



Community Advisory Committees

Name of Committee: French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: 11 February 2020

A meeting of the French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee convened from 7:00 pm 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), Zeynab Kazi (Parent Vice-Co-Chair W22), Rob Janes (W1/W2), Lisa McAvoy (W2 Alt), , Sharlene Henry (W5/W6 Alt), Lynne LeBlanc (W8), Jennifer Tse (W8 Alt), Polina Osmerkina (W10); Wilmar Kortleever (W11 Alt), Randy Samuel (W14), Sarah Smith (W15),

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), Doug Kwan (parent, Millwood), Diana Mockute (parent, Palmerston), Paul D. Ruzin (parent, Palmerston), Joanne Nash (parent, Palmerston), Tereza Maul (Hawthorne II Bilingual Alt), Lauren Chang MacLean (parent, Palmerston, Kate Gertner (parent, Palmerston), Ibimie Opuso-Jama (parent, W4)

The following participated by electronic means: Kathleen Meek (W15 Alt), Gail Miller (W22 Alt), Rosemary Sutherland (CPF Alt)

Regrets: Nalini Singh (W2 Alt), Deloris Williamson-Braham (W5/13), Caroline Tolten-Paterson (W7 Alt), Nancy White (W16 Alt), Christie Dunbar (W16), Kirsten Johnston (Program Coordinator)

Recorder: Linda Stockdale

ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION / MOTION / ACTION
Call to Order / Quorum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quorum achieved 7:07 pm • Land acknowledgment – Mandy Moore 	
Membership Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
Approval of Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended to include Ward/CPF Reports. Moved to approve by Charles, seconded by Zeynab. Carried. 	
Approval of Jan 14, 2020 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 5 - Remove “On hold until further review” regarding the Draft FSL Survey. Minutes as amended moved to approve by Zeynab, seconded by Sharlene. Carried. 	Linda will post approved minutes on tdsb.on.ca/FSLCAC
Declarations of Possible Conflict of Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilmar Kortleever is a W11 parent and FSLCAC alternate and is also employed by the TDSB as a Shared Services Liaison, a casual position in which he supports the Board and Trustees, e.g., by helping organize and taking minutes at public meetings. 	
Ward Reports	<p>W11 – Homework help in community needed for his school. There are many new immigrants requiring support. They’ve established the Thorncliff French Academy which is a weekly homework club, which includes a healthy snack.</p> <p>W2- Three kids this year have been hit by cars near the middle school; concerns with</p>	

traffic in the area.

W15 – kids in grade 4 and 5 who did not go into extended at GR 4 no longer will have Cosburn or Ext 7 to go to, concerned about their pathway options.

W1/2 – car issues at drop-off and pick-up, and assumes this will get worse with more kids coming from long distances for FI if no bus.

CPF – CPF is meeting with decision makers about challenges in FSL teacher supply, recruitment and retention including Kelly Burke, Ontario Commissioner of French Language Services, official in the Ministry of Education. The \$31M in funding for projects to improve the supply of FSL teachers across Canada from Minister Melanie Joly’s Official Languages portfolio is starting to flow. Thank you to the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association (OPSBA) for continued work on the Labour Market Study on FSL Staff and the release of the Phase 2 report in January. FSLCAC members were sent the link:

<https://www.opsba.org/new-report-outlines-fsl-teacher-recruitment-strategies>

W8 – Receiving TTC tokens because family lives more than 5-6 km away from FI program. Why is she being re-directed? Concerned about the transportation tickets availability - help on the TTC tickets required. The Parent co-chair reminds the group that this can be addressed with the local school Principal.

W10- Member reads a letter from Palmerston parents...14 JK families are being re-directed to Dewson Street JPS, and given 6 days to make their choices. Reason given to parents that only 4 students will be in SK English and this will strengthen English program. Letter attached as addendum.

CPF expressed thanks to FSL staff for hard work, grace and dedication in placing every on-time applicant, particularly this year with an increase of about 400 students. CPF asked what the guidelines are regarding delegates and membership involvement in delegate presentations. Trustee Pilkey recited the CAC Guidelines, suggesting that delegates can be asked questions of clarification on a point if required. CPF expressed offence regarding the previous evening’s Governance meeting, where delegates presented regarding Palmerston redistribution. CPF expressed concern that TDSB officials’ response to the Palmerston situation, of repeatedly stating that TDSB is an ‘English language school board’ and that English is the priority, while technically true, can also be

	perceived by the 30 000 students and their teachers who are doing bilingual education as making them second class citizens. Board addressed the use of the word 'optional' after the 2006 Review as it was also perceived by FI/Ext parents as marginalizing their children.	
Delegates	Diana Mockute, parent of JK student at Palmerston Parent concurred with CPF's statement above regarding Palmerston redirection and TDSB officials' response to the Palmerston situation at the Governance meeting. We learned that redirections occur when there is a capacity issue. But this is not a capacity issue. The disclaimers on the website say one thing, 2 years wait list at Dewson for child care...you have the option to go back to English.	7:35
	Lauren Chang MacLean, parent of JK student at Palmerston Presented the case of another Palmerston family first. Family came from Hong Kong 3 years ago. Older child in FI, but made a mistake during registration of JK student, to not include sibling. She has not been given a spot at Palmerston yet. These families want a French education. This was a surprise, a shock. There's lots of space in our school, empty classrooms. We don't think it's going to help the English enrolment. It is hard to back down from a decision, especially a good one like viability of English program. Has an enormous impact on 4 year olds. Please help us.	7:38
	Joanne Nash, parent of JK student at Palmerston Found out on the Thursday, and told to make a decision by Monday. We moved here for the French program, the English program is not strong. A 14 student class is being cut. Essex kids are being bussed elsewhere. This is dividing the community. The situation is unlike other redirects in that we are not at capacity. Teacher upset as well.	7:45
	Kate Gertner, parent of JK student at Palmerston FI kids are being placed in a class of 32, those that get to stay, so one FI class only will remain, with 32 kids. This cut seems to go against the TDSB's view that 2 FI classes allows for a sustainable program.	7.48
	Paul Patterson, parent at Palmerston Absent.	
Staff Updates Manon Gardner	Delegate-Member Response TDSB is an English language Board. Staff member does not feel belittled by working here, even though a Francophone, raised in Quebec. FI is an optional program. Trustees could decide that only Core French is available at the TDSB. We have 28, 000 students in FI.	7:50

	<p>We have placed over 4,000 students in an optional program. We are struggling with the demand for French teachers, supply teachers, like many other boards across the country. What is happening at Palmerston is not unique. Many around the table have gone through this. We do have an approach to support all students that want FI. Efficient staffing is required, and mandated. 32 is the max. that can be accommodated in a classroom, otherwise it is not efficient use of staffing. Will there be some instances of less than 32 students per class; yes, if some parents elect to decline. It is new program (entry classes), where 2 classes is the optimum. There are inaccuracies in the information being conveyed, and this is understandable. Rules have changed. With the last recommendations for French programming, some items are pleasing, others not. Over the course of 20 years, we have amalgamated. Each previous Board had their own set of rules thus adding to the complexity of attaining equitability across the Board. In the downtown, we have lots of FI schools. In the North West or North East, there are fewer FI locations and larger distances between FI schools, but this is the reality. Our job is to place all students in FI and Jr. Extended. We will not be able to please everyone. It is not easy.</p>	
<p>Staff Update Manon</p>	<p>FSL Draft Survey The survey is on hold because of the feedback received last month. How can we engage this group more? – This is on our minds.</p>	
<p>Staff Update Manon</p>	<p>French Review - Recommendations</p> <p>At the June Board Meeting, Trustees approved recommendations which included the redistribution of intensive FSL programs to improve equity of access across the Board. Staff presented maps of the current FI schools, pathways and catchment areas, which are available on the Board website. The map clearly shows the concentration of programs. Only a few programs are available in the North East, and North West and south Etobicoke, compared to downtown/Yonge Street corridor. A member notes that there is a greater population of people is in the downtown core, and it is agreed that population must be considered. The Membership considered two guiding questions (as time permitted) and their own responses, in an effort to review options and consider possible solutions.</p> <p>Some members felt reluctant to participate as they expressed concern about not having been advised of this consultation in advance in order to represent their community. Staff</p>	

responded by stating the guiding questions could be shared with FSLAC and in turn, the Ward reps could share them with their School Councils, and parent communities. The Parent Co-chair indicates that this is an opportunity to provide feedback as members and as parents. Two guiding questions:

Question 1:

Staff background provided: Currently, there are 71 SK French Immersion sites and 38 Grade 4 Junior Extended French sites across the TDSB. Given their current locations, and the guarantee that all on-time applicants are offered a placement in an intensive FSL program, but not a particular school, there are varying distances that students travel to access a French program. Some students may walk as the intensive FSL program is located at their neighbourhood school, while others may be transported as the local intensive FSL program is further or the number of allotted program spaces has reached capacity, and therefore they have been redirected to a nearby school with available program space.

1. What would be a reasonable distance to travel for students accessing an intensive FSL program?

Member responses expressed:

- for a JK-6, walking distance (1.6km is considered walking distance); reduces congestion
- this is not realistic; in some areas, there are no schools where all can walk.
- reasonable travel time, parity with English programs.
- parents don't want to pass by a FI school to go to another. This would mean FI in every school - not possible.
- One member's situation is 11km to Middle School French- a pathway, not entry. Trustee Pilkey notes that 11-14kms is not reasonable. A member says that 7km should be a reasonable distance limit.

Question 2:

Staff background provided: Currently, every home address in TDSB is connected with an English school and all of those home addresses make-up what is called a catchment. Each English school catchment is associated with a French Immersion school defining the

catchment of that French Immersion school. Presently, we have 14 French Immersion schools whose French catchment is only associated to their own English home school (e.g. Adam Beck Junior PS, Allenby Junior PS, Howard Junior PS, RH McGregor Elementary School, Runnymede Junior & Senior PS, etc.). Whereas, other French Immersion schools may have 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 English school catchments. Some like Corvette Junior PS and William G. Miller PS have 15 English school catchments associated to their French Immersion school.

2. What should be the minimum number of feeder schools to an intensive FSL program?

Member responses expressed:

- families will travel further to go to a French Centre.
- might work well in a centre where there is a large concentration of FI schools
- give more than 4 days notice to make decisions; minimize the redirection (Staff did comment that all families receive 6 days to reserve a spot in FI.)
- give more notice the younger the kids are that are experiencing the change
- don't uproot a program from one location and plunk it down into another. You need critical mass of people interested in the program. Recommendation a few years ago was to look at 6 largest sites and create 12 sites - Trustee Pilkey indicates that this was not the motion the Board passed.
- the underserved areas need to be addressed – how do we know where they are, but more importantly where do we pull from?
- notice/grandfathering is needed to move students from one site to another.
- redistribution, based on the need, is valid. It should be 'new' programs, not taken from elsewhere. Yet, the approved recommendation is redistribution.
- legacy FI schools should not dictate distribution - Why not bring a program from a legacy FI school to a closer school?
(Staff provides an example that Melody Village went through a PART process to go from English school to a French Centre. Right now the school is at GR4 FI, so 5 years in, yet the enrolment numbers are lower than hoped.)
- member says that there is a perception that if FI is in the school that it is a more academic school. Are there stats that if French leaves, the English program is less academic?
- dual vs. single track supports: Will there be better supports for children in French single

	<p>track school? Concern expressed that students with Spec Ed needs are not getting support. Some FI students are not receiving Spec. Ed support as required, more likely to be counselled out of program. So, if a single French stream is more likely to provide special education supports – this is what parents would like. Parents state that they would like this challenge addressed as best as possible in whatever way you think it can be best achieved. Staff state that supports in both dual and single track have improved in recent years and Trustees support both.</p> <p>A member asks if attrition data is different from single/dual/triple/quad track schools? Member suspects that attrition is higher at a dual track school than in French centres.</p> <p>A member asked if there is a survey question regarding French centres, dual, triple tracks? Can we put this forward to look at this further with our communities and get back together on this? If we go with French centres, will this impact transportation? Yes, longer distances to get there.</p> <p>=====</p> <p>Staff offered to provide a package with map and guiding questions to the Membership to take to their School Councils and parent communities, if this is agreeable to the Membership. It will be emailed to membership.</p> <p>A member(s) recommended that the March meeting consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Michelle Munroe attend /Parent Engagement Survey - staff to be excused b) Further discussion/work, as was done today. <p>A member notes that FSLCAC March 10 meeting conflicts with PIAC, so likely Michelle Munroe not available to come to FSLCAC.</p>	
Other Business	no	
Adjournment	The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm. Moved by Zeynab, seconded by Charles and Carried.	
Next Meeting	Tuesday, March 10, 2020, 7:00 pm in Committee Room A.	

ADDENDUM – provided by Polina Osmerkina, Ward 10 FSLCAC Representative

Palmerston Avenue Junior Public School
School Council 734 Palmerston Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M6G 2R4

French as a Second Language Advisory Committee (FSLAC)
Toronto District School Board fslactoronto@gmail.com

February 11, 2020

Dear Committee:

Re: Surprise Cuts to French Immersion at Palmerston Avenue Junior Public School

The School Council at Palmerston Avenue Junior Public School wishes to express concern over recent surprise and drastic cuts to the French Immersion Program at Palmerston, and the manner that these changes were determined and communicated.

On January 28, 2020, parents of approximately 14 students in junior kindergarten (JK) at Palmerston were notified that their children would not be placed in the senior kindergarten (SK) intake class for French Immersion at Palmerston. The parents were provided a deadline of 6 days to accept a position at an out-of-catchment school (Dewson Street Junior Public School), or lose their placement in the SK French Immersion entry stream.

This was surprising and disappointing for affected parents and this School Council because SK French Immersion classes at Palmerston are not at capacity, and historically, children already attending JK at Palmerston have been placed in SK French Immersion upon application. The existence of at least two SK intake classes is long-standing, and we understand that there have been two classes as long as records of enrollment numbers have been kept (approximately 2005). Maintaining two classes has ensured enough space for all applicants entering from Palmerston JK classes.

The affected Palmerston parents were given woefully inadequate time to understand their options and the impact on their families' lives and children's education. For some of these families, and for some of these young students, it is incredibly important to have the opportunity of a French Immersion education. This unexpected redirection has jeopardized that. Child care and day care arrangements are typically long-ago

established and it is difficult (if not impossible) to change these arrangements to accommodate the redirection. Some parents, for example, have subsidized daycare spots at Palmerston Community Daycare and cannot give up that spot. Other families have older siblings at Palmerston (English and French streams) and it is not feasible, especially on short notice, to accommodate multiple drop-offs and pick-ups, particularly when children on a bus from the redirected school will arrive mid-afternoon when parents are generally still at work. All to say, this surprise redirection has significant French education access implications for the affected students.

We understand that currently, for the 2019-2020 school year, there are approximately 22 children in each of Palmerston's two SK French Immersion classes. We understand that approximately 44 students applied for next year's SK intake class (2020-2021 school year), with approximately 3-5 expected to enroll in English.

This School Council has come to learn that the reason for the 14 students' rejection and redirection is a significant cut to the French Immersion program at Palmerston. The SK intake class has been cut from two classes to one. This cut is not due to low demand or space restrictions. On the contrary, there is significant and steady demand for French Immersion at Palmerston and empty classrooms.

TDSB has advised the reason behind the cut is two-fold: (1) an attempt to increase enrolment in the English stream at Palmerston - by reducing available French spots, the TDSB expects some declined French Immersion students will enroll in English at Palmerston; and (2) an attempt to achieve "efficiencies" by increasing the class size to a number above the recommended cap size of 29, to a maximum size of 32.

This School Council is highly concerned with the justification provided, and with the lack of notice and consultation with this school community. In our view, the justification is inadequate for a change of this magnitude, and parents at Palmerston are upset that the remaining SK French class will have more kids than recommended cap, for 5-year-olds who are being exposed to a new language for the first time.

We urge this Committee to take whatever action is available to it to request that TDSB Board of Trustees reverse the decision to halve Palmerston's SK intake class. We ask that the impact of such a cut on the affected community be more intensely examined and taken into account, and alternative solutions to increasing English enrollment explored. Palmerston School Council, along with many parents at Palmerston, are committed to help identify and implement solutions that will work for all involved.

Please ask TDSB's Board of Trustees to reverse the cuts to Palmerston's French Immersion Program.

We have copied FSLAC Ward 10 representative, Polina Osmerkina on this letter, as well as FSLAC Parent Co- Chair Mandy Moore. We request that Ms. Osmerkina and Ms. Moore ensure: (1) that this letter is read into the record at the upcoming FSLAC meeting on Tuesday, February 12, 2020; (2) that a copy be provided to all Trustees; and (3) that this letter be posted publicly alongside FSLAC meeting minutes.

Sincerely,

School Council - Palmerston Avenue Junior Public School Council

CC: Polina Osmerkina, Ward 10 FSLAC Representative
Mandy Moore, FLSAC Parent Co-Chair, Chris Moise, TDSB Trustee