



Community Advisory Committees

**French As A Second Language
Advisory Committee (FSLAC)
2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT**





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Mandate

The FSLAC was created by the Board in 2005. In 2007, our mission was adopted by the Board and was reconfirmed with the adoption of our Terms of Reference in 2016:

“To consult with and advise the Board on French as a Second Language matters. As a Board community advisory committee, the FSLAC will contribute to the work of trustees and staff. This partnership of trustees, staff and parents will foster excellence and growth in FSL programs at the Board.”

Membership

There are 28 parent members and alternates on the FSLAC from 16 wards, and 1 non-voting community member from Canadian Parents for French (Ontario). Trustee Robin Pilkey is our trustee co-chair. French as a Second Language (FSL) program staff attend all meetings.

Members/alternates are elected by parents in their ward in odd numbered years to serve a two-year term on the FSLAC. Trustees are asked to hold elections at their ward meetings in early 2019. To be eligible to be an FSLAC voting member/alternate, one must be a current TDSB parent who wishes to further the mission of the FSLAC and is available to attend (in person or by phone) about eight meetings per year. Trustees needing more information or assistance recruiting members to fill vacancies may contact the FSLAC at fslactoronto@gmail.com.

FSLAC information is posted at: www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. Members/alternates also receive electronic access to a Member Briefing Book via Google Drive which is updated annually.

This year the FSLAC parent volunteers were supported by excellent staff, Beth Butcher (Executive Superintendent, LC1), Angela Caccamo (Centrally Assigned Principal for French as a Second Language), Kirsten Johnston (Program Coordinator for FSL) and due to the French Review, Manon Gardner (Executive Superintendent, Teaching and Learning including FSL) also attended FSLAC meetings this year.





Committee Membership

Trustee Co-chair Robin Pilkey
Parent Co-chair Lauralyn Johnston (W8)
Parent Vice-co-chair Sharon Beason (W17)
Parent Vice-co-chair Christie Dunbar (W16 Alt)
Parent Vice-co-chair Sarah Smith (W15)
Parent Vice-co-chair Rosemary Sutherland (W9 Alt)
Lisa McAvoy (W2)
Rob Janes (W2 Alt)
Nalini Singh (W2 Alt)
Dina Pizolinas (W2 Alt)
Melanie Amandasun (W3)
Michelle Minott (W4)
Deloris Williamson-Braham (W5)
Laura Steele Gunter (W7)
Jane McGrath (W7 Alt)
Mandy Moore (W7)
Lauralyn Johnston (W8)
Nadya Phelan (W8 Alt)
Matt Forrest (W9)
Rosemary Sutherland (W9 Alt)
Polina Osmerkina (W10)
Sarah Ramkissoon (W12)
Wilmar Kortleever (W13)
Sudha Takaki (W13 Alt)
Betheney Maheu (W13 Alt)
Alison MacAlpine (W14)
Sarah Smith (W15)
Bronwyn Graves (W15 Alt)
Sharon Beason (W16)
Nancy White (W16 Alt)
Christie Dunbar (W16 Alt)
Randy Samuel (W17) Gail Miller (W21)
Zeynab Kazi (W22)
Mary Cruden (Community Member, Canadian Parents for French)





FSLAC Accomplishments: Activities, Information Sharing and Board Consultations

Meetings

The FSLAC met eight times in the 2017-18 school year. Meetings are generally held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, excluding December and March. FSLAC members work collaboratively with FSL (French Second Language) program staff, attending French Immersion/extended French information nights, parent conferences and parent information evenings.

Meeting notices, agendas, minutes and FSL resources are posted on the FSLAC page on the TDSB website (www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac). We currently receive administrative support from the Executive Superintendent's assistant to organize meetings and to handle minutes, but dedicated support in communications and committee administration and a stronger link to the Parent Engagement office, would be welcome.

This year's overwhelming focus has been on the French Review, feedback on the engagement framework and implementation were discussed at most meetings. In addition, to gather information and provide informed advice to the Board on its identified areas of focus, the FSLAC invited several TDSB guests to share their expertise and provide an opportunity for meaningful discussion and feedback:

September 2017: French Review was confirmed for the spring of 2018 as an informational review by Manon Gardner, Executive Superintendent. FSL Coordinator, Kirsten Johnson, followed with the proposed changes to the information nights for French immersion/extended programs. This allowed the FSLAC to give important feedback on the number of evenings and proposed locations of the now centralized information events.

October 2017: Transportation was discussed with the lens of the Equity Framework. Transportation facilitates broad participation in French immersion/extended including families who do not have cars and flexible work schedules. Kevin Hodgkinson, General Manager, Toronto Student Transportation Group, updated the FSLAC on upgrades to the transportation system for the 2017-18 year. FSLAC parents were pleased to be invited to participate on a TDSB work group on transportation issues as many students are bussed to French immersion/extended schools.

November 2017: FSL Teacher Recruitment, Retention Update presentation by Maxine Grey, Senior Manager, Recruitment, Staffing, Labour Relations. This built on the spring 2017 presentation and covered issues of recruiting qualified FSL teachers across the Board and Canada. Housing costs, federation and Reg 274 rules, retention difficulties and a tight supply lack of qualified applicants are all challenges to hiring teachers. FSLAC members encouraged acknowledgement of French immersion/extended enrolment growth as a TDSB success that needs to be supported with planning for staffing levels and





with resources for using modern and traditional recruitment techniques in a growing program. Suggestions for overseas recruiting were given and received well by staff.

January 2018: Partnership Developer, Pierre Mauger for **Snakes and Lattes**, a TDSB partner, spoke about support for FSL through games. Happie Testa from **Librairie Moisaïque** spoke to FSLAC about the GTA's only French bookstore and the annual French book fair, Salon du Livre.

April 2018: FSLAC members were pleased to have Director Malloy in attendance.

May 2018: FSLAC members did a group response for submission to the French Review

Email & Newsletter Distribution:

FSLAC volunteers continue to use our Gmail account: fslactoronto@gmail.com for correspondence. Parents and stakeholders write to us with FSL related questions. Common enquiries are on accessing programs and special education support and for referrals to the appropriate staff member on FSL specific concerns.

The FSLAC newsletter was produced three times in 2017-18 and was sent out to more than 120 schools with French immersion/extended programs, trustees, and over 780 individual parents and FSL stakeholders who have signed up. It shares information about new developments in FSL and tips for parents in supporting their children learning French. The sign-up button and past newsletters are available at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. We look forward to adding Parent Council TDSB email addresses to our distribution to more effectively fulfill our mandate as a partnership between trustees, staff and parents.

Engaging Parents and Community Members: Conferences, Workshops & School Councils

In our continued effort to reach out to more parents directly, FSLAC members participated in parent conferences and workshops at PIAC's fall and spring parent conferences. FSLAC Members and Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) greeted parents at our display table and provided information on FSL programs and how to get assistance for students who may be struggling. Our popular parent workshop "Help with French Homework...even if you don't speak French" was given at the fall conference and power point slides are available at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac.

Our "Intro to the FSLAC" was given at school council and ward meetings. Power point slides are posted at www.tdsb.on.ca/fslac. Inquiries to have this presentation done may be directed to fslactoronto@gmail.com.





FSLAC Members attended French immersion/extended information nights to meet new parents and to support the presentations of principals and FSL staff.

FSLAC parents attended policy consultations on the Equity Framework and submitted feedback on the Board Member Code of Conduct. The parent co-chair and executive members attended the CAC session on social media training and two CAC meetings. Participation might be better facilitated with a draft schedule prior to each term for upcoming consultations and CAC meetings.

FSLAC members continue to participate in Pupil Accommodation and Program Area Reviews where recommendations might involve changes to French programs. In 2017-18, the PART for Regal Road Jr. PS, Perth Avenue Jr. PS, Carleton Village Jr. & Sr SWA, Rawlinson CS, Brock PS, and Winona Drive Sr. PS was of particular importance. FSLAC participation was not facilitated from the start of the process but was included part way through.

The FSLAC is very engaged in the **French Review**, providing detailed suggestions to staff on the process and the surveys through a working group. Members/alternates attended the review consultation meetings across the Board to engage with other FSL families. The Review was outlined in the March 2018 FSLAC newsletter. Two newsblasts went to the FSLAC email list about the consultation dates and the survey. The FSLAC parent co-chair and a member from our working group attended the CAC consultation evening. The FSLAC sought and received an opportunity to do its own consultation session on successes and suggestions for FSL programs that will be included in the French Review report as the input of the FSLAC. We will continue to provide a voice for French immersion/extended/core parents as the Review goes from information gathering to the report stage and follow-up, such as recommendations, if any, are developed in 2018-19.

Current Opportunities for Growth and Excellence in FSL Programs in the TDSB

New Learning Centres Model, Immersion/Extended Sites and “Transforming FSL”

The FSLAC is receiving feedback from parents that the new Learning Centres model may not be providing the expertise, support and encouragement previously given to support student and program success in French immersion/extended sites. Also, the cut from 6 instructional leaders to 2 coaches and the redirection of funding from PD release time to the 2 salaries has reduced capacity for release time for Professional Development sessions lead by FSL specific coaches. “Transforming FSL” as expected and directly funded by the Ministry, is a long-term effort that is not yet fully realized. Implementation of the FSL Framework (2013), Including Students with Special Needs (2015), Welcoming English Language Learners in FSL (2016) and new curriculum for French immersion/extended/core (2013, 2014) as well as Common European Framework and DELF, require high levels of expertise, dedicated central staff, use of existing dedicated funding for PD release time and a concerted multi-year effort.





Extended/Immersion Program Enrolment

All on-time applicants receive a spot in SK French immersion and Grade 4 extended programs and the system responds to demand by adding new classes and sites as outlined in PR597. In September 2018, three new Grade 4 extended French sites will open. The percentage of redirects (offers other than to a new, closer site to home) for SK French immersion is 9%, a slight drop from 2017. For Grade 4 extended it is 5%. This improvement is welcome and the FSLAC thanks staff for their vigilance as they make the opportunities accessible to all. However, parents cannot always accept the designated, unexpected placement because of family logistics, before and after school care availability and bussing schedules.

The FSLAC continues to be concerned about redirections from FI schools where there are no feeders, for 2018: Brown, Earl Haig, Fern, Humbercrest, Jackman, RH McGregor and Runnymede PS. Lotteries are used to select who stays and who goes on a bus to the next closest FI program, when all applicants could walk to and have a right to be in the school for the English program.

Continued FSL Needs at the Secondary School Level

French immersion/extended (FI/EF) enrolment growth and new programs across the city are impacting secondary needs. Since 2009, 30 new elementary sites have been added and FI/EF total enrolment has grown from 20 464 to 28 821. In February 2013, the Board adopted the recommendation from the FSLAC to meet “the need for additional sites and opportunities for immersion and extended students at the secondary level and develop a plan for meeting current and future needs in consultation with the FSLAC and stakeholders”.

We are pleased that East York CI was added as a new FI secondary site for September 2018. Despite concerns for staffing and programs, this has been identified as a potential way to relieve increasing pressure on Malvern and Leaside CI. We are continuing to explore FSL secondary programs and are hopeful that the French Review as part of the Equity Framework will provide the opportunity to advance inclusion and to reduce commute times, in particular in the old cities of Scarborough and Etobicoke. We would like to see an increase in access and the variety of courses offered in French, which will lead to better retention between grade 8 and grade 9, as well as through to grade 12 in FI/EF programs. Currently students have the choice of continuing in FI/EF or attending specialized programs (ie, TOPS, IB, Cyber Arts, Arts, etc) and cannot do both concurrently despite the obvious job opportunities that can come with both French and these areas of study. Grade 12 Core French is only available in 56 secondary schools (less than half of all secondary schools), and even if offered does not take place if the enrollment numbers are low. Work done to add e-learning and summer credits is encouraging. More work needs to be done on possible solutions including school year e-learning, reconsidering credits offered to better align with students’ needs and interests, experiential credits in French and a campus approach to provide access to FSL and specialized programs concurrently.





Special Education and Core/Extended/Immersion

FSLAC members continue to work with the Board staff to share the Ministry document “Including Students with Special Education Needs in FSL” with parents. Parents continue to report being counselled to leave French at all grade levels, rather than support being provided within FI/EF. This advice is made informally by staff despite TDSB and Ministry policy and research that backs up inclusion. Experiential learning is identified by FSLAC parents as a way to support student achievement in FSL and increase participation by a broader range of FSL students at the secondary school level.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the DELF

The DELF is an internationally recognized exam that tests proficiency in French and awards a credential to the student based on the benchmarks of the CEFR. This type of testing provides an external assessment of student outcomes in French immersion/extended/core. The FSLAC supports providing the opportunity for all grade 12 French immersion/extended/core students to have the opportunity to take DELF exams (Diplôme d'études en langue française) as is done at OCDSB. Limited funding and support is provided by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry did a study which included the TDSB students which is available here: www.edugains.ca/resourcesFSL/PDF/Research/Synopsis_FINAL-1.pdf

The TDSB currently has 15 teachers trained as examiners (Correcteurs) to conduct the tests with the 54 funded students. We welcome the opportunity provided through Student Success funding for 15 additional TDSB teachers to become examiners this year. Ministry research is showing that CEFR/DELF-related professional learning is positively impacting FSL classroom practice:

<https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/the-cefr-in-ontario-transforming-classroom-practice/>

2018-19 FSLAC Executive

Mandy Moore (Ward 7) was elected at the June 12th meeting as parent co-chair with Melanie Amandasun (Ward 3), Sharon Beason (Ward 16), Christie Dunbar (Ward 16), Zeynab Kazi (Ward 22) and Rosemary Sutherland (Ward 9) elected as parent vice co-chairs.

Upcoming meetings:

Thursday, September 13, 2018

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Tuesday, November 13, 2018

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Monday, February 11, 2019

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Tuesday, June 11, 2019

