



**French-as-a-Second Language
Community Advisory Committee
FSLAC**

Annual Report 2021-2022

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CAC Mandate/ Purpose

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.”

NB: FSL (French as a Second Language) programs are: core, extended and immersion. Extended French programs are being phased out.

CAC Activities and Outreach

Meetings

The FSLAC held 7 formal and 2 informal meetings over Zoom in the 2021-22 school year, usually on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. During the winter of 2022, parents made considerable effort to attend and continue the work of the FSLAC despite the enormous challenges due to waves of Covid. The FSLAC executive met virtually throughout the year to coordinate and advance committee work and communications. A new member welcome and orientation Zoom meeting was held in December 2021. The FSLAC Parent co-chair appeared at the Program and School Services Committee on October 6, 2021, and May 11, 2022 and the Governance and Policy Committee on March 23, 2022 and meets with the Trustee co-chair and staff lead prior to each formal committee meeting.

Meeting notices, agendas, minutes and FSL resources are posted on the FSLAC page on the TDSB website (www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac). Members/alternates also receive electronic access to a Member Briefing Book via Google Drive which is updated annually. We receive administrative support to organize meetings, for minutes and reporting to the Board from the assigned committee assistant. Additional support would be welcome, particularly for FSLAC communication with school councils and parents/caregivers.

P023, P078 and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Review Participation

In February 2022, FSLAC members became aware of the CAC Review Report which went to the Governance and Policy Committee in January 2022. Members reviewed the GPC and subsequent Board meeting webcasts and participated in the Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO) pre-consultation meeting for CACs on updates to P023 Parent and Community Engagement on March 3, 2022. Ms. Munroe (PCEO) was invited to present and to hear our concerns at the March 10, 2022 FSLAC meeting.

It is unclear to the FSLAC how the separation and redrafting of P023 into a Parent Engagement Policy and a future Public Engagement Policy (P078) will recognize the FSLAC as a parent engagement and as an advisory committee at the Board level and if new procedural obligations set out in the CAC Review Report will support and improve parent engagement. As such, the FSLAC parent co-chair delegated and provided a written delegation to share these concerns with Trustees at the March 2022 GPC meeting.

Engaging Parents/Caregivers and Community Members: 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 and for referrals to the appropriate staff member on FSL specific concerns.

The FSLAC newsletter was produced and distributed in December 2021, March 2022, and June 2022. It is sent out to more than 150 schools with French immersion/extended programs, Trustees, and over 900 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. The sign-up button and past newsletters are available at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. We continue to seek email addresses for Parent/School Councils to add to our distribution to fulfill our mandate as a partnership between Trustees, staff and parents.

Engaging Parents/Caregivers and Community Members: Conferences, Workshops & Meetings

In our continued effort to reach out to more parents directly, FSLAC members presented virtually in PIAC's November parent conference 'Bridge the Gap'. The theme of the FSLAC workshop was "French...helping your child succeed". The power point slides that accompany that workshop are available at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac.

Due to Covid-19, our usual range of activities which includes meeting parents and supporting presentations by staff at FSL information nights and presenting at school/ward councils was quite limited. Our "Intro to the FSLAC" is available for school/ward council meetings. Power point slides are posted at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. Inquiries to have this presentation done may be directed to fslactoronto@gmail.com.

Current Opportunities and Challenges to Growth and Excellence in TDSB FSL Programs

Covid-19 and Student Participation in FSL

FSL parents, like all parents, have had many challenges and numerous pivots from March 2020 on. Staff work during the pandemic to provide resources and flexibility in FSL is greatly appreciated. However, it appears that many families have found continuing in FSL programs too challenging. Data that is available on retention of students in French immersion/extended and core French (grades 10-12) is pre-Covid-19. Enrolment, with the new JK entry point and the switch to middle French immersion from Grade 4 entry Extended French, is not reaching 2019 levels as reported by staff at FSLAC meetings. FSLAC has raised the need for better, effective communication and outreach to prospective and continuing families.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the DELF

Due to Covid-19, the DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) was not offered in 2020, 2021 or 2022. We hope to revisit the FSLAC formal recommendation to PSSC made in February 2019, that staff be asked to provide a briefing note on TDSB DELF Capacity Building and Cohort Results (from 2013 on). TDSB has teachers who are trained examiners, and the continued provision of this training is essential to increasing opportunities for students to participate.

The DELF is an internationally recognized exam that tests proficiency in French and awards a credential to French immersion/extended/core students based on the benchmarks of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The DELF motivates and validates student achievement and informs parents. The FSLAC supports providing the opportunity for all grade 12 French immersion/extended/core students to take DELF exams as is done at some other Ontario Boards. Limited funding and support is provided by the Ministry of Education. Parent and student information: <https://destinationdelf.ca/>

2018 French Review

The FSLAC continues to be very engaged in the 2018 French Review, the June 2019 decisions and implementation work. We have received staff updates and had detailed discussions on the French Review at every meeting this year. The open conversations and the expectation shared throughout the consultation phase of the process showed a strong TDSB commitment to working together to improve FSL programs for all students and as such, the FSLAC continues to provide feedback during meetings drawing on lived experience and the extensive French Review parent survey results.

Diversity and Inclusion Impact: 2018 French Review

We are hopeful that the addition of new early French immersion sites in underserved areas in September 2022 and the on-going professional development for FSL educators will help achieve the objective in P080 (FSL Programs) to have FSL classrooms that “are inclusive and reflective of a diverse community”. However, the absence of results reporting means it is impossible to know if these equity initiatives and the decisions from the French Review are having a positive impact on growth and excellence in FSL programs.

At the May 2021 Board meeting, Trustees adopted the recommendation of the FSLAC to “continue annual reporting on FSL programs including enrolment”. The last publicly reported demographic data on FSL programs was used in the French Review and it is now 6 years old. The last detailed FSL annual report, with more than basic enrolment data, was done in anticipation of the French Review, in June 2017. The previous detailed FSL annual report was in 2011, in response to a similar Board decision in November 2007.

FSLAC Recommendation to Ensure Inclusive Practices in all FSL Programs: 2018 French Review

At the April 2022 FSLAC meeting, Special Education Staff shared updates on actions being taken to include students with Special Education needs in FSL programs. However, in the absence of publicly available current data on students with IEPs in French immersion/extended programs, the impact of actions to date and if French immersion/extended/core programs are progressing towards being “inclusive and reflective of a diverse community” (P080 FSL Programs) is unclear.

In April 2019, the FSLAC made a formal recommendation to PSSC on improving inclusion of students with special Education needs in FSL which included making that section of PR597 more useful to parents. This was referred to Staff which committed to reviewing and revising that section of PR597 in the June 2019 French Review Staff Report. This work is still needed to support students and inclusive growth in FSL programs.

FSLAC Recommendations on Access to Childcare (Before and After School): 2018 French Review

In April 2021, the FSLAC made a formal recommendation to PSSC to improve access to childcare (before and after school) for French immersion/extended Students (JK-6) which Trustees referred back to FSLAC. The FSLAC followed up by having Early Years staff present at the September 2021 FSLAC meeting and by continuing the discussion at the February 2022 informal meeting.

FSLAC members continue to be concerned that French immersion/extended parents face additional barriers in accessing childcare that most parents in English do not. These barriers include the lack of coordination with bussing, lack of access to the neighborhood school

childcare and the lack of priority access granted to students coming from on-site toddler childcare as is provided for English programs in dual track schools. Better access to childcare (Before and After School) can help achieve FSL classrooms that “are inclusive and reflective of a diverse community” (P080 FSL Programs).

Transportation: Secondary French Immersion/Extended TTC support

The 2019/20 budget cut of TTC tickets to secondary French immersion/extended (FI/Ext) meeting distance criteria continues to be of concern. In June 2019, all Grade 8-11 FI/Ext parents were advised by the TDSB that secondary students in need would be able to continue receiving support through their FI/Ext school principal. The FSLAC is concerned that those students drop quietly out of FI/Ext rather than self-identify. On May 27, 2020, the Board forwarded the FSLAC recommendation that staff consider this equity issue in their on-going review of transportation. While Staff assured the FSLAC that principals may use school funds for this, it remains unclear if the availability of this support is communicated to all incoming Grade 8-11 FI/Ext families.

Committee Members

There are 23 parent/community volunteers on the FSLAC: 20 parent members/alternates from 12 wards, 1 non-voting community member and 2 alternates from Canadian Parents for French (Ontario). There is 1 Trustee member, selected at the annual TDSB organizational meeting in December. Staff members who support the work of the FSLAC are: Associate Director Linda Curtis (Sept 2021-April 2022), Associate Director Andrew Gold, Executive Superintendent Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, FSL central staff Angela Caccamo, Linda Edwards and Kirsten Johnston and administrative assistant Linda Stockdale.

Parent members/alternates are elected by parents/guardians in their ward in odd numbered years to serve a two-year term on the FSLAC. Trustees who were not able to hold elections at their ward meetings in 2021 are asked to do so at the next opportunity. To be eligible to be an FSLAC voting member/alternate, one must be a current TDSB parent/guardian who wishes to further the mission of the FSLAC and is available to attend about eight evening meetings per year. Trustees needing more information or assistance recruiting members to fill vacancies may contact the FSLAC at fslactoronto@gmail.com.

The membership list is as follows:

Executive and CPF Members	Ward Representatives
Trustee Co-chair Rachel Chernos Lin	Doug Kwan (W2)
Parent Co-chair Lynne LeBlanc (W8)	Lisa McAvoy (W2 Alt)
	Frances Shawera (W2 Alt)
	Katherine Fisher-Laxa (W3)
Parent Vice-co-chair Charles Zhu (W11)	Deloris Williamson-Braham (W5/13)
Parent Vice-co-chair Sharlene Henry (W5/6 Alt)	Sharlene Henry (W5/6 Alt)
Parent Vice-co-chair Lisa McAvoy (W2)	Crystal Stewart (W6)
	Mandy Moore (W7)
Mary Cruden (Canadian Parents for French)	Lynne Leblanc (W8)
Sharon Beason (CPF Alt)	Cheryl Batty (W8 Alt)
Rosemary Sutherland (CPF Alt)	Matt Forrest (W9)-resigned May 2022
	Hans Bathija (W10)
	Charles Zhu (W11/8)
	Divya Chandra (W11 Alt)
	Randy Samuel (W14)
	Sarah Smith (W15)
	Kathleen Meek (W15 Alt)
	Christie Dunbar (W16)
	Nancy White (W16 Alt)
	Gail Miller (W22)

Note: Where there is more than ward next to a parent/guardian's name, it indicates that they live in one ward, but their child(ren) attend school in another ward.

2022-2023 FSLAC Executive: Lynne LeBlanc was elected at the June 7, 2022 FSLAC meeting as parent co-chair. Lisa McAvoy, Sharlene Henry and Charles Zhu were elected as parent vice co-chairs.

Upcoming Meetings: 2022: Sept 13, Oct 11, Nov 8 **2023:** Jan 17, Feb 21, Mar 21, Apr 18, May 16, June 13