

May 10, 2010

To: Trustees
From: FSLAC

Re: Planning and Priorities Committee, May 10, 2010

ARCs with recommendations affecting Extended/Immersion (Ext/Imm) French programs:

1. Meadowvale/Sheppard ARC: Brooks Road PS, Chief Dan George PS, Highcastle PS, and John G. Diefenbaker PS
2. Eastview, Heron Park, Joseph Brant, Peter Secor, William G. Miller
3. Cedarbrook JPS, Charles Gordon SPS, John McCrae SPS, Knob Hill JPs, McCowan Rd JPS, Pringdale Gardens JPS

Dear Trustees,

The French as a Second Language Advisory Committee (FSLAC) supports, in principle, the staff recommendations for Ext/Imm programs as outlined in the power points at the community meetings which were on the TDSB website. We are pleased to see that a longstanding need for more SK French Immersion programming in this area of the city could be addressed as the process moves forward.

The following specific recommendations raise concerns for Extended/Immersion French programs that warrant further consideration as the details are decided and implementation begins:

Meadowvale/Sheppard Recommendation:

Closing Brooks Rd which is an SK French Immersion site and replacing it with 2 sites: Highcastle and either Stirling or Fleming.

For further consideration:

1. The catchments will still be very large and long distances deter applicants. Transportation only provided in grades SK-5, TTC in subsequent grades,
2. The additional site, north of the 401 appears to be unnecessarily dependent on the construction of Meadowvale/Sheppard,
3. Highcastle is over capacity now and it is unclear how it will accommodate an SK FI program.

Eastview and Cedarbrook Recommendation:

Moving the Poplar Rd Ext 4 program to join the Cedarbrook Ext 4 program.

For further consideration:

1. The catchment will be very large and long distances deter applicants. Transportation only provided in grade 4 & 5, TTC in subsequent grades.

In general:

If the Board adopts any of the staff and/or ARC recommendations affecting Ext/Imm French, the FSLAC asks that further input be sought and considered from Ext/Imm parents and the FSLAC. Strong buy-in from the affected parents and the broader community is essential to maintaining

and building the strong attendance that leads to exemplary Ext/Imm program delivery. To lay the foundation for successful transitions, there are 4 key areas for consideration:

Transportation – school bus routes and TTC proximity need to be assessed for new sites to meet the needs of the students and their families.

Pathways – the sites chosen for continuation of programs impacts the number of students who stay in the program to graduation. A successful Ext/Imm program at secondary is dependent on sufficient enrolment to maintain course selection. Pathways need to be carefully evaluated with input from the local communities the programs serve and the FSLAC.

Communication – current and prospective Ext/Imm parents, as well as teachers, office staff and administrators need to be informed of the changes.

The best ambassadors for TDSB programs are current parents. Prospective parents (preschool – grade 6) need the information as soon as possible so that they may plan for everything from daycare to preparing students to be on the school bus or the TTC going to an unfamiliar school.

Notification needs to be coordinated with board-wide timelines for FSL program application and registration periods.

Continuity & Predictability – Moving a program to meet the needs of the broader system rather than for specific needs of the program itself, is disruptive and carries the risk of making prospective parents nervous. To encourage and maintain enrolment, there needs to be a strong, clear and demonstrated commitment from the Board that these moves are not short term and that Ext/Imm programs are not nomadic.

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

Tami Oudendijk
Parent co-chair
French as a Second Language Advisory Committee

Attachments:
Brooks Rd SK FI Catchment Map
Poplar Rd and Cedarbrook Ext 4 Catchment Map