

Appendix B

Comments from Consultations:

Review of

French Immersion and Extended French Programs

November, 2005 – February, 2006

DRAFT

Many participants expressed their appreciation to the board for ensuring voices are heard.

Each response has been reviewed. Comments, which are similar, and addressing the same issue are not all included in this appendix, due simply, to the large number of responses received. Any of the comments included in this appendix may have been the opinion or experience of one person.

Names of individuals and of schools (in most cases) have not been included in this appendix. The comments have been grouped into themes.

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Hundreds of parents, students, teachers, principals, superintendents and trustees participated in the review. Hopefully, all issues raised appear in this appendix. They are presented in the words of the participants.

Thank you to all who so willingly participated in the review.

The largest and arguably the most powerful School Board in the country should at last and finally embrace the notion of a bilingual Canada. Let us look at the French Program with enthusiasm. Let us view the whole process of second language acquisition as a precious gift and not a chore; something to be “got through” because it’s a required part of the curriculum. If we cannot meet the demand for French-speaking teachers, let us become proactive in our approach to French-speaking members of our community by inviting them into our schools to help us in this wonderful adventure. Let us move outward into the French cultural community by making it possible for our children to benefit from the many gifts that are offered to them within that community. Let us move into the future with the sure knowledge that once a second language is acquired, an entire culture becomes that much more accessible. Let us understand that language acquisition is more intuitive and emotional and less academic than we have been wont to insist.

Overall, I have been quite pleased with the French immersion program. The cultural variety and quality of French instruction has been impressive in the programs I know about. My children have benefited from having teachers representing the full spectrum of the Francophone, with teachers from Vietnam, Morocco, Paris, Haiti, and also teachers who themselves were in French Immersion in Toronto and who studied in Quebec, Africa and Europe. In my view, this has brought a wonderful global perspective to their education. The French library resources are also strong and there have been extracurricular activities which have enriched the program.

Manage French Immersion / Extended French ... — create a long term vision, give authority to manage policies in harmony with other Board policies... Apply the vision to begin promoting what we already have in French Immersion and Extended French, and to begin to address the gap between where the programs are at, and where the programs need to be.

French Immersion is two generations of children beyond being an experiment — it is time for the organization structure around the program to be formalized.

Support for Students

- 2Kids who are struggling with *learning* difficulties should be helped within FSL programs – kids struggling with *language* difficulties should not be in the programs
- A good process has been established for supporting students with special needs within FSL programs
- Support help should be available for students with slight learning problems
- Accommodation for bright and gifted learners within the French immersion program is one of the top programming issues discussed ... Initial queries come up when children are 4 and parents are looking for options for kindergarten. Many bright and gifted children are already reading and have mastered basic arithmetic before entering kindergarten so parents are eager to find programs that will further challenge them. Unfortunately, there are no options within the TDSB for bright and gifted children whose academic achievement surpasses curriculum expectations at an early age, with the exception of the primary gifted program.
- Because of the limited options available, parents of bright and gifted children often choose the early French immersion stream for the additional challenge of learning a second language.
- Create a pilot gifted/French immersion congregated class
- The CSDCSO (Toronto French board) does not offer intensive support placement for its students because of the large distances between its schools. Consider offering monthly gifted pullouts jointly with students from the CSDCSO. This would benefit both the gifted students in the CSDCSO who otherwise have no opportunities for congregation as well as the gifted French Immersion students in the TDSB who would learn from the interaction with their more fluent peers in the French board.
- Once the novelty of the second language wears off, it quickly becomes apparent that the French immersion program is not sufficiently challenging for many bright and gifted children. Not only is the math curriculum the same as in the regular stream, science and social studies are covered in less breadth and depth because of the children's reduced proficiency in French.
- Unlike the Ottawa school board that offers a French immersion gifted program, the TDSB does not offer combined French and gifted classes.

Support for Students (Continued from previous page)

- Enrichment options are even more limited in the French immersion classroom than in the regular classroom as parents are repeatedly assured that the French immersion program is itself an enriched program and that no further differentiation is necessary for bright and gifted children. ABC maintains that French immersion is not a gifted program; instruction in a second language is one form of enrichment but does not, on its own, constitute a complete individual education plan (IEP) that addresses all of the strengths and needs of a given gifted child.
- Parents may not be aware when their children are entering senior kindergarten that they will go on to be identified as exceptional pupils, whether because of a learning disability, giftedness, or other exceptionality.

- The issue of special education services within the French immersion and alternative programs was discussed by the TDSB at meetings in the spring of 2005. This is a human rights issue: exceptional pupils should not be excluded from optional programs or forced to leave in order to access special education services if they can be equally successful in the optional program with appropriate accommodations.
- Parents of gifted children are therefore forced to choose between a gifted intensive support placement (ISP) and French immersion for grade 4. Although some parents are assured that their child can continue in French immersion in grade 4 and that an IEP will be put in place, those parents who have failed to obtain appropriate individualization in the earlier grades are generally wary of such promises and therefore, choose to place their child in a gifted ISP. They are then dismayed to learn that only core French is offered for students in the gifted ISP with no enrichment for former EFI students! After four years of French immersion, their children can no longer continue to progress in French.
- With streaming currently out of favour before grade 9, French immersion is now the only available enriched stream for bright children. Consequently, many children are attending French immersion classes not because they or their parents are particularly committed to learning French but rather because French immersion is perceived to be the stream for the 'smart kids'.

Support for Students (Continued from previous page)

- The high popularity of French immersion by parents looking for an enriched stream means that the pool of qualified teachers is limited
- The lack of support for French language instruction at home, such as by renting French videos or listening to French music, means that the pace of language acquisition in the class is depressed compared to the pace we might expect from a group of students whose parents have chosen French immersion specifically because of their high commitment to learning French.
- Substitute teachers commonly do not speak French and even full time teachers are not always perfectly fluent.
- Increasing options for bright and gifted children may help reduce the stress that the high demand for early French Immersion has placed on the program. Cross sectional research suggests that students who remain in early French Immersion up to grade 6 outperform their peers in the regular stream in English skills. Parents, and many researchers, have erroneously interpreted these results to suggest that second language instruction improves skills in a student's first language. They fail to recognize that the children included in the research represent a very select group of students.
- On average, students in early French Immersion have fewer learning problems than students in the regular stream. Furthermore, only the most successful early French Immersion students, those who did not withdraw from the French stream, are included in results for grade 6. Their high achievement levels in grade 6 may be explained entirely by their higher ability at baseline and not by any benefit of the program. This particular bias increases with the increased proportion of French instruction in the program, leading to the impression that more intensive French programs lead to greater benefits on English

language ability. The studies also fail to answer the question of whether or not these students might have achieved even higher results had they only ever studied in English.

- If the students with the lowest levels of achievement were those most likely to leave the program, then we would expect to see increases in the overall standardized achievement of the cohort over time due to attrition alone as the low achievers no longer contribute to the class average.

Support for Students (Continued from previous page)

- Students who have difficulties do not usually have French-speaking parents at home to help them.
- The French Senior Kindergarten teacher spoke about qualities your child will need to succeed in the program etc, but she emphasized that you will have to teach your child reading and writing in English at home.
- Given the relatively high rate of students who switch from the French to the English stream, research into the factors that predict attrition from a French program will help select those students most likely to remain within the French stream.
- Providing parents who are considering a French program for their child with rates and reasons for withdrawal from the program in addition to helping them interpret research results on achievement in early French Immersion may lead to appropriate self selection and eliminate the need for a lottery system for admission.
- Be clear about the services that will be provided for students with special needs who are enrolled in a French as a Second Language program. If the board is going to provide support for special needs (e.g. gifted, Attention Deficit Disorder, reading recovery) then it MUST be FULLY prepared to do so. If it is not able to address special needs within the French as a Second Language program, then the Board should make it clear that support is not available. Currently the board promises to address all needs of individual students, but at the school level, this does not happen. Schools are not equipped with the staff or the resources to support this policy.
- Allow students attending schools with both French immersion or Extended French and gifted streams to take classes within both streams. By coordinating schedules, students switching from French immersion to gifted in grade 4 could continue to attend French Immersion for French instruction and additional subjects such as social studies. Palmerston offers French immersion and primary gifted, as well as two gifted classes in grades 4-6, but no student currently attends classes in both ...streams. King Edward and Bowmore both offer Extended French and gifted classes in grades 7 and 8, and King Edward also has a French immersion stream. Leaside High School is the only high school currently offering both French immersion and gifted classes. There are no high schools offering both gifted and Extended French classes.

Support for Students (Continued from previous page)

- There are more children staying in the program despite academic difficulties.
- Increase the number of schools that offer both Extended French or French immersion and gifted streams.

- Counseling out of students needs review – any difference in learning is streamed out – actually, the program is ruthless
- Make a range of program options available for gifted students in French Immersion such as acceleration, cluster grouping, one-day/week pullouts with students from other French immersion schools, and/or cross-grade pullouts within the school.
- Conclusions drawn from longitudinal studies such as the St. Lambert experiment have also been flawed, since improvements in yearly achievement tests did not adjust for attrition.
- Provide authentic opportunities to practice French in francophone environments: e.g., exchanges with students from France, Quebec, in elementary and middle school.
- Create after school homework francophone homework clubs for students to get assistance where parents do not possess academic language proficiency in French
- More support is essential if immersion is to be successful - I have witnessed more and more average students drop out of French immersion because they are unable to cope with the program and sometimes do not have the support of a French-speaking parent at home. This is a shame.
- My particular concern is with gifted kids in French Immersion. . Both children need enrichment but I do not want to remove them from FI. I realize that you face serious staffing problems and getting teachers with FI and gifted qualifications would be a real challenge. However, can the Board not offer gifted programming in English within a school also offering FI and allow gifted FI kids to access both streams. ...I am not sure what the solution is, but I know that the current position of the Board (if you are gifted go to gifted) is not fair to those of us who want our gifted children to acquire a second language.

**Support for Students
(Continued from previous page)**

- Offer better support for special needs students within French as a Second Language.
- Provide a range of enrichment options for bright children in lieu of early French Immersion.
- Parents shouldn't have to choose Immersion or Gifted
- The issue of boys and French programs needs to be addressed
- The tendency to relegate kids who learn differently to the English program seems unjust and creates an imbalance in the school population. It implies that to participate in the French programs, a student must first be academically strong and developmentally mature. Why not offer additional help in the French program? Our son is very strong in language; his issues are organization and attention – I believe his needs can be met within a French program.
- TDSB doesn't save any money denying French students Special Education help – they are switched to the English program and use Special Education resources there.
- There doesn't seem to be support for French immersion kids that are struggling in Math. My 13 year old has been struggling for several years. I have tried outside tutoring

however it's not to the curriculum and is in English. He was offered a remedial after class but this was so basic and below his level. It was aimed at kids that don't speak English. When we tried to apply for specialized support we were told that because is was in French Immersion, he didn't qualify. My son loves the French and wants to continue in high school however I'm concerned that he won't get the support he needs if he stays in the program. Would an alternative be to teach Math in English?

- My concern is that learning activities seem more suited for girls than boys. Boys are often highly kinesthetic learners, so doing endless dictes may not be the best way to build their vocabulary. Rather than having my children "weeded out" because they're deemed unsuitable for the program, I'd like to see the program encompass different learning styles and perhaps eliminate the high drop out rate, which from my experience ... accelerated as children reached higher grades.

Support for Parents

- There should be more resources for parents and resources should be online
- The school treats us like they have given us some privilege
- Parents need help understanding things such as if child is poor speller in French, will child also be poor speller in English?
- The board need to use this review process to mend credibility with parents and respect the opinions of parents
- Clarification needed for parents of immersion students regarding who is teaching English - there should be a resource guide for parents if they are expected to help at home
- Anxiety expressed that this review be taken seriously – what about the previous expression of concerns?
- On what data should parents base their decision to register their child for Grade 4 programs?
- Parents are confused with terminology – what is Extended? What is Immersion? Programs need to be clarified
- There should be more communication with parents – parents need to know more about language learning
- Parents without French are unable to assist their children
- There is a need to address issues regarding parent understanding of the roles and expectations of parents – parents are confused about what they are supposed to do
- Do parents need to be bilingual?
- Board needs to provide program to help parents
- Parents of kids in French as a Second Language programs get treated like “You played your card, now you can’t play another.”
- More help for parents re helping at home and learning a second, or third, language

Support for Parents (Continued from previous page)

- We the parents need the necessary resources from the school/teacher to help our children at home.
- All homework is in French and since we the parents are not bilingual we are finding it extremely difficult to help her with the homework
- I would have loved to participate in your feedback forum for French Immersion, however our school did not send out the form!! This is in itself more reinforcement that the school is very protective of its programs and this in itself is very frustrating for parents whose children attend this school.

- More research and information about the program should be available to parents
- I believe that the success of the French immersion program is dependent upon the support, involvement and supplementation by parents. I personally cannot imagine how my children could succeed in the program without my help and level of bilingualism. It is critical that parents are presented with realistic information at the application stage. For example, when I originally applied I asked the principal directly how much extra parental involvement was required for students in French immersion and she stated that everything students need to know is taught in class and that they should complete homework independently without any parental involvement. As a parent with 3 children at a variety of academic levels I can acknowledge first hand that this is not the case. Even my straight A son requires my assistance.
- Feedback to parents on French programs and resources should be available to us on a continuous basis. It's almost like we're left in the dark about this program until there is a big issue.
- Neither the teacher nor the Principal, despite numerous appeals, has addressed my concerns and those of many other parents of children in the Grade 7 Extended French Program in a constructive fashion. Parents are now at a loss as to how to proceed since a unified parent group is hard to achieve given the tight schedules we all face.
- Why doesn't the board offer a French course for parents?

Support for Parents (Continued from previous page)

- There should be better orientation for parents whose children are entering the program
- When I asked my principal why there weren't more supplies in the Immersion classrooms, he told me to put my child in the French language school if I want French materials
- Not enough parents know about "Canadian Parents for French" to find out about resources and help their child with homework.
- At the parent introductory meeting, my husband was told that we did not need to speak French in order to support our child. While I have some University French, I am finding it difficult already to help with homework and it is not possible to meet the demands of the work that is coming home. We are expected to read with him in French and to assist in his French homework. Often times, he is not clear as to what he needs to be doing.

Program Support

- Curriculum departments within the board must develop exemplars and other materials in both languages – it is not a matter of the FSL department translating (even if they could translate everything) – student work, for example
- In order to maximize the learning experience, especially for students living in a unilingual household, the French-speaking members of the community should be invited, welcomed and encouraged to become involved in the classroom as guest speakers and resource persons.

- French plays, movies and cultural events should be part of the planned school outings for students.
- Why don't we look into something like the \$1100 scholarships available for FSL students in Alberta?
- Support of this program from all levels of the board is not very strong (my impression).

Program Support
(Continued from previous page)

- It doesn't make sense for teachers to be spending most of their time translating materials that are only available in English. Teachers should not be translators.
- I have recently heard intimations that the Extended French Program may be discontinued by the TDSB, hence this review. I hope this is not the case. Rather, French (or any other language) should be taught even earlier.
- The program requires more promotion in the communities it is offered. This should be done independent of the teachers. Their time is required for teaching. The attendance in the program fluctuates. If I am not mistaken when my first daughter entered the program there were three or four half-day classes of Senior Kindergarten compared to my third daughter where I think there was only one large half-day class.
- Secondary students (from Immersion and Extended programs) should be able to do their community hours in elementary programs
- There needs to be much more professional development for French teachers – their English counterparts get far more pd
- PD is offered to teachers in a wide variety of ways
- TDSB supports in-service parallel to the Ministry literacy initiatives
- Teachers, of necessity, are developing a lot of their own material and the board should find a way for teachers to share all the material they have developed with other teachers. Could there be a website for teachers to post their materials?
- Programming needs to follow the children through their entire public education so that kids in high school have enough choice and quality programming to attract them to stay in the system to complete their degree and have the credits they need to get into University.
- Most of the materials in use are from Quebec and were developed for use with students whose first language is French – we need to address this issue.

Program Support
(Continued from previous page)

- The juggling process between extended and immersion may seem democratic but it's not appropriate – the board should determine which program has the better results and go with that

- More courses required at secondary level – students not taking French simply because there is such limited selection
- The mixing of students from early, mid, and late immersion along with students from extended French programs is a nightmare at Grade 9
- There should be a re-zoning of areas for the schools offering Extended French programs so that all schools in the board will feed into at least one Extended French school. In this way, all those students desiring the program will have the same opportunity to apply
- Why not rent space in one of the French School Board's schools?
- Planning Department must provide a new street guide to figure out which school to go to

Program Success

- All three of my children have benefited from this program and I would hope that it would continue. They are able/will be able to use the two languages out in the working world. It has given them the ability to learn other languages...
- The program has been successful because the teachers have put the effort into the program.
- I hope there is success of the French Extended program because I truly believe in the idea of this and that kids should be allowed any entry point in elementary school in picking up French as second or third language.
- I believe that French, a second language, is a wonderful opportunity for the children, but am also of the belief that the earlier the exposure the better and probably the greater the success will be in a child's comprehension and verbal abilities. Thank you for the opportunity, ... I hope I have been able to help you in your review.

Program Success (Continued from previous page)

- Overall we have been very happy with all matters related to the program and it is working very well for our children.
- I attended the meeting earlier tonight at John Fisher... it was interesting to hear the many comments. While I did have concerns going into French Immersion, I have been quite impressed with how much my son is learning & the wonderful school programs ...
- What is working: - Public speaking opportunities, Echo de la Ville (TDSB publication of student writings in French and English), Student exchanges, Travel opportunities (Quebec trips, France trips), Evening French classes for parents
- The program was very well run and my son was successful in completing French Immersion in 2005 when he graduated from grade 6.
- Lots going well – most student leaders are French students
- It is a wonderful way of learning a new language ... Once a second language has been acquired, there is an increased interest in learning other languages

- Having learned another language, children tend to be more open minded about other cultures
- I am a parent ...I have a son in Grade 4 French Immersion and another in Grade 1 French Immersion. What a wonderful experience for them! My daughter will be in JK next year, and she will also be in French Immersion eventually.
- It's a shame that such a wonderful program can't be open to everyone.
- I am a Francophone and had very high hopes for this program. We have been delighted in every way with the work of the immersion teachers, who handle this linguistic challenge and large class sizes, and do an excellent job... to date we have had all fluent francophone teachers ... we celebrate the recent changes in the application process. Our wish list? Smaller class sizes, more francophone experiences outside the classroom and a chance for everyone who wants to be in the program to have this same opportunity.

Program Success
(Continued from previous page)

- I just want to let you know that I have been very impressed with the Extended French program I enrolled my daughter in ... not only have you chosen a great school for this new program but the teacher is exceptional – a dedicated teacher and very talented at inspiring the students in both French and English. I am so glad ...I was selected through the lottery process. My daughter has adapted very quickly and happily into the new school and program. I was very impressed when the teacher called my daughter in August to introduce herself and to answer any questions.
- I'm the mother of three children all in French immersion ... As a graduate of the very first French Immersion class in Toronto; ... I fully support this wonderful program.
- Our daughter, 6 years old, attends French Immersion program in her 2nd year. She is doing excellent. She understands a lot and speaks French very beautifully. Our son is 9 and this is his first year in French Immersion program. Both programs are wonderful and we only regret that our son didn't start in Senior Kindergarten. Keep up the amazing job that you're doing. Thank you.
- In the French immersion centres there is an ability to create a totally French environment that optimizes student learning of the target language. We have a very high retention rate ...have a highly dedicated and innovative staff, very committed and supportive parents. We are able to maximize the opportunity to accumulate resources in libraries and classrooms ... consider the creation of additional French Immersion Centres to provide equity of access to the program throughout the board. Assign at least .5 vice principal for each centre to provide administrative support for registration, transportation, staff development, and guidance to parents, and Special Education issues.
- Overall, I believe that I have made the right decision by putting all my children in French Immersion. My youngest child is really intent on learning French because he knows if he speaks French to his brothers, Mom won't know what he'll be talking about.
- Handbook for optional French programs is very helpful

General Comments

- On the whole, French Immersion is working... I note that I have three children in French Immersion, currently in grades 2, 5, and 9. Each of them is absolutely **thriving** in the current system, despite the shortcomings they have encountered. Indeed, most of their friends also are thriving within the system — and my personal observation is that their classmates who have departed from French Immersion, largely have done so with good reason. My children have been mentored by excellent, dedicated teachers. Each of the children has received constructive developmental comments that have assisted with their progress. They have each been stretched in personally valuable ways to achieve beyond what they themselves thought possible. They have responded with a passion for learning and a willingness to apply themselves. As the primary outcome of education (French Immersion, Extended French or otherwise) is entirely about the student, it is important to bear in mind the strengths of the current system.
- The fragmentation of our neighbourhoods is a collateral outcome of catering to choice in education. I believe choice in education is a good thing; and I understand that some fragmentation is a necessary result. The problem is that systemic program choices and random choices by parents have increased the fragmentation severalfold. Fragmentation of neighbourhoods is a direct causal factor of undesirable social ills, like the rise of gangs and gang violence in our communities.
 - Admit this is a problem, and one that needs careful consideration.
 - Seek creative solutions to maintain French Immersion and Extended French programs, and that restore communities instead of destroying them.
- Concerned about review leading to close of some programs
- Immersion programs stream by race and ethnic origin. ESL children are in regular classes.. children with learning disabilities are in regular programs.. children with attention and behaviour issues are in regular classes.. what is less obvious is the socio-economic streaming that is evident ... I hope that the TDSB will have the courage to examine these issues in more depth and to encourage research that will lead to an improved learning environment for all children.

General Comments (Continued from previous page)

- Concern that if board considers report on review in March, impact for coming school year may be minimal
- We need a more consistent platform for the French programs. There is an absence of policy development for French Immersion and Extended French programs. Good policies would provide a better framework for the system and for the people working within it.
- The board's equity policy does not apply in FSL programs
- In the first class that blended early and mid Immersion students, all the honour students were from the mid-immersion program
- TDSB advertises that they meet individual needs, but in FSL they sure don't

- The board has put enough obstacles in parents' way that most give up
- French Immersion programs discriminate against all the families who have English as a second language – everyone new to the country wants their kids to learn English and the school offers no encouragement that, later, they learn French
- Why is IB not available for Immersion student?
- Decisions are too facilities driven
- There are more road blocks to getting your child into the program of choice than face an Olympic hurdler
- I am so glad that the board is interested in French Immersion challenges!
- Current survey for Grade 3 parents is very slanted to Extended (away from Immersion)
- Administrators actively try to push kids out of immersion
- There is too much 'controlling'
- The literacy level, in French, is not good
- Can the board consider a French pre-school?

General Comments
(Continued from previous page)

- The issues of African people, particularly from the Congo who are coming to Toronto, speaking French and are finding it very difficult to be part of the French school board - not accepted. And yet they don't really have a place in the TDSB. This group is feeling very disenfranchised and would be dearly like to find support and a place
- My child in graded 1 immersion has at least one hour homework every day
- Programs should be more inclusive
- The lottery is an absolute abdication of responsibility
- Board treating us like our children are in an enriched program – that should not be how it is seen
- Kids are successful not because of ability but because of the feeder school
- Enlist the support of school councils and administration to assist
- Consult with other boards and share ideas about policy and program successes and innovations.
- Kids who drop out of French are those who are struggling in English. I thank that FSK teacher (who by the way my son has now) who emphasized this at that first meeting as I feel that is one of the main reasons our children are doing well in FI. Others have not been so lucky.

- If the board is serious about this program, then everyone has to support it and not talk down about it. ... either we all support it or we don't.
- My own attempts to secure a satisfying and productive learning environment for my daughter have been met with a brick wall. I would be more than grateful for any suggestions on how this depressing situation can be altered.
- What can be done to integrate or maintain the French Immersion kids in the social fabric of the English stream kids? Or alternatively reduce the "us vs. them" mentality that can develop.

General Comments
(Continued from previous page)

- The French immersion schools need to talk to each other. Who is responsible for that kind of communication? Is it FIBA? We need to extend our community for support, ideas and resources.
- Faculties (of Education) not requiring French competencies for certification
- The system as it now stands is flawed and the ultimate price paid by children who struggle and feel low self-esteem. I sincerely hop you rethink this program and the ability of the TDSB to offer it.
- Somehow we have to make it known to the powers that be just how important French immersion is... It is still very much in the back seat... even now after almost thirty years after its introduction

Program Organization

- Concern re large number of split grades in FSL programs
- French-only schools ideal setting for immersion programs
- Consider having JK in Immersion Centres
- Concern about discontinuation of mid-immersion program at Swansea – parents unsure why this happened – data should be gathered and examined re differences at Grade 7 between students who started immersion program at grade 4 and students who started extended program at grade 4
- Lack of English language skill development through primary grades for immersion students

Program Organization
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- Could we have some English in French Immersion? Perhaps 10% for first year?
- Math and science should be taught at secondary in French
- Board must find a place for FSL in all initiatives – curriculum, special education, Ministry initiatives, Special Education, programs for beginning teachers, ...
- Secondary schools are too far away from the elementary schools with FSL programs – if the board does not want to open more secondary programs, they should provide busing for those students that are very far from the secondary school they must attend to get their French courses.
- French programs need consideration in all literacy initiatives
- Because rationalization has not taken place in all areas, all programs are not available in some areas
- Turn mid-immersion programs into mid-extended for pedagogical reasons. Mid immersion is very teacher directed. Even a simple discussion in French is very difficult. Students go from reading novels to reading picture books.
- Parts of the rationalization process have been successful (standard entry for Core French, standard entry of early immersion, across system mobility, standard teaching of English in FSL programs, common issues of programming)
- It appears that the board favours Extended and don't want to open more Immersion programs
- Could there not be a better building of this process, and I realize there is a time constraint to the course load, possibly this is a reason for having core French start at an early grade, say grade 3 or SK. The teachers I have spoken to with this regard also agree with the earlier introduction French. (I'm sure I'll be told there is some funding issue around this) It would give teachers and parents a better understanding of their child's aptitude for French, instead of going into the course blindly. I don't regret placing my son in the program, at least not today, but those days he comes home discouraged I do.

Program Organization
(Continued from previous page)

- There are too few courses at secondary and some of the courses are marginal giving the message that French is marginal
- I would strongly advocate that the Immersion program at Cosburn Middle School remain in place.
- Clarification is needed ... should there be an open application process allowing students not suitable to the program to be frustrated and feel they have failed
- French Immersion would work better as "Immersion" if the children could be really immersed both in the classroom, in the halls, on the playground and at lunch. So having immersion programs exist in their own buildings where everyone, even support staff spoke French would be very helpful. Our principal doesn't even speak French, nor to the office staff.

- Something has to be done about waiting lists for programs
- Run all French programs in the same school. Do not offer Extended French in one school, mid-immersion French in another school and French Immersion in a third school. Combining programs in one school should show a savings in transportation, resources, staffing.
- Ideally, the board should strive to run a full, single track FSL school. When an English track is running in the same school as a French track, English becomes the dominant language of communication and the French language opportunities suffer.
- Consolidating the program into a dedicated school will help a lot
- Dual track schools with both French and English are a problem because resources in particular teachers are allocated to the school and not to immersion and therefore the English classes are small - averaging 20
- I also believe that English should be introduced before grade 4, perhaps as early as grade 1 so that students don't fall behind. My child in grade 4 can't spell and form sentences or paragraphs in English. After 1 month of English they were expected to read and comprehend Macbeth. How very unrealistic!

Program Organization
(Continued from previous page)

- French Immersion programs should be congregated into centres
- At the high school level, it is very difficult for student to plan courses ahead, to ensure they have the prerequisite courses for university/college entrance, as well as the courses required for the French immersion certificate.
- Past practices of legacy school boards are still in place and program offerings are not equitable across the city
- Why can there not be French Immersion at JK? Or at least, allow students to attend JK in the Immersion school – making children change schools where they have already made friends takes them out of their comfort zone.
- There is a need for a clear policy ... parents who don't speak French said not to matter – but how can they help struggling students at home?
- We have the process we are using for the new grade 4 programs backwards – we should get the staff first, then announce program opening – the process is flawed in other ways too – we need to make the differences between immersion and extended more clear.
- The extra hours of clerical work the programs generate must be addressed
- There is a real need to articulate the purpose of the programs – some people think they are for something they're not
- Board needs a better plan for this hugely popular, and growing, program
- Need for in-service for administrative staff going into schools with FSL programs

- Concern re speed of opening mid immersion/extended programs given staffing challenges
- Need for principals of FSL schools to meet on a regular bases to address issues such as resources, staffing,..

Program Organization (Continued from previous page)

- Feeder schools not passing on information – better to be mailed out centrally
- Principals need to be better informed and have regular workshops
- Board needs to have some events at the board level in French for teachers and students
- French Immersion Centres are at risk of isolation from board-wide curriculum and program initiatives
- Inequity of availability of instructional leaders to support French Immersion teachers (in all subjects)
- Inequity of Professional Development offered to French Immersion teachers
- If the programs with an entry at Grade 7 are not meeting the requirements for hours, they should be phased out
- Absence of programs, guidelines and human resources to plan the delivery of the English component of French Immersion Program in Centres

Assessment of Student Progress

- There is a need to develop assessment tools for our teachers. The DRA tools that exist in English do not exist in French. These are valuable tools that the teachers need to be able to assess literacy skills the same way these tools are used in English.
- More formalized testing program needs to be developed for FSL programs
- EQAO – why hasn't a French language module been written? Immersion students do Grade 3 Math in English but have never had math in English
- No equivalent of DRA for assessment – overall lack of assessment tools in FSL programs

Assessment of Student Progress (Continue from previous page)

- Leveled books are available in French, but the research has not been done to back up the levels and how they relate
- Issue of testing. Why has EQAO not been developed for French immersion students? There is a lack of data regarding the academic performance of French immersion students
- At grade six, the EQAO tests are written in English even though the students are taught math in French. It does not seem appropriate that the students should be evaluated in a language different from the language of instruction.
- Evaluation of students' comprehension in comparison to other French academic programs (in French board for example). How do our kids compare.

- The Board should get the Ministry to get EQAO tests for our programs
- Absence of consistent assessment and evaluation instruments for every grade in French Immersion programs including the English component

Class Size

- We need to know how the size of classroom cap for the primary grades will be implemented in the French programs. We are aware of separate meetings taking place regarding this issue.
- Our class sizes in the primary grades are huge.
- Many classes too large
- No policy on class size
- Smaller classes would help the program
- 35 students in all immersion classes – grade 10 & 11
- 3 grade 9s of 25 become 2 large grade 10s – should be smaller class sizes given the oral nature of the program

Class Size

(Continued from previous page)

- The huge size of classes averaging 28 from SK to grade 4 and a class of 35 in immersion in grade 5 is unacceptable and leads to inferior teaching of students.
- Maintain a reasonable class size (no more than 22 students).
- It seems ridiculous but ... classes are either too large or too small
- I do have a very big concern about the class size and lack of support for his teacher. He has 30 kids in his class and his teacher only gets help one time a week from the core French teacher. If you are going to have such large classes, you need more assistance for teachers.

Access, Admission and Enrolment

- Better entrance procedures – Given the considerable benefits of learning a second language – including enhanced overall learning skills and more career opportunities – the TDSB should provide access to its FSL program to every child who wishes to enroll in it. These programs are very difficult to plan for and administer. There are significant differences between numbers that apply (in February), register (in March-April) and actually turn up for school (in September). These numbers vary by school and by year. School administrations need to be assisted to track patterns so that the panic at the large numbers in the first stage are co-related to registration and actual attendance over a period of time, proper plans made to inform parents of procedures and plans to assure everyone a spot. All of this requires central staff and ongoing policies.

- Immersion programs have resulted in discriminatory barriers for many... only children residing in the country in their senior kindergarten year may enter an Early Immersion program... any child arriving after they are five years old is not eligible
- Boundary issues limit flexibility in school attendance
- Enrolment procedures for SK FI enrolment are driven by the logistical issues of the board which must plan staffing, etc but do not reflect the planning realities of parents

Access, Admission and Enrolment (Continued from previous page)

- Parents should be allowed to apply to a variety of schools, not just their assigned immersion school
- The lottery process dissuades parents from enrolling in FSB programs, especially Immersion programs as they want more certainty for their very young children
- There are insufficient spaces for SK entry to immersion
- Frustration for parents re no access to FSL programs for grades 1, 2 or 3
- Demand not lottery should drive program access
- Sibling rule in some schools means entire new class is siblings – no other students admitted
- If children have had some French in another setting, why can't they enter program at grade 1?
- Entry points are too rigid – the inability of students to enter program if they do not start in SK is a problem
- There should be pre-requisites for the programs
- The waiting lists and artificial cut-offs need to be changed
- There should be a re-zoning of catchment areas for the schools offering Extended French programs so that all schools in the board will feed into at least one Extended French school. In this way, all those students desiring the program will have the same opportunity to apply.
- There should be some sort of screening criteria developed in order to select the students best suited for success in the program (e.g. report card marks from grade 3, comments and recommendations from teachers, language tests, etc.). This type of screening is in place at the secondary level when students apply to various specialized programs. These schools do not want to waste valuable resources on students who are not suited for their programs, and who may drop out before completion.

Access, Admission and Enrolment (Continued from previous page)

- The current lottery system of entry into the program. Selecting students simply by drawing their application in a lottery may seem "equitable" in the short term, but I do not believe it to be so in the long run.
- When I phoned to inquire about getting application forms, I was told that my son couldn't apply because his school was not in the catchment area. Furthermore, I was told, since the demand was so high for the program, there would be an overwhelming number of hopefuls in the lottery, and out-of-area students would not be considered (at least, not until all the students on the waiting list would be offered a spot). I could live with this policy, as long as there was another school offering the program, which we could try. No such luck. Since entry into the Ext. Fr. program is now in grade 4, my son (and all those other potential students who wished to be in the program who are in grade 4 this year) has lost the opportunity forever!
- The Extended French program is a specialized program (as is the French Immersion program). If the Ministry and school boards are willing to invest more resources into it, they should be concerned about student results and retaining students in the program. Admitting students through a lottery, without considering their language skills (in French and in English), their motivation, and their work habits, risks admitting students who are not sufficiently prepared for success in meeting the expectations of the Extended French curriculum.
- I have two children... Both of them attend on optional attendance. My spouse and I considered SK-immersion programs for both children, but decided that we preferred them to learn to read and write in English first... when I attended an information meeting about the Grade 4 program, I discovered a difficulty for children currently in optional attendance in their school. I understand that if a child who was previously on optional attendance in the English program leaves the French program, he or she is not permitted to return to the English program in their previous school, but would be expected to go to their 'home' school. In conversations with other parents in the same situation, it seems that my concerns are common. It is likely that this policy is a significant deterrent for a number of children in every school who are afraid to attempt the French program for fear of losing their ability to return to a familiar place if it does not work out.

Access, Admission and Enrolment (Continued from previous page)

- The issue of the board's optional attendance policy has not come up in the review because it is primarily people who are already in the program, who are responding, not those currently outside the programs. We're the ones concerned with getting in and what happens after
- Consider altering the policy that deprives optional attendance students of the privilege of returning to the school, which is familiar and feels safe, if they have the misfortune to be unable to continue in the French program.
- The current "lottery" system of entry into the program. Selecting students simply by drawing their application may seem "equitable" in the short term, but I do not believe it to be so in the long run
- There should be some sort of screening criteria developed in order to select the students best suited for success in the program (e.g. report card marks from grade 3, comments and recommendations from teachers, language tests, etc.). This type of screening is in place at the secondary level when students apply to various specialized programs such as the Wexford C.I. Arts Program, or the T.A.P.S. program at Marc Garneau Collegiate. These schools do not want to waste valuable resources on students who are not suited for their programs, and who may drop out before completion.
- My son who was in a school of French Board of Education, wanted to go to a French Immersion program after grade 8. Imagine our surprise and despair when we learnt he wouldn't be automatically accepted in the only school with the program in Etobicoke, but had to participate in the lottery. I find it unjust because it's very hard for a French-speaking teenager to move directly to English only school. He needs some time to adjust, so the Immersion program is the best solution. Luckily he won the lottery.
- Taboo to question a student's placement in French Immersion despite solid evidence of specific Learning Disabilities involving phonological processing (making it difficult to learn to read in any language) & resulting in double whammy for FI students. The party line still seems to be that French Immersion is for all students no matter what their learning style. I strongly believe that there has to be a greater willingness to look at students' profiles along the way (particularly if they are struggling academically) & try to determine whether French Immersion is a 'good fit' for a student.

Access, Admission and Enrolment (Continued from previous page)

- I have to stress the inequity of the mid-immersion situation, as we perceive it. If it's being offered at two dozen new schools, please advise us which they are: our son is going into Grade 4 next year, and as far as we can tell is at the mercy of the lottery even to get the thin gruel of extended French
- If the Ministry and school boards are willing to invest resources into it, they should be concerned about student results and retaining students in the program. Admitting students through a lottery, without considering their language skills (in French and in English), their motivation, and their work habits, risks admitting students who are not sufficiently prepared for success in meeting the expectations of the Extended French curriculum. Students who have difficulty with English
- Language skills (both expressive skills--speaking and writing--but also reading), in addition to new English Language Learners, experience more challenges, often become frustrated, and often have difficulty in keeping up with the rest of the class. They affect the progress of the others when they are expected to contribute in pair and group activities. These students are more likely to drop out of the program after a few years, especially in the transition to grade 9, since they will become more concerned about their marks. In summary, a lottery system of recruitment, which recruits any students without considering their language learning aptitude, skills, and readiness, is inequitable in the long run since it denies spots to those students who are ready and able. Allowing into the Extended French program (which, I stress, is an **elective** program) students who do not have a solid foundation in language and literacy directly increases the probability that these students will drop out of the program before its end.
- I am concerned that the Extended French program is not equally accessible to all students. In order to qualify to be considered, a student must live within the catchment area of the school offering the program. However, there are schools that currently are not located in the area of **any** school offering Extended French. Therefore, some students have no opportunity at all to even get into the lottery because their school is located in a "no man's land" which does not have an Extended French school assigned to it!
- Lottery system for the program: This needs to be changed to public access or better way like Interview with child

Access, Admission and Enrolment (Continued from previous page)

- I would greatly wish the sibling rule would extend down to JK, as it obviously does not now. I have been whisking children between two schools and yet am not quite out of the English district in order to apply for school bus assistance, although we do live a half hour walk. Should my younger child, who is to attend SK French Immersion next year, not get in, I will pull both children out of the French Immersion System altogether and find some system that will accept both children without question. It is a huge hassle!
- A lottery system of recruitment, which recruits any students without considering their language learning aptitude, skills, and readiness, is inequitable in the long run since it denies spots to those students who are ready and able. Allowing into the Extended French program (which, I stress, is an elective program) students who do not have a solid foundation in language and literacy directly increases the probability that these students will drop out of the program before its end.

- Students who have difficulty with English language skills (both expressive skills--speaking and writing--but also reading), in addition to new English Language Learners, experience more challenges, often become frustrated, and often have difficulty in keeping up with the rest of the class. They affect the progress of the others when they are expected to contribute in pair and group activities. These students are more likely to drop out of the program after a few years, especially in the transition to grade 9, since they will become more concerned about their marks. (I have seen this from my experience as a grade 8 teacher of Extended French for the past 11 years).
- I am concerned that the Extended French program is not equally accessible to all students. In order to qualify to be considered, a student must live within the catchment area of the school offering the program. However, there are schools that currently are not located in the area of any school offering Extended French. Therefore, some students have no opportunity at all to even get into the lottery because their school is located in a "no man's land" which does not have an Extended French school assigned to it!
- The board should reinstate the testing programs to pick up kids with verbal ability

Access, Admission & Enrolment (Continued from previous page)

- Students should be tested in kindergarten to make sure that they have what it takes to be part of the program
- Consideration of the student's suitability for the program with respect to English language skills, motivation, and work habits, given the strong emphasis on listening and literacy skills
- Some kind of pre-screening "test" or criteria for entry into the program
- There should be no lottery and no screening
- Siblings should be admitted automatically
- Just because this is my oldest child, she didn't get in because the whole new class was filled with siblings
- Important to keep the sibling rule in effect
- How could I justify that her brother had a wonderful opportunity, but she was not because she didn't win the lottery?
- I simply wish to comment on the difficulty and confusion on the application process for early immersion. There is not adequate communicate on how this process works and the lottery to get in ...Every child has the right to a bilingual education and no applicant should be denied. I know many parents who do not bother to apply because they don't like the process. We finally got our daughter in and our fingers are crossed for our second children but I hope that something can be done to improve the application process.
- It's a shame that people are missing out because they didn't get their name pulled out of a hat. Can we make a change? Can we create more programs and more schools for more spaces?
- The placement of students through a lottery process is equitable
- We have not received information at this point regarding the lottery system used to enter the immersion program. My understanding has been that the French immersion program is available to all students.

Access, Admission & Enrolment (Continued from previous page)

- One of the members of our school council has three children in our school. Next year one will still be here, one will be at a school for Grade 4 immersion and the third will be at a school for Grade 6 immersion. We would recommend that each school have only one site for French Immersion entry regardless of which grade entry is at.
- The decentralized admission procedure works
- Those students who were on the waiting list for Mid Immersion and did not get in should have a better opportunity to enter the Grade 7 Extended French program
- Schools handling their own admissions is a good practice
- Some student will stay in FSL programs, even if they are struggling, in order to stay in their school of choice
- Some parents keep struggling students in French Immersion to ensure school of choice
- Secondary students are choosing to go to schools with wider choice of courses in French, leaving their designated school program in jeopardy
- Waitlist is very problematic
- Children should be tested before entering the program. If they cannot succeed in the language, they should be forced to leave. We have no support for these children.
- From a parent's point of view, I am concerned that the Extended French program is not equally accessible to all students. In order to qualify to be considered, a student must live within the catchment area of the school offering the program. However, there are schools that currently are not located in the area of **any** school offering Extended French. Therefore, some students have no opportunity at all to even get into the lottery because their school is located in a "no man's land" which does not have an Extended French school assigned to it! There should be a re-zoning of catchment areas for the schools offering Extended French programs so that all schools in the board will feed into at least one Extended French school. In this way, all those students desiring the program will have the same opportunity to apply.

Data Gathering and Analysis

- Educators have been aware for some time of inequities that exist between immersion and regular programs in terms of teaching load, student ability, gender division and diversity... there has been little desire to examine these problems
- The board need to survey and track students more effectively so it has a better handle on why students are leaving the program
- Some programs have low attrition – they should be examined for strategies for other programs
- Information on reasons for withdrawal will also assist educators in targeting areas for improvement. At the high school level, exit surveys may identify high schools where FI programs could be relocated, as students leaving the FI stream may do soon order to attend high schools offering other specialized programs.

- Follow-up with students who leave the program in order to determine the reasons for withdrawal. Information on baseline characteristics of all French program students, including reason for enrolment in the program (e.g.: questionnaire with Likert scale ratings of importance of different factors), along with reasons for dropout for students who withdraw, can be used to develop a process for admitting students to the program that could replace the lottery system.
- Strong feelings expressed that this review should cause a data gathering process to be undertaken
- Lack of tracking of dropout rate SK – 8, need for interviews and data bank
- Firm data are urgently needed, and time is running out
- The board insists it has not gathered this performance information, which, if true, amounts to pedagogical negligence.
- 85% of immersion students drop out after grade 6 - as quoted by CPF in a recent meeting. This figure was nowhere to be found when I did my initial investigation into immersion.
- Are the kids getting enough French in our system to completely be considered "immersed"?

Data Gathering and Analysis (Continued from previous page)

- Are there reports/studies to demonstrate the success of this program - how do the kids fare? What percentage stay in the French Immersion system and do they use French background later on?
- TDSB should measure success rate of the programs
- Why do more boys than girls leave the program? I have never seen this issue addressed, but it is of concern to me. My observations are that many boys are asked or "suggested" to leave because they are struggling... I think it's just that they are more active learners and some teachers can't cope ... I think these kids should be encouraged to stay in the program
- If the board believes this to be a valuable program, how do we get useful data for French immersion?

Funding French Immersion and Extended French Programs

- We have been told that funds for French immersion are routinely diverted to other needs in the Board.
- Board needs to know how much is raised by parents and that most of the materials are bought with funds raised by parents
- The number one overall issue as we see it is lack of funding. The federal and provincial governments have long acknowledged that the provision of quality FSL programs simply cost more. In fact, there is a federal/provincial agreement in place that specifically allocates additional dollars for this purpose. It is simply unacceptable that these monies

are not being allocated to our programs. This issue has been known and acknowledged for many years and it must be rectified.

- It is crucial that funds are made available to provide more professional development for French Immersion teachers and principals. There is a need for better textbooks and teaching materials. We hear about the same issues over and over again. This needs to be addressed in order to provide a quality education to our children, which is equal to that of the English system. Funding also affects:
 - a. Enough good quality French teachers coming into the system
 - b. Consistency of programming
 - c. Reading materials

Funding French Immersion and Extended French Programs
(Continued from previous page)

- Turn-around funding from the Ministry was denied because EQAO test scores are not available and the Ministry has not seen that EQAO testing is developed for our programs
- Is all funding for FSL being spent in FSL programs? Review process needs to get answer
- Concerns re how funding is being allocated and how allocation is being spent
- Can we have clarification about the \$27 million grant to TDSB from the Ministry? Parents have detail on how allocation is generated but not on how it is spent
- The high cost of French resources need to be addressed and increased funding has to be allocated
- Need for accountability and transparency for spending for French programs
- Is Ministry allocation for French truly being spent on French programs?
- Some attrition is due to the lack of resources in the immersion and extended classrooms
- Solicit support/sponsorship from corporations who have a vested interest in bilingual education (publishing companies, the Ministry of Immigration, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, French restaurants, etc).
- We have been told that there is a budget and money specifically for FSL programs. If so, then why are teachers struggling for materials?
- Federal money of \$275 per student received by board but not sent to schools – must be forwarded to address shortage of resources

Resources

- The French Immersion (FI) program as it is currently delivered at the two schools my daughter has attended is woefully underfunded and barely staffed. This is particularly true of math & science programs. There is a virtual absence of contemporary teaching materials. Math is delivered at the grade 7 level from 'photocopies of sheets prepared by teachers who may or may not be on extended absences. I am in the somewhat unusual position of parenting twins, one of whom is in FI, & the other in the English stream. The English stream is taught from reasonably contemporary textbooks that are a primary resource for students who may not have grasped a concept, in math in particular, at its initial classroom delivery. No such fall back resource is available to FI students. Instead of nurturing the students who go the extra mile, by participating in a language other than their vernacular, the TDSB, chooses willfully or by neglect to emiserate the lives of these students by failing to provide adequate teaching resources, and indeed teachers, to them. The library resource material is dated, dog-eared, and generally too infantile to hold the attention of students. This either is reflective of the fact that French is not expected to be read at grade level (that is, the available books are deliberately infantile, accommodating a lower level of comprehension) or, it is a tacit admission that the program is not an immersion in French in which available material is both contemporary & at an age appropriate level.
- Why are there no textbooks available in French?
- Seek out, fund, and obtain more and better textbooks. I have been told that suitable textbooks are not always available. Create them. This should be simple for the Fifth Largest School Board in North America, and might even be a revenue source — and I wouldn't be surprised to find federal seed money that could even fund this.
- Resource shortages coupled with ongoing changes in the curriculum, are adversely affecting the quality of the French language education
- Some of the text books used in FSL programs are racist and sexist and very out of date
- My child does not get age appropriate books
- Must have adequate resources (texts, readers, resource kits) to support curriculum

Resources

(Continued from the previous page)

- Resources must be both language and age appropriate (specifically designed for second language learners). In the middle years especially, much of the material is language appropriate, but too juvenile in content or subject matter.
- Provide professional development opportunities in French.
- Inadequate number of French readers in the classroom. Last year, my son's grade three class went the whole year without leveled readers. Due to a lack of books, they only read one novel the entire year. There was a lack of appropriate, independent grade level readers and resource books at every grade level.
- Resources too limited

- Ensuring that there is more availability of French reading materials/ resources made available at school for kids for sign-out, and perhaps have resource lists provided for parents to select at suggested stores.
- I've noticed also that particularly in math and science, the books and exercises are often photocopies instead of organized textbooks, which speaks to the need for better material supports for the French stream.
- More and better French-language software is needed for the computers, from elementary level through high school. These materials are available (e.g. Adibou and other learning games, science and social studies supports in French, etc.) but I have not seen much attempt to bring them into the libraries and classrooms. Field trips and extracurricular activities with a French focus need development, and teachers need better resources to be able to integrate the curriculum with French in an interesting way to spark and challenge students. In comparing my own children's school experiences with those of friends' children in the English stream, I have noticed how excellent teachers in the English stream are able to bring social studies together with other areas of the curriculum (in units on everyday life, history and science in medieval times, for example, or in China), while in the French stream the teachers have a much harder time doing these sorts of creative lesson plans. Probably this is because of needing to spend more time on vocabulary and language instruction, but I believe that with better materials and advisory support, they would be able to do more. There are certainly excellent teachers in French!

Resources (Continued from previous page)

- Financial and resource allocation to ensure that classrooms have the necessary audio-visual equipment and materials
- Inadequate number of French readers and resource books in the libraries. Students at all grade levels cannot find enough resources in our library to support curriculum-based projects (e.g. Prime Ministers of Canada, Pioneers, Heritage, etc.)
- Allocate more funds for purchase of resources (books, resource kits, etc.)
- Libraries in schools with immersion programs need the board's attention
- Share or circulate resources between schools. Start a "mobile" French library for the TDSB.
- More French resources are required such as Canadian textbooks, computer resources and classroom books.
- Our biggest concern ... that French resources are very limited (teachers resort to photocopying pages from various sources which are often confusing, unconnected and lack continuity, not to mention get lost physically)
- French immersion resources are usually written for Francophone student not French immersion students – makes them much more difficult to understand
- There are no text books in my child's class – only copies of pages from books
- A large variety of current resources have been identified in an up-to-date resource guide

- Board needs to work with publishers to develop more materials and books, including leveled books
- Cost of resources puts real limitations on what schools can buy ... resulting in a great deal of teacher-generated material
- Resources are too expensive for allocated money and teacher training to use new resources is lacking

Resources

(Continued from previous page)

- The resources available for immersion and extended programs are lacking. Teachers have told me that some materials are inappropriate, some not at grade level, most not at language level, and are not of interest to the kids ... The cultural references, some of which are racist, sexist. If we are going to continue these programs, some heavy curriculum development is in order. Perhaps we could collaborate with other boards to do this efficiently and cost-effectively.
- We need more books for the junior grades and more for the library
- We don't have any books to teach Math vocabulary

Staffing

- Create a senior executive with specific responsibility for French Immersion and Extended French. If there is one already, this is news to me and clearly is part of the problem.
- Build a pipeline of French-speaking teachers. We are told TDSB is the "Fifth Largest School Board in North America" — well, it is time to act like it, and to do so visibly, not risibly. The inability of the Board to ensure an adequate supply of teachers is fundamentally and utterly unconscionable.
- Provide levels of staffing commitment to ensure (and drive) sufficient high school options to achieve the Certificate in French Immersion.
 - Do the collective agreements create barriers? Co-opt the Ministry and the teachers' associations to amend these. The needed changes will bring more teachers to the TDSB. Everybody wins.
 - Are the qualified teachers going elsewhere? Find out why, and create a strategy to deal with it. Pay is not the only motivator.
 - What is happening with graduates of French Immersion and Extended French from the TDSB? When some enter the teaching profession, what attracts elsewhere? Find out why, and create a strategy to deal with it.
 - Get rid of non-performing teachers. Everyone knows who they are — except for the next school they are headed to. They reflect poorly on the profession, and they jeopardize education in general. I understand that dealing with — and even simply identifying — non-performing teachers is a labour relations hot potato. But, it is not impossible.

Staffing

(continued from previous page)

- Understand the key skills required for teachers in French Immersion / Extended French:
 - Teachers who relate to adolescents — vital — and who can cope with the highly verbal nature of multilingual children.
 - Teachers who are qualified for the challenges of the initial elementary experience with French-language instruction.
 - Teachers who understand, are comfortable with and will embrace the diversity of TDSB students.
- More needs to be done to promote/encourage development of bilingual teachers
- Staffing of math programs is so poor that in my daughter's case the program is at mid year being delivered in English with a dispensation from the board to credit it in English. The same can be said of science. Absence a recruitment drive of substance, with compensation incentives, among graduating teachers, I would suggest to the board via your office that an exchange program for teachers from France or the 'Francophonie' be instituted in short order. The issue of text and resource material availability could be resolved by a substantive spending spree. (Perhaps some of the Federal funds that the Board has appropriated into its general revenue account could now be properly directed to its intended purpose.)
- Teacher and resource shortages undermine the long-term success of the program. Related to this is a concern that the French skills of students are not at the level expected by parents – and they may, in fact, be deteriorating
- Board should not be expanding program until they have the staff and resources for the programs already in place
- There is a need for EAs in all SK classrooms
- Lack of high quality teachers and substitutes
- Some substitute teachers teaching in English
- We need specialists to help students who have trouble with French
- Lack of availability of qualified teachers for programs

Staffing

(Continued from previous page)

- What is the board doing about recruitment of teachers?
- Need to ensure qualified supply teachers are identified and available
- My child is on her 5th teacher of the year
- Do not expand the French immersion program beyond the availability of qualified teachers who speak French fluently. Hire teachers to teach specific subjects within the primary grades and assign the most fluent teachers to subjects with the greatest linguistic demands.
- Additional support is required for FSL department

- Having qualified and excellent teachers is crucial
- I know there aren't enough French teachers available in GTA, but would it be possible to employ francophones in the French Immersion Program and Anglophones and allophones in Extended French or Core French? In my son's school the situation is reverse. I believe The French Immersion students should be getting teachers with the best French accent, not teachers who make mistakes and speak worse French than their students.
- Teachers and their supervisors (principals included) MUST be bilingual. It is essential that supervisors and principals be bilingual in order to provide adequate and relevant support and teacher/lesson evaluation. It is also essential to have a bilingual principal when interviewing and hiring staff. Bilingual principals can also be role models and participate in French communication within and around the school.
- My second set of concerns revolve around the quality of French being taught and the associated lack of qualified French immersion teachers. Very few teachers speak French fluently and the level of French that is deemed acceptable for students in Grade 8 is low. It is extremely difficult to recruit French immersion teachers and covering leaves is virtually impossible.
- Staffing policy of dual track schools (where French is one of the tracks) should reflect the specific needs and requirements of a track that is in a second language.

Staffing
(Continued from previous page)

- There should be incentives to attract and retain French teachers and administrators.
- Teaching French in an English environment brings challenges to the job that teachers/administrators in English schools do not experience.
- The most important issue is the adequate provision of enthusiastic and qualified teachers.
- My daughter's French teacher, who is also the Home Room Teacher and therefore responsible for teaching Social Studies, Science, English and Guidance has been absent for nearly 25% of the first term.
- Many of the substitute teachers have been unable to speak or teach French.
- My question is: who exactly is responsible for eliminating these French positions (EAs) and why?
- I believe that a full time French library assistant would be an exceptional addition to the French immersion system, to be on hand to help those with reading/writing troubles.
- Lesson plans left for substitute teachers have been sketchy at best, non-existent at worst, leaving teachers no option but to assign the students "Desk Work" for the entire day.
- Must have quality and qualified instruction (teachers teaching French as a second language should have, at least, FSL Part I, and they should have the proper designation (primary, junior, intermediate, etc) for the grades they are teaching.

- I am deeply concerned that preparation for Grade 8 and beyond is already compromised due to the French teacher's continued absences and the apparent lack of qualified French teachers to take his place
- Provide strong mentoring program for French teachers who are new to Canada and are not familiar with Canadian history, geography, social system and curriculum.
- Supply teachers must be bilingual

Staffing

(Continued from previous page)

- Librarians must be bilingual.
- The needs in a dual track school are very different from a single-track school and dual track schools should not be subject to the same formulae as other schools.
- Several FI teachers are not adequately qualified to teach FSL immersion (e.g. some teachers do not have strong French language skills, some teachers do not have FSL qualifications, some teachers new to Canada do not have a strong knowledge of such subject areas as Canadian history, geography, politics and this weakness is reflected in their coverage of Canadian material etc). The TDSB FSL classroom should not be their training ground. The quality of the FSL program suffers when teachers are not fully qualified and prepared to teach in their area.
- Inadequate number of FSL teachers. The board has several teachers who are "deemed" certified, but, in fact, some qualifications are "outstanding" and this is reflected in the quality of instruction, classroom management and lack of understanding of the students and curriculum.
- Inadequate numbers of French supply teachers. Often there are only English speaking supply teachers available to cover French classes
- Our school has not retained French teachers. Our school has not had a Principal with French language skills for at least five years.
- Children graduating from French Immersion should be encouraged to go into teaching.
- Hire more teachers from Quebec or French-speaking countries. This may require opening up the TDSB hiring requirements to new immigrants who are trained as teachers and can speak and teach French competently.
- If TDSB is committed to offering a French Immersion and Extended French Program, it must solve the problem of not having enough short and long term supply staff on hand that are qualified and competent in French. Improve recruitment of French-speaking staff!

Staffing

(Continued from previous page)

- TDSB should hire more supply staff that can speak French. All too often, if not most of the time, I have observed that supply staff did not speak French and I was told that they were unavailable. This is unacceptable.

- This past school year my daughter's school had the very unfortunate situation of there being several regular immersion and extended teachers out on maternity leave and the principal was unable to hire competent French teachers to work on contract from 4-6 months. This resulted in my daughter having 4 homeroom teachers over a 4-month period. That is unacceptable, especially since her class was not the only one suffering.
- Increase number of qualified French teachers, supply teachers and principals within the board. This can be done in a variety of ways:
 - Offer salary bonus
 - Provide professional development free of charge (summertime FSL qualification courses, etc)
 - Reduce work load (e.g. supervision duties)
 - Provide regular half-day retreats for French teachers to get together and share resources and ideas.
 - Re-structure the staffing policy within dual track schools to make the staffing issue easier for administrators and staff
 - Offer foreign teacher candidates a housing allowance or housing bonus
- Some principals actually anti-French; principal who is former language teacher excellent
- The board is currently struggling to support its existing FSL programs and yet they continue to introduce new programs. If they cannot properly staff and support the existing programs then they should not be offering new programs
- Providing support to all teachers not possible with only four instructional leaders – must work with all teachers K-12 in Core, Immersion and Extended programs
- Providing support to teachers from a variety of backgrounds a challenge
- The lack of bilingual supply teachers means that when teachers are off on extended sick leaves kids are taught in English, thus diminishing the impact of the program.

Staffing (Continued from previous page)

- Quality of teachers in the system. How do we keep good quality teachers in our board?
- Back-up resources i.e. substitute teachers on call as required
- Maybe if we put teachers new to the province in smaller schools and made sure they had a mentor, they'd stay longer
- We recently had a teacher who left mid-year and found it difficult to get good quality staff to replace. Also discovered that teacher was not capable/qualified to work in our system (was from other country/culture). This stems back to not having a good pool of teachers to choose from.
- I believe you do NOT have the staff to offer this program across the board. There are simply not enough French teachers. I had difficulties with both my children in the early grades. In both cases, they had inexperienced first year teachers teaching their first grade. Why? Because you don't have access to a large pool of experienced teachers. Had our teachers been experienced, they would have recognized problems earlier and we could have intervened earlier. My daughter is not reading anywhere close to grade level and still not received any extra help. She says she doesn't want to learn to read!

- We want to offer Math in French but it is very hard to find a French Math teacher
- EA allocation is not equitable
- Better plan needed to find qualified teachers
- Office staff spending a lot of time dealing with busing issues and with registration procedures
- Lack of prep time from teachers who speak French
- There are morale issues in dual track schools between teachers of English and French

Staffing

(Continued from previous page)

- We have such a large program... why isn't there enough central staff to support it?
- Planning staffs schools as though they are one school, without recognizing dual track issues
- Principals spend a long time over every summer hiring qualified French teachers
- French Immersion schools need .5 vice-principals and .5 office staff increase above allotment
- I am a French specialist trained to teach French as a second language... but French teachers, at secondary, have to teach whatever they are assigned whether it is history, or computer or world religions – whether they know anything about those subjects or not.
- Need more instructional leaders to help teachers – spread too thinly across city – schools need more guidance
- Provide at least one French Immersion Literacy Coordinator per quadrant
- Hire instructional leaders to coordinate translations/development of curriculum materials in all departments and subjects (e.g. Social Studies, Equity, Guidance...)
- Ensure availability of Special Education support (withdrawal and partial integration) for French Immersion students.

Student Transportation

- The current transportation policy has the potential to adversely affect enrolment in FSL programs. The policy is a one-size-fits-all policy and does not allow for major differences in the way in which FSL programs are delivered in different parts of the city (the legacy delivery models – in Etobicoke the previous school board opted to centralize the programs in a few schools and to bus all students up to high school

- The lack of suitable transportation arrangements for students is one of the direct root causes for the worsening traffic safety situations in schools (at the elementary, middle and secondary levels).

**Student Transportation
(Continued from previous page)**

- Commit to transportation in the middle and high school years.
- Expand the transportation eligibility to all students of an elementary school — on the basis that if “nearby” families request transportation, they probably need it.
- Find creative ways to accommodate the expanded vehicular traffic associated with regional programs like French Immersion and Extended French. To ignore this problem could be criminally negligent.
- Some students spend far too much time on buses to and from school
- One choice only is the very furthest northwest point in Toronto. From our Longbranch address the commute is brutal and I believe that if there is not going to be a more centrally located school than Richview, then the school board should provide busing. On TTC it can easily take 1 1/2 hours each way to make all the connections required.
- Busing prevents children from participating in extra-curricular activities
- We need transportation decision written down, including individual and group pick-ups
- Supervision of busing is a nightmare – buses are late up to 1 1/2 hours – due, in part, to irregular pick-up hours – how to provide supervision over such a long period a challenge
- Busing supervision issues have to be dealt with daily
- Downloaded busing administration to schools in a real strain
- Transportation challenges in French Immersion Centres
 - Safety concerns
 - Uneven quality of service
 - Poor communication with routing officers and bus companies
 - Poorly trained bus drivers
 - Increased supervision time (routes that do not respect school entry and supervision times)
 - Stress to parents with regard to their children’s safety

Program Observations

The consultant ensured that participants in the review process were aware that the review did not include a review of instructional practice or program evaluation. Parents, particularly, were anxious that concerns be heard and included. Comments included

- What does it say about programs when students from grade 4 entry program merge with student from grade 7 entry programs at grade 9?
- Concern about the lack of English skills or immersion students; need for standard English curriculum year-by-year
- Promised amount of English not being offered in extended program
- Concern about oral French because children are practicing each other's mistakes – oral language fluency levels for FSL should be part of Ministry of Education expectations
- There is too little numeracy and too much language
- The communicative approach to second language acquisition as developed at OISE is the most effective and enjoyable way for students of all ages to learn a second language and should define the basic thrust of all French taught in the school system. According to my and my daughter's experience this has not been the case. Students spend their class time listening to the teacher talk instead of participating in a collaborative learning experience where the teacher is the guide instead of the orator at the front of the class.
- My first and most serious concern is around the lack of a standard English curriculum within the French immersion curriculum. Each teacher adapts the English curriculum as they see fit. There is no continuity and students are not provided with a solid foundation in English grammar and writing. It would be in the interest of both the teachers and the students to develop a formal English curriculum for the French immersion program. There also seems to be confusion around when English is actually introduced formally. Is it Grade 3 or Grade 4? Related to this is the assumption that parents should be introducing English at home starting in Kindergarten. No guidance is provided as to how this should be done and this greatly disadvantages children from homes where English is a second language.
- All the special subjects - music, phys.ed, have to be taught in English – even though it's supposed to be 100% French

Program Observations (Continued from previous page)

- French should extend beyond the classroom (i.e. in school announcements, school clubs, on school posters, in the school yard, on field trips, etc.)
- The use of French should be validated and used in "real life situations" (submit work to publications, enter contests, communicate with students from other regions, attend French film festivals, etc)
- Instruction must be geared toward the needs of a student as a SECOND language learner (not a first language learner).). Learning French as a second language is VERY different than learning it as a first language. Teachers need to understand the differences and know how to teach to FSL students.

- I am very concerned about the English teaching in the French extended program
- Problem (at secondary) is teachers having to invent courses
- In the opinion of a number of my sons' teachers (who have taught both immersion and extended French for the TDSB), there is little benefit to the student involved in an Extended French program beyond what s/he might experience in a core French program. Therefore, there is little point in bussing students to new schools when core French can be delivered in their home schools.
- Studies have shown that language acquisition is easiest for learners at a very young age. In addition, early language acquisition forges pathways in the human brain that enhance its associative abilities. This is not conjecture but proven fact. What reason could we have for not wanting to enrich our children's lives? I confess I delayed enrolling my daughter in the Extended French Program because I wanted her to learn English well first. As a person who can use only one language well, French Immersion students of my acquaintance who can neither spell nor write in either language had alarmed me. I did not want such a fate to befall my daughter. However, my misgivings lie not with the program but with its execution.
- The program caters to "girl style" learners only. No attempt is made to teach to other learning styles. Why can't the program offer a balance of learning styles so it is a better program for boys?

**Program Observations
(Continued from previous page)**

- My sons, who are excellent students, see most of their friends leave the French program ...this makes it harder for my sons and the other few remaining boys to want to stay in French immersion because they suffer socially, with fewer and fewer friends in the class. Because the program graduates so few boys, I think that there is a problem.
- I think the student should be expected to meet grade 4 levels of both English and Math despite being French Immersion or Extended program. It would involve homework nightly of both English and Math.
- The concerns are keeping up with grade level (grade 4) English and Math. They were not provided with sufficient practice/homework to excel in these areas. We address this with his teacher several times, her answer always relate to that the kids are being extremely challenged with French therefore, she can not justify giving them expected level of homework. The English program that she would be teaching in Jan./06 would be material my son has completed in grade 1/2. Therefore, we elected to put him into a challenging program that will provide him with French daily.
- The issue that I think is important is that the students are still expected to meet all other area of grade 4 (literacy-English and math). I did not feel that they were being challenged with sufficient material/homework regarding this and therefore, even through the student may be learning a different language, I did feel my son did not progress in the area of English and Math. He was challenged in science, which was taught by English track grade 4 teachers.
- Introduction of the English component into the daily routine – Two of my children had one hour of English introduced at the grade 3 level and both seemed to struggle with that class at that time. It appeared to be a slow catch up. The third child had it introduced at the grade 4 level and at the moment seems to be doing well with English.

- The TDSB homework policy is not followed in French immersion – there is much more homework in the French programs.

Program Observations (Continued from previous page)

- There is not enough literature and love of literature being communicated in classrooms. The excitement of classroom reading seems to get lost with the problem of finding books that are interesting but at the right level for the kids. High quality French children's literature is needed – not just readers.
- Please consider creating a solid repertoire of French songs for teachers to sing with students.
- It would be nice to have the students learn about francophone countries of the world and be exposed to some different cultural events from a variety of places such as Africa or Indonesia or even within our own country – Quebec, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Northern Ontario, ... film, dance, music, Harbourfront activities should be offered to French immersion students – perhaps a francophone arts festival, or bring French writers in to speak with students or going to see a French play or partnering with francophone Toronto
.....
- There should be summer camps and field trips for French Immersion students.
- I believe that we have ... created an elite little program within our public school system – one that has a wide reputation with parents for attracting a “higher academic standard”. What parent wouldn't want this for their child? .. The consequence is that the English stream is seen as a “dumping ground” – kids with learning, emotional and behavioural issues, as well as ESL students. The negative image in turn becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. To make matters worse, we then send our English and French stream students off to different middle and high schools: one of which has a rosy reputation and the other is seen as an (undeservedly) unattractive choice, mostly due to its physical location. It seems these factors are doomed to give our English program a distinct disadvantage as an attractive choice for parents. ... We are also creating a two solitudes situation that is socially unacceptable and potentially damaging ... communities thrive when children from the same neighbourhood attend the same schools – let's not segregate children - that's a road we must never go down.
- Science is not taught in French

Program Observations
(Continued from previous page)

- With respect to reporting, my son's first term report card mark in writing was based solely on penmanship. While I understand the need to have clear and legible handwriting, the subject area of writing involves a lot more than penmanship. As a primary teacher myself, I am not sure how much of the Ministry's focus on early reading instruction and balanced literacy is happening in the French program. To date, we have not received any leveled texts coming home from guided reading groups. I'm not sure if the problem is lack of teacher training or lack of resources.
- There is a tremendous amount of "busy work", colouring and copying... I would much prefer that my child was drawing his own pictures instead of colouring a photocopied sheet. I can appreciate the need for the language to be pre-written but there are a tremendous number of photocopied sheets where more active "hands-on" learning could be going on.