Final Report

of the

French Immersion

Review Committee

Elementary

September 2012
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Introduction

During the 2010-11 school year, staff brought to the trustees’ attention the challenges facing the board as a result of the growth of the French immersion program. A report dated October 2010 stated; “The continued growth of the French immersion program raises some items for consideration. The growth of the program is such that it is possible that we will eventually reach a point where it will be difficult to staff the program. We are recognizing the impact of increased preparation time on the capacity of schools to provide 85% of instructional time in French in grade 1. For French immersion programs, we must determine what percentage in grade 1 is optimal for Peel”.

The board received a further update on June 22, 2011 and agreed to re-establish a French Immersion Review Committee to meet during the 2011-12 school year to examine data and to consider the implications of the various options to manage the growth of the FI/EF programs at the elementary level.

The French Immersion Review Committee was formed on October 25, 2011 and the initial meeting was held in November 2011 to establish the Terms of Reference for the committee.

Terms of Reference

Scope
The French Immersion Review Committee worked with Peel District School Board internal stakeholders to focus on key aspects at the elementary level (i.e. including program framework, location of programs and program sustainability). The Review Committee reports to the Board of Trustees, through the Associate Directors of Instructional Support Services and Operational Support Services. It is responsible for making recommendations to the Board to address the direction of elementary French immersion programs in the Peel District School Board.

Objectives
• To plan for the sustainability of the French immersion/extended French programs;
• To maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery and instruction of French immersion/extended French programs;
• To ensure that students throughout the school district have equitable access to French immersion/extended French programs;
• To ensure that French immersion/extended French programs are cost effective.
**Frequency of Meetings**  
Meetings were held once monthly from November 2011 through May 2012.

**Chair**  
The chair was a Trustee, responsible for developing the agenda for meetings and facilitating meetings. The lead remained a Superintendent of Education responsible for producing the final report to the Board based on Committee findings and direction.

**Membership**  
Chair: Jeff White  
Lead: Superintendent of Education: Shirley-Ann Teal  
Trustee Representation: Steve Kavanagh, Jeff White, Janet McDougald (Chair), Suzanne Nurse (Vice-Chair)  
Associate Director of Instructional Support Services: Pam Tomasevic  
Superintendent of Education: North Field Office: Hazel Mason  
Superintendent of Education: South/West Field Office: Wendy Dowling  
PPVPA Representation: Angela Kempster, David Jack, Judi Denison, Kathy Anderson, Lisa Miller-Wood, Matthew McCutcheon, Michelle Anderson, Rita Manners  
Human Resources Representation: Paul Woodley  
CISESS Representation: Shawn Moynihan, Amy Cundari  
Communications and Community Relations Representation: Carla Pereira  
Planning/Accommodation Representation: Suzanne Blakeman, Alex Bleicher, Phillip Sousa  
Transportation Representation: David Neale

**Resources**  
Resources were accessed as needed throughout the process and included data provided through other departments and through evidence based research.

**Meeting Structure**  
Individual meetings were dedicated to an area of support services and the sharing of their perspectives on the French Immersion/Extended French Program. Presentations from all departments were made to the committee looking at the current impact of the programs on service delivery and projecting ahead to the future.

Sustainability of the French immersion/extended French program was identified as the overall goal for this committee. The focus for all of the presentations was to examine each aspect of the program model and delivery as it related to a specific area and the effect on the system as a whole.

**Methodology**  
As a part of the review process, staff collected information that was relevant to the goals and objectives identified by the terms of reference. Many of these issues have been discussed for a number of years and addressed in previous reports to the board. Where appropriate, a review of the literature specific to the issue under discussion was also considered.
In addition, information was gathered from central departments within the Peel District School Board as well as from other school boards in the GTA and beyond (Appendix A).

A stakeholder survey completed by parents, a position paper prepared by Peel Principals’ Vice-Principals’ Association (PPVPA) and focus groups held with teachers helped to provide an understanding of current perceptions regarding existing French immersion/extended French programs and suggestions for improvements.

Three meetings were held with representatives from Canadian Parents for French in December, April and August. The focus of the meetings was to advise the organization of the scope of the committee’s work, to share the final draft report prior to going to the Board and to solicit feedback.

**Analysis of Data**

**Communications and Community Relations Support Services**

Current statistics show that in the 2011-12 school year there were 11,271 students in the French immersion/extended French programs (1-8). 4,342 families responded to a survey developed by Communications and Community Support Services and PPVPA.

Qualitative responses were solicited from parents that addressed the following questions:

- Why did you enrol your child in French immersion/extended French?
- If busing was not provided for French immersion/extended French, would you have registered your child in the program?
- For those parents where French immersion/extended French is offered at your home school, would you have registered your child in the program if it had been offered at another school?
- Are you planning on having your child(ren) continue French immersion/extended French in secondary school?
- Are there any other comments you would like to share?

A number of themes were identified based on opinions/ideas that were offered by a sizable proportion of the respondents. They were:

- Continuation in French immersion will depend on busing to high school;
- Provide more resources for parents to assist with homework;
- Program is valuable and appreciate that it is available;
- Lack of support for students who are struggling or have IEPs;
- Start FI in kindergarten;
- Provide more resources for students – French library books, videos, learning websites;
- My child is falling behind in English skills development – need for increased English skills development, particularly in grade one;
- Percentage of French taught should be higher after grade one – 50% is insufficient;
• Have FI in every school so that every child can attend their neighbourhood school;
• Students should be able to enter a regional program and continue in French Immersion/Extended French;
• FI program does a better job of challenging and engaging children;
• Consistent pressure from teachers for children to “abandon FI”;
• Too many FI boundary changes;
• Allow flexible boundaries for siblings who are not in FI so the entire family is accommodated at one school;
• Single stream schools would ensure more French spoken at school;
• Perception that FI teachers are “keener” than average because they need “advanced teaching skills” and therefore make the extra effort;
• Parents should not alone determine if their child should be enrolled in FI – should be made in partnership with school staff;
• Workload is extensive and can be overwhelming for both the child and parent;
• Decision to enrol child in Peel FI because the program was not available in the Catholic school until much later/didn’t want to be on a waiting list;
• Lack of experienced high quality teachers;
• Supply teachers do not speak French;
• Confusion around FI and the role it plays in helping students get into university;
• Students need strong English skills in university so French is less important in high school;
• Extended French should start in grade 4;
• Oral French lags behind French comprehension;
• French immersion families are more involved and classes have fewer behavioural issues.

In answering the question, “Why did you enroll your child in French immersion/extended French?” the following answers were given:
• To open doors to future opportunities;
• To increase my child’s appreciation of other languages and cultures;
• To help my child learn French – the language we speak at home;
• To help my child get into a post secondary institution;
• To enhance my child’s future career potential;
• To increase my child’s opportunities for success in a rapidly changing global economy;
• To become fluent in Canada’s other official language;
• Because my child’s teacher(s) recommended it to us;
• Because schools with French immersion/extended French appear to score better on EQAO assessments;
• Because my child excels at school and needs to be challenged;
• Because my child is eligible for busing to the French immersion/extended French program, but not to our home school;
• Because the French immersion school is closer to us than our home school;
• Because my other children attend French immersion.
Curriculum Instruction Special Education Support Services

Questions addressed during the presentation included:

- What is the relationship between instructional time and student achievement?
- How has the data been trending over a five year time period?
- What are the entry points for French immersion and are they supported through research?
- How are we addressing the needs of students with Special Needs and English Language Learners?
- Does school organization impact quality?
- What connection has been identified between French immersion/extended French and Regional Programs?

The Ministry of Education allows schools boards to start an extended French or French immersion program at any grade level provided that all policy and program requirements are met and that students enrolled in these programs are given the opportunity to achieve all of the expectations in French as a second language for the relevant program.

A Quality Program

The principle aim of the extended French and French immersion program is to provide students with the skills they need to communicate in a second language, and thereby enhance their ability to perform effectively and meet with success in a rapidly changing global economy. Although the two programs are designed to help students achieve different levels of proficiency in French through instruction at different levels of intensity, both aim to develop strong fundamental skills in oral communication (listening and speaking), reading, and writing. Both aim as well to provide students with an understanding of the cultures of French-speaking societies by integrating cultural study into daily language instruction.” (Ministry of Education, 2001).

Both the extended and immersion programs require that students study French as a second language in addition to studying at least one extended French or two French Immersion subjects: the arts, social studies (grades 1-6) or history and geography (grades 7 and 8), mathematics, science and technology, or health and physical education. In the case of 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, and a minimum of 1,260 hours of instruction in French must be completed by the end of grade 8. Program guidelines are designed on a five-year period, starting in grade 4. In French immersion programs, French must be the language of instruction for a minimum of 50% of the total instructional time at every grade level and a minimum of 3,800 hours of instruction in French must be completed by the end of grade 8 (Ministry of Education 2001).

The Peel District School Board offers French immersion programs at a single entry point, which is grade one. Of the ten school boards surveyed in the environmental scan all, with the exception of Ottawa Carleton District School Board, had a single entry point of either SK or grade one for their French immersion program. Extended French is offered
in Peel with an entry point at grade seven. Most boards surveyed offered extended French beginning at grade 7, with one board identifying grade five as the entry point.

Research supports an early entry level for French immersion over a middle or late entry point.

Information is provided to parents to assist in their decision-making. Information meetings are held for parents at immersion schools throughout the board and at that time parents are provided with information about the program and a brochure, entitled “Is French immersion right for my child?”, is provided. Parents are also encouraged to explore the website established by the Canadian Parents for French and the Peel District School Board website for additional information. Although this information is seen as valuable and should continue to be offered, it was recognized by administrators, teachers and Canadian Parents for French that there is a need to enhance and build on the information provided to parents.

Factors influencing a quality program include: growth of enrolment in FI, growth of board enrolment, school organization, and availability of quality teachers.

**Quality Indicator: Qualified, Fluent, Committed**

“There is a growing consensus that good teaching makes a big difference to students’ learning. Many studies show that the quality of teaching is a key determinant of student schooling experience and attainment, regardless of race, gender or socio-economic background.” The Facts on Education, (February 2011). “Does Teaching Quality Make a Difference? Produced by OISE and CEA.

Research has demonstrated that there is a relationship between instructional time and student achievement. However, the research literature is clear that this relationship between time and achievement is not a simple one. Conflicting viewpoints can be found throughout the literature. On one side, it has been demonstrated that more instructional time does not automatically equate to greater achievement and less instructional time does automatically equate to reduced achievement (Baker, D.P., Fabrega, R., Galindo, C., & Mishook, 2004). In summarizing the main finding in the study, Laitch (2005) stated, “changes in instructional time do not generally increase or decrease student achievement, unless such changes go beyond unusually low, or high, amounts of time. Curriculum and instructional quality appear to have a much greater effect on achievement than do the total hours of instructional time.”

Many educators assumed a direct relationship between spending more time studying a second language (L2) and higher proficiency in that language (Lapkin, S., Turnbull, M., Hart, D., & Swain, M. 1998). In second language instruction such as French immersion, there are findings to question this assumption. Turnbull, et. al (1998) finds evidence to
assert that, “the time argument does not necessarily apply, at least linearly . . .” In contrast, alternate findings support the assumption (Carroll, 1975; Morrison, Bonyun, & Pawley, 1981; Morrison, Bonyun, Pawley, & Walsh, 1980; Stenett & Earl, 1984a, 1984b; Stern et al., 1976). Many of these studies in the late 1970s and early 1980s involved core French programs in Canada, where students had short daily classes, resulting in a total of about 1400 hours of French instruction by the end of senior secondary school.

Whereas a great deal of attention has been given to examining the French proficiency, cultural attitudes, motivation, and career aspirations of students who have graduated from an immersion program (Harley, 1994; Hart & Lapkin, 1989; Hart, Lapkin, & Swain, 1989; Husum & Bryce, 1991; MacFarlane & Wesche, 1995; Turnbull, 1990a, 1990b; Wesche, 1988, 1993; Wesche, Morrison, Pawley, & Ready, 1986), few of these studies have examined the time/proficiency issue. Those that did typically focused on gross differences among programs. Therefore, many of these studies have shown that Early immersion students' French proficiency is higher than that of graduates of late or middle immersion programs, given that students in early immersion programs are exposed to many more hours of French than those in middle immersion or late immersion programs. However, this has not happened in all studies for all test measures. Furthermore, the differences between these groups have not been proportional to the differences in accumulated hours of instruction in French. These findings support the theory that older students learn second languages (L2s) more efficiently (Harley, 1982; Krashen, Long, & Scarcella, 1979; Krashen, Scarcella, & Long, 1982; Long, 1990) because they have already developed what Cummins (1983) called cognitive academic linguistic proficiency (CALF) in their first language which they can use in the L2 when they begin learning it.

The support for this theory lends credibility to the belief shared by Peel DSB teachers of English Language Learners (ELL) and special education students during focus group discussions. Here the teachers emphasized that if you build on English as the first language it will support literacy development. Staff stressed the need to understand that Peel is diverse and the probability that English is not a student’s first language. ELL students coming into grade one FI often have no basic English literacy skills in reading and writing. It was their feeling that with the current delivery model in the Peel District School Board we are challenged to build a strong literacy foundation in either French or English. Providing additional time in English instruction at the grade one level would benefit a majority of students in the FI program. However, teachers and administrators of French immersion/extended French programs noted that they believed that the first year with 85% instruction in French provides Peel students with an advantage. This belief is shared by Canadian Parents for French.

**Student Achievement**

An analysis of data trending over a five-year period demonstrates that in the Peel District School Board, although both English and FI groups are trending up over time, FI students (on average) achieve at a higher level than English students in both report card and EQAO results. Peel DSB FI students achieve at or above the provincial average for FI students in EQAO.
Although the data available would demonstrate that students are progressing well in the French Immersion/extended French program, administrators have cited a need for collection of specific language proficiency data for French immersion students. They believe that instruments must be made available to schools that will assist in measuring the rate of French language acquisition. The results of the assessments will allow schools and parents to better plan for next steps.

The French immersion/extended French program in Peel District School Board is accessible to all. English Language Learners and students with special needs are able to join the program along with their peers. Report card data indicates that FI students with IEPs and FI ELL students are achieving at a level close to the FI average.

The issue of meeting the needs of special education students and ELL students was explored during focus group discussions with teachers. Responses established that it would be beneficial to FI students and make the program more equitable if bilingual support were to be provided in these areas. In particular, the need to have bilingual ISSP teachers is important so that they have an understanding of how a teaching strategy or approach can be translated and applied. Although the strategy may transfer, the linguistic code in which the student is trying to apply the strategy may be the issue. Non-bilingual ISSP teachers generally support students during the English portion of the instructional day, thus limiting the options of when to best meet their needs. This is especially problematic in grade one with 85% French instructional time.

**School Organization**

French immersion/extended French programs in the Peel District School Board are offered to students in schools with dual track settings, both English and French.

Of the ten school boards surveyed, seven operate both single track and dual track school organizations.

Research in the area of single versus dual-track language programs is limited; however, results from the available research indicate the following:

- Effort must be put forth within a dual-track setting, to create a harmonious environment for all program stakeholders (students, staff and parents).
- Single-track immersion students are perceived, by both teachers and students, to be exposed to more French and less peer pressure than their dual-track counterparts (Kissau, S.P. 2003).
- A school environment which encourages the maximum use of French results in superior achievement on the part of immersion students in several aspects of French and English skills. While this is more easily done in a single-track school, it is possible for dual-track schools to encourage optimal use of French within the classroom (Lapkin, S., Andrew, C.M., Harley, B, Swain, M., Kamin, J. 1981).
- In respect of the question as to whether differences exist in achievement, self report measures of school effectiveness and attrition rates between students attending French immersion programs in the single-track and dual-track groups in this investigation, significant differences in attrition rates emerge as the sole measure that distinguishes the single track and dual track groups in this
Further study is warranted to better understand the factors that contribute to this finding. (Halton DSB Research Report 2009)

• No research was found to suggest that ELL students are disadvantaged in a dual-track school setting. (Upper Grand DSB 2009)

In summary, both benefits and drawbacks can be identified for single-track and dual track immersion settings.

Benefits for the dual-track include:
• Helping all students in the school appreciate the country’s two languages and two cultures;
• Immersion students have access to English resources in the school library which is beneficial to the English portion of their program;
• Teachers of both programs benefit from each other’s expertise;
• Community involvement is enhanced because the school may be closer to the child’s home or is the home school;
• Integration of two cultures fosters an understanding between the two languages;
• May help to keep community schools open.

Benefits for the single-track include:
• If available, bilingual staff, principals, teachers, librarian, secretaries, increase the opportunity for students to use the language outside the classroom;
• Certain of adequate numbers for a robust program by clustering students;
• Students exposed to more French and less peer pressure;
• Specialist teachers are more likely in all subjects;
• Easier to use French in all aspects of the school day;
• French teachers report greater satisfaction with resources and overall teaching situations.

Drawbacks for the dual-track setting:
• Immersion students may speak French less outside the classroom;
• Principal must manage two streams in one building & maximize student exposure to French e.g. French language in assemblies, hallways so immersion students’ exposure to the second language is not limited to the classroom;
• Greater likelihood that the support staff may be English;
• English regular program staff may feel intimidated by the immersion program;
• Teachers, students and parents may fear the displacement or disappearance of the English program;
• The English program may seem “second best”;
• English/French cliques may develop among students and /or the parent community.

Drawbacks for the single-track setting:
• Displacement of English home school students for French only program;
• May result in too much rotary;
• If in a new school, community may resent benefits of a new building being dedicated to an optional program;
• Perception that immersion is an elitist program – lacks development of cultural tolerance;
• Finding bilingual support staff is difficult;
• May increase time spent travelling from home if program is limited to centres;
• When the school reaches capacity re-location is difficult.

Regional Programs

Regional Learning Choices Programs offered by the Peel District School Board empower students by providing an opportunity to develop and explore skills in a particular area of interest. All students may apply for the program. At the elementary level, programs offered are, Arts, Sci Tech, International Business and Technology, Extended French and International Baccalaureate.

Programs are offered as a separate track within existing elementary schools. In some situations a school will offer a regional program and an FI track or an EF regional program track. In general, principals have stated that it is difficult to have a school that has both an FI component and a regional program component. Principals have also stated that it is very difficult to find qualified specialized staff and/or meet the required percentage of French instruction.

Professional Learning for Teachers and Administrators

Within the Peel District School Board, professional development opportunities designed specifically for French teachers are provided centrally through Curriculum and Instruction Support Services. The following table provides an overview of the in-service opportunities offered to teachers.

Table 1: PDSB Central Professional Development Opportunities Specific to French Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Learning Opportunity</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Inquiry (TLCP) in French Immersion</td>
<td>FI/EF and English teaching partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Inquiry Learning in Literacy – French Immersion</td>
<td>FI/EF teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learners in French Immersion</td>
<td>FI teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Immersion and Special Education</td>
<td>FI teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Workshops designed to provide additional professional learning:  
  • Comprehensive Literacy Program  
  • Gradual Release of Responsibility  
  • Reading Strategies  
  • Critical Literacy  
  • Critical Thinking  
  • Media Literacy  
  • Teacher Moderation  
  • Differentiated Instruction  
  • Assessment and Evaluation | FI/EF teachers  
  All workshops are open to principals and vice-principals |
Resource support is provided to the system through Curriculum and Instruction Support Services with five resource teachers with French qualifications in field offices and one FI resource teacher located centrally. Other supports are found in the teaching and learning website, the French writing scales, translated classroom resources, publisher/vendor displays, professional resources purchased for FI schools and the discussion page for French teachers.

Despite these offerings, however, PDSB teachers and administrators are requesting more professional development opportunities and access to resources. With 25% of our student population coming in at the grade one level and beginning a French immersion program, it is seen as important that the program be resourced accordingly. Principals and vice-principals have identified a need for an on-going series of workshops designed specifically for administrators with French immersion/extended French responsibilities. Responses articulated in the parent survey stressed the need for parental support in how to assist their children in the program.

Additional support for professional learning for occasional French teachers was identified through conversations at the committee level and in the qualitative data gathered.

Unlike other boards, the Peel District School Board provides additional resources to new French immersion sites. This includes $4500 per class, $10000 for the library and $12000 discretionary fund.

The members of the French Immersion Review Committee reached consensus on the following recommendations:

1. Expand, create or adopt standard language proficiency benchmarks to help assess the proficiency of the students’ French language acquisition.
2. Continue to utilize technology in presenting professional development opportunities to staff and in the sharing of professional resources.
3. Expand materials and in-service to assist French immersion/extended French classroom teachers in providing an effective program for all students.
4. Continue to provide teachers with access to quality grade appropriate materials.
5. Provide targeted professional development opportunities for occasional teachers qualified in French.
6. Implement 50% daily French instructional time in grades 1-8 FI, effective September 2013.
7. Monitor retention rates and establish a tracking system for those students leaving the French immersion program.
8. Review the information provided to parents to create an awareness and understanding regarding the challenges of the French immersion program.
**Human Resources Support Services**

Questions addressed during the presentation included:

- If we continue to grow in the French Immersion program as we have been, how many teachers are we going to require?
- What is the process for French Immersion Pool Hiring?
- How many teachers are on a Temporary Letter of Approval?

In general, teachers who receive their initial training in a teacher education program where English is the language of instruction are eligible to teach in English-language publicly funded schools. Similarly, teachers trained in French-language programs are eligible to teach in French-language publicly funded schools. At the elementary level, there is a language restriction. You must hold English-language basic qualifications (Primary, Junior, Intermediate) to teach in an English-language elementary school and you must hold French-language basic qualifications (primaire, moyen, intermédiaire) to teach in a French language elementary school. French immersion schools are considered English-language schools. There is no language restriction for secondary school teaching assignments. To teach French as a Second Language (FSL), you must hold the specific qualification on your Certificate of Qualification and Registration or the board must ask the Ministry of Education for a Temporary Letter of Approval. Ontario College of Teachers members may add additional qualifications to their certificate by taking additional qualification courses with approved providers.

As part of a number of initiatives to enable the Ministry of Education to better predict teacher trends in Ontario and to ensure that school boards have access to teachers with the qualifications and background that they need, the Ministry conducted an online teacher supply and demand survey in the winter of 2007/08. The Teaching Policy and Standards Branch, Instruction and Leadership Development Division, distributed a nine-question survey, and requested completion by Human Resources Superintendents at the 72 publicly funded school boards, 31 school authorities, and provincial schools in Ontario. 66 school boards and 11 school authorities responded. All school boards and authorities were asked to report on:

- The number of individuals employed in 2006-07 under Letters of Permission (LOPs) by grade and subject: Letters of Permission (LOPs) may be granted to a school board, authorizing the board to employ individuals who are not teachers to teach in an elementary or secondary school for a period not exceeding one year. The number of LOPs granted indicates shortages in specific teaching areas;

- The number of teachers granted Temporary Letters of Approval (TLAs) in 2006-07 by grade and subject: The Ministry of Education may grant a Temporary Letter of Approval (TLA) to a board for up to one year, to allow a teacher to teach a subject or hold a position for which he or she is not qualified. The number of TLAs granted may indicate that certain subject areas are experiencing a shortage of teachers; and

- Their perception of the shortage and surplus of teachers by grade and subject, based on applications for teaching positions in 2006-07 and 2007-08.
The subject areas that were identified by school boards and authorities as having the greatest shortage of applicants and teacher shortage were French as a Second Language or French Immersion in elementary. (Teacher Supply and Demand Survey - Executive Summary 2008)

The most common grade or subject area for which teachers were granted TLAs in 2006-07 was French as a second language or French immersion. (Teacher Supply and Demand Survey - Executive Summary 2008)

A common concern among schools boards was recognized as difficulty in attracting and retaining French qualified occasional teachers.

Due to the lack of qualified FSL staff that possess both French proficiency and pedagogical knowledge, the Ontario College of Teachers issues more letters of permission to uncertified instructors than any other teacher-governing council in Canada (Ottawa Carleton District School Board Final Report: Review of FSL Programs, Elementary Phase 2007).

A large-scale survey of Ontario teachers in their early years in spring 2011 found that the unemployment rate of teachers has risen significantly. Almost one in three of the teacher education graduates of 2010 who sought teaching jobs during the 2010-11 school year were unemployed; with no success in finding even daily supply teaching during the first school year of their teaching careers. Only one in eight of them secured regular teaching jobs and just one in three of those who were on the job market secured as much teaching work as they wanted.

The report identifies that French as a second language teachers have a high degree of success in finding some employment as teachers. (Ontario College of Teachers Transition to Teaching 2011)

Research has shown that proficiency of the teacher in the target language is critical for program success, particularly in terms of being able to: (i) plan and implement language programs and teach curriculum in specific content areas; (ii) model language for students; and, (iii) provide corrective feedback on grammatical errors (Ottawa Carleton District School Board Final Report: Review of FSL Programs, Elementary Phase 2007).

### Table 2: Peel District School Board French Staffing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Teachers 2011-12</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1082</td>
<td>French qualified teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>891</td>
<td>French qualified teachers currently teaching French (FI/EF, Core and Planning time)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
French qualified teachers not currently teaching French but have taught French within the past 10 years

French qualified teachers available to teach French in Peel DSB

22 have not taught within the last 10 years*
35 currently in alternate roles or on leave

French qualified occasional teachers

French qualified occasional teachers in Long Term French occasional positions (2011-2012)

French qualified occasional teachers available to cover day to day supply requests.

Regular status teachers are teaching on a Temporary Letter of Approval

Occasional teachers are teaching on a Temporary Letter of Approval

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* Notwithstanding Article 14.02 (1), the Board shall not assign a Teacher to teach a program for which he or she is qualified, if he or she has not taught that program in the preceding ten (10) years unless agreed to by mutual consent between the teacher and the Principal.

It is important to note that a percentage of the qualified French teachers may only be teaching the subject a small percentage of each day and this further increases the need for qualified French staff.

A concern raised continually by school administrators in Peel is the lack of French qualified occasional teachers available for day-to-day supply coverage and/or Long Term Occasional positions. Administrators are constantly facing the dilemma of trying to ensure that the required amount of French instruction is being provided by qualified French teachers, but are finding this difficult when occasional teachers are not accepting French jobs as there is nothing to prevent these teachers from accepting English positions once they have been signed on with the board. Some administrators have reported having classes going for extended periods of time without a qualified French teacher.
French Immersion Hiring

The Peel District School Board is looking for candidates to be able to demonstrate university level spoken and written French. The candidates must hold FSL part 1 or be able to gain entrance into the FSL part 1 AQ in order to be considered for hire to the Board.

Pool hired teachers are guaranteed a full time position if offered a teaching position with the Board.

Table 3: Elementary French Immersion Pool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number Applied</th>
<th>Number Selected to be Interviewed</th>
<th>Number Recommended</th>
<th>Number Hired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>App. 300</td>
<td>App.150</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/7</td>
<td>App.300</td>
<td>App.150</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/8</td>
<td>App. 300</td>
<td>App.150</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>App. 300</td>
<td>App. 150</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>No pool</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>App. 160</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>App. 170</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several reasons have been identified for candidates not being selected for an interview or subsequently not being recommended for hire. They include:
- Do not hold a Bachelor of Education Degree (not a qualified teacher);
- No French qualifications;
- Do not want full time employment;
- Resumes/cover letters riddled with errors;
- Candidate did not answer the questions appropriately or with depth;
- Candidate did not provide concrete examples;
- Candidate did not pass the fluency test(s) – written and oral; and
- Candidate did not have support from one or more of their references.

In an ongoing effort to recruit French teachers in the past board staff have visited a number of universities by attending their Career Fairs; namely,
- Brock
- Charles Sturt (Burlington Campus)
- Lakehead
Due to budget restraints, Peel has stopped conducting interviews at the universities. To conduct these interviews at least two administrators (of which one must be French speaking) were required.

The Peel District School Board annually holds an Information Night for Teachers at the HJA Brown Education Centre.

Staffing has been identified as a key issue for many of the boards surveyed and one that gives cause for concern when looking at future sustainability of French programs.

It is recommended by PPVPA that the board continue to expand FI pool hiring to ensure there are qualified candidates available as needed for LTOs and re-organization and to increase the diversity of skills available to include planning time subjects and ISSP.

In recognizing the need for bilingual support in ISSP and for ELL students, it must also be recognized that the primary need for French qualified teachers must be the classroom so that the mandated hours of instruction can be met.

Teacher recruitment for unfilled vacancies after the French Pool has been depleted becomes the responsibility of individual school administrators of immersion/extended French schools, many of whom are unable to evaluate French language skills of prospective candidates. Presently, principals are required to ask French-speaking colleagues to assist in hiring, a difficult process when so much of it occurs during July and August.

**Table 4: French immersion/extended French Staffing Projections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total # of teachers required with the current status of instructional time of grade 1 85% and all remaining grades at 50%</th>
<th>Total # of teachers required with instructional time of all grades at the ministry minimum mandated level of 50%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>419.2</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>French Immersion</td>
<td>Extended French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>443.8</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>473.9</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>485.2</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>503.5</td>
<td>444.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>506.1</td>
<td>447.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>510.1</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>509.5</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>439.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This table assumes status quo on the current level of growth in French immersion/extended French programs.

The members of the French Immersion Review Committee reached consensus on the following recommendations:

1. Establish a protocol for the hiring of French Teachers that includes:
   1.1.1. An initial pre-screening of all candidates by a bilingual school administrator or designate qualified to teach French to verify the candidate’s French-language proficiency.
   1.1.2. A follow up interview for those who are successful in the pre-screen by two school administrators with a focus on pedagogical, interpersonal and classroom management skills.
   1.1.3. The continued practice of pool hiring for French qualified teachers.
2. Consider the feasibility of appointing an administrator to facilitate the attraction and retention of French language staff.
3. Assign French qualified teachers to as many periods of French instruction as possible.
4. Implement 50% daily French instructional time in grades 1 – 8 FI, effective September 2013.
5. Explore and develop the training of French qualified pre-service teachers in partnership with post secondary institutions.
6. Endeavour to place a French qualified teacher as a member of the school ISSP team in FI locations.
7. Continue using technologies to conduct online/web-based interviews with potential teacher candidates.

**Transportation and Corporate Support Services**

Questions addressed during the presentation included:

- What is the transportation eligibility for students in French immersion/extended French?
- How many students access transportation for French immersion/extended French and what is the cost?

French as a Second Language programs offered in Ontario school districts receive a funding grant from the Ministry of Education that is based on the type of program, the number of minutes of French instruction per day, and the number of students enrolled in the program. All costs of resources for French immersion programs are covered by this
grant. It is difficult to estimate specific costs for the program, as they are dependent on a variety of factors, such as staffing, resources/materials to support program delivery, transportation, etc. Because revenues are generated through the FSL grants are not enveloped specifically for the delivery of FSL programs, it is impossible to provide figures that explicitly show FSL revenues compared to expenditures (Ottawa Carleton District School Board Final Report: Review of FSL Programs, Elementary Phase 2007).

Revenues derived for French immersion/extended French funding in the Peel District School Board do not fully cover the costs of expenses connected with the programs (Appendix B).

Transportation costs at the elementary level account for a portion of the overall expenses.

Peel DSB students may access transportation services if their primary address is within the school’s attendance boundary, at a distance of more than Kindergarten – 1.0 km.; grades 1 to 4 – 1.6 km.; grades 5 to 6 – 2.0 km.; and grades 7 to 8 – 3.2 km. For schools hosting French immersion/extended French programs the school’s attendance boundary is defined for both the English and the French student population.

During the 2011-2012 school year 10,856 elementary students were enrolled in French immersion/extended French. Seventy percent of those students were eligible for transportation at a projected cost of 4.1 million dollars. This cost is reduced to $2.7m when factoring in those students who would continue to be eligible for transportation if they were attending their home school.

Canadian Parents for French (CPF) believe in a bilingual Canada where young Canadians have the opportunity to learn both of Canada’s official languages. During meetings with representatives of CPF they shared their position that, without transportation, programs are threatened and that, through the FSL grants, the boards should be able to afford the related costs. Many programs can be wholly dependent on the ability of students to get to the sites.

Although the mandate of this review was the elementary panel, the needs of the secondary school French immersion students came up on more than one occasion. Parents advocated for transportation at the secondary level, specifically in rural areas where a public transit does not exist.

The members of the French Immersion Review Committee reached consensus on the following recommendation:

1. That the board establish a committee to conduct a full review of the FI/EF program at the secondary level during the 2013-14 school year.
Planning and Accommodation Support Services
Questions addressed during the presentation included:

- What are the retention rates over a five-year period?
- What are the projections over the next ten years based on our current growth rate?
- If we continue to grow in the French immersion program as we have been, how much space will we require? Will there be accommodation pressures?

Enrolment patterns over the past ten years in Peel District School Board elementary schools indicate that although the district continues to demonstrate a growth pattern, each year has seen a smaller percentage of growth noted. In contrast enrolment (and proportion of students) entering French immersion programs in grade one has been increasing significantly. (Appendix C) In 2011 24.9% of grade one students were enrolled in a French immersion program, up from a 9% in 2001.

The following tables display 5-year average retention rates by grade for elementary French immersion and extended French.

**Table 5: Five-Year Average French Immersion Retention Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Movement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1 → Grade 2</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2 → Grade 3</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3 → Grade 4</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4 → Grade 5</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5 → Grade 6</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6 → Grade 7</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7 → Grade 8</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6: Five Year Weighted Average Extended French Retention Rates at Grade 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In looking to reasons why students in the elementary panel would withdraw from the program, teachers, parents and administrators have informally cited a number of reasons as was evident in the perceptual data collected. There is not an identifiable tool in place within the board that will allow for conducting exit surveys for students who leave the program to help administrators better understand why students are leaving.

In the 2012-13 school year the Peel District School Board will provide forty-five French immersion centres and four extended French centres within elementary schools. These centres will all reside in dual track elementary schools across the system. The optimal
division of English and French programs in any school has been identified in previous reports to the Peel District School Board as a gap no greater than 60/40 for either program. Although this is an identified goal, the current reality is that in many centres the English program is strongly outweighed by the French program. Perceptual data from teachers and administrators identified this as a strong concern. In five of the forty-five centres less than twenty-five percent of the students enrolled are in the English stream. Projected enrolment September 2012 is 12,624 for French immersion and 682 for extended French.

French immersion is open to any student who will be beginning grade one. To guarantee a place in the program for any given September students must be registered at their local FI school by the last Friday before February 1st of each year. Registration begins on November 22nd. After the January deadline, new registrants for French immersion will be put on a waiting list. Openings will be offered to students on the waiting list on a first come first serve basis. Current policy allows for students on waitlists to attend their “closest” FI school if there is not enough room at their “home” school.

Current experience in executing the waitlist policy has proven to be highly problematic and it is suggested that this is an area that will need to be reviewed.

Over the past few years the growth in French immersion/extended French has resulted in new centres being opened. Peel District School Board Policy # 19, *Flexible School Boundaries* states that where a boundary change has been instituted, no flexible boundary applications will be approved in the first year of the new boundary. Several parents have requested that this clause be withdrawn and consideration be given to families who are affected by the change and would like their children to be able to attend the same school as his or her siblings. Due to the phase-in nature of the French immersion programs in a new centre, many families may have children attending one centre for grade one, two or three and another for grade four or five. These parents have shared the challenges they face in getting children off to two different elementary schools, particularly small children. Parents have shared that they would like to become a part of the culture of a school and to participate in the school community. This becomes very difficult when they are split between schools due to their children attending different schools.

In response to parental concerns data was collected to determine how many children may be affected by their family being split by French immersion boundaries. The four French immersion boundary changes scheduled for September 2012 could potentially impact sixty-nine students.

The following tables demonstrate the projected growth over the next ten years in French immersion/extended French assuming that the enrolment in grade 1 FI remains constant at 25% of our total grade 1 population.
Table 6: Enrolment Projections for French Immersion Centres
Grade 1 remains at 25% uptake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Projected Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>12,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2013</td>
<td>13,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>14,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>14,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>15,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>15,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>15,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2019</td>
<td>16,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2020</td>
<td>16,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2021</td>
<td>16,255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Enrolment Projections for Extended French Centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Projected Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2013</td>
<td>686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2019</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2020</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2021</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This demonstrates a growth of 3,631 students in French immersion and a decline of 83 students in extended French. Of the four extended French centres, two will sustain the enrolment growth over a ten year period and the remaining two have been projected to show a slight decline.

In projecting the French and English enrolment based on the current level of growth over the next ten years in French immersion and comparing it to the Ministry rated capacity within the current school sites, fifteen schools would not have the capacity to accommodate all students for both programs.

A projected twelve new centres would need to be identified to accommodate the students and maintain the current level of growth. With the Peel District School Board currently facing accommodation pressures, particularly in the north, and due to the implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK), identifying appropriate space to expand French immersion would be challenging. In addition, capital dollars will not be provided through Ministry funding to create new FI spaces.
The members of the French Immersion Review Committee reached consensus on the following recommendations:

1. Place an enrolment cap on all grade one elementary French immersion programs maintaining the level of access (i.e. 25% of the total Peel District School Board grade 1 enrolment) identified in the 2012-13 school year, effective September 2013. The enrolment cap is to be reviewed by December 2017.
2. That staff consider the organization of both single track and dual track French immersion schools as a part of the 2012-13 annual planning process and annually thereafter.
3. Continue to monitor the enrolment balance in dual track French immersion centres and address as required through the Annual Planning Document.
4. Consider the implications of establishing new French immersion centres and school flexible boundary requests as they relate to siblings of students who have been asked to change schools due to the opening of a new FI centre.
5. Develop a tool that will allow for the collection of data that identifying the numbers of students leaving the program and the reasons for the departure.
6. Review and revise Curriculum and Instruction Support Services Operating Procedure # 15, Registration for French Immersion and Extended French Programs specific to the section outlining the waitlist process.

Summary

The purpose of this report was to provide detailed information that would assist in planning for the sustainability of the French immersion/extended French program in the Peel District School Board.

A major focus in this report was to examine the issues of staffing, instructional time and space accommodation. PDSB enrolment statistics show that the French immersion/extended French program has grown significantly over the past ten years and is projected to continue to do so. The demographics of the student population are reflected in the enrolment for the French program, highlighting the need to create a strong literacy base in both English and French. The growth of the French program impacts the need for additional teachers and space. For many school boards, including Peel, the acquisition of staff is challenging and it has been found that the lack of teacher proficiency has become an additional challenge, requiring a continued strong focus on professional learning. Accommodation pressures faced by the Peel District School Board, particularly in the north and due to FDK, support the need to closely examine the feasibility of identifying appropriate space to expand French immersion.

Based on research evidence, no definitive answer was found that spoke to the optimal percentage of instructional time in French immersion. School districts in Ontario have opted for different French immersion/extended French percentage of French instructional time and entry points, provided that Ministry of Education guidelines governing FSL programs are met.

Additionally the implementation of the French immersion/extended French program is influenced by: (i) the cost of the program overall; (ii) the enrolment balance of French
and English students in FI/EF centres; (iii) the comparative lack of commercial immersion resources; and (iv) the concerns expressed by parents over the impact of boundary changes causing siblings to attend different schools for the French immersion program.

The strategic plan for the Peel board, the Report Card for Student Success is based on a proven, research-based methodology called the balanced scorecard. Its power is in using data to transform our strategic plan into action. It demonstrates the cause-and-effect relationship between our actions and what we're trying to achieve—is what we are doing having a direct impact on what we are trying to achieve?

The final recommendations from the French Immersion Review Committee are aligned with the goals identified in the Report Card for Student Success. Those recommendations that will impact on policy change or financial considerations will be taken to the trustees of the Peel District School Board for approval. All other recommendations will be referred to the appropriate department for implementation.

**Recommendations**

**Attract, Develop and Retain Staff**

1. Explore and develop the training of French qualified pre-service teachers in partnership with post secondary institutions.
2. Expand materials and in-service to continue to assist French Immersion classroom teachers in providing an effective program for all students.
3. Continue to provide teachers with access to quality grade appropriate materials.
4. Provide targeted professional development opportunities for occasional teachers qualified in French.

**Use Resources Effectively**

1) Establish a protocol for the hiring of French Teachers that includes:
   i) an initial pre-screening of all candidates by a bilingual school administrator or designate qualified to teach French to verify the candidate’s French-language proficiency.
   ii) a follow up interview for those who are successful in the pre-screen by two school administrators with a focus on pedagogical, interpersonal and classroom management skills.
   iii) the continued practice of pool hiring for French qualified teachers.
2) Consider the feasibility of appointing an administrator to facilitate the attraction and retention of French language staff.
3) In order to optimize the French qualified teachers in each school, principals are asked to assign French qualified teachers to as many periods of French instruction as possible.
4) Implement 50% daily French instructional time in grades 1 – 8 FI, effective September 2013.
5) Develop a tool that will allow for the collection of data identifying the numbers of students leaving the program and the reasons for the departure.
6) Review and revise Curriculum and Instruction Support Services Operating Procedure # 15, Registration for French Immersion and Extended French Programs specific to the section outlining the waitlist process.

Set High Expectations
1. Expand, create or adopt standard language proficiency benchmarks to help assess the proficiency of the students’ French Language acquisition in FI/EF.
2. Monitor retention rates and establish a tracking system for those students leaving the French Immersion program at defined transition points.

Positive Relationships
1. Consider the implications of establishing new French immersion centres and school flexible boundary requests as they relate to siblings of students who have been asked to change schools due to the opening of a new FI centre.
2. Review the information provided to parents to create awareness and understanding regarding the challenges of the French Immersion Program.

Achieve Equity
1. That the board establish a committee to conduct a full review of the FI/EF program at the secondary level during the 2013-14 school year.
2. Endeavour to place a French qualified teacher as a member of the school ISSP team in FI locations.

Safe and Appropriate Places to Learn and Work
1. Place an enrolment cap on all grade one elementary French Immersion Programs maintaining the level of access (i.e. 25% of the total Peel District School Board grade 1 enrolment) identified in the 2012-13 school year effective September 2013. The enrolment cap is to be reviewed by December 2017.
2. That the staff consider the organization of both single track and dual track French immersion schools as a part of the 2012-13 annual planning document and annually thereafter.
3. Continue to monitor the enrolment balance in dual track French Immersion Centres and address as required through the Annual Planning Document.

Effective Use of Technology
1. Continue using technologies to conduct online/web-based interviews with potential teacher candidates.
2. Continue to utilize technology in presenting professional development opportunities to staff and in the sharing of teaching resources.
References:


Halton District School Board Research Report 2009

Kissau S. The Relationship Between School Environment and Effectiveness in French Immersion. University of Windsor


Ottawa Carleton District School Board Final Report Review of French as a Second Language Programs, Elementary Phase September 2007


Teacher Supply and Demand Survey Report Ontario: 2007

Upper Grand District School Board French Immersion Program Delivery and Impact on ESL Learning in a Dual-Track French English School

Upper Grand District School Board Reports to Board - November 2009