

# French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee

# Meeting Date: April 16, 2024

A meeting of the French as a Second Language Community Advisory Committee convened from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm in Committee Room A and via virtual Zoom meeting, with Parent Co-Chair Lynne LeBlanc presiding.

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| **Item** | **Invitee Name** |
| **Attended**: | Lynne LeBlanc (Parent Co-Chair W8), Charles Zhu (Parent Vice Co-Chair W11), Sharlene Henry (Parent Vice Co-Chair, W5/W6 Alt), Lisa McAvoy (Parent Vice Co-Chair W2), Maeve Gray (W10), Randy Samuel (W14), Moosa Anwar (W19), Gail Miller (W22). Also present: Mary Cruden (Canadian Parents for French), Trustee Dan MacLean (Trustee Co-Chair W2), Trustee Dennis Hastings (W1), Audley Salmon (Staff Co-Lead), Roni Felsen (Staff Co-Lead), Angela Caccamo (Centrally Assigned Principal), Kirsten Johnston (Program Co-ordinator). |
| **Guests:** |  |
| **Regrets**: | Michelle Munroe (Central Co-ordinator PCE), Mandy Moore (W7), Elizabeth Carvalho (W7 Alt), Cheryl Batty (W8 Alt), Divya Chandra (W11 Alt), Madelaine Hamilton (W16), Zuojun Han (W20), Sharon Beason (CPF Alt), Rosemary Sutherland (CPF Alt). |
| **Recorder:** | James Jarrett |

| Item | Discussion |  Motion / Action |
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| 1. Call to Order | * Land acknowledgment – Lynne LeBlanc
* Meeting recorded for minute taking purposes
* Introductions
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| 2. Quorum / Membership Changes | * Quorum met
* No membership changes
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| 3. Approval of Agenda | * Item 8 Moved to 6 on the Agenda.
* Lisa McAvoy Moves, Randy Samuel seconds. Carried.
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| 4. Approval of March 19, 2024 Minutes | * Minutes deferred to next meeting
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| 5. Declarations - Possible Conflict of Interest | * Gail Miller works as an emergency replacement person with the TDSB.
* Randy Samuel works as an emergency replacement person with the TDSB.
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| 6. Group Discussion – LOI Evaluation Messaging | Parent Co-Chair: * FI and the LOI has been on our radar this year with the upcoming review of the LOI policy, the ICCAC motion to remove FI from the LOI calculations and the November 2023 motion by Trustee King. Not counting FI students in school data on LOI seems like a slippery slope. Looked at data and it doesn’t support that FI is a key factor changing LOI as some go up and others go down the index after introduction of FI; neighbourhoods are changing across the city. Concerned that French Immersion (FI) centres which are entire schools would be left out of the LOI calculation. If our motion passes here tonight, I’ll be able to speak to this issue if it arises and in the LOI consultation in the fall.
* Trustee Co-Chair: The Trustees received a report on LOI and FI which responded to the November motion and a broader report on LOI at their last meeting. Reports will be discussed at the April 17 Board meeting. This motion won’t make the meeting.
* Staff: We haven’t heard discussion about FI students being removed from the LOI calculation. There are six variables that are used to calculate LOI.

Comments: * Some schools communities feel that when FI or gifted programs arrive, they pull up the median income variable.
* The idea that FI students should be removed from the calculation came from the Inner-City Community Advisory Committee (ICCAC). Also raised in the November 2023 Globe and Mail article about Blake PS.
* The motion is in response to the perception that FI drives gentrification and FI/gifted pull up the median income variable. The research we’ve done and Dr David Cameron’s assessment show that it is more coincidental. Some FI sites go up the LOI index and some go down.
* Motion will give our Parent Chair strength to do a delegation if need arises. This aligns with the staff report on the issue.
* Staff: The staff report on LOI and FI to PSSC in March brings voice to what we’re sharing here. The report highlighted that an FI program is merely one factor of many. There are 37 schools that are at the centre of this discussion. We are also committed to going with ICCAC to answer questions about FI. The report demonstrates that schools move due to the six factors in the LOI. It does not mean that schools that change ranking do not have needs, just that other schools may have relatively greater needs.
* Trustee Co-Chair: We’ve discussed advocacy. Some CAC delegations to Trustees have not had clear support from their members. It’s good value to have a committee motion to provide clarity for Trustees who are interested in hearing what the CACs think. Dr. Cameron was very clear that all students should be counted, and shared that view with ICCAC.
* Motion: That the FSLCAC receive the FSLCAC LOI Report and attach it to the minutes as an appendix. Lisa McAvoy moves, Gail Miller Seconds. Unanimously adopted by the committee.
* Motion: That the FSLCAC adopt the position that FI students remain in the data collection by school for the LOI as in previous years. Lisa McAvoy moves, Maeve Gray Seconds. Unanimously adopted by the committee.
* Q: Why was the committee not informed beforehand that a staff report on LOI and FI (response to Trustee King’s November 2023 motion) was going to PSSC?
* Staff: Apologies, it was an oversight.
* Trustee Co-Chair: Apologies as well to the committee. We had FBEC concurrent to the last meeting, and I came to issue my trustee report to the committee, but did not communicate the PSSC motion.
* Parent Co-Chair: Thank you. We hope that any future motions concerning FI are brought to our attention. We would like to thank the FSL staff for their work at PSSC. The webcast of the meeting is posted on the TDSB website. We also appreciated that it was conveyed to the meeting that the school principal is responsible for cohesion between cohorts at schools.
* Staff: We know that in many schools with special programs that there can be challenges, but we have to make an effort for students to feel included.

**Post COVID Mental Health of Teachers*** Q: When we were going through COVID, the TDSB did an outstanding job emphasizing mental health. It seems now though that teaching staff are struggling. What is being done to support teachers?
* Staff: The pandemic affected us all. We have a challenge for example with teachers taking professional learning because we are having trouble getting occasional teachers (OTs). As a system, we have been emphasizing mental health and well-being. Our People and Culture department now link to our well-being supports in their signatures. One of the big impacts post-COVID is an increase in absences, and the impact that has on staff that are not away. This is true for other boards of education and other sectors of society as well.
* Q: How can families support staff, given that they are part of our student’s lives?
* Staff: It really comes down to relationships. There is fear about some situations in classes, but it’s important that we come together.
* Comment: Thank you for mentioning that. Staff and students are stressed out. Students are speaking out about it. It’s a big topic. It’s important for students to talk about it with families.
 | James Jarrett to attach FSLCAC report to minutes |
| 7. Ward & CPF Reports | Ward 10Q: We are trying to organize summer camp at Winchester, but we are facing challenges because the Permits department can’t give us timelines on when the permit will be approved. Any ideas on this?* Staff: With permits, there are many factors. The key is working with the school principal to get the permit approved. If it’s a private organization trying to move it alone, the process is slower.
* Q: CPF is a registered as a partner with the Board. Does this help expedite the process?
* Staff: Have just selected sites for our Summer School Programs. Process then moves on to City renewals, then private renewals and then new applications.
* One of our parent volunteers organized a 3-hour French cooking class. We had 30 participants, and it was well received. We will be redoing in September.
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| 8. Parent and Trustee Co-Chair Reports  | * Parent Co-Chair: No report.
* Trustee Co-Chair: April is Latin Heritage Month and Sikh Heritage Month.
* Summer school registration starts April 22.

**Budget:** * Has been occupying our agenda. We’ve tried to create a tentative budget in Spring, which would have provided some stability for schools. Some staff are not placed until the budget is formally done. We’re closer than ever before to having this process done ahead of time. We have found $17 million in efficiencies. Some VP allocations that had been pulled have been put back, along with some safety staff. Adult education happens naturally in school environments. It’s an asset to the community, but if participation is low, we end up subsidizing it. Last year, it cost us around $700K, and it’s not part of our mandate. International language instruction has the same problem.
* Permitting in the Board is designed to be on a cost recovery basis in theory.
* We’ve had challenges with all 3 of these issues. We’re seeking additional reports which won’t be ready in time for this budget session.
* The grants for student needs, the funding allocated by the Ministry of Education are expected shortly.
* We plan to hold 3 public budget meetings across the city to highlight some of the gaps in funding.
* We spend $40 million on space we aren’t funded for. We receive a fraction of the cost of our replacement staff.
* The Ministry has pushed back. The Chair of the Board has a news conference tomorrow to advocate. We are preparing an information package to show funding versus operational costs. If we were fully funded for these initiatives, we wouldn’t be in this position every year.

**Lawsuit:*** Q: What information do you have about the big lawsuits against social media companies?
* Trustee Co-Chair: Regarding the lawsuit, five boards have now joined. The objective is to get a change in behaviour from social media companies, because of the effects on student mental health (e.g. misinformation online, or negative social behaviour promoted). In the US, many boards are a year ahead of us on this initiative.

**School Closures:*** Q: What information to you have about school closures?
* Trustee Co-Chair: There has been a moratorium on school closures since 2017. We received special permission to close George Harvey CI and it has been consolidated with York Memorial CI. We lose about $35 million a year in inefficiencies due to unconsolidated space. We figure we can save $585 thousand per site per year if we consolidate. We’ve asked if we can consolidate four sites a year.
* 4 years ago, we did a [Secondary Program Review](https://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Secondary-Program-Review). Secondary sites function best when they are large enough to support diverse programming. 1000 students is the target number. There are some sites where both a CI and technical school were built close together, so where perhaps three sites exist, consolidating to two would yield savings.
* Q: What if the closure of a site leads to a significant trip for a student?
* Trustee Co-Chair: We’re speaking about neighbourhood schools. When we get permission to close a site, it’s a two year process, with the first year involving public consultation. The site being closed stops receiving incoming grade 9 students, until the site winds down.
* Schools are better served when there is more choice. In some cases, students may be travelling a few neighbourhoods over to follow their academic dreams.
* Comment: Not all clusters are groups of three, many are groups of two.
* Trustee Co-Chair: Consolidation may be a possibility for two secondary schools, and we think the benefits will be substantial. We are very excited about this proposal because it makes programs more accessible and manageable.
* We have asked the TTC to extend free transit to secondary school students.
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| 9. Community Advisory Committees: new proceduresPR 741 and 742 | * Staff: [PR 742](https://policies.tdsb.on.ca/Detail.aspx?id=2343) deals with committee memberships, reports to the Board, information requests, elections, student opportunities, agendas, decision making, meeting frequency, loss of quorum requiring meeting adjournment, attendance requirement of 5 members in person for hybrid meetings. We follow many of the these procedures already at FSLCAC.
* The Board has offered three mini sessions on the CAC procedures.
* [PR 741](https://policies.tdsb.on.ca/detail.aspx?id=2342) There are 10 committees plus two standing committees that are mandated by the Ministry of Education: SEAC and PIAC. Six of the committees are up for review in the fall, including FSLCAC.
* Q: Our March hybrid meeting was unusual. No technical support, and people moving in and out of the room from FBEC which was meeting next door. We haven’t established what is normal post COVID. A parent volunteer committee shouldn’t run exactly like a Trustee Committee as it is an advisory committee not a decision-making committee. Who will be reviewing the CACs?
* Staff: The evaluation will include the committee’s self-evaluation, the annual report, the Terms of Reference and the minutes. Staff will use a standard template to review and report on the CACs to Trustees.
* Trustee Co-Chair: Other than SEAC and PIAC, the CACs are tools of the Board.
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| 10. Terms of Reference | * Terms of Reference were shared ahead of the meeting by email and will be discussed at a future meeting.
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| 11. French Review-staff report | * Staff: Bannockburn PS will be opening in September as a FI centre. Kindergarten registration is complete; the before-and-after school program survey is complete. Families will be invited to a welcome to kindergarten session in May.
* Renovations to the site should be completed in August. The school is opening as a K-3 school and will roll-up a grade each year until Grade 6.
* Summer School: Four schools will host FI summer programs: Greenholme, Nelson Mandela, Rawlinson and Tredway-Woodsworth. They will offer programs from grades 3-8 with Rawlinson as the exception, offering Grades 1-8. The programs will have a focus on literacy and numeracy.
* There is a limit on offering primary programming, because of soft demand in previous years.
* Long-term Planning and Accommodation Update: the annual planning document included a study on a grade change between Valleyfield JS and Hilltop MS to align the grades in the regular and French Immersion tracks at Valleyfield JS. Valleyfield is currently K-5 English and K-6 French. A local feasibility team was convened to discuss which included the Principals, Superintendents, Trustee. The pathway for the Middle French Immersion will remain the same to Richview CI.
* Trustee Chair: We are aligning the programs, so that both streams enter middle school at Grade 6.
* Q: Will Lakeshore CI also be opening in September?
* Staff: Yes, as discussed at an earlier FSLCAC meeting, Lakeshore CI will be opening a FI program September 2024.
* As also mentioned in previous FSLCAC meetings, we are actively in two other Local Feasibility Studies – L’Amoreaux CI and Riverdale CI.
* Q: The French Review was started in 2018-2019. There hasn’t been a follow-up report from the review concerning the issues of special education, transportation childcare, etc. Is the data for those matters still available for those unaddressed areas?
* Staff: Some of those items were addressed and continue to be the work we do through our yearly work plan. Transportation is tied to the budget constraints at the Board.
* Special education and inclusion are a focus as we work to remove barriers for students.
* Trustee Chair: Regarding transportation, it was last discussed in the budget year for 2019-2020 and taken off the table. It has not resurfaced since then.
 | **Standing Item** |
| 12. Adjournment | * Motion to adjourn. Randy Samuel moves, Lisa McAvoy seconds. Carried.
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| Next Meetings | May 14 @ 7:00 PM-9:00 PM. Virtual Meeting.Upcoming meetings: June 11  |  |

**Appendix**

**Context:**

P067 Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) Policy is scheduled for public consultation in April 2024. FSLCAC had staff presentations on the LOI in November 2023 and January 2024. As LOI has not previously been discussed at the FSLCAC, our parent co-Chair requires some direction from the committee on what to say at the consultation and in any opportunities to delegate.

In May 2022, the Inner City Community Advisory Committee sent a recommendation to the Board that French Immersion students be removed from the data collected for the LOI. Trustees referred it back to staff.

**French immersion site selection:**

FI sites chosen by TDSB planning and FSL staff over the last several years were intended to bring FI programs to underserved areas to improve inclusion across socio-economic and race groups.

New FI sites have a basic requirement that there be sufficient space in the school to add students as most FI sites draw students from its own and surrounding English catchments.

**Analysis of LOI and French Immersion:**

**LOI COMPARISONS SELECTED FI SITES AND ENGLISH SINGLE TRACKS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Elementary School | Ward | FI start year |  | LOI Rank |  | Utilization |
|  |  |  |  | **2023** | **2020** | **2017** | **2014** | **2011** |  | **2022** | **2011** |
| Melody Village | W1 Etobicoke North | 2014(French single track) |  | 78 | 108 | 154 | 162 | 130 |  | 44% | 57% |
| Parkdale PS | W7 Parkdale-High Park | 2009(dual track) |  | 172 | 183 | 118 | 99 | 86 |  | 65% | 84% |
| Dr Rita Cox- Kina Minagok | W7 Parkdale-High Park | English single track |  | 204 | 200 | 151 | 125 | 64 |  | 73% | 70% |
| Blake St | W15 Broadview-Danforth | 2014 (Dual track) |  | 223 | 147 | 96 | 39 | 27 |  | 66% | 37% |
| Bruce | W15 Broadview-Danforth | English single track |  | 258 | 207 | 170 | 172 | 84 |  | 84% | 36% |
| Chester | W15 Broadview-Danforth | English single track |  | 323 | 236 | 195 | 145 | 141 |  | 79% | 72% |
| Pape | W15 Broadview-Danforth | English single track |  | 386 | 384 | 330 | 245 | 180 |  | 71% | 55% |
| Chief Dan George | W22 Scarborough-Rouge Park | 2013(Dual track) |  | 108 | 122 | 176 | 268 | 385 |  | 79% | 96% |

In Ward 15, Broadview-Danforth, single track English schools, Bruce, Chester and Pape experienced a significant decrease in LOI rank and increase in utilization between 2011 and 2022/23 as did Blake St which started the FI program in 2014.

In Ward 1, Etobicoke North, Melody Village started FI in 2014 and W 22, Scarborough-Rouge Park, Chief Dan George started FI in 2013. Completely opposite to the Ward 15 examples, these FI schools experienced a decline in SES and moved 200+ places up the LOI to a higher needs level.

In Ward 7, Parkdale-High Park, Parkdale PS started FI in 2009. Between 2011 and 2022/23, Parkdale PS and Dr Rita Cox-Kina Minagok (formerly Queen Victoria) which is a single track English school both experienced a significant decrease in LOI rank and decreases in utilization.

These examples illustrate that isolating the effect of the introduction of FI at a school is not a consistent factor in changes to LOI and may in fact, not be a factor at all in changes to LOI.

From our observations in our city, it appears that neighbourhoods, particularly downtown and central core ones, the influx of people with post-secondary education and higher incomes has more to do with rental and real estate markets, condo and townhouse development and the expansion of the financial and tech sector in Toronto than it has to do with the addition of an FI program.

References retrieved Feb 1, 2024:

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/research/research/learning-opportunities-index>

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Strategy-Planning/Long-Term-Program-and-Accommodation-Strategy>

**Model Schools Program:**

As noted from the November 2023 presentation by System Superintendent Karen Murray and the January 2024 presentation by Dr David Cameron at the FSLCAC, as many as 15-18 schools move in and out of the model schools cutoff of 150 or less for LOI every time the LOI is recalculated. Schools with improving SES (socio-economic status) continue to be supported with additional resources as they transition from a school with a predominantly low SES to a more mixed one.

The Model Schools program directs additional resources to 150 schools with the greatest level of external challenges; ie, where the student population has an above average concentration of needs to support. However, there are also children with low SES, often in significant numbers, in schools ranked 151+ on the LOI that do not receive the additional supports that come with the Model School designation. The unsaid expectation is that mixed and high SES school communities will mobilize and use their bandwidth to support each other and the school.

**Potential impact of removing French Immersion (FI) students from the LOI:**

In the most recent publicly available data (2016-17), FI skewed to higher socio-economic status. It remains unclear what impact the equity efforts in French Immersion have had in the intervening years.

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| **Household Income****2016-17** | **FI****K-6** | **TDSB****K-6** |
| Less than $30,000 | 7% | 23% |
| $30,000-49,999 | 8% | 18% |
| $50,000-74,999 | 11% | 14% |
| $75,000-99,999 | 12% | 10% |
| $100,000 + | 63% | 35% |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Parents’ Education Level****2016-17** | **FI K-6** | **TDSB****K-6** |
| Elementary/Secondary | 4% | 16% |
| College | 13% | 22% |
| University | 83% | 61% |

If it FI/Ext were removed from the LOI data, 27,480 students across every SES group would be erased. In addition, 5 single track FI schools and Winchester JK-6 would disappear from the data. Melody Village is a single track FI school and currently ranks 78 on LOI making it a Model School.

Removal of FI students from the LOI would be interpreted as the TDSB declaring that the FI program serves only above average SES families which is not the case. It would undermine the commitment to the equity work that staff, Trustees and the FSLCAC has done over many years in support of the goal of “equity of access” set out in P080 and inclusion as noted in Ontario Framework for FSL that “participation should reflect the diversity of the student population”.

An inclusive TDSB recognizes and sees all students regardless of their chosen language of instruction.

Work needs to continue on breaking down barriers to access and inclusion identified by the FSLCAC in our meetings and annual report and in data collected from students and families during the 2018 French Review:

- improving before and after school childcare,

- aligning and simplifying the JK and FI registration process,

- providing TTC to secondary students in need,

- continuing to do outreach to and provide additional support to underrepresented groups, particularly students with special education needs,

-French classroom and library resources that are culturally responsive and relevant.