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Community Advisory Committees

French as a Second Language
Advisory Committee (FSLAC)
2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT



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FSLAC Mission, Membership and Terms of Reference

The FSLAC was created by the Board in 2005 and set our mission as “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.”

There are 22 parent members and alternates on the FSLAC from 16 wards, and 1 non-voting community member from Canadian Parents for French (Ontario). Kristina Laperle is the parent co-chair and Trustee Robin Pilkey is the trustee co-chair. French as a Second Language (FSL) program staff attend all meetings.

FSLAC members/alternates are elected by parents in their ward in odd numbered years to serve a two year term. Trustees are asked to hold elections at their ward meetings no later than December 2016 to fill any vacancies. To be eligible to be an FSLAC voting member/alternate, one must be a current TDSB parent who wishes to further the mission of the FSLAC and is available to attend (in person or by phone) about seven meetings per year. Trustees needing more information or assistance recruiting members to fill vacancies may contact the FSLAC at fslactoronto@gmail.com. FSLAC information is posted at: www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. A detailed Member Briefing Book is provided to members annually.

In keeping with the Board’s request to standardize Community Advisory Committees, the FSLAC reviewed and revised our “Operation Guidelines” and renamed them “Terms of Reference”. The new Terms of Reference were adopted by the FSLAC on April 12, 2016 and received at the Program and School Services Committee of the Board in May: www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac

FSLAC Activities & Information Sharing

The FSLAC held 8 meetings in the 2015-2016 school year and continues to work collaboratively with FSL program staff. Staff provided us with a preview of the new FSL video that was used at French Immersion and Extended French Information nights as well as at parent conferences and parent information evenings. FSLAC parents provided feedback and we hope to see a version of this highly informative video available online in the future. FSLAC staff also presented a research report on Characteristics of Students in French Immersion and Extended French to help us better understand the progress that has been made and the growing diversity of students enrolled in the different FSL programs.



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Several guest speakers were invited to FSLAC meetings to share information on a variety of topics affecting FSL programs, students and their families. Executive Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, Beth Butcher, attended FSLAC meetings twice in 2015-2016 to present on the "Sifting, Sorting Report" and the reorganization of central teaching staff. Colleen Russell-Rawlins Executive Superintendent Early Years Learning and Care shared information about childcare policies and procedures, and TDSB Senior Manager, Shulin Dave, also attended to provide information about the EDSBY Parent Portal. Céline Marcoux-Hamade, Toronto Public Library Senior Services Specialist- French Language, presented on available resources and programming available at the public libraries across the city.

Meeting notices, agendas, minutes and FSL resources are posted on the FSLAC page on the TDSB website (www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac). We currently receive limited administrative support from the Parent Engagement Office to organize meetings and to handle minutes, but look forward to getting increased, FSL-specialized support from the Board in the coming year, particularly with writing, editing and communications.

The FSLAC continues to use our Gmail account: fslactoronto@gmail.com and is transitioning to Mail Chimp for newsletter distribution. Parents and stakeholders write to us with FSL related questions. Common enquiries are on accessing programs and special education support, for referrals to the appropriate staff member on FSL specific concerns and to be on our newsletter distribution list.

The FSLAC newsletter was produced three times in 2015-2016 and was sent out to more than 120 schools with immersion/extended programs, trustees, and over 750 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. A new Conference Edition of the newsletter was also created for the PIAC-SEAC Conference in April, highlighting information about FSL and including students with special education needs. Past newsletters are available at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac.

The FSLAC created and disseminated a survey to all trustee candidates during the fall 2014 municipal election and is doing so in by-elections. The survey asked three questions about experiences with learning French and views on FSL programs. Responses to the surveys are circulated to parents and posted on our Google Drive.

Engaging Parents and Community Members

This year we continued to reach out to more parents directly through participation in parent conferences and workshops. FSLAC Members and Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) staffed tables, and provided information, and resources at PIAC's "Parents Make a Difference Conference" in the fall and at the PIAC-SEAC Conference in April.



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We have continued to offer our popular parent workshop “Help with French Homework...even if you don’t speak French” at parent conferences, as well as at individual schools upon request. This year we have added a new section on online resources and FSL apps. We also presented our “Intro to the FSLAC” at a Ward Forum. New FSLAC parent members have shadowed this year’s presentations and are prepared to increase the number of these types of presentations in 2016-17 school year. Power point slides are posted at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. Inquiries may be directed to fslactoronto@gmail.com.

FSLAC Members also attended many immersion/extended information nights to meet new parents and to support the presentations of principals and FSL staff.

FSLAC Participation in Board Activities

FSLAC members continued to be involved in PARC and PART meetings across the Board, including those for AY Jackson, Sir John A Macdonald, and Georges Vanier, as well as the Danforth and East York PARC to support growth in FSL programs and to share information about FSL programs from the parent perspective with the community.

The FSLAC has also been active in attending other Board meetings to represent the voice of FSL families and the FSL Advisory Committee. In addition to submitting written recommendations on the draft Pupil Accommodation Policy and Procedure Guidelines (PARG), members attended several Program Area reviews. We also participated in the Policy Review Consultation for P024 Educational Programming Partnerships, and are planning to attend the Community Advisory Committee Meeting later in June.

Current Opportunities / Growth and Excellence in FSL Programs in the TDSB

New Learning Centres Model for Central Teaching Staff:

The FSLAC has expressed concerns to senior staff about how the change to Learning Centres might impact the high quality and consistency of Professional Development sessions lead by FSL specific Instructional Leaders. “Transforming FSL” as expected and directly funded by the Ministry is a long term effort that is not yet fully realized. The implementation of the FSL Framework (2013), Including Students with Special Needs and FSL (2015), new curriculum for core, extended and immersion French (2013, 2014) as well as Common European Framework and DELF projects demand a high level of expertise and a concerted multi-year effort.



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Extended/Immersion Program Enrolment:

According to the 2016-17 enrolment report, enrolment in immersion (SK and grade 4 entry) as well as enrolment in extended (grade 4 or 7 entry) is continuing to grow. All on-time applicants receive a spot in SK immersion/grade 4 extended/immersion and the system responds by adding new sites as required. For the 2016-2017 school year, five new French immersion (FI) sites and two new extended French sites will be opened. Despite the best efforts of staff, further refinement to the process is indicated as about 11% of applicants are not offered spots at the expected immersion/extended schools. Extended/immersion Parents continue to struggle with family logistics and before and after school care availability.

The FSLAC continues to be concerned about the use of lotteries at immersion schools where there are no feeders. Lotteries select who stays and who goes on a bus to the next closest FI program, when all applicants could walk and have a right to be in the school for the English program.

Continued FSL Needs at the Secondary School Level:

We will continue exploring FSL secondary programs as per the Board's accepted recommendation from the FSLAC (February 2013) to meet "the need for additional sites and opportunities for immersion and extended students at the secondary level and develop a plan for meeting current and future needs in consultation with the FSLAC and stakeholders". We hope that increasing access and variety of courses offered in these areas will lead to better retention between grade 8 and grade 9, as well as through to grade 12 in extended/immersion programs.

Special Education and Core/Extended/Immersion:

FSLAC members worked with the Board staff to ensure dissemination of information regarding new **Ministry document "Including Students with Special Education Needs in FSL" at the PIAC-SEAC conference in April.** An informative presentation was conducted by the FSL Coordinator at two sessions during the conference and conference slides are available on the FSLAC website. Copies of the Ministry document and other helpful resources were available at the FSLAC table in the vendor's hall.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELFF):

The FSLAC is supportive of FSL staff in providing the opportunity for some grade 12 students to participate in DELF exams with support provided by the Ministry of Education. The DELF is an internationally recognized exam that tests proficiency in French and awards a credential to the student based on the benchmarks of the CEFR. This type of testing provides an external assessment of student outcomes in core/extended/immersion. The Ministry did a study which included the TDSB students which is available here: www.edugains.ca/resources/FSL/PDF/Research/Synopsis_FINAL-1.pdf



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2016-17 FSLAC

The annual general meeting of the FSLAC was held on June 9, 2016. Kristina Laperle was elected as parent co-chair with Matt Forrest, Betheny Maheu and Peggy Dufresne elected as parent vice co-chairs.

Upcoming meetings: September 20, 2016; October 27, 2016; November 24, 2016



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