

# French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee

# Meeting Date: Apr 18, 2023

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 and via virtual Zoom meeting, with Parent Co-Chair Lynne LeBlanc presiding.

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| **Item** | **Invitee Name** |
| **Attended**: | Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin (Trustee Co-Chair W11), Lynne LeBlanc (Parent Co-Chair W8), Charles Zhu (Parent Vice Co-Chair W11), Sharlene Henry (Parent Vice Co-Chair W5), Lisa McAvoy (Parent Vice Co-Chair W2 Alt) Mavis Ayippey (W4), Crystal Stewart (W6), Mandy Moore (W7), Elizabeth Carvalho (W7 Alt), Cheryl Batty (W8 Alt), Divya Chandra (W11 Alt), Randy Samuel (W14), Bahira Abdulsalam (W14 Alt), Christie Dunbar (W16), Gail Miller (W22) Also were present: Mary Cruden (Canadian Parents for French), Sharon Beason (CPF Alt), Audley Salmon (Staff Co-Lead), Roni Felsen (Staff Co-Lead), Angela Caccamo (Centrally Assigned Principal), Linda Edwards (Centrally Assigned Principal, Virtual French Programs), Kirsten Johnston (Program Co-ordinator) |
| **Guests:** | Booshan Pandya, Eric, Grace Go, Henry Cheng, Sarah Nik, Sharayana, Julie |
| **Regrets**: | Michelle Munroe (Central Co-ordinator PCE), Frances Shawera (W2), , Sarah Smith (W15) Nancy White (W16 Alt), , Rosemary Sutherland (CPF Alt) |
| **Recorder:** | James Jarrett |

| Item | Discussion |  Motion / Action |
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| 1. Call to Order | * Land acknowledgment – Lynne LeBlanc.
* Meeting recorded for minute taking purposes.
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| 2. Quorum / Membership Changes | * Quorum met
* Welcome to new parent member Mavis Ayippey (W4) – 3 children at Derrydown PS and new parent alternates Elizabeth Carvalho (W7)-child at Parkdale Jr&Sr PS and Bahira Abdulsalam (W14) -child at Valley Park MS
* Welcome to Associate Director Audley Salmon, new staff co-lead 30 years of TDSB experience. Former secondary principal. Key idea is how do we make things better. We can’t just do it with educators, we need parents’ voices.
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| 3. Approval of Agenda | * Randy Samuel moves, Sharlene Henry seconds, agenda approved.
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| 4. Approval of Jan. 2023 Minutes | * Randy Samuel moves, Charles Zhu seconds, minutes approved.
 | James Jarrett to post minutes on FSLCAC Webpage |
| 5. Declarations - Possible Conflict of Interest | * Randy Samuel works as an emergency supply replacement person in the TDSB.
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| 6. Ward & CPF Reports | * CPF Report – Virtual programs for students delivered by French teacher candidates with Ministry funding are starting and running through the summer
* Check On.cpf.ca for more information.
* Thanks to CPF for door prizes to kickstart back to hybrid meetings.
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| 7. Chair, Trustee Reports | * Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) and Budget report from the Chair of the TDSB Rachel Chernos-Lin.
* We are currently in the midst of the MYSP renewal with Trustees
* All boards are required to have a MYSP. The MYSP is a document that guides everything done in the boardroom. It is an accountability roadmap.Consultations are starting in the Spring and going on towards to the Fall.
* There has been outreach to CAC chairs, and parents may see materials coming home regarding the MYSP, as the Board seeks feedback. Parent voice is a significant part of the MYSP process.
* Ministry of Education announced changes to the Education Act. The Board is reviewing changes and for bearing, if any, on our MYSP.
* The budget is challenging this year for 3 major reasons: directed by Ministry of Education to use reserve funding of $70 million to pay for extra costs during pandemic, but province has not replenished reserves; specialized funding for pandemic recovery has come to an end, and that affects over 400 positions that are paid for using this funding; TDSB is not fully funded for $48 million in inflationary costs in benefits for CPP and EI
* The Grants for Student Needs (GSN) came out April 17th, and the Board is doing the preliminary investigation of those for Finance Budget and Enrolment Committee meeting on Monday, April 24, and then an update the following week.
* TDSB is in a tough fiscal position, staffing cuts expected, not necessarily through layoffs. Could be done with staff attrition.
* No expectation that cuts will specifically affect French programs. Continued Immersion student transportation is not a worry.
* Q– How much would the 480 staff cost the TDSB?
* Rachel Chernos-Lin –Board has to go through the GSNs to see how staffing will be affected and how it will be paid for.There will be a signification impact on operations.There is also slightly lower enrolment overall which impacts the GSNs.
* Q– Are there still virtual classes?
* Rachel Chernos-Lin – Yes we have a virtual secondary school and then we have elementary classes attached to elementary schools that are still virtual.
* Linda Edwards – Yes we are continuing with that model next year.
* Q– Is virtual learning here to stay?
* Rachel Chernos-Lin – We don’t know that for certain.We are only funded by pupil enrolment so that’s one of the Board’s challenges.Staffing is based on student projections and then in September there is a count of actual students in seats and staffing is adjusted accordingly.
* Q– Related to the funds that the TDSB has not got back from the government, how can we get this money back?
* Rachel Chernos-Lin – It would be great if we got what we asked for. The $70 million in COVID expenses, and the benefits we aren’t funded for, we’re still continuing our advocacy. We need advocacy from everyone.
* Q– With regards to the COVID funding that is going to be cut off. French teachers are hard to find. If they cut off that funding, how are they going to help those kids that are already behind. How are they going to catch up?
* Rachel Chernos-Lin – There is a shortage across the country for FSL teachers. There are combined classes because of class averages and collective agreements. The more staff we have the easier it is to help people catch up.
* Q– It’s going to be hard for the kids to learn at the beginning. How are they going to learn in grades 1-3? If they go back to English, it will be a heavy road.
* Rachel Chernos-Lin – We’re working on recruitment and retention of French teachers. There will be a lot of discussion about this issue during these meetings.
* Q– Kids leaving for middle school, they don’t have transportation as a 10-year-old. It’s difficult for people to see their kid traveling on their own at that age. We have issues with schools going from grades k-5 and then 6-8.
* Rachel Chernos-Lin – We have been working on equity of access for bussing. We do try to have as few transitions for kids as possible, but we don’t have the funding to bus all the way up to grade 8. . We can always talk off-line about this issue.
* Q– With the MYSP consultation how does it tie into the student census?
* Rachel Chernos-Lin – I’ll ask staff to comment.
* Associate Director, Audley Salmon – A significant part of student voice comes from our student census, and it informs the MYSP. We can refine our document using the student census information as it becomes available.
* Q– The money that the TDSB needs to give back to the government. Why do we don’t we get it back?
* Rachel Chernos-Lin – I never expected we would get it all back. I thought we might get a third of it back, as did the city of Toronto. It could have covered ta large portion of the unfunded benefits. Ultimately, I don’t know the answer as to why we didn’t get it back, would have to ask the Minister directly.
* Q – Regarding the sale of schools, shouldn’t the TDSB get money from the government for that?
* Rachel Chernos-Lin – We haven’t unpacked what the changes to the legislation (Education Act) specifies, so we don’t know yet. There are procedures for the sale of surplus sites. We were hoping that the province would lift the moratorium on the closure of schools as there are some we would like to consolidate. When we do declare a site surplus, there are all sorts of rules about how the sale works.
* Supt Roni Felsen – We can discuss it in detail at Rachel’s Coffee Mornings.
* Lynne LeBlanc – There is a discussion on the MYSP will be coming up at the May FSLCAC Meeting
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| 8. Early Reading in French  | Staff presented on early reading and literacy in French Immersion. * Q– is the TDSB collaborating with the Toronto Public Library on making decodable reading materials available in the community?
* Staff – When we talk about decodables right now, what’s on the market right now is for teaching purposes.
* Q– How do we deal with students who speak different languages at home?
* Staff – It’s important that you read at home in your home language because it helps with language acquisition, regardless of if the language is different than the one they are learning at school. Skills are transferable.
* Research has shown us that bilingual students do as well or even better than their monolingual peers in language acquisition.
* Q– We know that we have a shortage of French teachers. Can we use remote teachers as resources?
* Associate Director, Audley Salmon – We know there is a lack of French teachers. During the pandemic, we solicited teachers from Quebec and Alberta, as well as overseas. There were challenges particularly with overseas resources because of time-zone differences.With in-person learning, it becomes challenging because to use such resources it becomes an issue of supervision.
* Q - Do we know the rates of dyslexia amongst students in FI? Are supports provided to kids in English streams who struggle with dyslexia to learn to read in French -- via resource teachers/programs?
* - We don’t have disaggregated data for students in FI. We support students in FI directly in French based on specific needs.
* If we do see numbers in FI, we would celebrate because it means that we are screening FI students individually and serving their needs.
* Comment– We need to spread more awareness about dyslexia among parents. Knowing about it helps make peoples lives easier dealing with their own children.
* Q - How will this early reading information be shared with parents?
* Staff – We have been working in collaboration with the Early Years Department.Educators have been invited to professional leaning sessions all year.We have also attended Learning Network meetings to share this information with superintendents and principals.
* It is well underway system wide to share this information.
* Supt Roni Felsen – Superintendents meet monthly on these issues, and we also discuss this in our school visits.There is a team approach to this learning system wide.
* Q– What metrics will tell us this work has been successful?
* Supt Roni Felsen – It’s embedded as part of our School Improvement Plans. For our grade 1 readers they must be able to reach a level 16 with our DRA in English. In French we screen all readers using Alpha Jeunes.We do our testing at the end of the year to see if there is an improvement in scores for our grade 1 readers.The Ministry has pushed for measurement into grade two.
* Q– If the metrics in grade 1 aren’t where they should be, when does screening come into place?
* Staff - That hasn’t taken place yet. If a student is not moving a pace, we turn to the inventories to see if the reason one is not progressing is decoding for example, as one of the five pillars.If we get some future direction on universal screening, we will implement it.
* Staff – it’s about layered assessments and to look at reading with the whole child;Oral language and monitoring, it’s everything put together
* Q– The earlier screening the better. My own son wasn’t able to read until grade 5 in French.
* Associate Director, Audley Salmon – I’m saddened to hear what you’ve outlined, we have staff that are working on changing the mindset, as opposed to simply making judgments like you shouldn’t be in FI or Extended French.On a macro level, we’ll be bringing a report on literacy and numeracy to the Board around October to show data on how our students are doing so we can have points of improvement.
* Q– Islamophobia is something we’ve been talking about. How do we consider this with materials with Muslim identity.
* Staff – the work that we do in French is through an equity, human rights, and anti-oppression lens. Instructional development is supported by culturally responsive pedagogy. Our selection of resources is founded on these principles as well.
* Staff – We work with our 100 lead educators on this in our lead educator meetings.
* Comment– Regarding the messaging about not telling parents that their children are not right for FI, be encouraged that the message is sticking, if inconsistently, with teachers. The message is definitely getting through.
* Q-Regarding research and the budget for books. Is there research showing that ownership of FI materials at home matters? Not everyone has the ability to buy these materials.
* Staff – Having reading materials at home in their home languages is important so that reading can be a shared joy. The research doesn’t show that ownership of French resources as an advantage.
* Staff – Reading for pleasure is the goal.
* Q– Where I was before in Quebec, there was a partnership where books were given out by schools and that helped people read more. Can we try something like this here?
* Comment- school does a used book sale to give books a new home. Kids have fun shopping for themselves on a budget.
 | Links will be distributed with minutes.  |
| 9. French Review | * Staff –Middle French Immersion: 1223 applications and offers made for entry Sept 2023
* New Early FI sites opening in 2023: Gracedale, Kingsview Village and White Haven, historically/currently underserved areas.
* We have opened new 7 sites in last two years. No new sites for 2024-2025.
* Supt Roni Felsen – Bannockburn will be opening as an Early FI centre in Sept 2024
* Q– At the next meeting, can you tell us about the FI and EF in the LTPAS
* Staff – Noted.
 | **Standing Item** |
| 10. Discussion Application Alignment  | Update on the alignment of application start of EFI (currently November) and regular English kindergarten registration (currently February) to address concern that this may cause some confusion for parents and creates a barrier to participation * Staff – have met with Early Years department to share FI info, working on aligning messaging online and through various communications, and social media tactics. There have been multiple system communications to stakeholders and promotions for the FI applications period.
* FAQ in PowerSchool has been updated.
* Our long-term goal would be to align timing with PowerSchool’s enrolment.
* Exploring migration of PARS into the PowerSchool enrolment tool; currently in the investigation phase to explore the functionality of a form or platform being added and all the implicationsUntil we do that, we cannot move the timelines for the entire system
* Also need to be cognizant that our procedure indicates that any family who applies on-time is guaranteed a placement.
* Comment– Challenging to know when to apply at TDSB
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| 11. Concours / DELF | * Staff - extremely pleased Canadian Parents for French Concours d’Art Oratoire is back in person. Annual public speaking contest in French for secondary students. 36 students were successful and are moving on to Glendon for the provincial finals where prizes are post-secondary scholarships.
* Staff – DELF (Diplôme D’études En Langue Française) exams are back for the first time since 2019. 170 grade 12 students (Core, Extended and Immersion) are participating and if successful, they receive an internationally recognized certification of French proficiency
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| 12. Adjournment | * Lisa McAvoy moves, seconded by Randy Samuel
* 9:05 pm
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| Next Meeting | Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 7-9pm, Hybrid Meeting |  |