

BRIEFING NOTE

DATE: 28 February 2007

TO: Trustees

FROM: Melanie Parrack, Executive Superintendent, Student Success
Nadine Segal, System Superintendent, School Services – Special Programs

Issue:

Access of students to Grade 4 entry French Immersion/Extended French programs, where new classes must be offered at the host school or in an additional site.

Context:

On 31 January 2007 the Board made decisions to expand opportunities for students to access Grade 4 entry French Immersion/Extended French programs for September 2007.

The Board decided that:

- Where applications exceed available spaces in current classes, every effort will be made to create new classes in the host school (the school where the current program exists).
- Where new classes cannot be created in the host school, new classes will be created in another school.

The Board decision is silent concerning which students will be accommodated in the host school or in an additional site.

As a result, when the additional class is created, the Principal and Superintendent of Education, in consultation with the Trustee and the community, will develop a local process to determine which students are assigned to classes in the host school or the additional school.

Some Trustees, Principals and parents have raised concerns that the Board's decision will create *inconsistencies* in processes being used across the system to select students from catchment areas and place them in programs.

Options:

There are three options to address this issue:

Option 1: Implement the current direction of the Board

- This approach would likely result in different processes being used in different parts of the City for assigning students to schools for French Immersion/Extended French programs.
- This approach would increase local control.
- This approach could lead to criticisms from parents who would prefer a process being followed in a different part of the City.

Option 2: Issue a guideline that could be used at the local level by Principals and Superintendents of Education in consultation with their Trustees and communities

- This approach would provide advice only.
- Principals and Superintendents, in consultation with Trustees and communities, could modify local processes to fit local preferences.

Option 3: Issue a Protocol that prescribes a system-wide process

- This approach would require Principals and Superintendents to follow a consistent approach to determine assignment of students to schools.

Possible guideline or protocol:

If staff were asked to develop a guideline or a protocol, staff would recommend the following approach to determining which students to assign to a host school or an additional school.

- Make every effort to establish classes in the host school (based on criteria approved by the Board on January 31, 2007).

Where a class or classes must be placed in an additional school:

- Place siblings in the same school.
- Place students based on geographic proximity of their English school to the French Immersion/Extended school.
- Place students based on a lottery, when/if the number of applicants from one school exceeds the number of available spaces in the French Immersion/Extended school.

Next steps:

If the Board so directs, staff will develop a guideline or protocol based on the approach described above.