



Community Advisory Committees

Name of Committee: French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee
Meeting Date: 10 March 2020

A meeting of the French As A Second Language Community Advisory Committee convened on March 10, 2020 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm in Committee Room A at 5050 Yonge Street with Parent Co-Chair Mandy Moore presiding.

Attendance:	Mandy Moore (Parent Co-Chair W7), Matt Forrest (Parent Vice-Co-Chair W9), Charles Zhu (Parent Vice-Co Chair W11), Rob Janes (W1/W2), Doug Kwan (W2), Lisa McAvoy (W2 Alt), Lynne LeBlanc (W8), Polina Osmerkina (W10); Wilmar Kortleever (W11 Alt), Randy Samuel (W14), Sarah Smith (W15), Gail Miller (W22 Alt) Also present were: Trustee Robin Pilkey (Trustee Co-Chair), Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin (W11), Trustee Dan MacLean (W2), Mary Cruden (Canadian Parents for French), Sharon Beason (Canadian Parents for French), Manon Gardner (Associate Director), Angela Caccamo (Centrally Assigned Principal), Belinda Lam (Palmerston parent), Lauren Chang MacLean (Palmerston parent) The following participated by electronic means: Kathleen Meek (W15 Alt),
Regrets:	Zeynab Kazi (Parent Vice-Co-Chair W22), Nalini Singh (W2 Alt), Sharlene Henry (W5/W6 Alt), Deloris Williamson-Braham (W5/13), Caroline Tolten-Paterson (W7 Alt), Jennifer Tse (W8 Alt), Nancy White (W16 Alt), Christie Dunbar (W16), Rosemary Sutherland (CPF Alt), Kirsten Johnston (Program Coordinator)

Part A: Recommendations

1. Guiding Principles for French Immersion

Whereas the TDSB has been tremendously successful in improving and increasing opportunities for TDSB students to become proficient in both Official Languages in French immersion/extended programs which provide cognitive benefits and future employment opportunities; and

Whereas this work began with the amalgamation Directional Statement on French (TDSB Minutes October 25, 2000) and moved forward significantly with the implementation of PR597 (2009); and

Whereas the scope of the changes that can flow from the June 2019 French Review Recommendations as they relate to French immersion/extended is huge; and

Whereas we want to be careful not to ‘throw out the baby with bathwater’; and

Whereas clear commitment to guiding principles will help to reassure parents and to ensure that the myriad of decisions that are going to be made have a sharp focus on continuing to improve and increase opportunities for the next generation of French immersion students;

Therefore, the FSLAC recommends that:

Implementation of the June 2019 French Review recommendations on French Immersion be guided by the TDSB's MYSP goal "to enhance students' access to learning opportunities" and its long standing commitment to growing and improving the program, the Ontario FSL Framework (2013) goal to increase student participation and achievement in FSL and by being responsive to both equity of access where programs are "inclusive and reflective of a diverse community" (TDSB P080) and the expectations of families by continuing with the following procedures:

- a. place every on-time applicant to French immersion,
- b. add spots/sites as needed to meet demand,
- c. give priority placement to siblings,
- d. annual reporting on FSL programs including enrolment.

2. TTC support for French immersion/extended Secondary Students in Need

Whereas the FSLAC supports and applauds the Board's commitment to "Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students" (Multi-Year Strategic Plan); and

Whereas Toronto District School Board (TDSB) trustees decided to stop providing TTC support for ALL 1168 French immersion/extended secondary students who travel more than 4.8 km due to transportation grant shortfalls in favour of providing them only for students in financial need on a case by case basis; and

Whereas another multi-year goal -- "Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs" – may not be realized now that individual principals at the secondary school level are responsible for providing TTC support from their school funds and may not even be aware of it; and

Whereas the stigma of poverty may prevent French immersion/extended students from contacting their principal to ask for support, meaning that poverty may become a barrier to continued participation in the programs; and

Whereas poverty is often hidden, thereby preventing principals from realizing to whom they ought to proactively reach out; and

Whereas without TTC support French immersion/extended classes may become less "inclusive and reflective of a diverse community" (P080) and the Board's commitment to "Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being" (Multi-year Strategic Plan) may be negatively affected; and,

Whereas TDSB secondary school principals have not received criteria from their Superintendents (as a June 24, 2019 letter from the Board to parents stated they would) regarding how they ought to determine whether or not a French immersion/extended student is in financial need, guidance which would help ensure a system-wide equity for students; and

Whereas there is no publicly visible budget, even on a per-school basis, or required reporting for this proposed practice and that will make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for administrators and the public to accurately determine as months and years pass whether needs are increasing or decreasing; and,

Therefore, the FSLAC recommends that the TDSB consider the following, as part of the review of student transportation that is currently underway:

1. Create and document standardized, system-wide criteria for determining eligibility to receive TTC transportation support for French Immersion/Extended French programs and
2. That information on the availability and criteria for receiving support be shared with all schools on an on-going basis, and
3. That principals receive sufficient equity funds to fulfill all requests that meet the criteria and distance minimums, and
4. That the Director present a report annually on the use of TTC Support for attending French Immersion/Extended French programs.

3. Keep 2 SKFI Classes at Palmerston and Follow former PR577

Whereas all TDSB students, whether in English or French programs, deserve robust and effective programs; and

Whereas there are enough on-time applicants from Palmerston's SK French Immersion (SKFI) catchment to make 2 full classes as recommended in PR597 to maintain French program viability; and

Whereas in French Immersion "a two class entry (58 students) is ideal for the sharing of resources, job-embedded professional growth and co-planning" and long term viability (French Review Staff Report June 2019); and

Whereas Palmerston has had at least 2 SKFI classes since 2005; and

Whereas the applicants include 43 students from the Palmerston English catchment and 15 from its feeder school, Essex; and

Whereas the TDSB has decided to offer only one class for SKFI for September 2020 and to redirect the 15 Essex students to Humewood and 14 Palmerston English catchment students to Dewson; and

Whereas these redirections put students who could walk to Palmerston on school busses thereby increasing TDSB expenditures; and

Whereas PR597 (French Immersion/Extended French) only allows for redirection as a last resort when there is insufficient space to accommodate all of the French Immersion applicants; and

Whereas Palmerston has empty classrooms with its 2018 utilization at 75% (Long Term Pupil Accommodation Strategy Dec 2019); and

Whereas the English SK program at Palmerston only has 4 students registered for September 2020, making it clear that viability of the English program needs to be addressed with the former appropriate tool, PR577 (Program Review of Dual Track Schools); and

Whereas given that most parents in the area clearly want French Immersion, the reduction to one SKFI class at Palmerston is unlikely to achieve the TDSB stated objective of creating a stronger English program with “no fewer than 20-25” in English (French Review Staff Report June 2019); and

Whereas Essex and Palmerston families redirected to other schools were given less than a week to accept spots and consider entirely unexpected logistical issues regarding the bus, and childcare causing great stress; and

Whereas the TDSB has not followed P068 (Accommodation and Program Review) requirements to notify the affected school councils and the FSLAC if intake classes are reduced; and

Whereas the TDSB has not used nor replaced former PR577 to review the issue of viability in a dual track school with the local community; and,

Whereas P068 and former PR577 support the TDSB in “build(ing) strong relationships and partnerships within school communities to support student learning and well-being” (Multi-Year Strategic Plan);

Therefore, the FSLAC recommends that for the school year beginning in September 2020 that

1. the TDSB keep 2 SKFI classes at Palmerston,
2. the redirected Essex and Palmerston on-time applicants be enrolled in Palmerston, and
3. the TDSB follow former PR577, convene a local feasibility team to examine the best options for all students in the Palmerston English and French Immersion catchments and proceed in accordance with that procedure including parents and school council chairs in the development of solutions.
4. that Humbercrest and Howard be considered as well.

Part B: For Information

Ward Reports

Ward Reports Wards 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9 members spoke to the Thorncliff Homework Club, resource availability and issues/concerns. Detail is available on the Mar 10 meeting minutes on the FSLAC webpage, <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac>.

TTC Ticket Elimination and Guidelines for Principals

A central equity fund intended to support schools with items such as TTC ticket elimination hardship funding for students has not been setup at this time. Principals have discretion to use school discretionary funds to support this type of request. A communication to all Principals is recommended.

French Review Recommendation/Redistribution Update

In concert with Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS), staff is meeting with groups of Trustees to discuss the overview of the wards, the Secondary and French program reviews and priorities through a system perspective, pathways, and redistribution, including potential relocation of

programs. Staff will be providing Trustees with the tools to share ideas and concepts with their communities. The draft recommendations for the Secondary Review are tracking to April Committee of the Whole, with the final recommendations tracking to June Committee of the Whole. Implementation is expected to take 6-8 to 10 years. Elementary FSL redistribution, not expansion, is very challenging, and continues to track to June Committee of the Whole, with Trustee review closer to May. Many options are being reviewed and considered including repurposing underutilized secondary schools.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Nil

Report Submitted by: Manon Gardner