

March 2012

FSLAC NEWS

French as a Second Language Advisory Committee

Visit to Parkdale PS - Full Day Kindergarten/Immersion

The Senior Kindergarten French Immersion students at Parkdale PS had a special visitor in January – Commissioner of Official Languages Graham Fraser. Commissioner Fraser read a story to the children, toured the school and met with staff and parents from the FSLAC to hear about teaching and learning French at the TDSB.

Parkdale PS is a model inner city school and 2/3 of the students speak a language other than English (or French!) at home. The SK French Immersion program at Parkdale was opened in September 2009 as part of TDSB efforts to meet demand and to ensure that the programs are equitably distributed across the city. Parkdale is the first TDSB school to have both French Immersion and full day kindergarten.

With the support and leadership of FSL Program Coordinator Alison Pearce, the kindergarten teachers at Parkdale have built a full day Kindergarten program that uses the play-based approach to early learning and the best practices of early immersion. It will be the standard as more French immersion schools have full day kindergarten in Sept 2012. French oral language skills are developed first through listening, interacting and playing.

The teachers report that having the students for the full day means that they start to express themselves in French sooner and are better prepared for grade 1. There were no signs that students were tired out by a long day - Commissioner Fraser's story time was in the afternoon and he found the students were energetic, attentive and full of fun!

March Break French Fun

Toronto Public Library is offering free French theatre and magic shows at nine branches across the city during March break. For more information, contact these branches: Cedarbrae, Don Mills, Parliament, North York Central, Sanderson, Richview, Fairview, S. Walter Stewart and Maria A. Shchuka or go to www.torontopubliclibrary.ca and search 'March break', then click on 'French'.

The National Film Board is open – drop by between 10 am and 4 pm to experience 'Can you see in the Dark - À Voir Dans Le Noir'. It is a 90 minute hands-on bilingual activity for the whole family presented in partnership with the CNIB. \$5 per child, free for accompanying adults. 150 John Street at Richmond. <http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/mediatheque/>

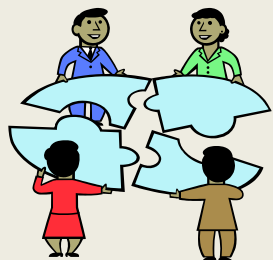
Concours et Festival

The annual French public speaking event for Ontario students is on May 12 at Glendon College at York University. The 'Concours et Festival d'art oratoires' is organized by Canadian Parents for French and the Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association.

Students from grades 4-12 in core, extended and immersion French participate locally, provincially and nationally. An estimated 20 000 Ontario students participated in 2011!

Senior student national finalists compete for full scholarships to the University of Ottawa.

Further information is available through your French teacher and at www.cpfont.on.ca, click on the Concours/Festival tab at the top.



Working
together
for our
students

Travaillons
ensemble
pour nos
élèves

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We're on the
Web!

See us at:

www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac

Parents Ask....

What happens when a teacher can't come to work for a day or two or longer?

It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that the class is safe and that teaching and learning continue during the absence of the regular teacher. The disruption can be hard on students and principals try to make things go as smoothly as possible. As soon as the teacher tells the principal that he/she won't be in, the principal enters the information into an automated call system called 'Smart Find Express'. For core, extended and immersion, the request is made for a teacher with FSL qualifications. Teachers on the occasional teacher (OT) list receive an automated call and can accept or decline the offer of work. Principals get to know the occasional teachers and can have ones who are familiar with the school routine called first. However, the subsequent order of the calling is random to ensure that work is distributed fairly.

Teachers who want to be on the OT list go through the same hiring process with the same background checks and qualifications as regular classroom teachers. The teachers on the OT list include recently retired teachers, recent graduates and teachers who prefer flexible schedules. It is important to note that retired teachers are subject to restrictions on how many days they can work. The FSL department invites occasional French teachers to participate in professional learning along with regular teachers whenever possible.

For the first 10 days of any assignment, the OT is paid the occasional rate and then on day 10, they are on the same pay scale as regular teachers and are retroactively compensated at that rate from day 1. An OT that is in a class for a few days usually has the lesson plans and notes from the regular teacher and does yard duty if required.

If the regular teacher is going to be away for an extended period, the principal has to find an 'LTO' or long term occasional teacher. These jobs are posted by the Board and applications go to the principal who must interview half of the applicants up to a maximum of 5. The number of applicants can vary significantly depending on the time of year and the local job market.

When an LTO is needed suddenly, it can be a big challenge to find someone. The OT department, the FSL department and principals all network to get the position filled as soon as possible. An LTO has all of the responsibilities of the regular teacher including assessment, report cards and parent-teacher interviews.

CEFR: Work in Progress

The FSL Department is working with teachers to shift teaching practice towards the communicative approach that is the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The focus is on elementary and secondary Core French and the objectives are to increase retention in the program beyond grade 9 and to improve student achievement in French, particularly speaking skills.

Since January 2011, over 400 Core French teachers have participated in a full day session entitled "Oui, je parle français" where they examine the proficiency grid (A1- B2) and develop strategies for building confidence and competence in their students.

A CEFR Workgroup of grade 9 Core French teachers is at work as a professional learning community to review current teaching practice, develop communicative tasks and examine student performance. Members of the Workgroup presented to secondary FSL and International Languages teachers at the board-wide PD day on February 17, 2012.

Three members of the FSL department have participated in provincial training sessions for the CEFR in Ottawa and many core/extended/ immersion French teachers have attended sessions at conferences and accessed resources through professional associations, including the Ontario Modern Languages Teachers' Association, l'Association canadienne des professeurs d'immersion and the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers.

To learn more about the CEFR and the self-assessment grid, click on www.cpfont.on.ca

Summer Ideas

The YMCA offers students age 16-17 the opportunity to live and work in French in Canada over the summer: www.summer-work.com

ISE Ontario offers exchanges in France and Switzerland over the summer and during the school year to students age 13-17: www.iseontario.on.ca

FSLAC Meetings – All Welcome

Parents, students, trustees, teachers and staff are invited to attend and participate in FSLAC meetings. Meetings start at 7 pm at the TDSB offices at 5050 Yonge St., ground floor, committee room A or B.

Meeting notices, reports and minutes are posted on the TDSB website: www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac

Upcoming meetings are:
March 22, April 17, May 29 and June 19, 2012.

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