

May 31, 2010

To: Trustees

From: French as a Second Language Advisory Committee (FSLAC)

Re: Planning and Priorities Committee, May 31, 2010

ARCs with recommendations affecting Extended/Immersion (Ext/Imm) French programs:

1. Davisville

Dear Trustees,

The French as a Second Language Advisory Committee (FSLAC) supports, in principle, the staff recommendations for Ext/Imm programs as outlined in the power point from the Davisville community meeting which is on the TDSB website. We are pleased to see that the need for further exploration of the implications of moving Hodgson's Extended French program is identified.

The following specific recommendations raise concerns for Extended/Immersion French programs that warrant further consideration as the details are decided and implementation begins:

Davisville Recommendations:

1. Relocating Spectrum Alternative Sr School to Davisville Jr PS/MTSD
2. Possible move of Hodgson, grade 7/8 continuation of Eglinton's Extended 4 program to Davisville.
3. That there be recognition of the importance of achieving appropriate program balance in schools offering both French and English and that TDSB staff meet with parents and school staff in September 2010 to initiate a process to ensure the continued viability of the English programs at Davisville Jr PS and Eglinton Jr PS.

For further consideration:

1. If Spectrum or both Hodgson and Spectrum move to Davisville, will Davisville have sufficient space to accommodate SK immersion as each grade is added?
2009/10, year 1 of program – 2 SK classes.
2. What does 'appropriate balance' mean? Adding 2-3 FSL program sites annually is helping to create spots and spread FSL intake among more dual tracks. However, if the majority of a dual track's English JK chooses SK immersion and less than a full class wants to stay in English, is 'appropriate balance' maintained by denying local access to immersion applicants or does each incoming cohort decide the 'appropriate balance' by the choice it makes?
3. If Davisville adds grade 7/8 for Hodgson (Extended 4) or both Hodgson (Extended 4) and Spectrum, should the SK immersion pathway still be Glenview for 7/8 and Lawrence CI?
4. If the Eglinton Grade 4 extended program pathway (Hodgson for 7/8, Leaside CI) is changed to Davisville for 7/8, will the students go to Lawrence or Leaside? The catchment for Eglinton and the mid immersion program at John Ross Robertson (JRR) are almost identical but JRR's pathway is Glenview, Lawrence. What are the implications? How will the loss/gain of secondary students affect program viability, course selection and space?

5. How will the proposed changes affect Brown and John Fisher French immersion programs which also feed to Glenview?

In general:

If the Board adopts any of the staff and/or ARC recommendations affecting Ext/Imm French, the FSLAC asks that it be conditional and that further input be sought and considered from Ext/Imm parents and the FSLAC before implementation is finalized. Strong buy-in from the affected parents and the broader community is essential to maintaining and building the strong attendance that leads to exemplary Ext/Imm program delivery. FSL programs have been growing in absolute terms, against a TDSB backdrop of declining enrolment. To lay the foundation for successful transitions and continued growth, there are 4 key areas for consideration:

Transportation – school bus routes and TTC proximity need to be assessed for new sites to meet the needs of the students and their families.

Pathways – the sites chosen for continuation of programs affects the number of students who stay in the program to graduation. A successful Ext/Imm program at secondary is dependent on sufficient enrolment to maintain course selection. Pathways need to be carefully evaluated with input from the local communities the programs serve and the FSLAC.

Communication – current and prospective Ext/Imm parents, as well as teachers, office staff and administrators need to be informed of the changes.

The best ambassadors for TDSB programs are current parents. Prospective parents (preschool – grade 6) need the information as soon as possible so that they may plan for everything from daycare to preparing students to be on the school bus or the TTC going to an unfamiliar school.

Notification needs to be coordinated with board-wide timelines for FSL program application and registration periods.

Continuity & Predictability – Moving a program to meet the needs of the broader system rather than for specific needs of the program itself, is disruptive and carries the risk of deterring prospective parents and undermining past success. To encourage and maintain enrolment, there needs to be a strong, clear and demonstrated commitment from the Board that these moves are not short term and that Ext/Imm programs are rooted in the communities they serve.

Working together for our students. Travaillons ensemble pour nos élèves.

Tami Oudendijk
Parent co-chair
French as a Second Language Advisory Committee

Attachments:
Davisville SK Immersion Feeder Map
Eglinton Extended 4 Feeder Map
John Ross Robertson Middle Immersion Feeder Map