

offered placements. Staff is continuing to offer a program to these applicants in sites where space is available; and

- To accommodate students within geographic proximity, some catchment areas were adjusted and students were offered placements in the next closest school/program to their designated school (e.g. Cliffwood, Cassandra, Orde, John Ross Robertson).

(b) (i) *That if there is less than a full class over the target, the staffing model will be adjusted accordingly by the Principal, recognizing that split classes might be needed.*

- No schools accommodated the Grade 4 entry by combining Grade 4 with Grade 5 classes;
- Four schools combined Grades 5 and 6 (Roselands, Rawlinson, Wilkinson, Orde);
- No schools combined Grades 3 and 4; and
- To avoid combined classes and meet the demand of the program, classes in Grades 4 to 8 are loaded at over 30 students in most schools.

(b) (ii) *That if there is more than a full class over the target, the Superintendent will examine the available space at the host school to see if all the applicants can be accommodated.*

- Eleven schools will open a second Grade 4 French Immersion/Extended French class in an existing program site;
- To support decisions about opening these classes, meetings were held with Superintendents of Education, Principals, and Program and Planning staff. Trustees, School Council Chairs, and French as a Second Language Advisory Committee (FSLAC) representatives were consulted prior to making a decision; and
- In some instances, English parents in Dual Track schools raised concerns that the viability of the English program would be jeopardized by the increase of French classes.

(b) (iii) *That if numbers exceed the spaces available, an additional site will be determined within the geographic area.*

- Only one new site was opened to accommodate registrations from schools that had no available space for an additional class;
- All parents were contacted to explain the relocation of the program;
- The Board's decisions provided flexibility concerning which students would be accommodated in the home site and which students would be moved to the additional site. As a result of local decisions students were placed by proximity of home school to the French program. Catchment areas were adjusted to offer students a program closer to their home schools, and students were placed by home school groupings so that they would be able to travel together to the new school;
- The Phase 4 expansion highlighted the difficulty of addressing space restrictions resulting from both the primary class size cap and expansion of Grade 4 programs. Staff sought not to displace other programs to support French Immersion/Extended French expansion, and not to close Music rooms, and not to create classroom space by moving a Core French teacher from a dedicated classroom to rotation to other classrooms "a la carte" (since this is not a supportive strategy for retaining a French teacher); and

- Resource costs are increased when programs are opened in new rather than existing sites. Where new sites are established, there is an increase of \$4,000 per year to support the library resources.
- (c) ***That when the viability of the English program in a dual track school is compromised, a PART would be convened to examine the feasibility of establishing a centre for Extended French and/or French Immersion.***
- No Dual Track school was identified with a non-viable English program.
- (d) ***That the creation of a centralized computerized admission process be explored.***
 - Several meetings have been held with Information Technology staff to develop this process;
 - Consultation and on-site visits have taken place with other school boards that use a computerized process;
 - Adaptation of in-house models (e.g. CLASS, Key to Learn, Virtual School) is being explored; and
 - Staff will return to Board with a report concerning a centralized admission process in October 2007.
- (e) ***That the sibling rule be maintained.***
 - All schools have registered siblings before other applicants; and
 - All siblings of students in French Immersion/Extended French programs have been placed.
- (f) ***That for September 2007, where possible, the current number of available spots for SK Immersion be maintained with no more than 30 students in each class and that Educational Assistants continue to be assigned to each SK class in 2007-08, to the extent that the budget process allocates.***
 - Planning and Program staff determined the number of classes based on a set of criteria including historical application patterns, projections, space availability, and other existing programs;
 - In order to address the initial Ministry of Education direction to implement the Primary Class Size Cap, 101 SK classes of 20 or 23 students were created. This resulted in 2,104 pupil places, 114 spaces more than last year and 18 classes more than last year;
 - The Ministry of Education announced, as part of the March 2007 funding release, that Boards may apply for exemptions to the cap on class sizes where caps will compromise program delivery. To make use of this flexibility, we have created classes that pierce the cap in 60% of schools with early French Immersion classes. We have allowed classes up to 27 students. It is important to note that, despite allowing this flexibility, we have maintained 101 classes – the number required under the cap. The flexibility was used from school to school to help maintain program viability and reduce disruption of classes;

- Approximately, 50 students are on a waiting list for SK programs and are being offered placement in other program sites. Last year all students applying for SK were placed by the end of September;
- All SK French Immersion classes will have an Educational Assistant for 2007-08; and
- A more detailed report will come to Board in June 2007 on the final status of SK registration.

(g) *That every student be in a catchment for Grade 4 Immersion and Grade 4 Extended.*

- This was accomplished through the 24 May 2006 Board decision and implemented through the establishment of the Phase 4 sites approved by the Board on 31 January 2007.

(h) *That, if possible, the application process for French Immersion and Extended French programs be abandoned as a first step and be replaced by a one-step registration.*

- This will be examined further as the computerized registration process is developed.

(i) *That staff present a report to the Program and School Services Committee on the SK and Grade 7 Extended applications and catchment areas.*

- This report will be presented in the fall.

Issues to be Addressed in the Fall

Changes as a result of the decisions concerning entry to Grade 4 French Immersion and Extended French programs will have implications in the fall.

- Program Revitalization and the Long Term Capital Plan will affect program placement and expansion;
- There is the potential for significant reorganization of schools in the fall, as the timing of adding classes did not allow the most current enrolment data to be used. This reorganization in French programs is in addition to the anticipated reorganization that will result from implementation of the primary class size cap;
- It is likely that more combined classes will be generated by attempting to accommodate every applicant;
- Teachers allocated to new French Immersion and Extended French classes were taken from the holdback. This will reduce the number of staff available for flexibility in the fall. Additional teachers can be hired only if the system meets and exceeds its projections; and
- Transportation costs are still being examined.

Next Steps

- A further report to Board in October 2007 on the implications and issues outlined above, when September enrolment reports have been completed;
- Transportation costs of the Phase 4 expansion will be reported to Board in April 2008; and

- In future years, staff will begin Grade 4 registration in November for the following September, rather than in January to support better planning for organization of classes and placement of programs.

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Recommendation

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the memorandum be received.

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