



French as a Second Language Advisory Committee

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January 22, 2014

Re: Ward 1 PARC Report to the Planning and Priorities Committee, January 22, 2014

Dear Trustees,

Thank you, on behalf of the French as a Second Language Advisory Committee (FSLAC), for the opportunity to participate in the Ward 1 Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC).

The FSLAC supports the PARC recommendation to open a Senior Kindergarten French Immersion (SKFI) program at Melody Village with a gradual conversion to a French immersion centre.

Currently, the designated SKFI school for the area is Elmlea which has 20 feeder schools making it the largest French immersion catchment area in the TDSB. By adding Melody Village as a site and splitting the catchment for Elmlea, travel times for immersion students will be significantly reduced, it will be easier for parents to be involved at school and accommodation pressure at Elmlea will be reduced. The addition of SKFI at Melody Village will also mean a more equitable distribution of SKFI programs, a challenge that has been with us since amalgamation. Due to the close proximity of Melody Village and Elmbank, the English and the immersion students will walk to a community school and many immersion students from Albion Heights, Greenholme, Claireville and Highfield who were previously assigned the bus to Elmlea will now be able to walk as well.

FI Centres provide very strong French immersion programming. Every child in the school is in immersion and as such, the school is able to provide more opportunities to speak French and can use French resources very effectively. Our experience with our fully established FI Centres (Broadlands est. 1986, John Fisher est. 1982 and Lester B. Pearson est. 1987) is very positive and the transition at Winchester (est. 2011) is progressing well. The gradual and pre-determined conversion at Melody Village to an FI Centre will mean a smooth transition and an opportunity for the FI program to develop in the coming years.

The FSLAC member for Ward 2, Dina Pizolinas, attended approximately 14 PARC meetings and personally spoke with many parents to share her children's experience in SKFI at 'carousel' meetings. At the request of staff and Trustee Hastings, the FSLAC also assisted with the public meeting held in December 2013 for the parents of Melody Village. Trustee Hastings, Superintendents Appleby and McNamara are to be commended for their commitment to providing our north Etobicoke students with the opportunity to become bilingual in our two official languages, to working to make this opportunity more accessible than it has been in the past and to holding such an inclusive and thorough consultation.

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

Sincerely,

Kristina Laperle

Parent Co-chair, French as a Second Language Advisory Committee