



French-as-a-Second Language Programs Review: Update#2

To: Committee of the Whole

Date: 29 January, 2020

Report No.: 01-20-3824

Strategic Directions

- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Transform Student Learning
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being
- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs

Recommendation

It is recommended that the second update on French-as-a-Second Language Recommendations be received.

Context

This second update for the French-as-a-Second Language Recommendations highlights ongoing initiatives, activities and those that have taken place since the October 16, 2019 Committee of Whole meeting.

Over the next several years, the TDSB will phase in changes and enhancements to French-as-a-Second-Language Programs, which are all aimed at improving equity of access for students. The redistribution of existing programs will establish a single program model with two entry points – Junior Kindergarten French Immersion (beginning 2022) and Grade 4 Middle Immersion (beginning 2021). As part of planned program changes, the Grade 4 Junior Extended French Program will phase out as the Grade 4 Middle Immersion Program begins. There will be no gap in access to the Grade 4 entry to intensive French programming.

As part of planned program changes, the following entry points will phase out entirely: the one (1) Grade 6 Intensive Extended French Program and the fourteen (14) Grade 7 Entry Extended French programs. At the foundation of this decision was a commitment

to ensuring that access to intensive FSL programs was more fair and equitable across the TDSB. The streamlining of programs will increase access to an intensive FSL program for students in the board. It will permit the focus of resources, both material and human, in order to serve students better, and to strengthen the Core French program that serves all students in Grade 4-9 (and beyond) in TDSB schools that do not choose an intensive FSL program. This will also allow a more effective deployment of FSL qualified teachers. While understandably important to families in the immediate area, a specific entry point at one (1) of 473 elementary TDSB schools, that is the Grade 6 Intensive Extended French, and an entry point at fourteen (14) of 473 elementary TDSB schools, that is the Grade 7 Entry Extended French, does not align with the vision of equitable access across the system.

Staff has acknowledged that there are some students that have been impacted by the phase out of the aforementioned programs. Therefore, staff will conduct further analysis on the implementation phases of the French-as-a-Second Language recommendations concerning the phase out and will report back accordingly.

Flow charts, Appendix A, have been created to depict the phase out of each of the programs.

Core French Action Plan Update

Currently, more than 90,000 TDSB students are enrolled in the Core French Program. In Ontario, it is mandatory for all students attending English-language elementary schools to receive French instruction in every school year from Grade 4 through Grade 8, and to accumulate a minimum of 600 hours of French instruction by the end of Grade 8. In addition, students in the regular English program must complete one secondary Core French credit (typically in Grade 9) in order to graduate.

The integral focus of the Core French Action Plan presented in October 16, 2019 Committee of the Whole report is to support leaders and Principals to build staff capacity and shared leadership regarding programming and strategies for differentiated instruction that accommodate a range of learners and learning needs in Core French programs. In addition, to the items shared in that report, the central FSL department has concentrated efforts to improve on-line engagement and communication for Core French teachers across TDSB.

On-line Engagement & Communication (Staff):

In September 2019, the central FSL department launched the TDSB FSL Google Site. The site is accessible to all TDSB teachers and staff, and is designed to support FSL teachers, administrators, superintendents, and staff who support teachers and students working and learning in French-as-a-Second-Language programs. On this site, TDSB teachers and staff have access to a plethora of resources which include, but are not limited to, a handbook for FSL teachers as well as a wide range of information and resources on topics such as:

- Inclusive Design
- Special Education
- Best Practices in FSL programs
- Global Competencies and Digital Tools
- Differentiation, Inclusion and Assistive Technology
- Events and Cultural Activities
- Classroom resources
- TDSB FSL Google+ Community
- Excursions and Experiences in French

In January 2020, the central FSL department completed and launched an addition to the TDSB FSL Google site, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) site. This site is aimed at supporting Core French teachers as they implement the CEFR-based Action-Oriented approach in the classroom. The central FSL department and TDSB CEFR workgroups have co-created a series of CEFR toolkits to support planning, instruction and assessment in Core French programs across the TDSB. Linked to the already existing staff TDSB FSL Google site, FSL teachers and staff can access the CEFR site created to support the engaging use of these materials. Teaching staff will be able to borrow the CEFR toolkits on-line from the Library and Learning Resources Centre.

On-line Engagement & Communication (Parent/Guardian Community):

In continued efforts to streamline and enhance communication with the parent/guardian community, the central FSL department has undertaken the redevelopment of the public FSL website. This site is designed to support parents/guardians and family members of students in Core French, Extended or French Immersion programs in the TDSB, or any interested members of the wider community searching for information on French programs in TDSB. Information on the public FSL website will provide parents/guardians with access to a broad range of topics which include, but are not limited to, information on the various TDSB FSL programs (i.e., Core French, Immersion and Extended, as well as a wide range of information and resources on topics such as:

- Why Learn French? Visions and Goals
- Core French
- Application & Placement Process
- Supporting My Child at Home
- Staying Connected with School
- Special Education & FSL
- Inclusion
- FSL Review, Recommendations, and Implementations Plans
- French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee
- Community Links & Supports

All the information is designed to assist parents/guardians and the wider community to support their child, to navigate important information related to FSL programming and to promote well-being at school and at home.

Recruitment:

In collaboration with Employee Services, the central FSL department continues to concentrate efforts on effective and intentional recruitment by participating in career fairs at universities that have pre-service training programs for French teachers inside and outside Ontario; liaising with these Faculties of Education beyond the career fair opportunities to organize information sessions that specifically address French teacher candidates; and actively interviewing French candidates during actual campus visits at the universities whenever possible. In 2019, a total of 194 elementary and 21 secondary occasional teachers with French-as-a-Second-Language qualifications were hired.

In addition, the central FSL department in collaboration with Employee Services undertook the review of the current FSL fluency assessment tool for new hires to the board. Careful consideration has been given to the establishment of the criteria in the revised French assessment tool used to gauge French oral and written fluency for teacher interviewees. The French assessment tool is currently used by the Principal Interview teams to assess French proficiency of prospective new FSL teachers at the initial interview stage. Successful candidates who are deemed fluent in both oral and written French proceed to the final stage of the interview process. Successful candidates in both interviews are placed on the Occasional Teacher roster.

Implementation of a proposed transportation plan:

Given decisions made at the November 2019 Board meeting, operational procedure PR597 has been updated to reflect no service changes to transportation for K-8 in French Immersion/Extended French programs for the 2020-2021 school year for those students who qualify. Finance & Business Operations staff will report back in February 2020 on the achievability of savings in transportation and the impact of associated funding changes.

Development of a redistribution plan for French Immersion programs to improve equity of access:

The TDSB continues to be committed to equity of access to an intensive FSL program through the redistribution of existing programs taking into consideration the following:

- Transportation
- School capacity
- School configuration (i.e. JK-3, JK-5, JK-6, JK-8, 4-8, 6-8, 7-8)
- Proximity to other Intensive FSL programs
- Number of feeder schools to Intensive FSL programs
- Secondary school pathways

A meeting for Trustees will be confirmed for the end of May 2020 where staff will share the proposed redistribution plans for the implementation of the French

recommendations approved June 2019, and receive feedback. This will assist staff in identifying areas that may require further clarification or description in advance of the final report to be presented in June 2020.

A redistribution plan will be presented at the June Committee of the Whole meeting after an extensive review of the existing locations of intensive French programs to improve equity of access for families across the TDSB. Consideration for program locations, pathways and secondary school sites are all under review within the French-as-a-Second Language Implementation phase of the French recommendations and the Secondary Review. All existing pathways at this time as established at the entry of each intensive FSL program will remain as such. Changes may occur in the future in accordance with board procedures.

Revision of operational procedure, PR597, French Immersion/Extended French:

PR597 is the procedure that governs intensive French programs, including the process by which staff manages the application and placement process for these programs. Given decisions made at the November 2019 Board meeting, operational procedure PR597 has been updated to reflect no service changes to transportation for K-8 in French Immersion/Extended French programs for the 2020-2021 school year for those students who qualify. Where transportation is approved by the Transportation Department, students from Senior Kindergarten to Grade 5 will be transported by bus. Where transportation is approved by the Transportation Department, students from Grades 6 to 8 will be provided with TTC tickets. Students may be transported to French Immersion and Extended French programs if the distance from home to school exceeds the following:

- Senior Kindergarten to Grade 5: 1.6 km or more
- Grade 6 to 8: 3.2km or more

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

A meeting for Trustees will be confirmed for the end of May 2020 where staff will share the proposed redistribution plans for the implementation of the French recommendations approved June 2019, and receive feedback. This will assist staff in identifying areas that may require further clarification or description in advance of the final report to be presented in June 2020.

Resource Implications

No additional resources are required at this time.

Communications Considerations

The French-as-a-Second Language public website will contain information on the French-as-a-Second Language Review, Recommendations, Implementation phases

including updated reports as approved at Board Meetings, and house all the updated Question and Answer fact sheets related to the recommendations, phase out of the Grade 6 Intensive Extended program, the phase out of the Grade 7 Entry Extended French program and the transition from the Grade 4 Junior Extended program to the Grade 4 Middle Immersion program. Staff will also continue to work with the Government, Public and Community Relations Department to determine further communication needs and support required to inform parents/guardians, staff, and students.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

PR597 – Operational Procedure, French Immersion/Extended French

Appendices

- Appendix A: Flow Charts

From

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