



Community Advisory Committees

**French-as-a-Second-Language
Community Advisory Committee
(FSLAC)**

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT





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Community Advisory Committees

CAC Mandate/ Purpose

The FSLAC was created by the Board in 2005. In 2007, our mission was adopted by the Board and was reconfirmed with the adoption of our Terms of Reference in 2016:

“To consult with and advise the Board on French as a Second Language matters. As a Board community advisory committee, the FSLAC will contribute to the work of trustees and staff. This partnership of trustees, staff and parents will foster excellence and growth in FSL programs at the Board.”

CAC Activities

Meetings

The FSLAC met formally 8 times over Zoom in the 2020-21 school year, usually on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. The regularly scheduled meeting in September 2020 was cancelled by the Director due to Covid-19. The FSLAC executive met virtually throughout the year to coordinate and advance committee work and communications. The FSLAC Parent co-chair appeared at the Program and School Services Committee on November 2020, February 2021 and May 2021 and meets with the Trustee co-chair and staff lead prior to each formal committee meeting.

Meeting notices, agendas, minutes and FSL resources are posted on the FSLAC page on the TDSB website (www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac). Members/alternates also receive electronic access to a Member Briefing Book via Google Drive which is updated annually. We receive administrative support to organize meetings, for minutes and reporting to the Board from the assigned committee assistant. Additional support would be welcome, particularly for FSLAC communication with school councils and parents/guardians.

Outreach Initiative(s)

Email & Newsletter Distribution:

FSLAC volunteers continue to use our Gmail account: fslactoronto@gmail.com for correspondence. Parents and stakeholders write to us with FSL related questions. Common enquiries are on accessing programs and special education support and for referrals to the appropriate staff member on FSL specific concerns.

The FSLAC newsletter was produced in December 2020, April 2021, and June 2021. It is sent out to more than 150 schools with French immersion/extended programs, trustees, and over 900 individual parents and FSL stakeholders who have signed up. It shares information about new developments in FSL and tips for parents in supporting their children learning French. The sign-up button and past newsletters are available at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. We continue to seek email addresses for Parent/School Councils to add to our distribution to more effectively fulfill our mandate as a partnership between trustees, staff and parents.





CAC Activities cont'd...

Engaging Parents/Guardians/Caregivers and Community Members: Conferences, Workshops & Meetings

In our continued effort to reach out to more parents directly, FSLAC members participated in PIAC's November parent conference virtually. The theme of the FSLAC workshop was "French...helping your child succeed". The power point slides that accompany that workshop are available at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac.

Due to Covid-19, our usual range of activities which includes meeting parents and supporting presentations by staff at FSL information nights, presenting at school/ward councils and participating in policy consultations was quite limited. Our "Intro to the FSLAC" is available for school/ward council meetings. Power point slides are posted at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. Inquiries to have this presentation done may be directed to fslactoronto@gmail.com.

FSLAC members participate in Pupil Accommodation and Program Area Reviews (PART) where recommendations might involve changes to French programs. In 2021-20, two FSLAC members participated in the Eglinton, John Fisher, Bannockburn PART and raised concerns that the proposal does not fully address or support growth and excellence in French immersion.

Current Opportunities for Growth and Excellence in TDSB FSL Programs

Recommendations re: 2018 French Review, 2019 Decisions and 2019/20 Implementation Interim Reports

The FSLAC continues to be very engaged in the 2018 French Review, the June 2019 decisions and implementation work. We have received staff updates and had detailed discussions on the French Review at every meeting this year. The open conversations and the expectation shared throughout the consultation phase of the process showed a strong TDSB commitment to working together to improve FSL programs for all students and as such, the FSLAC continues to provide feedback during meetings and through formal recommendations to Trustees.

In April 2021, the FSLAC made 2 recommendations for Trustee consideration at the Program and School Services Committee in response to the June 2019 French Review Decisions:

Access to French Immersion in Underserved Areas – referred to staff

Childcare (Before and After School) for French Immersion/Extended Students (JK-6)- referred back to FSLAC

These recommendations support growth and excellence in FSL programs, were developed by the FSLAC working group on the Review and were informed by parents who share their experiences with the FSLAC, the French Review consultation and reports, implementation reports, the November 2020 presentation of Andrew Gowdy and Nachema Hirschberg (TDSB Planning) and the presentations in past years by the Early Years leads. Better access to French immersion programs in underserved areas and to Childcare (Before and After School) can help achieve the objective in P080 to have FSL classrooms that "are inclusive and reflective of a diverse community".

Work on further recommendations related to the June 2019 decisions and implementation was delayed due to Covid-19 and will continue in 2021/22.





Current Opportunities for Growth and Excellence in TDSB FSL Programs cont'd...

Core French Action Plan – re: French Review Staff Report June 2019 and Implementation Report October 2019

At the January and May 2021 FSLAC meetings, Staff shared updates on the implementation of the Core French Action Plan. Key work being done includes professional development and improving resources for Core French teachers to support engagement and achievement of Core French students. The FSLAC was happy to hear that participation in grade 10 Core French grew from 28% of eligible enrolment (ie, students not in French immersion/extended) in 2016 to 34% in 2018 as reported to the Ministry on the FSL Framework 3 Year Plan. The FSLAC looks forward to seeing this trend continue and grow through Grades 10-12 as the Core French Action Plan moves forward. In April 2019, the FSLAC made recommendations which included provision of dedicated Core French classrooms in elementary to improve the Core French learning environment and regular public reporting on improving access to Core French grade 10-12 credits as approximately half of secondary schools do not offer them.

Ensure Inclusive Practices in all FSL Programs – re: French Review Staff Report June 2019

At the May 2021 FSLAC meeting, Staff shared updates on actions being taken to include students with Special Education needs in FSL programs. This includes professional development on differentiated instruction, removing barriers to inclusion and early literacy. The FSLAC is encouraged by these actions. However, in the absence of publicly available current data on students with IEPs in French immersion/extended programs, the impact of actions to date is unclear. Anecdotally, there are still parents who experience 'counselling out' of French immersion/extended programs and have to push back very hard to get special education equal to what is provided in the English program. In April 2019, the FSLAC made a formal recommendation to PSSC on improving inclusion of students with special Education needs in FSL which included making that section of PR597 more useful to parents. This was referred to Staff which committed to reviewing and revising that section of PR597 in the June 2019 French Review Staff Report. This work is still needed to support students and inclusive growth in FSL programs.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the DELF

Due to Covid-19, the DELF was not offered in 2020 or 2021. We hope to revisit the FSLAC recommendation to PSSC made in February 2019, that staff be asked to provide a briefing note on TDSB DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) Capacity Building and Cohort Results (from 2013 on). TDSB has teachers who are trained examiners and the continued provision of this training is essential to increasing opportunities for students to participate.

The DELF is an internationally recognized exam that tests proficiency in French and awards a credential to French immersion/extended/core students based on the benchmarks of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This DELF motivates and validates student achievement and informs parents. The FSLAC supports providing the opportunity for all grade 12 French immersion/extended/core students to take DELF exams as is done at some other Ontario Boards. Limited funding and support is provided by the Ministry of Education. Parent and student information: <https://destinationdelf.ca/>





Current Challenges to Growth and Excellence in TDSB FSL Programs

Covid-19

FSLAC parents, like all parents, have had many challenges and numerous pivots from March 2020 on. Staff work during the pandemic to provide resources and flexibility in FSL is greatly appreciated. However, new challenges to growth and excellence in FSL continue to emerge. Access to electronic resources that support learning in French, such as, Je Lis, on a school-by-school basis has meant uneven access to critical electronic FSL resources for students across the system. Parents have found it enormously challenging to support French learning from home and this has resulted in students leaving FSL programs. With the upcoming changes of JK entry and Middle French Immersion (MFI), the predictability and stability of FSL programs is going to be a challenge in 2021/22. Support and effective communication with parents is going to be needed more than ever before. The FSLAC is concerned that the dip in French immersion/extended enrolment will affect the Board's ability to retain French teachers through 2021/22 for what is anticipated will be an increased need for the double cohort entry (JK and SK) in Sept 2022. It is unclear how French immersion/extended will be implemented for students and their teachers in virtual learning in 2021/22 with relatively few sites and a much smaller student population when compared to English.

Impact of French Review: 2018 Consultations, 2019 Decisions, 2020 French Interim Reports and Implementation

We are hopeful that the lack of French immersion programs in underserved areas is going to be addressed by the November 2021 registration for students starting Early French Immersion in September 2022 and that on-going professional development for FSL educators on core French, middle French immersion and supporting FSL students with special education needs will improve inclusion in FSL programs. However, the absence of results reporting including recent relevant data means it is impossible to know if these equity efforts and the French Review are having a positive impact on growth and excellence in FSL programs.

At the May 2021 Board meeting, Trustees adopted the recommendation of the FSLAC to "continue annual reporting on FSL programs including enrolment". The last publicly reported demographic data on FSL programs was used in the French Review and it is now 5 years old. The last detailed FSL annual report, with more than basic enrolment data, was done in anticipation of the French Review, in June 2017. The previous detailed FSL annual report was in 2011, in response to a similar Board decision in November 2007.

Transportation – Cuts to Secondary French Immersion/Extended TTC support

The 2019/20 budget cut of TTC tickets to secondary French immersion/extended (FI/Ext) meeting distance criteria continues to be of concern. In June 2019, all Grade 8-11 FI/Ext parents were advised by the TDSB that secondary students in need would be able to continue receiving support through their FI/Ext school principal. The FSLAC is concerned that those students drop quietly out of FI/Ext rather than self-identify. On May 27, 2020, the Board forwarded the FSLAC recommendation that staff consider this equity issue in their on-going review of transportation. While Staff assured the FSLAC that principals may use school funds for this, it remains unclear if the availability of this support is communicated to all Grade 8-11 FI/Ext families.





Committee Members

There are 23 parent/community volunteers on the FSLAC: 20 parent members/alternates from 13 wards, 1 non-voting community member and 2 alternates from Canadian Parents for French (Ontario). There are 3 Trustee members, selected at the annual TDSB organizational meeting in December. Staff members who support the work of the FSLAC are: Associate Director Curtis Ennis, FSL central staff Angela Caccamo, Kirsten Johnston, Linda Edwards and administrative assistant Linda Stockdale.

Parent members/alternates are elected by parents/guardians in their ward in odd numbered years to serve a two-year term on the FSLAC. Trustees are asked to hold elections at their ward meetings during 2021. To be eligible to be an FSLAC voting member/alternate, one must be a current TDSB parent/guardian who wishes to further the mission of the FSLAC and is available to attend about eight meetings per year. Trustees needing more information or assistance recruiting members to fill vacancies may contact the FSLAC at fslactoronto@gmail.com.

Trustee Co-chair Rachel Chernos Lin
Trustee Dan MacLean
Trustee Robin Pilkey

Parent Co-chair Lynne LeBlanc (W8)
Parent Vice-co-chair Matt Forrest (W9)
Parent Vice-co-chair Charles Zhu (W11)
Parent Vice-co-chair Sharlene Henry (W5/6 alt)
Parent Vice-co-chair Lisa McAvoy (W2)

Mary Cruden (Canadian Parents for French)
Rosemary Sutherland (CPF Alt)
Sharon Beason (CPF Alt)

Lisa McAvoy (W2)
Doug Kwan (W2 Alt)
Deloris Williamson-Braham (W5/13)
Sharlene Henry (W5/6 Alt)
Crystal Stewart (W6)
Mandy Moore (W7)
Caroline Tolten-Paterson (W7 Alt)
Lynne Leblanc (W8)
Geordie Sabbagh (W8 Alt)
Matt Forrest (W9)
Polina Osmerkina (W10)
Hans Bathija (W10 Alt)
Charles Zhu (W11/8)
Wilmar Kortleever (W11 Alt)
Randy Samuel (W14)
Sarah Smith (W15)
Kathleen Meek (W15 Alt)
Christie Dunbar (W16)
Nancy White (W16 Alt)
Gail Miller (W22)

Note: where there is more than 1 ward next to a parent/guardian's name, it indicates that they live in one ward but their child(ren) attend school in another ward.

2021-2022 FSLAC Executive: Lynne LeBlanc was elected at the June 8, 2021 FSLAC meeting as parent co-chair. Charles Zhu, Sharlene Henry and Lisa McAvoy were elected as parent vice co-chairs.

Upcoming Meetings: 2021: Sept 14 , Oct 12, Nov 9 and **2022:** Jan 11, Feb 8, Mar 10, Apr 12, May 10, Jun 7

