



Date: October 5, 2020
To: Board of Trustees
From: Director of Education
Subject: Initiation of 2020/21 French Immersion Review

Type of Report: Decision-Making
 Monitoring
 Incidental Information concerning day-to-day operations

Type of Information: Information for Board of Trustees Decision-Making
 Monitoring Information of Board Policy **XX XXX**
 Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

Origin:

The recommendations of the 2017/18 French Immersion Program review concluded that a further update of the board's plans for French Immersion (FI) be completed by 2023, including a plan related to secondary FI. In May 2020, the Long Term Accommodation Plan identified undertaking this update in 2020/21.

Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:

IV 010 - Facilities/Accommodations

The CEO shall not permit the establishment of facilities that lack physical signs of our Catholic faith and allowance for sacred space; limit students from fully experiencing the curriculum and do not have relationship with the community.

Alignment to the MYSP:

Promote a culture of belonging and respect, that supports success for all:

- Equitable access to learning opportunities

Background/Comments:

Under the Education Act, French language instruction is mandatory in Ontario schools. Students are required to study French from Grades 4 through 9. Boards of Education have the option to offer additional French as a Second Language (FSL) instruction, such as French Immersion.

The board began offering FI in 2015/16. FI was initially offered at St. Anne (K) and Sir Edgar Bauer. Additional FI sites were added in 2016/17, 2019/20 and in 2020/21. Table 1 illustrates the current configuration of FI in the six existing locations.

Since 2015/16 the board has refined the approach to school direction for FI from creating service areas to associating regular track/English schools with FI locations.



The first cohort of FI students will graduate from Grade 8 in 2022/23.

Table 1 - 2020/21 FI Grade Configurations

City	School	Family of Schools	First Year Offering FI	2020/21 Grade Configuration
Waterloo	Holy Rosary	Resurrection	2019/20	Grades 1-2
Cambridge	Our Lady of Fatima	St. Benedict	2016/17	Grades 1-5
Waterloo	Sir Edgar Bauer	St. David	2015/16	Grades 1-6
Kitchener	St. Anne (K)	St. Mary's	2015/16	Grades 1-6
Waterloo	St. Luke	St. David	2019/20	Grades 1-2
Cambridge	St. Peter	St. Benedict	2020/21	Grade 1

2017/18 French Immersion Program Review

During the 2017/18 school year, the board undertook a French Immersion Program Review which concluded with a [report](#) to the board on April 9, 2018.

General recommendation of that report included:

- That the Board update its French Immersion Plan by 2023, including a plan related to secondary French Immersion.
- That the entry point for French Immersion remain as Grade 1.
- That the Board prioritizes offering French Immersion at the same school for Grades 1 to 8.

Specific recommendations of the review were grouped according to areas of accommodation, registration and transportation as follows:

ACCOMMODATION

That to address enrolment pressure, portables, boundary changes, and opening new French Immersion sites are contemplated before any other accommodation solution.

That the following criteria be prioritized when selecting schools for French Immersion:

- Empty/underutilized space
- Traffic impacts on school
- Easily accessible location (close to highways/major road)

That the following new sites be considered for French Immersion:

- Holy Rosary CES (2019)
- St. Luke CES (2019)
- New Huron Brigadoon school (2020)
- St. Peter CES (2020)
- New southeast Galt school (TBD)

That French Immersion boundaries are modified to reflect the addition of new schools.

REGISTRATION

That the registration process remains the same until additional sites make prioritizing in-boundary students more practical.



TRANSPORTATION

That the Board continues to allow students to attend the French Immersion program from outside of the school's English boundary, subject to parents/guardians providing their own transportation. (No bussing will be provided for French Immersion)

That the Board work with municipalities and the school community to identify alternate drop-off/pick-up points to alleviate traffic congestion and safety issues immediately adjacent to the school.

Provincial French Immersion Trends

Since the early 2000s, school boards have experienced persistent challenges with recruitment and retention of qualified French as a Second Language (FSL) teachers. These challenges have led to reviews by several boards across the province, the Ministry of Education, and have been reported in academic literature.

In 2017, the [Report of the French as a Second Language Ontario Labour Market Partnership Project](#) noted that as of 2015/16, the average annual French Immersion enrolment growth rate of 5.7 percent had been sustained for the 11th consecutive year.

Across the province, the most prevalent issues and challenges related to French Immersion include:

- Recruitment and retention of qualified FSL teachers
- Supporting robust English language programming in dual track schools
- Accommodating enrolment pressures associated with French Immersion growth

2020/21 French Immersion Review

The board must undertake an updated French Immersion review to address emerging elementary accommodation trends, plan for the continued expansion of elementary FI opportunities, and establish criteria for secondary FI accommodation.

The 2020/21 French Immersion Review Committee (FI Review Committee) will be responsible for providing guidance and advice to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees related to French Immersion programming and future accommodation issues.

SCOPE

The following factors are to be re-confirmed or addressed in this review:

- Elementary school organization (i.e. grade structure, single track, dual track)
- Grade 1 entry point
- Approach to Grade 1 application for FI
- Attendance of siblings in FI school
- Impact of transportation, as it relates to school organization
- Establish strategy for delivery of FI courses for grades 9 to 12 to meet secondary FI certificate requirements
- Review and confirm criteria for selecting new elementary FI location(s)
- Identify areas of future consideration for new elementary FI location(s)
- Establish criteria for selecting new secondary FI location(s)

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

How does the Waterloo Catholic District School Board continue to support the expansion of FI instruction, while ensuring that students have equitable opportunity for access to quality programming?



GOALS:

- To confirm the Waterloo Catholic District School Board's values and beliefs regarding French Immersion.
- To ensure that students in French Immersion receive equitable access to quality program.
- To update the French Immersion delivery plan which:
 - considers all Waterloo Catholic District School Board students and families,
 - respects fiscal and accommodation realities,
 - provides guidance and structure to future decisions related to program expansion and accommodation
 - is aligned with the Board's Long Term Accommodation Plan, and
 - provides a predictable and transparent method of locating programs.

OBJECTIVES:

- French Immersion should enhance a student's educational experience.
- High quality, inclusive learning environment should be maintained for both French Immersion and English track students.

CONSTRAINTS:

- Based on projected enrolment, there may be insufficient space to accommodate students at the six existing French Immersion sites in the future.
- The staffing component related to attracting, developing, and retaining qualified FSL Teachers and support staff will be discussed internally by board staff and will not be discussed by the FI Review Committee.
- The ability to offer a variety of secondary FI courses to support retention of students in FI and achievement of the secondary FI certificate is affected by FI enrolment levels.

2020/21 French Immersion Review Committee

The FI Review Committee will be comprised of:

- Principals of the three French Immersion schools that have students closest to entering the secondary panel (3)
- Principals of two secondary schools (2)
- Superintendent of Learning and French Immersion (1)
- Superintendent of Corporate Services (1)
- Manager of Planning (1) (Co-Chair)
- French Consultant (1) (Co-Chair)
- Director of Education, Ex Officio (1)
- Three French Immersion parent/guardian representatives from three unique elementary schools offering FI (3)
- Three English parent/guardian representatives from three unique elementary schools offering both FI and English (dual track) (3)
- Additional staff resources, as required.

PARENT/GUARDIAN REPRESENTATIVE SELECTION CRITERIA

Parent/guardian representatives will be invited to apply to be a member of the FI Review Committee and will be selected by board staff.

FI PARENT/GUARDIAN CRITERIA

- Grade/Division of Children
- Gender balance
- Geographic dispersion
- Home school FI attendance vs. Out of Boundary
- Principal input



ENGLISH PARENT/GUARDIAN CRITERIA

- Grade/Division of Children
- Gender balance
- Geographic dispersion
- Principal input

To ensure continuity of the FI Review Committee’s work, no substitutes will be allowed to attend committee meetings in the absence of the designated parent/guardian representatives.

Timing

Staff will advertise on the board website, via social media channels and through local schools to seek applicants for the parent/guardian representatives. The expectation is that the committee’s work would be initiated in November 2020 and conclude in the Spring of 2021 and generally follow the schedule as outlined in Table 2. A final report will be presented to the Board by June 2021.

Table 2 - French Immersion Review Schedule

Activity	Detail	Purpose
Meeting #1	Nov 18/20 4:00pm TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish group norms • Review terms of reference • Review background Information • Review elementary school organization (i.e. grade structure, single track, dual track) • Review projections and utilization of current locations
Meeting #2	Jan 13/21 4:00 pm TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Grade 1 entry point • Discuss approach to Grade 1 application for FI • Discuss attendance of siblings in FI school • Discuss impact of transportation, as it relates to school organization
Meeting #3	Feb 10/21 4:00 pm TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss strategy for delivery of FI courses for grades 9 to 12 to meet secondary FI certificate requirements • Discuss criteria for selecting new elementary FI location(s) • Discuss criteria for selecting new secondary FI location(s) • Undertake SWOT analysis of selection criteria - Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats • Identify areas of future consideration for new elementary FI location(s)
Meeting #4	Mar 10/21 4:00 pm TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm information and materials to be shared at open houses (virtual as needed), and via Thought Exchange.
Thoughtexchange	Mar 22-31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit input on matters evaluated by the committee to inform recommendations.
Open Houses	Mar 23-25 TBD	
Meeting #5	Apr 14/21 4:00 pm TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review public input • Develop strategic options and/or recommendations
Meeting #6	May 12/21 4:00 pm TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review draft report and recommendations for inclusion in final report.
Board of Trustees	May 31/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present final report.
Board of Trustees	June 14/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board decision.



Recommendation:

This report is for the information.

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*Bylaw 4.2 “where the Board of Trustees receives from the Director of Education a monitoring report that flows from a responsibility delegated to the Director under Board Policy – **except where approval is required by the Board of Trustees on a matter delegated by policy to the Board** – the minutes of the Meeting at which the Report is received shall expressly provide that the Board has received and approved of the Report as an action consistent with the authority delegated to the Director, subject in all instances to what otherwise actually occurred.”

