



Community Advisory Committees

**French As A Second Language
Advisory Committee (FSLAC)
2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT**





Community Advisory Committees

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Mandate

The FSLAC was created by the Board in 2005. In 2007, our mission was adopted by the Board and was reconfirmed with the adoption of our Terms of Reference in 2016:

“To consult with and advise the Board on French as a Second Language matters. As a Board community advisory committee, the FSLAC will contribute to the work of trustees and staff. This partnership of trustees, staff and parents will foster excellence and growth in FSL programs at the Board.”

Membership

There are 22 parent members and alternates on the FSLAC from 12 wards, and 1 non-voting community member from Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) and three Trustee Members. French as a Second Language (FSL) program staff and/or Executive Superintendent attend most meetings.

Members/alternates are elected by parents in their ward in odd numbered years to serve a two-year term on the FSLAC. Trustees are asked to hold elections at their ward meetings during 2019. To be eligible to be an FSLAC voting member/alternate, one must be a current TDSB parent who wishes to further the mission of the FSLAC and is available to attend (in person or by phone) about eight meetings per year. Trustees needing more information or assistance recruiting members to fill vacancies may contact the FSLAC at fslactoronto@gmail.com.

FSLAC information is posted at: www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. Members/alternates also receive electronic access to a Member Briefing Book via Google Drive which is updated annually.

This year the FSLAC parent volunteers were supported by excellent staff, Beth Butcher (Executive Superintendent, LC1), Kathy Wenger (Executive Assistant LC1), Angela Caccamo (Centrally Assigned Principal for French as a Second Language) and Kirsten Johnston (Program Coordinator for FSL). Due to the French Review, Manon Gardner (Associate Director) attended 3 FSLAC meetings and Manon Gardner and Dr. Kathy Witherow (Associate Director) also attended together once.





Committee Membership

Trustee Co-chair Robin Pilkey
Trustee Michelle Aarts
Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin
Parent Co-chair Mandy Moore (W7)
Parent Vice-co-chair Sharon Beason (W16)
Parent Vice-co-chair Christie Dunbar (W16 Alt)
Parent Vice-co-chair Zeynab Kazi (W22)
Parent Vice-co-chair Rosemary Sutherland (W10 Alt)
Lisa McAvoy (W2)
Rob Janes (W2 Alt)
Nalini Singh (W2 Alt)
Deloris Williamson-Braham(W5)
Mandy Moore (W7)
Laura Steele Gunter (W7 Alt)
Lynn Leblanc (W8)
Nadya Phelan (W8 Alt)
Matt Forrest (W9)
Polina Osmerkina (W10)
Rosemary Sutherland (W10 Alt)
Charles Zhu (W11)
Wilmar Kortleever (W11 Alt)
Elaine Sun (W11 Alt)
Sarah Ramkissoon (W12)
Randy Samuel (W14)
Sarah Smith (W15)
Sharon Beason (W16)
Nancy White (W16 Alt)
Christie Dunbar (W16 Alt)
Gail Miller (W22)
Zeynab Kazi (W22)





FSLAC Accomplishments: Activities, Information Sharing and Board Consultations

Meetings

The FSLAC met eight times formally in the 2018-19 school year, usually on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, excluding December and March. FSLAC members work collaboratively with FSL (French Second Language) program staff, attending French Immersion and Extended French Information nights, parent conferences and parent information evenings. The FSLAC executive met twice and due to the 2018 French Review, there were also several working group meetings.

Meeting notices, agendas, minutes and FSL resources are posted on the FSLAC page on the TDSB website (www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac). We currently receive administrative support from the Executive Superintendent's assistant to organize meetings and to handle minutes, but dedicated support in communications and committee administration and a stronger link to the Parent Engagement office, would be welcome.

This year's focus has been on the 2018 French Review.

Email & Newsletter Distribution:

FSLAC volunteers continue to use our Gmail account: fslactoronto@gmail.com for correspondence. Parents and stakeholders write to us with FSL related questions. Common enquiries are on accessing programs and special education support and for referrals to the appropriate staff member on FSL specific concerns.

The FSLAC newsletter was produced in December 2018, March 2019 and June 2019. It is sent out to more than 150 schools with French immersion/extended programs, trustees, and over 900 individual parents and FSL stakeholders who have signed up. It shares information about new developments in FSL and tips for parents in supporting their children learning French. The sign-up button and past newsletters are available at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. We look forward to adding Parent Council TDSB email addresses to our distribution to more effectively fulfill our mandate as a partnership between trustees, staff and parents.

Engaging Parents and Community Members: Conferences, Workshops & School Councils





In our continued effort to reach out to more parents directly, FSLAC members participated in parent conferences and workshops at PIAC's fall and spring parent conferences. FSLAC Members and Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) greeted parents at our display table and provided information on FSL programs and how to get assistance for students who may be struggling. Our popular parent workshop "Help with French Homework...even if you don't speak French" was given at the fall conference and power point slides are available at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac.

Our "Intro to the FSLAC" was given at school council and ward meetings. Power point slides are posted at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. Inquiries to have this presentation done may be directed to fslactoronto@gmail.com.

FSLAC Members attended French immersion/extended information nights to meet new parents and to support the presentations of FSL staff.

FSLAC parents participated in policy consultations and the parent co-chair and executive members attended CAC meetings. Participation might be better facilitated with a draft schedule prior to each term on what meetings and consultations to expect.

FSLAC members participate in Pupil Accommodation and Program Area Reviews where recommendations might involve changes to French programs. In 2018-19, the PART for Bedford Park PS, Eglinton Jr PS, Glenview Senior PS, Hodgson MS, John Fisher Jr PS, Northlea E and MS is of particular importance. FSLAC participation was not facilitated from the start of the process as per PR577 but was being considered when the PART was put on hold. FSLAC has been aware of the possibility of the reopening of Bannockburn PS as a French Immersion Centre for several years and is concerned about the proposed change of John Fisher Jr PS, a French Immersion Centre, to a dual track.

Current Opportunities for Growth and Excellence in FSL Programs in the TDSB

2018 French Review

The FSLAC continues to be very engaged in the 2018 French Review and has received staff updates and had detailed discussions at every meeting this year. The open conversations and the expectation shared throughout the consultation phase of the process showed a strong TDSB commitment to working together to improve FSL programs for all students.

However, in the next phase, the development and writing of the actual recommendations, the FSLAC was disappointed not to be invited to collaborate with staff and Trustees in the spirit of 'parents as partners'





as we were for the ‘co-construction’ in the writing of PO 80 (2013 FSL policy). The FSLAC decided to take a proactive approach, rather than a ‘wait and see’ approach, and made recommendations directly to Trustees at the Program and School Services Committee (PSSC) in February and April 2019. It is our hope that Trustees will consider the advice of your French parent advisory committee as you evaluate the staff recommendations in June 2019.

In response to the Summary of Findings (November 2018), the FSLAC made two formal recommendations to PSSC on February 11, 2019:

1. Additional FSL Central Staff Needed: central staffing levels are at the lowest they have been since amalgamation
2. Examining Internal Challenges and Conditions: key data and information about FSL programs has not been updated and/or shared publicly

In response to the FSL Program Review: Developmental Evaluation (posted on TDSB website French Review page March 2019), the FSLAC made five formal recommendations to PSSC on May 1, 2019:

3. Improving Equity of Access to French Immersion/Extended as additional sites are needed to overcome inequitable distribution of the programs across the system.
4. Achieving Equity by Supporting Participation of Students with Special Education Needs in FSL
5. Improving Core French
6. Improving Student Achievement, Engagement and Retention in French in Secondary
7. Seamless Access to Before and After School Care for French Immersion/Extended Students.

2018 French Review updates were shared in the 2018-19 FSLAC Newsletters.

E-blasts about the Review were sent in March 2019 to announce the release of the full consultation report on the TDSB website and in June 2019 to announce the release of the recommendations.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the DELF

In FSLAC 2018 French Review recommendation 2 (PSSC February 2019), we asked that staff be asked to provide a briefing note on TDSB DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) Capacity Building and Cohort Results (2013-18). TDSB has teachers who are trained examiners and to increase opportunities for students to participate, the provision of this training is essential.

The DELF is an internationally recognized exam that tests proficiency in French and awards a credential to the student based on the benchmarks of the CEFR. This type of testing provides an external assessment of student outcomes in French immersion/extended/core that is validating and motivating for students and informs parents. The FSLAC supports providing the opportunity for all grade 12 French immersion/extended/core students to take DELF exams as is done at some other Ontario Boards. Limited





funding and support is provided by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry did a study which included the TDSB students which is available here:

www.edugains.ca/resourcesFSL/PDF/Research/Synopsis_FINAL-1.pdf

Ministry research is showing that CEFR/DELF-related professional learning is positively impacting FSL classroom practice: <https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/the-cefr-in-ontario-transformingclassroom-practice/>.

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

2019-20 Proposed Budget Cuts and Recommendations from 2018 French Review, Secondary Section Cuts

The proposals to cut transportation (school bus and TTC tickets) for French Immersion/extended students and to cut FSL central staff are not supported by the FSLAC.

There is not enough information available at this time to understand or evaluate the impact of a \$12.15M cut to teachers being proposed for September 2020 but it cannot be good news.

E-blasts were sent to the FSLAC email list outlining cuts and opportunities to delegate. FSLAC parent cochair, Mandy Moore and parent vice-co-chair, Zeynab Kazi, delegated on behalf of the FSLAC against cutting transportation.

The staff report with recommendations from the 2018 French Review is expected at Committee of the Whole on June 12, 2019, the day after the final FSLAC meeting of the school year. Prior to finalization of plans, policy and procedure changes in October 2019, the FSLAC would like to be part of the conversation on the details of these changes, working in partnership with staff and trustees.

The cuts to secondary sections for FSL due to increase in secondary class size as required by the Ministry of Education are also of great concern.

It is increasingly difficult for engaged, committed FSL parents and the FSLAC to follow what is going on. In spite of this, we have tried to contribute constructive feedback, to help parents understand what is happening and to share their feedback with decision makers.

2019-20 FSLAC Executive

Mandy Moore (Ward 7) was elected at the June 11th meeting as parent co-chair with Matt Forrest (W9), Zeynab Kazi (Ward 22) and Charles Zhu (Ward 11) elected as parent vice co-chairs.





Community Advisory Committees

Upcoming meetings:

- Tuesday, September 10, 2019
- Tuesday, October 15, 2019
- Tuesday, November 12, 2019
- Tuesday, January 14, 2020
- Tuesday, February 11, 2020
- Tuesday, March 10, 2020
- Tuesday, April 14, 2020
- Tuesday, May 12, 2020
- Monday, June 8, 2020



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