 - Word-of-mouth referrals from students and families
 - Expansion into new international recruitment markets

5-Year Enrollment Growth

- 2021-22: 103.25 FTE
- 2022-23: 125.7 FTE
- 2023-24: 133.32 FTE
- 2024-25: 180.55 FTE
- 2025-26: 196.2 FTE

This reflects a steady upward trend in both student numbers and program participation.



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As of March 1:

- 225 students enrolled
- 172.6 FTE

Enrollment breakdown:

- 123 students at 1.0 FTE
- 88 students at 0.5 FTE
- 15 students at less than 0.5 FTE

Additional highlights:

- Full-year and first-semester programs are at capacity
- Second-semester space remains available
- Program is trending toward exceeding the 200 FTE target for the first time.

Enrollment levels are carefully managed in collaboration with schools to ensure capacity is not exceeded.

International Diversity

The program currently works with students from *approximately 23 countries*, creating a highly diverse learning environment.

The top three countries

1. Germany
2. Spain
3. Italy

Recent growth has also occurred in:

- Brazil
- Mexico
- Japan
- Slovakia
- Belgium

Diversity is viewed as a strength of the program because it allows:

- Canadian students to learn from global perspectives
- International students to learn from one another
- Increased cultural exchange within schools.

Benefits to Students and Community

For International Students

Students come to Chilliwack to:

- Learn English
- Experience Canadian culture
- Access a broad range of elective courses
- Participate in extracurricular and outdoor learning opportunities.

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Many students note that the *choice and flexibility of the BC education system* differ significantly from those in their home countries.

For Local Students

The program supports local students by:

- Bringing global perspectives into classrooms
- Creating opportunities for cross-cultural learning
- Supporting student leadership through the *Global Ambassadors Program (GAP)*.

The GAP program pairs local students with international students to:

- Provide mentorship and support
- Encourage cultural exchange
- Build friendships and leadership opportunities.

For the Community

The homestay program allows local families to host students.

Benefits include:

- Cultural exchange within the community
- Long-term international relationships between families
- Economic and social benefits to the community.

Many host families maintain relationships with students long after they return home.

Indigenous Learning Opportunities

The ISP collaborates with the *Indigenous Education Department* to provide students with learning opportunities related to:

- Indigenous history
- Truth and Reconciliation
- Cultural experiences and land-based learning

Activities have included:

- Longhouse visits
- Cultural ceremonies
- Canoeing and land-based learning experiences.

These experiences help international students better understand Canadian history and Indigenous perspectives.

Looking Ahead: Key Priorities

1. *Recruit Additional Homestay Families* - As the program grows, ensuring sufficient host family capacity is essential.
2. *Expand Recruitment Markets*
Current recruitment efforts are focusing on:
 - Poland
 - Czech Republic
 - Denmark

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3. *Maintain Existing Partnerships* - The program has added 149 new admissions agents since 2022 and will continue to strengthen those relationships.
4. *Strengthen Student Leadership Programs* - Further development of the Global Ambassadors Program to increase connections between domestic and international students.
5. *Explore Professional Learning Opportunities* - Early exploration of opportunities for international teacher professional development exchanges, allowing educators from other countries to learn about the BC education system.

Summary:

- The International Student Program is growing steadily and approaching a milestone of 200+ FTE students.
- The program is diverse, operating in over 20 countries and expanding recruitment markets.
- It provides educational, cultural, and community benefits to both international and local students.
- Growth is carefully managed with school capacity in mind.
- Strategic priorities focus on sustainable growth, homestay recruitment, and strengthening partnerships.