



Community Advisory Committees

French-as-a-Second Language Advisory Committee (FSLAC) 2016/2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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Mandate

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.”

Membership

There are 29 parent members and alternates on the FSLAC from 17 wards, and 1 non-voting community member from Canadian Parents for French (Ontario). Trustee Robin Pilkey is our trustee co-chair. French as a Second Language (FSL) program staff attend all meetings.

Members/alternates are elected by parents 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 no later than December 2017 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 eight 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. Members/alternates also receive electronic access to a Member Briefing Book via Google Drive which is updated annually.

This year marked some significant changes in terms of TDSB Staff, who are part of the FSLAC team. We were sad to say goodbye to Central Coordinating Principal John Tancredi, who retired in January of this year. Since 2009, he was a supportive member of the FSLAC and was instrumental in making so many positive changes to FSL (French Second Language) teaching and learning at the Board during his long and distinguished career. **With John’s departure**, the FSLAC welcomed Angela Caccamo to the table as the new Central Coordinating Principal. Executive Superintendent, Manon Gardner has also been attending FSLAC meetings this year.

2016-2017 Committee Members

Trustee Co-chair Robin Pilkey
Parent Co-chair Kristina Laperle (W17)
Parent Vice-co-chair Matt Forrest (W9)
Parent Vice-co-chair Betheney Maheu (W13 Alt)
Parent Vice-co-chair Peggy Dufresne (W19)
Rob Janes (W2)
Lisa McAvoy (W2 Alt)
Dina Pizolinas (W2 Alt)
Melanie Amandasun (W3)
Michelle Minott (W4)
Deloris Williamson-Braham(W5)
Caroline Paterson (W7)
Jane McGrath (W7 Alt)
Laura Steele-Gunter(W7 Alt)
Lauralyn Johnston (W8)
Matt Forest (W9)
Rosemary Sutherland (W9 Alt)
Lionel Chuffart (W9 Alt)
Sarah Warden (W10)
Polina Osmerkina (W10 Alt)
Maureen Burnett (W11, W14 Alt)
Sarah Ramkissoo (W12)
Wilmar Kortleever (W13)
Alison MacAlpine (W14)
Sarah Smith (W 15)
Bronwyn Graves (W15 Alt)
Sharon Beason (W16)
Nancy White (W16 Alt)
Randy Samuel (W17 Alt)
Gail Miller (W21)
Mary Cruden (Community Member, Canadian Parents
for French)



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FSLAC Accomplishments: Activities, Information Sharing and Board Consultations

Meetings The FSLAC met eight times in the 2016-17 school year. Meetings are generally held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, excluding December and March. FSLAC members work collaboratively with FSL program staff, attending French Immersion and Extended French Information nights, parent conferences and parent information evenings.

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 some administrative support from the Parent Engagement Office to organize meetings and to handle minutes, but additional support, particularly in communications, would be welcome.

To gather information and provide informed advice to the Board on its identified areas of focus, the FSLAC invited several TDSB guests to FSLAC meetings to share their expertise and provide an opportunity for meaningful discussion and feedback:

October 2016: Equity Framework presented by Jim Spyropoulos, Executive Superintendent. FSL Coordinator, Kirsten Johnson, **followed with the “Review of Characteristics of FSL” and the “Sifting and Sorting Report”**. **This allowed us to have important insight into the progress that has been made, the growing diversity of students enrolled in the different FSL programs and provide suggestions for equity improvement which were compiled and submitted to the Equity consultation.**

November 2016: TDSB Virtual Library and French resources presented by Ruth Hall TDSB coordinator, Library Learning resources and Global Education. FSLAC members were very happy to see the progress that has been made, particularly in being able to use carefully selected on-line French resources from home and shared the information with parents in the FSLAC newsletter.

February 2017: Childcare Policy and Procedures presented by Liz Humphreys, Child Care Services Manager, Sheryl Robinson-Petrazzini Central Coordinating Principal and Liz Hoang, Child Care Services Manager. FSLAC members expressed concerns about equity of access for French Immersion/Extended families who often have to choose between childcare, French and bussing. Feedback and suggestions were compiled and submitted to the Childcare team.

May 2017: Placing Occasional Teachers in French Classrooms presented by Andrew Gold and Maxine Grey from TDSB Employee Services. FSLAC members gained insight into how the assignments are made and expressed concerns that French assignments are not always filled by French teachers and that having a series of occasional teachers in a class is very disruptive for the students.

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FSLAC Accomplishments: Activities, Information Sharing and Board Consultations Cont'd

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, 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 2016-17 and was sent out to more than 120 schools with immersion/extended programs, trustees, and over 780 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. Past newsletters are available at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac and an index is in development to help parents access information on particular issues. The FSLAC is transitioning from Mailchimp to My Emma to increase capacity and ease volunteer workload and thanks TDSB Communications for the support in doing this.

Engaging Parents and Community Members: Conferences, Workshops & School Councils

In our continued effort to reach out to more parents directly, FSLAC members participated in parent conferences and workshops at both of PIAC's parent conferences: "Parents Make a Difference Conference" in the fall and at the "Parents as Partners Conference" in the spring. FSLAC Members and Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) staffed tables, and provided information on FSL programs and how to get assistance for students who may be struggling. Four sessions of our popular parent workshop "Help with French Homework...even if you don't speak French" were given at the fall conference and at individual schools who requested it during the year.

Our "Intro to the FSLAC" has also been given at school council and ward meetings. Power point slides are posted at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. Inquiries may be directed to fslactoronto@gmail.com.

FSLAC Members also attended French immersion/extended information nights to meet new parents and to support the presentations of principals and FSL staff. FSLAC parents helped with the production of the FSL Information video shared on the TDSB website during peak registration season, and we hope to see it online on a permanent basis in the future.

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FSLAC Participation in Board Activities

FSLAC members continued to be involved in Pupil Accommodation and Program Area Reviews where recommendations might involve changes to French programs. In 2016-17, members were on PARCs in Ward 2, Ward 6 and Ward 22 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 and consultative discussions to represent the voice of FSL families and the FSL Advisory Committee. Our representatives participated in consultation sessions on the student and parent census and on parent engagement. We invited staff conducting consultation on the Equity Framework and Childcare to the FSLAC and submitted written recommendations based on our discussions.

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

New Learning Centres Model, Immersion/Extended Sites and “Transforming FSL”

The FSLAC is receiving feedback from parents that the new Learning Centres model may not be providing the expertise, support and encouragement previously given to support student and program success in French immersion/extended sites. Also, the cut from 6 instructional leaders to 2 and the redirection of funding from PD release time to the 2 salaries has reduced capacity for **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. Implementation of the FSL Framework (2013), Including Students with Special Needs (2015), Welcoming English Language Learners in FSL (2016) and new curriculum for core, extended and immersion French (2013, 2014) as well as Common European Framework and DELF, require high levels of expertise, dedicated central staff, use of existing dedicated funding for PD release time and a concerted multi-year effort.

Extended/Immersion Program Enrolment

All on-time applicants receive a spot in French immersion/extended programs and the system responds to demand by adding new SK and Grade 4 extended sites as required. In September 2017, four new SK French immersion (FI) sites and one new Grade 4 extended French (EF) site will open. The percentage of redirects (other than to a new, closer site to home) has dropped from 12% in SK and 13% in Grade 4 last year to 10% for September 2017. This improvement is welcome and the FSLAC thanks staff for their vigilance as they make the opportunities accessible

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Current Opportunities for Growth and Excellence in FSL Programs in the TDSB
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to all. However, parents cannot always accept the designated, unexpected placement because of family logistics, before and after school care availability and bussing schedules.

The FSLAC continues to be concerned about redirections from FI schools where there are no feeders, for 2017: Allenby, Earl Haig, Jackman, RH McGregor and Runnymede PS. Lotteries are used to select who stays and who goes on a bus to the next closest FI program, when all applicants could walk to and have a right to be in the school for the English program. This problem is also now evident in Grade 4 Extended at Swansea.

Continued FSL Needs at the Secondary School Level

FI/EF enrolment growth and new programs across the city will impact secondary needs: from 2013-2016, 2 FI and 8 EF new sites were added and FI/EF total enrolment has grown from 24 843 to 28 013. In February 2013, the Board adopted the **recommendation from the FSLAC 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 are continuing to explore FSL secondary programs and are hopeful that next year’s consultation on Secondary access as part of the Equity Framework will finally provide the opportunity to move forward. We would like to see an increase in access and the variety of courses offered in French, which will lead to better retention between grade 8 and grade 9, as well as through to grade 12 in FI/EF programs. Currently students have the choice of continuing in FI/EF or attending other specialized programs (ie, TOPS, IB, Cyber Arts, Arts, etc) and cannot do both concurrently despite the obvious job opportunities that come with both French and these areas of study. Grade 12 Core French is only available in 56 secondary schools (less than half of all secondary schools). Possible solutions include e-learning (school year and summer), virtual high school, hybrid courses, campus approach to provide access to FSL and specialized programs concurrently.

Special Education and Core/Extended/Immersion

FSLAC members continue to work with the Board staff to share the Ministry document “Including Students with Special Education Needs in FSL” with parents. Parents continue to report that the suggestion to leave French rather than seek support within FI/EF is made informally by staff despite policy and research that backs up inclusion.

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At the PIAC-SEAC conference in April, the FSL Coordinator presented “Including Students with Special Education Needs in FSL” and copies it and other helpful resources were available at the FSLAC table in the vendor’s hall. The conference slides and the document are available on the FSLAC webpage.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the DELF

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 FSLAC supports providing the opportunity for grade 12 students to take DELF exams (Diplôme d’études en langue française). Funding and support is provided by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry did a study which included the TDSB students which is available here: www.edugains.ca/resourcesFSL/PDF/Research/Synopsis_FINAL-1.pdf

We currently have enough teachers trained as examiners (Formateurs and Correcteurs) to conduct the tests with the 45 funded students. However, how as teachers retire or take leaves, it is unclear how the current DELF needs will be met, let alone expansion of the opportunity to all Grade 12 FSL students such as is available at the Ottawa Carleton District School Board.

2017-18 FSLAC Executive

Lauralyn Johnston was elected at the June 13th meeting as parent co-chair with Christie Dunbar, Rosemary Sutherland, Sarah Smith and Sharon Beason elected as parent vice co-chairs.

Upcoming meetings:

September 12, 2017

October 10, 2017

November 14, 2017

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