

TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE – EXTENDED FRENCH GRADE 7 ENTRY

TO Program and School Services
Committee

21 January 2009

RECOMMENDATION IT IS RECOMMENDED:

- 1. That the current Grade 7 entry point for the Extended French program be phased out by 2012;**
- 2. That parents and community members be informed that the program will be phased out by September 2012;**
- 3. That the Grade 4 entry Extended French program in response to requests for enrolments be maintained and expanded.**

BACKGROUND

On 25 October 2000, the Board decided as part of the Rationalization of Optional French Programs that three entry points be offered:

- Early Immersion (Senior Kindergarten entry)
- Middle Immersion (Grade 4 entry)
- Extended French (Grade 7 entry).

On 18 February 2004, the Board approved the expansion of Optional French programs to include Extended French in which students entered the program at Grade 4.

On 31 January 2007, the Board decided that every student be in a catchment for Grade 7 Extended so that every student has the ability to access every type of French as a Second Language program offered.

On 16 April 2008, the Board considered a working paper of the General Asset and Program Planning Trustee Working Group setting policy direction for program and capital planning.

Reconsideration of the Grade 7 entry point to the Extended French program was suggested and referred to staff for further study.

RATIONALE

Resources should be allocated responsibly to support programs that are effective. An effective French program meets Board and Ministry requirements that contribute to the objectives of language acquisition and fluency; it can be appropriately and adequately supported and is sustainable. This report describes the changes in Ministry and Board directions that have affected the Extended French Grade 7 entry point, the impacts of multiple entry points to French Immersion and Extended French programs, and outcomes for students.

1. Ministry of Education Policy (Appendix A)

The Ministry of Education outlines the requirements for daily and accumulated hours of instruction and program requirements to the end of Grade 8 for Immersion and Extended French. The Ministry requires a minimum of 1260 hours of instruction in French for entry to Grade 9. Since the Grade 7 Extended French program provides only 720 hours of French instruction by the end of Grade 8, the program is not compliant with Ministry of Education requirements.

2. Extended French Grade 7 Entry Program at TDSB (Appendix B)

The program is situated in 16 elementary and middle schools. The delivery of the Grade 7 entry point for the Extended French program is inconsistent across the city, reflecting legacy board practice. Instruction in French ranges from 80 minutes per day to 150 minutes per day.

At the secondary level, there is no differentiation of program by the original entry point into Extended French programming. Students from the Grade 7 and Grade 4 entry points will blend in Grade 9 for the first time in 2009-10. When this occurs, Grade 4 students will enter secondary school with 2250 hours of instruction, while the Grade 7 students will have 720 hours. At the secondary level, the Ministry of Education curriculum has been designed for students with 1260 hours of instruction. The students in these blended classes will have a wide range of

knowledge and language proficiency, creating a challenging academic environment.

3. Timetabling and Multi-Track Sites (Appendix C)

In elementary schools, staff is allocated by numbers, not by program. There will be different staff assigned for French and English programs, but not for individual French programs. As a result, there is no differentiated staffing for Extended French based on the entry point of the students. This can restrict staffing models and result in awkward grade and program combinations for both the French and English streams.

As an example, in schools with both Grade 7 and Grade 4 entry Extended French programs, classes are blended prior to Grade 9 because there is no additional staffing for each program. As a result, schools cannot timetable separate classes. In schools where there are French Immersion programs with entry at Senior Kindergarten, there can be triple and quadruple tracked schools. The implementation of Primary Class size caps further complicates these issues since staffing levels are closely defined and the flexibility to create more classes is restricted.

4. Resources

The expansion of Senior Kindergarten French Immersion and Grade 4 Extended French programs has increased the demand for resources: material, human and financial.

- a) Material resources are not readily available at the appropriate language level for use at the Grade 7 entry level;
- b) Where materials are available, they are very expensive;
- c) Despite enhancements to teacher recruitment and retention initiatives, French as a Second Language (FSL) teachers are a limited resource. It is difficult to recruit and retain sufficient teachers and choice is very limited; and
- d) The Ministry of Education renewal grant has supported the expansion of FSL programs but the funding ends in June 2009.

5. Program Application (Appendix D)

Applications to the Grade 7 program are high and generate waiting lists in a few of the 16 schools each year; most of these wait listed students are accommodated in other existing sites.

Application to the program provides a pathway to a designated secondary school. This may be different from the student's home school and in some instances parents choose the Grade 7 program because of the school location.

6. Program Retention (Appendix E)

There is a 35-40% retention rate of Grade 7 entry Extended French students from Grade 8 to Grade 9; the rate has been consistent over the past four years. There is further attrition of students by graduation.

Student exit surveys were received from seven schools in June 2008. Students demit from Extended French in Grade 8 for many reasons including secondary school distance, secondary school reputation, program difficulty, and other specialized program choices. (Appendix F)

7. Research on Entry Points in French Immersion (Appendix G)

Findings from a number of research studies point to better performance when students begin their language study at an early age. Students who begin learning a second language in Kindergarten or Grade 1 perform better than those who begin learning at later grades.

8. Achievement Data (Appendix H)

The student achievement data was reviewed to compare the Core French results from students who had left the Extended French program with the results of the rest of the students in Core French. There is minimal difference in achievement between the two groups of students after Grade 9.

Summary

Multiple entry points for French Immersion and Extended French are impacting effective program delivery. The Grade 4 Extended French entry program continues to be highly subscribed and successful. Phasing out the Grade 7 Extended French entry point would support better programs and better outcomes for students, and allow for resources to be used to support the expansion of the Immersion and Extended programs across the city, thus enhancing program viability and sustainability.

RESOURCES

Funding from the Special Purpose Elementary Language Grant supports the additional costs of providing French programs: \$273 Core French, \$311 Extended French and \$348 French Immersion. Staffing for French Immersion/Extended French programs is provided to be consistent with collective agreements and the staffing and budget processes.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ministry of Education Policy
Appendix B: Extended French Grade 7 Entry Program at TDSB
Appendix C: Multi-Track Sites
Appendix D: Program Application
Appendix E: Program Retention
Appendix F: Exit Surveys
Appendix G: Research on Entry Points in French Immersion
Appendix H: Achievement Data for Students who Leave Extended French
Appendix I: Transition Plan for Grade 7 Extended French Programs
Appendix J: French Entry Points – Other Boards
Appendix K: TDSB Program History

FROM

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Appendix A

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION POLICY

The Ministry of Education presented a new policy document entitled *The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Extended French Grades 4-8, French Immersion Grades 1-8* in 2001. This new policy document defined both French Immersion and Extended French programs by accumulated hours and programming requirements by the end of Grade 8. The policy states that:

In an Extended French program, French must be the language of instruction for a minimum of 25% of the total instructional time at every grade level of the program ...and must provide a minimum of 1260 hours of instruction in French by the end of Grade 8."

In the former Ministry policy, students were required to accumulate a total of 2100 hours by the end of secondary school (OAC requirement). This allowed for flexibility at the Grade 7 and 8 levels to program for Extended French with a Grade 7 entry. Further, three years of Core French were counted to achieve the total number of hours but this is not permitted in the new policy.

Although school boards may choose to start an Extended French program at a Grade other than Grade 4, they must ensure that the policy and program requirements are met at each grade level and that students enrolled in the program are given the opportunity to achieve all of the expectations in French as a Second Language outlined for the relevant program.

Students not enrolled in Extended French are required to study Core French until the end of Grade 9.

Impact:

The expectations in the Extended French program are designed for a five-year program, starting in Grade 4; it was not designed to be a two year program. Students experience difficulty meeting course expectations at the same time as developing language proficiency.

Appendix B

EXTENDED FRENCH GRADE 7 ENTRY PROGRAM AT TDSB

The Extended French program has not been rationalized across the city and ranges from 80 minutes per day to 150 minutes per day of French instruction.

Grade	Minutes of Daily Instruction	Percentage of Daily Instruction	Hours of Annual Instruction
Grade 7	80-150	25-50%	240-450
Grade 8	120-150	40-50%	360-450
Total			600-900

Some schools offer an enriched Core French program in Grade 7 and introduce *histoire* and *géographie* in Grade 8. Other schools offer *français*, *histoire*, *géographie* and some *éducation physique*, *arts visuels* or *arts dramatiques* in both Grades 7 and 8. Some schools offer *français*, *histoire*, *géographie* and *mathématiques* in both Grades 7 and 8.

Impact:

The Rationalization of Optional French Programs report passed by the Board on 25 October 2000 included the parameter that “programs offered in the Toronto District School Board must meet Ministry requirements with respect to number of accumulated hours of instruction.”

None of these programs meets the Ministry requirement of 1260 hours for Grade 9 entry. To fulfill the time requirements, schools would have to provide 630 hours per year in Grades 7 and 8. In order to achieve this, schools would have to provide several additional subjects in French. This program would be very intensive and challenging for students. Also, resources (e.g. textbooks) may not be available.

Teachers and Principals indicate that the program is challenging pedagogically in that students are developing French language skills at the same time as learning intermediate level curricula.

When the Grade 7 and Grade 4 entry points blend in Grade 9 for the first time in 2009-10, Grade 7 students will have had 720 hours and Grade 4 students 2250 hours, creating an inequitable learning opportunity due to the wide range of knowledge and language proficiency in Grade 9.

Appendix C

MULTI-TRACK SITES, OCTOBER 2008

School	English	Immersion	Grade 4 Extended Pathway	Grade 7 Entry
Beverley Heights MS	X	X	X	
Charles Gordon PS	X		X	X
Cosburn MS	X	X	X	X (Grade 6)
Earl Grey PS (Phase 5)	X	X	X	X
Glenview PS	X	X		X
John English PS	X	X	X	
Joseph Brant PS	X	X	X	
Lord Lansdowne Sr. PS	X		X	X
Rocklife MS	X		X	X
Sir Alexander MacKenzie Sr. PS	X	X	X	X
Sir Ernest McMillan PS	X	X	X	X
Swansea PS	X		X	X
Willowdale MS	X	X	X	
Winona Dr. PS	X	X	X	X

Impact:

There is no differentiated staffing to accommodate program delivery. With the implementation of the Primary Class Size initiative, elementary schools are now allocated staffing on a “school within a school” model. English and French streams have separate staffing envelopes as do Kindergarten, Primary and Junior/Intermediate divisions. As a result of this “sweating” of staffing, schools have little flexibility in creating classes. This is particularly challenging in multiple track schools with a variety of English and French programs.

Appendix D

PROGRAM APPLICATION

**EXTENDED FRENCH GRADE 7 ENROLMENT
AS OF 30 MAY 2005-2008**

School	Registration 2005	Waitlist	Registration 2006	Waitlist	Registration 2007	Waitlist	Registration 2008	Waitlist
Arlington	52	0	65	0	62	10	50	0
Bowmore	80	0	48	0	55	0	53	0
Charles Gordon	120	0	105	7	120	0	99	24*
Earl Grey	46	0	58	0	45	0	63	0
Glen Ames	30	22	60	0	51	0	38	0
Glenview	32	0	33	14	49	0	53	0
Henry Hudson	52	27	56	9	54	20	57	0
JB Tyrell	60	36	69	0	60	18	61	21
King Edward	28	0	30	0	13	0	16	0
Lord Lansdowne	26	0	24	0	24	0	21	0
Queen Alexandra	57	0	58	0	59	0	56	0
Rockcliffe	18	0	16	0	0	0	18	0
Sir A. Mackenzie	60	35	54	39	51	0	53	0
Sir Ernest McMillan	42	0	51	0	45	0	19	0
Swansea	30	7	30	18	33	0	28	0
Winona	85	0	62	0	82	0	85	0
TOTAL	818	127	819	87	803	48	770	45

Impact:

*Unable to accommodate waiting list as Grade 4 Extended French students reached Grade 7 this year.

Appendix E

PROGRAM RETENTION

Enrolment in the Extended French Program – Cohort Study

	Grade 7	Grade 8		Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12	
Entry School Year	Original Enrolment	Retention of Original Enrolment	% of Original Enrolment	Retention of Original Enrolment	% of Original Enrolment	Retention of Original Enrolment	% of Original Enrolment	Retention of Original Enrolment	% of Original Enrolment	Retention of Original Enrolment	% of Original Enrolment
2002-2003	787	685	87%	275	35%	266	34%	254	32%	248	32%
2003-2004	746	623	84%	295	40%	271	36%	253	34%		
2004-2005	720	603	84%	264	37%	251	35%				
2005-2006	732	627	86%	267	36%						
2006-2007	779	688	88%								
2007-2008	797										

All figures effective as at October 31 of the school year.

There is significant enrolment attrition from Grade 8 to Grade 9 in each year: 60-65% of the original cohort leaves after two years in the program.

Enrolment in the Early French Immersion Program – Cohort Study

	SK	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6	
Entry School Year	Original Enrol-ment	Retention of Original Enrol-ment	% of Original Enrol-ment	Retention of Original Enrol-ment	% of Original Enrol-ment	Retention of Original Enrol-ment	% of Original Enrol-ment	Retention of Original Enrol-ment	% of Original Enrol-ment	Retention of Original Enrol-ment	% of Original Enrol-ment	Retention of Original Enrol-ment	% of Original Enrol-ment
2001-2002	1,810	1,491	83%	1,285	71%	1,144	63%	1,017	56%	938	52%	858	47%
2002-2003	1,773	1,465	83%	1,259	71%	1,112	63%	1,010	57%	942	53%		
2003-2004	1,875	1,563	83%	1,363	73%	1,207	64%	1,081	58%				
2004-2005	1,896	1,614	85%	1,394	74%	1,272	67%						
2005-2006	1,909	1,583	83%	1,385	73%								
2006-2007	1,987	1,657	83%										
2007-2008	2,077												

There is enrolment attrition in each grade; 47 - 48% of the original cohort leaves after six years in the program (after Grade 5).

Appendix F

EXIT SURVEYS

EXIT SURVEY SUMMARY

June 2008

To add information to the attrition data, Exit Surveys were completed by Grade 8 students who were not continuing in the program in Grade 9. Exit surveys were completed by 212 students in 7 of the 16 schools. Reasons for leaving the program are:

School	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Number of Responses
Distance	13	8	2	7	13	3	0	46
Where Program Offered	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	14
Moved/Moving	8	2	2	0	3	2	0	17
Be With Friends in Other School	20	7	2	9	10	9	0	57
Enrol in Another Special Program	7	10	2	19	22	3	6	69
Another School Board	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	6
Program too Difficult	7	6	3	5	6	17	1	45
No Additional Support at School	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	6
No Extra Support at Home	9	7	2	2	9	5	0	34
Teacher Recommended	2	2	0	0	2	3	0	9
Class Size too Large	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	6
Not Happy with School	3	0	0	0	3	1	0	7
Not Happy with Program	6	2	2	1	6	4	3	24
Not Happy with Teacher	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	6
Not Happy with Students	4	0	0	4	5	0	0	13
Total Responses (each student could choose more than one reason)	86	63	15	49	82	54	10	359
Total Surveys	46	36	14	29	29	48	10	212

Comments from Students

Reason	Comment
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My parents don't like the Extended French School Want regular high school My parents liked another school better Excel more in school going to Don't like the High School Heard was a good school, parent suggestion Not happy with home school offered Accepted to a better school
Subjects Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Want to enrol in arts program High school doesn't have Extended French IB more challenging Wanted more English courses My high school has enriched French Don't have Immersion at school going to Wanted geography and history in English Reduces knowledge learned in history and geography Don't need to know geography and history in French

Difficulty with Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hard work• Afraid couldn't catch up in Grade 9• Liked French better before• Marks at the high school don't seem like the school I plan to attend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty to earn 60 in French spoken subjects• Too much homework• Program more difficult than seemed• Large campus, level of difficulty with subject• Don't feel confident to continue
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students didn't take it seriously• My parents wanted me in Extended French but I didn't• Some students a pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I don't like French• Not everybody acted as if they wished to be there and put in enough effort• I don't like it anymore

Appendix G

RESEARCH ON ENTRY POINTS IN FRENCH IMMERSION

The Rationalization of Optional French Programs report passed by the Board on 25 October 2000 included the parameter that “Optional French program models are supported by research.”

The research data is inconclusive as to which entry point is optimal; however, the data highlight certain variables that explain success in any program which are number of hours of exposure to French, percentage of the program which is offered in French, teaching methods and student attitude.

2003 – Dicks, Rehorickage – *Reflections on the Debate about Early French Immersion*

Early French Immersion has been shown again and again to offer the best means for children with the widest range of academic abilities to become bilingual. Early French Immersion students are far and away more likely to reach the advanced level of French proficiency than are students in any other program.

1998 – Halsall – *French Immersion: The Success Story Told by Research*

Students who begin learning a second language in kindergarten or Grade 1 perform better than those who begin around Grade 4 and much better than those who begin in Grade 6 or 7: levels of performance are more consistent, and the ability to speak, comprehend, and utilize second language skills with confidence is better with early learners than later learners.

1998 – Lapkin, Swain, Turnbull – *Time on Task and Immersion Graduates’ French Proficiency*

In a study that compared results in standardized tests of listening, reading, writing and speaking skills from French Immersion students across Canada, early immersion students demonstrated superior French skills compared to late entry students.

1992 – Dicks – *Analytic and Experiential Features of Three French Immersion Programs: Early, Middle and Late*

Students entering French Immersion at different entry points have vastly different levels of cognitive maturity and first language literacy skills as well as varying number of hours of exposure to French. Early Immersion students are offered more experiential language activities so they tend to be stronger with respect to language tasks and oral fluency. Late entry students are offered a more analytic approach to learning languages and lag behind in the experiential use of the language.

1991 – Dube, MacFarlane – *Middle Immersion: Is It a Better Option than Early or Late?*

In general, research indicates that Early Immersion students perform better than Middle or Late Immersion students in listening, speaking, reading and writing at least through Grade 8. Early Immersion students tend to feel more positively about their French language skills and are less anxious about using French than Late Immersion students.

1950 – Erikson – *bibliographical reference is not available*

Children aged 6-11 have reached a developmental stage that is the most appropriate for second language acquisition; the key focus is on learning and achieving.

Appendix H

ACHIEVEMENT DATA FOR STUDENTS WHO LEAVE EXTENDED FRENCH

Grade 9 is a mandatory credit for high school graduation. As a result, students who leave the Grade 7 entry Extended French program after Grade 8 must continue in Core French in Grade 9.

The student achievement data was reviewed to compare the Core French results from students who had left the Extended French program with the results of the rest of the students in Core French.

In the chart below, each school year shows the percentage achieved in Core French for the two groups of students.

Cohort refers to students who have left the Grade 7 entry Extended French program when they entered secondary school.

System refers to all students who take Core French at each grade level.

In Grade 9, students from the Grade 7 entry Extended French program scored 9-10% higher than all students in the system. From Grades 10 to 12, there is only a 1-4 % difference in achievement between the two groups of students.

Percentage (Marks) Achieved in Core French

School Year	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
2001-02				
Cohort	74	78	81	84
System	64	76	79	81
2002-03				
Cohort	77	76	81	81
System	68	75	79	82
2003-04				
Cohort	79	79	82	86
System	69	76	78	82
2004-05				
Cohort	79	79	82	--
System	70	75	78	--
2005-06				
Cohort	78	--	--	--
System	69	--	--	--

Appendix I

TRANSITION PLAN FOR GRADE 7 EXTENDED FRENCH PROGRAMS

Guidelines:

- The phase-out process will occur over 4 years.
- Students in Grade 3 for the 2008-9 school year will be the last group of students to access the Grade 7 entry program.
- September 2012 will be the last year in which Grade 7 students may enter the program.
- Students currently in the grade 7 entry program will finish their program, subject to sufficient enrolment.
- The SK and Grade 4 entry programs will continue to expand to meet demand.

ACTION	DATE
Inform parents of children in Grade 3 that the Grade 7 program is under review	November 08- December 08
Consult with FSLAC and communities	October 08– January 09
Prepare reports for Board Cycle including PSSC and Board	January – February 2009
Adjust promotional materials and website	February 2009
Students in Grade 6 in 2008-09 still eligible for Grade 7 entry	September 2009
Students in Grade 5 in 2008-09 still eligible for Grade 7 entry	September 2010
Students in Grade 4 in 2008-09 still eligible for Grade 7 entry	September 2011
Students in Grade 3 in 2008-09 still eligible for Grade 7 entry	September 2012
Last Grade 7 Extended French entry class	September 2012
Last Grade 8 class of Grade 7 Entry	September 2013
Last Grade 7 Extended French graduates	June 2014

Appendix J

FRENCH ENTRY POINTS - OTHER BOARDS

Board	French Immersion Entry	Extended French Entry
Toronto DSB	Senior Kindergarten Grade 4	Grade 4 Grade 7
Toronto Catholic DSB	Senior Kindergarten	Grade 5
Thames Valley DSB	Senior Kindergarten or Grade 1	Grade 7
York Region DSB	Grade 1	NA
Hamilton Wentworth DSB	Senior Kindergarten	NA
Hamilton Wentworth CDSB	Kindergarten	NA
Dufferin Peel CDSB	NA	Grade 5
Peel DSB	Grade 1	Grade 7
Durham DSB	Grade 1	NA
Durham CDSB	NA	Grade 4
Ottawa Carleton DSB	Senior Kindergarten Grade 4 Grade 7 (being phased out)	NA
Ottawa CCSB	NA	Grade 4

Appendix K

TDSB FRENCH IMMERSION/EXTENDED FRENCH PROGRAM HISTORY

Date	Comment
1999-2000	TDSB instituted the Task Force for the Rationalization of Optional French Programs. The approved parameters were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional French Programs offered in the Toronto District School Board schools must meet Ministry requirements with respect to number of accumulated hours of instruction • Optional French Program models be supported by research • Optional French Program models must ensure the continuation of exemplary program delivery
October 2000	Directional Statement for the Rationalization of Optional French programs was passed. The Board decided on three entry points: Senior Kindergarten Early Immersion, Grade 4 Middle Immersion, Grade 7 Extended French.
June 2001	Ministry of Education released an elementary policy document entitled <i>The Ontario Curriculum French as a Second Language: Extended French Grades 4-8, French Immersion Grades 1-8</i> . This policy defined both Immersion and Extended French programs by accumulated hours and programming requirements by the end of Grade 8.
August 2002	TDSB under Supervision. Staff reported on new Ministry policy document.
January 2003	Supervisor approved staff recommendation for 2 entry points: SK Early Immersion program and Grade 4 Extended French. Grade 4 Middle Immersion and Grade 7 Extended would be phased out.
April 2003	Trustee Briefing on Optional French included a reassessment of the board approved entry points. Phasing out the Grade 7 entry point was recommended because of the Ministry requirements, program blending, retention and pedagogical challenges.
December 2003	Motion to PSSC to support three entry points and rescind the decision of the Supervisor
February 2004	Decision to expand the Grade 4 Extended French program and maintain the Grade 4 Middle Immersion, SK and Grade 7 programs.
January 2007	Board direction to have catchments across the city for all entry points.
April 2008	GAPP report addressing system wide directions to program and capital planning suggested re-consideration of the Grade 7 entry point. This was referred to staff for further study.

E03(FSL0809/01091370FSLExtendedFrGr7Jan9)NS.4072

Last Update: 14 Jan 2009