French Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: February 11, 2025

A meeting of the French Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee convened from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm via virtual Zoom meeting, with Parent Co-Chair Lynne LeBlanc presiding.

Item	Invitee Name
Attended:	Lynne LeBlanc (Parent Co-Chair W8), Sharlene Henry (Parent Vice Co-Chair, W5/W6 Alt), Charles Zhu (Parent Vice Co-Chair W11), Nabil Hasbun (W1), Lisa McAvoy (W2), Devon Pool (W3), Oluwakemi Ojowa (W4), Bibi Safraw Hanif (W4 Alt), Elizabeth Carvalho (W7), Divya Chandra (W11 Alt), Aamir Barlas (W14 Alt), Gail Miller (W22). Also present: Mary Cruden (Canadian Parents for French), Sharon Beason (Canadian Parents for French Alt), Angela Caccamo (Centrally Assigned Principal), Liliana Martins (Co-ordinator, French Programs C & IL), Audley Salmon (Staff Co-Lead), Trustee Dan MacLean (W2), Trustee Deborah Williams (Trustee Co-Chair W10).
Guests:	Michelle Lawrence (People and Culture), Randy Samuel, Memuna, Michelle Iam, Tara.
Regrets:	Moosa Alloo (Parent Vice Co-Chair W19), Andrew Waters (W3 Alt), Cheryl Batty (W8 Alt), Maeve Gray (W10), Roni Felsen (Staff Co-Lead), Michelle Munroe (Central Co-ordinator PCEO),

Recorder:	James Jarrett

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
1. Call to Order	● Land acknowledgment – Lynne LeBlanc ● Meeting recorded for minute taking purposes ● Introductions	
2. Quorum / Membership Changes	● Quorum met with 10 out of 12 Wards present ● No changes in membership	
3. Approval of Agenda	● Sharlene Henry moves, Bibi Safraw Hanif seconds. Carried.	
4. Approval of January 14, 2025 Minutes	● Sharlene Henry Approves, Devon Pool seconds. Carried.	James Jarrett to post minutes on FSLCAC Page
5. Declarations - Possible Conflict of Interest	● Gail Miller is an emergency replacement person in the TDSB.	
6. Transportation Letter	● Parent Co-Chair: Letter to the Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) ● Draft letter asks for return to all eligible students starting bussing first day of school; i.e, rescind staggered start (second week of school) that was a pandemic response. Staggered start stressful for parents who work, creates logistical challenges and delays kids settling into school community and routines. ● Trustee Co-Chair: Can a recommendation also be made to the Board? ● Parent Co-Chair: Absolutely we would be interested in making a recommendation. ● Trustee MacLean: In the spring, you could do a recommendation and make a delegation to a Trustee committee. Don't know when TSTG is on an agenda as yet. It is another option for this committee. ● Q: In January, TSTG said this is a decision made by TSTG governance, and they would be reviewing decision in May. Do we want to send the letter now?	

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	● Q: Can we make a recommendation without knowing the Trustee committee which would receive it? ● Trustee MacLean: I'm unsure. We would have to ask Ms. Joseph-Dowers about timing and what Trustee committee is concerned with TSTG. ● Q: So we would do the letter, and pass a recommendation to a Board committee? ● Trustee MacLean: Right, but also make a delegation to represent your position. A delegation would allow you to ask questions. ● Parent Co-Chair: I'm excited we are going to be ahead of the curve on this issue. ● Q: The letter is well put together. ● Parent Co-Chair: Motion to send the letter as drafted to TSTG? Sharlene Henry moves, Elizabeth Carvalho seconds. Carried ● Parent Co-Chair: Motion to the Board to recommend that bussing be reinstated for all eligible students on the first day of school. Text for report to Board to make the recommendation will be taken from the draft letter to TSTG. Lisa McAvoy moves, Devon Pool seconds. Carried.	
7. CPF and Ward Reports	● Parent Co-Chair: Any reports for wards or CPF? ● Q: No CPF report, just a reminder that Flag Day is Sat, Feb 15. ● Nil reports for the wards.	
8. Parent Co-Chair Report & Trustee's Report	● Parent Co-Chair: Nil report from the Co-Chair. ● Trustee Co-Chair Report: CAC REVIEW: ● The Board approved the following at the November 13, 2024 meeting: ● a) That the Trustee co-chair and the Director work with the French Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee (formerly known as the French-as-a-Second-Language Community Advisory Committee), the Early Years Community Advisory Committee and the Environmental Sustainability Community Advisory Committee to explore alternative committee models (for example, staff reference groups, stakeholder roundtables, etc.) that honour the work of the respective committees;	

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	● b) That the Director present a report to the Board on Part (a) in the spring 2025;
	● c) That the Director ensure that further CAC reviews include alignment with other CAC mandates and recommendations for possible changes to the committee structure (e.g. staff committee, reference group);
	● d) That the Trustee Co-Chairs for the Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee and the Inner City Community Advisory Committee work with the Director and committee members to review mandates and explore options including developing a new, single community advisory committee model focused on equity and the social determinants of health;
	● e) That the Director presents a report to the Program and School Services Committee on Part (d) above in the fall 2025.
	
	● NOTE: On February 4, 2025, staff provided the following clarification. Over the coming months, staff will engage in a thorough review of the current CAC (Community Advisory Committee) framework and collaborate with CAC members to:
	  ○ Assess whether the existing CAC model effectively addresses their needs.
	  ○ Evaluate alternative models that may better align with the objectives and scope of CAC activities.
	  ○ Identify the most suitable model for the CAC, which may include retaining the current structure.
	  ○ Develop and present a comprehensive report to the Board summarizing the CAC's recommendations.
	
	● Throughout this process, CACs will maintain their ongoing activities until the committee renewal scheduled for the 2025 Board Organizational Meeting.
	
	HERITAGE MONTHS
	● African Heritage (Black History) Month – February 2025	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	• The chosen theme for 2024-25 is Lift Every Voice. This theme is drawn from the iconic first line of the Black National Anthem, and encourages collective strength, unity, diversity, and resilience. • Chinese Heritage Month - February 2025 • The TDSB proudly recognizes Chinese Heritage Month in February each year. This year, we celebrate the Year of the Snake: Tenacious and Transformative. We hope to encourage students, staff, and the TDSB community to make impactful changes amidst challenges. ADVOCACY: • Advocating for Equity, Diversity, and Anti-Racism Teacher Certification - Letter to Ministry and OCT • Following the January 22, 2025 passing of the motion by Trustees Williams and King on behalf of Student Trustee Bell, on February 07, 2025 TDSB Chair, Trustee Shan, wrote to Minister Dunlop and Ms. Lacroix, OCT Registrar & CEO, on behalf of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) to advocate for the implementation of a mandatory equity, diversity, and anti-racism certification for all K-12 teachers in Ontario. This initiative is crucial to ensuring educators are well-equipped to support racialized students across the province. We propose that the Ministry of Education consult with key stakeholders, including the Ontario College of Teachers, the Ontario Black Trustee Caucus, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, equity and diversity experts, educators, and community organizations, to develop and implement this certification program. We also recommend establishing a timeline for the development, consultation, and implementation phases of the certification program. • Toronto Left out of Provincial Funding for New Schools • Trustees with TDSB are calling on the Province to help fund new schools and renovations in Toronto after a recent $1.3 billion provincial announcement	

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	completely omitted projects in Canada's largest school board. On average, TDSB's 579 schools are more than 60 years old and many require urgent repairs, renovations and/or replacement. The Ontario Auditor General recently found that "TDSB school buildings on average are in the worst condition in Ontario," with the Financial Accountability Office of Ontarion reporting that 84% of buildings are now below a state of good repair. School boards, including the TDSB, submit up to 5 projects for consideration each year, however none of the TDSB project were approved despite the urgent need. The projects submitted to this year's Capital Priorities Program were intended to revitalize spaces for students and teachers, from: ○ A new school at 770 Don Mills Road for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8. ○ Replacing St. Margaret's Public School for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8. ○ Replacing Secord Elementary School for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5. ○ A new addition at Davisville Junior Public School. ○ A standalone school for Indigenous students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12. ● In addition to not receiving capital funding, the TDSB continues to face an approximate $4.5 billion maintenance and repair backlog. Despite increased provincial funding, the backlog continues to rise and is compounded by the Ministry of Education's ongoing moratorium on school closures which has been in place since 2017 and which restricts the TDSB's ability to consolidate schools. As a result, the board spends desperately needed money on older and/or low enrolment schools, while limiting the breadth of programming for students. ● Quick Facts: ○ In 2023-2024 TDSB received $293.2 million in funding to maintain buildings, while spending exceeded $447.1 million in the same year as the maintenance backlog grew by approx. $70 million ○ As of January 2025, there were 730 projects actively under construction and another 335 projects in the works.	

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	POLICY CONSULTATIONS ● We want to hear from you. The TDSB is committed to open and inclusive policy decision-making and values community input and participation through consultation. ● Dealing with Abuse and Neglect of Students Policy (P045)	

Policy	Status	Closing Date	Draft New Policy	Contact Information
Dealing with Abuse and Neglect of Students	Open	February 24, 2025	Draft New Policy [docx] Draft New Policy [pdf]	Email: mentalhealthandwellbeing@tdsb.on.ca

Item	Discussion	Motion / Action
	Policy (P045) **Objective** • To promote human rights and to provide a culturally safe (in particular anti-oppressive and anti-racist), nurturing, positive, and respectful learning environment focused on preventing abuse and neglect for all students, including newcomer students. • To educate all students about abuse and neglect. • To train employees about abuse and neglect, including understanding how racial biases can further harm and/or stigmatize racialized and vulnerable students, including newcomer students, in particular Indigenous and Black students. • To inform employees and volunteers working with students about their legal duty to report abuse and neglect - suspected, witnessed and/or disclosed. • To address and provide identity affirming/culturally responsive support including settlements services which supporting newcomer students and connections to community agencies that are identity affirming/culturally responsive for the emotional and psychological needs of students, who have experienced abuse or neglect. • To identify, develop and facilitate identity affirming/culturally responsive and relevant healing practices for all groups of students.	

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	If you have any questions related to the review and consultation of the Policy, please feel free to contact us at: mentalhealthandwellbeing@tdsb.on.ca • Learning Opportunities Index Policy (P067) **Policy** / **Status** / **Closing Date** / **Draft New Policy** / **Contact Information** Learning Opportunities Index / Open / March 24, 2025 / Draft New Policy [docx] / Draft New Policy [pdf] / Email: research@tdsb.on.ca	

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	Policy (P067)
	
	Objective
	
	• To support student learning experiences through equitable allocation of resources to schools.
	
	• To provide direction to staff regarding the use of the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI).
	
	Please provide your input and feedback here
	
	If you have any questions related to the review and consultation of the Policy, please feel free to contact us at: research@tdsb.on.ca
	
	• TDSB Trustees and Staff from the Research and Development department will be hosting four (4) public consultation sessions across the city on the draft policy for the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI). These sessions ensure families, students, and community members have the opportunity to learn more about the LOI and how it is used to support schools. There will be opportunities to ask questions and share feedback on the dates listed below. If you are unable to attend any of the sessions, please share your feedback online.
	  ○ West End LOI Public Consultation
	  Date and Time: Thursday February 20, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM
	  Location: In person at 1 Civic Centre Court, Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B3
	  ○ East End LOI Public Consultation
	  Date and Time: Thursday March 6, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM
	  Location: In person at 140 Borough Drive, Scarborough, ON, M1P 4N6
	  ○ Downtown LOI Public Consultation
	  Date and Time: Tuesday March 18, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM
	  Location: In person at Central Technical School, 725 Bathurst St, Toronto, ON M5S 2R5	

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	○ Virtual LOI Public Consultation Date and Time: Thursday March 20, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM Location: Webinar link will be shared on Thursday March 20 ● Please RSVP to let us know you will be attending. ● We are committed to creating inclusive and accessible meetings for everyone. If you have specific concerns related to accessibility, or require childcare or interpretation services, please indicate when registering or email us at Research@tdsb.on.ca or call 416-394-7404.	
9. TIMED ITEM Staffing / People & Culture	● Staff: Michelle Lawrence from People & Culture, formerly Employee Services. ● FSACAC sent questions ahead of time about staffing for French programs. ● People are hired constantly, and people resign each day. ● People also move around our system frequently. OT vacancies fluctuate, and the length of vacancies is also variable. An LTO can be from 3 months up to the rest of the school year. Some leaves, like jury duty, are completely unpredictable. ● The data being shared with you was captured from our SFE system, the software that fills Occasional Teaching (OT) vacancies, and is from Feb 6, 2025: ● 626 elementary OT vacancies, 112 required French (18%), Core or FI. ● In secondary, it's based on courses. There were 364 vacancies, 28 requiring French. ● For permanent contracts for Elementary teachers, 19.5 jobs were unfilled, 4.5 French. ● For permanent contracts for Secondary teachers, 26 jobs were unfilled, none requiring French. ● From September to January, the daily fill rate is 84%. Unable to track French separately. ● We liaise with other boards for strategies to fill positions. Teachers can be on OT lists at other boards. Our fill rates are similar to our neighbouring boards.	James Jarrett to share slides with FSACAC

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	FSL Qualifications and Leaves ● Of our 11,018 permanent elementary teachers, 2,163 have FSL Part 1. ● Of those, 2,163 staff, 772 are FI teachers, 148 are Extended French (EF). We can' provide data on Core teachers. PowerSchool doesn't track that. ● This means that roughly 1,200 qualified FSL elementary teachers do not teach French, though many of those people may be Core French teachers. ● In elementary, 114 qualified French teachers are on leave. Leaves can be of varying lengths of time. ● In secondary, of 5,351 teachers, 472 have FSL. 113 teach FI or EF. 241 teach core French. 167 don't teach French. ● Presently, 35 of these teachers are on leave. ● For Secondary 279 were required, and we have 472 with qualifications. Each secondary teachers teaches 6 sections. ● We also have the ability to hire teachers on Letters of Permission from the Ministry, for people who are not FSL qualified but may have a French background. ● We have 4 elementary and one secondary teachers on Letters of Permission. EF/FI teachers Teaching in French and English ● We surveyed 20 schools, and 9 schools had teachers doing both. Mid Year Timetable Switches ● We can ask, but a teacher cannot be forced to change timetables because of their FSL qualifications. ● We used to have the power to mandate a change, but we lost an arbitration ● We advise the Elementary Teachers of Toronto (local of Elementary Teachers Federation Ontario-ETFO) what the assignments will be for the following school year in April. In the September re-organization, we can mandate change to teacher assignments	

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	Vacancies Filled by non-qualified staff. ● Our technology does not allow us to see how many vacancies are being filled by non-French teacher, or emergency replacement people. Using same tech that we were at amalgamation in 1998 ● If a Principal takes a teacher's prep to cover another class, it has to be repaid within 15 days Support for Principals in a Sudden Vacancy ● As a system we are constantly interviewing and hiring people, and French is always a priority. We provide schools with lists of candidates by postal code. ● In terms of qualified OT, we are capped at 40% of our workforce, which is 4400 elementary OTs. An OT has to work a minimum of 30 days a year to stay on our list. ● For Secondary OTs, the minimum is 25 days. Many OTs get snapped up as Long Term Occasional teachers (LTOs). Situation at start of 2024-25 School Year ● Fully staffed for this year. We pool hired 40 French teachers by September 1st. 6 were hired with no place for them. ● The reason we reorganize in September is students don't all start the first week. Bachelor of Education in FSL ● Queen' B Ed program for FSL teachers is done with a consortium of Boards who hire the teacher candidates as LTOs while they do their B Ed on weekends and during the summer. We know about this program and are looking into it. ● Q: Would this lead to additional FSL teaching seats at Queen's, or are we talking about reallocating existing seats that have been given to other boards? ● Staff: We ask for seats in Toronto. I don't know if they would add seats or not. That would be a question for the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.	

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	● We know that when faculties of ed went to 2-year programs, they reduced the number of seats from 9000 to 4500. New Brunswick went back to 1 year. Limits on Retired Teachers ● We have also been working with the Ontario Teacher's Federation regarding the 50-day limit on retired staff helping us fill vacancies. Potential Solutions ● We know that there is no substantial difference between 1 & 2 year grads in terms of quality. Initially, we thought that they would build Special Education into the program. We have a nation-wide need for French Teachers. B Ed program could be returned to being a 1 year program. ● Look to central groups like OPSBA (Ontario Public School Board Association) which has purview over things like compensation. Teachers make the same money in Toronto and Hamilton, even though costs of living are different. Consider that different boards have different needs. When we look at stakeholder voice, there are local considerations in attracting FSL. ● Partnership with York University. We host a focus group that examines challenges for French educators. Some see a lack of value of French as a subject at the local school. There is a sense of isolation at their schools, and not being valued in professional learning at school. ● For retention of FSL teachers, central French department supports our new and experienced educators. We allow them to voice their concerns to us without fear. ● We have embedded supports, such as learning coaches. ● Admin also need support in building relationships and creating communities. ● At the school level, in FI schools, i.e, are the announcements in French? ● We have support for dual-track schools to work collaboratively in planning. ● New Teachers are provided 4 JELI (Job Embedded Learning Initiative) and 2 JAM (Job Associated Mentoring) days after a couple of years, for professional learning. ● Focus on the hiring of French teachers through the year. We reach out of province to the major Quebec universities and have virtual recruitment fairs.	

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	● Q: Perennially there are parents that go to the press because they don't have a French teacher, but your numbers show that this issue is proportional. Correct? ● Staff: Absolutely. ● Q: What are superintendents doing to check on their French educators? What are schools doing to make French teachers feel like they're part of the team? For example, bilingual signage in schools? ● Q: Of the 1200 qualified FSL teachers, say 700 are in Core and 500 are not teaching in French, wondering what is done to make them feel valued to stay teaching in French? ● Staff: I don't want to make assumptions. We do exit interviews at the Board. There are a variety of reasons why people leave a school. Sometimes it's professional, sometimes it's personal, sometimes it's geographical. ● Q: Assuming that 500 are opting out, I'm concerned that we don't know why. There's got to be something deeper. What's the follow-up from a superintendent? ● Staff: We have for example a school where they've lost a French teacher, and it's been a revolving door of OTs. The SOE and the principal reach out to us for a list of French teachers. Someone goes in, and they tell us that they want to leave because they're being grilled by the parents, being questioned on their credentials and work history. How do you support the community to support the teacher? ● Another experience I've witnessed is where we could not have a dedicated class for the French teacher, because of class closures from lack of custodians. The French teacher wanted their own space. We had to negotiate to keep the space. ● Sometimes, teachers want other experiences because they want to build leadership capacities as aspiring leaders in our Board. ● Superintendents visit their schools regularly and liaise with principals about instructional leadership and issues. ● Q: Perhaps we can look to Angela to conduct a survey of French teachers who have chosen not to be in a French assignment so the system can understand this group better and find solutions?	

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	• Staff: Michelle, you've given some concreted examples that are great. • Q: For a school that's struggling with French staffing, maybe the administration needs support. It just seems like the French challenge comes up yearly. • Staff: We have to keep in mind that a lot of OTs are new teachers. It's very layered. Every situation is different. We just have to put our heads together. • Q: From the slides, the scope of the problem for French teachers is not different from English teachers. But in an English program, if there's a vacancy, we don't cancel the English instruction for the day. Hat's off for the effort you're making. • Q: OPSBA got a grant to do a labour market partnership study regarding French teachers. I'm wondering if their guides and advice are being used at the TDSB? • Staff: We did get a grant, and we use it for moving from awareness to action. • Q: Maybe we can collect some other questions and send them to you. Regarding everything from recruitment to retention, we appreciate the hard work you're doing. • Staff: Definitely consider Angela is part of our team. We offer FI as a board as well as Core French. We're trying to be creative but cost neutral in solving problems. If you have ideas for us, we would love for you to send me thoughts. • Q: Teacher's college used to be 1 year, now it's 2, and number of graduates were halved as a result. How come other provinces haven't followed along? • Staff: New Brunswick reversed course. Their seats went up. • Q: Do you know why it hasn't happened here? • Staff: It's a provincial matter in the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.	
10. Staff Review	• Staff: Early FI did conclude on November 29th. We did our offers of placement. The portal is closed. Families who accepted placement in November now need to complete registration. • Late applicants are being redirected to local schools by address to be added to late waitlists. • Middle FI application process closed January 31st. The new application portal remains active. We will take applicants until we complete the placement process. • We have a record number of MFI applicants, 1,141 were on time. • We are very busy with professional learning in the system. • Q: How was the process with PowerSchool.	

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	● Staff: So far, so good. It's still a learning process, but so far we're happy.	
11. CAC Review	● Staff: This item is in the Trustee's report above. ● Q: Can we complete the outstanding work to implement the name change to FSACAC? ● Staff: The CACs should continue their work, yes.	
12. Adjournment	● Sharlene Henry moves, Devon Pool seconds. Carried.	
Next Meeting	● March 18, Hybrid.	