

Planning Department Memo

French Review Terms of Reference



To: Martha Rogers, Director of Education

From: Judith Nyman, Nyman Consulting and Design Limited
Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program
Jennifer Passy, Manager of Planning

Date: March 31, 2015

Report Type: DECISION

Recommendations

1. That memo PLN: 15-12 “French Review Terms of Reference” be received.
2. That the UGDSB French Review Terms of Reference be approved.
3. That the Board appoints six Trustees and one Student Trustee to the French Review Committee and that the Trustee representation is structured as follows: (3) Guelph, (1) Orangeville, (1) Centre/North Wellington, (1) East Wellington.
4. That staff be directed to assign suitable Principals and Teachers to the UGDSB French Review Committee.
5. That seven parent representatives who demonstrate diverse French Immersion experiences in FI Centres, dual-track schools and secondary, be appointed to the committee based on the following geographic distribution: (4) Guelph, (1) Orangeville, (1) Centre/North Wellington, (1) East Wellington.

Background

On January 13, 2015 the Board endorsed the formation of a committee to develop the terms of reference for French Immersion review.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

Background Cont'd

The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) believes in providing a range of quality programs and learning opportunities at both the elementary and secondary level to maximize student engagement, achievement and well being.

French Immersion (FI) is one such program, which has been successfully offered by the UGDSB over the past 40 years. The success of FI is reflected by:

- the significant annual growth of FI in the UGDSB exceeding the average growth rate for the province of Ontario at both the elementary and secondary level (Appendix A);
- the total UGDSB JK French Immersion cohort being three times the size of the graduating Grade 8 cohort;
- the fact that approximately 1 in 4 new FDK students are enrolling in FI in the UGDSB;
- the fact that UGDSB regular track elementary enrolment being in general decline, while the FI program has been growing steadily at an average rate of 7% per year;
- FI demand exceeding existing pupil places available using a combination of single and dual track school models.

The increasing enrolment in FI is not just an UGDSB phenomenon, but is reflective of a provincial and national trend. French language instruction in a bilingual country, such as Canada, is recognized as an important learning opportunity and includes many cognitive, academic and social advantages for students.

There is a growing body of research that verifies these benefits and is outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Education document, *A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools K-12, 2013*, (<http://www.edugains.ca/resources/FSL/PDF/Framework/frameworkFLS.pdf>). In Ontario, French Immersion is one of three French as a Second Language (FSL) programs offered, which also includes Core French and Extended French.

As with all school boards in the province of Ontario, the success and associated growth of the FI program relative to other modes of French language delivery has put pressure on a Board's ability to manage enrolment projections in a way that leads to predictable and sustainable school placements for students and their families. The impact of increased enrolment trends in FI is affecting both regular track and FI track students.

The increased FI growth rate in the UGDSB has led to:

- significant accommodation pressures;

- multiple boundary reviews resulting in the frequent movement between schools of whole grades and groups/cohorts of students;
- difficulty in hiring and retaining sufficient numbers of FI/FSL qualified teachers
- increased transportation costs and overall length of school bus rides;
- exacerbating UGDSB's geographical inequities to effectively manage equity of access and equity of opportunity for all UGDSB students and their families.

Rationale for an UGDSB French Review

As reflected in Memo PLN: 15-04 "French Immersion Management Strategy" contained in Appendix B, it has become incumbent on the UGDSB to review these unintended and previously unanticipated impacts. Every effort should be made to strategically balance the success and value of the FI program with the accommodation, transportation and funding pressures to appropriately mitigate any negative impact on UGDSB students and their families. Creating effective strategies to mitigate and manage these issues now will help to ensure sustainability and viability of all regular and FI track programs for UGDSB students and their families.

Goals of the UGDSB French Review

1. To articulate the UGDSB values and beliefs regarding French language instruction.
2. To create a sustainable, cost effective delivery model for French Immersion programs in the UGDSB.
3. To generate a range of strategic options and recommendations, by December 31, 2015, for consideration by the UGDSB to better manage the demand for FI within fiscal and accommodation realities.
4. To continue to improve the effectiveness of delivery models and instruction in FSL programs in the UGDSB as identified in the UGDSB's French plan.
5. To create a long term FI delivery plan, integrated within the Board's long term accommodation plan, taking into account geographical differences and accommodation needs across the UGDSB for all students and their families. In this way placement of program and location of programs can become more predictable and transparent for all stakeholders.
6. To ensure equity of access and opportunity to French Immersion and regular track programs that respects geographical differences and home school locations for all students.
7. To develop a comprehensive communication plan to ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed.

Scope

The scope of the FI Review includes both the elementary and secondary panels in the UGDSB. The following factors will be considered as part of the review:

- Program delivery models including core French;
- Student achievement;
- Entry point(s);
- Program locations;
- School organization;
- Registration procedures;
- Class size comparisons;
- Special education supports in French programs;
- Attracting, developing and retaining FSL/FI teachers;
- Transportation;
- Funding.

Membership of the UGDSB French Review Committee

When selecting members for the French Review Committee every effort will be made to ensure that the Board's geographical diversity is equitably represented. There will be a core committee structure, however, based on the topics being covered in each meeting, additional staff expertise will be included as required.

The following represents the French Review Committee membership:

- 6 Trustees and a Student Trustee –(7)*;
- Superintendent of Program- (1)-Co-Chair;
- Facilitator to guide the work of the committee- (1)-Co-Chair;
- Manager of Planning- (1);
- Superintendent of Finance- (1);
- Superintendents of Education-Elementary and Secondary- (2);
- Principal of Program- (1);
- Supervisor of the Application Support Specialist Team- (1);
- Communications Representative- (1);
- Principals-Elementary and Secondary-FI and regular track- (3);
- Teachers-FI and regular track- (3);
- Presidents of UGDSB local ETFO and OSSTF- (2);
- Parent Representatives- (7)**.

Note *Trustees- (3) Guelph, (1) Orangeville, (1) Centre/North Wellington, (1) East Wellington

**Parents- (4) Guelph, (1) Orangeville, (1) Centre/North Wellington, (1) East Wellington

Each parent will have experience with a different French delivery model including regular track, FI dual/single track, elementary and secondary panel.

Meeting Frequency

The frequency of the meetings will be at least one meeting per month and may increase as required to meet the deadline of December 31, 2015.

Resources

In an effort to streamline the process and not duplicate efforts, all prior UGDSB and other public school board reports and research reviews will be used, as appropriate, to inform the process. UGDSB staff and other provincial resources (e.g. Canadian Parents for French) and school board/Ministry staff will be accessed, as required, to ensure that any options and/or recommendations are evidence based and data informed.

Methodology

- Create a project plan timeline for the work of the French Review Committee with a completion date of December 31, 2015. A review of the progress of the committee will be on-going to monitor the committee's progress relative to the timeline. The project plan will be adjusted accordingly to meet the December 31, 2015 completion date.
- Review and analyze a variety of UGDSB existing data sources to inform the committee in regard to UGDSB enrolment trends, expenditures/funding, class sizes, staffing/hiring practices, availability of pupil places, retention/attrition and success rates.
- Review and analyze applicability of current research and literature reviews to help inform discussion and understanding of the scope of the task.
- Ensure committee members have a full understanding of FSL program delivery in UGDSB and other public school boards in order to create viable options/recommendations.
- Develop and conduct parent, teacher and student surveys and possibly focus groups to seek input and feedback from all stakeholders. The scope of the survey and/or focus group will be determined by the French Review Committee.
- Propose a variety of strategic options/recommendations for consideration and simulation studies.
- Conduct simulations and create multi-year projections based on any proposed strategic options/recommendations regarding the delivery of FI and/or other models of FSL instruction. Simulations/scenarios will be created and analyzed to fully delineate and understand the pros and cons and overall impact on students, their families, program, facilities, transportation, funding and the Board.

Decision Making Process

The UGDSB French Review Committee will be responsible for completing a report for the UGDSB by December 31, 2015. The report will contain proposed strategic options and/or recommendations for the Board to consider. The report will be reviewed first at a meeting of the Business Operations Committee and then either referred back to the UGDSB French Review Committee with explanation or referred on to the UGDSB meeting for final consideration.

Summary

The UGDSB French Review Committee will propose options/recommendations to the UGDSB by December 31, 2015 to strategically manage the demand for French Immersion within the fiscal and accommodation realities of the Board.

French Immersion Enrolment

School Year	Elementary				Secondary			
	Province		UGDSB		Province		UGDSB	
	FI Enrolment	FI Participation Rate as % of total enrolment in English schools	UGDSB FI Enrolment (nominal)	FI Participation Rate as % of total enrolment	FI Enrolment	FI Participation Rate as % of total enrolment in English schools	UGDSB FI Enrolment (nominal)	FI Participation Rate as % of total enrolment
2007-2008	113,374	8.69%	2322	10.29%	19,682	2.85%	--	--
2008-2009	117,314	9.11%	2436	10.91%	19,718	2.85%	--	--
2009-2010	125,008	9.80%	2598	11.85%	21,420	3.09%	--	--
2010-2011	132,722	10.45%	2828	12.92%	22,510	3.28%	--	--
2011-2012	141,113	11.10%	3050	13.97%	23,522	3.49%	591	4.86%
2012-2013	150,687	11.84%	3359	15.28%	24,208	3.67%	570	4.76%
2013-2014	--	--	3613	16.45%	--	--	576	4.90%
2014-2015	--	--	3916	17.66%	--	--	587	5.10%

Planning Department Memo

French Immersion Management Strategy



To: Martha Rogers, Director of Education
From: Jennifer Passy, Manager of Planning
Janice Wright, Superintendent of Finance
Date: January 13, 2015
Report Type: DECISION

Background

While overall enrolment in the elementary panel has generally been in decline, the elementary French Immersion (FI) program has been growing steadily, at an average rate of 7%, or approximately 200 students per year. As of October 31, 2014, there were over 3,900 FI students in the Board, accounting for 18% of total elementary enrolment. In Guelph, 1 in 3 new JK students is now being enrolled in the FI program. The total 2014 JK FI cohort was almost three times the size of the graduating Grade 8 cohort.

Issue

Growth in the popularity of the FI program is placing increasing pressure on the ability of the Board's elementary schools to accommodate FI students. A review of the program, how and where it is delivered and how growth may be managed, is needed to inform further long term accommodation planning.

Recommendations

1. That memo PLN: 15-04 "French Immersion Management Strategy" be received.
2. That the Board appoints four Trustees; two from Guelph, one from Wellington County and one from Dufferin County, to a committee that will develop a French Immersion management strategy to be completed no later than December 2015.

Rationale

Projections indicate continued FI enrolment pressure throughout the jurisdiction. If a strategy is not developed, additional FI boundary reviews will be necessary in Guelph

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

within the next five years which will disrupt and upset more families. This trend is not only being experienced in Guelph; there are immediate pressures elsewhere some of which were highlighted during the Full Day Kindergarten boundary reviews.

Given the pressures that the Board has been experiencing and which are forecasted to continue, it is prudent to undertake a review of the French Immersion program in the Upper Grand District School Board. A similar study undertaken by the Peel District School Board identified factors influencing a quality program: growth of enrolment in FI, growth of board enrolment, school organization, and availability of quality teachers. These factors were also given as reasons for undertaking a review in that jurisdiction. These are factors which are applicable in the Upper Grand as well.

Undertaking an FI management strategy would ideally inform future decisions of the Board with respect to the framework of the FI program, location of FI programs and accommodation needs, sustainability of FI programs, and would address challenges with staffing the program. It is expected that such a strategy would also investigate and evaluate options for managing enrolment growth in an effort to inform the long range planning of the Board and determine how best to support student achievement in FI.