

February 10<sup>th</sup> - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

***In order to protect the identity of all individuals who have submitted correspondence with regard to the French Review and in keeping with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, all personal information and/or identifiers have been severed from all recorded communication (i.e. e-mails and letters) prior to distribution. The intent or message has not been changed.***

---

**February 10, 2016**

I support caps for French Immersion and expanding French language instruction to lower grades in regular track.

I was on the accommodation review committee for the [REDACTED]. I was well-versed in the projected numbers, and it was obvious then that with no long term plan, the uncontrolled growth of FI would cause boundary changes every few years. We predicted the current problems, a result of not capping FI six years ago.

As a result of the last review, my own children were moved out of their neighbourhood school to make way for FI and I have seen firsthand the damage closing neighbourhood schools does to an entire community. I could enumerate the problems in great detail, but you have the 2009 report and all the feedback from that review. Only the neighbourhoods have changed since then, not the issues.

Uncapped and unplanned FI growth privileges learning French, a single subject, over every other aspect of schooling. The FI lobby is a veritable juggernaut, somehow convincing parents and trustees that the program is so vital that it's worth uprooting and disrupting students repeatedly. This is not good pedagogy.

The current report has some excellent recommendations about other models of teaching French. The staff who put it together have done the research, investigated other boards, and offered solid suggestions. It is time to listen to the experts and plan accordingly, even if the decisions are unpopular. In the long run you aren't helping anyone, even FI students, by not dealing with the numbers problem.

Sincerely,  
[REDACTED]

---

**February 11, 2016**

In the east end, we currently do not have a neighbourhood French or English school. When my first child started school, we chose French for a variety of reasons, but location was not a factor as the English school we are zoned for is equally far from our home.

We have a third child who will be impacted by the decision regarding whether to grandfather siblings of children currently in FI. We would prefer the siblings to be

February 10<sup>th</sup> - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

grandfathered so all our children can attend elementary school together. Also, if our third child does not "win the lottery" to get into FI, he will have to take the bus to attend public English school. This makes no sense whatsoever. He could walk to the new FI school (Couling Cres) or take the bus to Brant Ave.

A big issue for our family is lack of a "neighbourhood" English school. As mentioned our kids are zoned for Brant Ave. We do not live in that neighbourhood. Ken Danby is much closer to our home, and in our neighbourhood, but due to zoning our children would go to Brant Ave.

One risk for the Board to consider if the cap is instituted is the loss of students who would have gone to public school to the Catholic school board. This should be considered in the decision making process.

Lastly, if a random lottery is instituted, it needs to be transparent and families need to know that "who you know" doesn't impact who gets into FI.

Thank you.

---

### **February 12, 2016**

While I am not happy about the cap suggestion, if this is implemented, I do hope that there is some consideration to siblings of children currently in the program. I have a ■ year old that will be affected by this change next year, and his sister is currently in grade ■ French Immersion. My concern about the 'random' lottery system is that we already have a support system for his learning, as my wife and I both work with our daughter on French, and she is doing well. I don't think that it is fair that we may be forced to have one in French, one not in French because we lose out on a lottery, especially since we are showing/putting in the effort on French and English at home with our daughter, which would be what we do with our son. I feel like you should be focusing more on hiring strategies and expanding the French program so that anyone that wants to learn it can. Restricting people from wanting to learn something is not the solution.

---

### **February 14, 2016**

I have two children that are currently in FI and doing absolutely amazing in it. I am very concerned that my younger two children will not be able to attend the same school or have and an equal learning opportunity. I do not understand why you would not allow younger sibling to be enrolled in FI if older children of the same family are succeeding in the program?

---

## February 16, 2016

Thank you so much for this opportunity to provide feedback. Similar points have most likely already made, but everyone needs to have their say.

1. The proposed cap of 25 students is simply not enough. The statistically generated retention rate of 95% per year means only 15 students will graduate from grade 8 in the FI track, and 60% doesn't seem good enough to me. As of last week, there are already 37 JK students registered in French for Sept. 2016. This number can still increase.
2. Lottery style selection seems less likely to result in the retention of students. Screening would increase the likelihood of successful completion of FI programming. Not doing so would only add to the above mentioned issue.
3. Young FI teachers in child bearing years will be deterred from applying to and/or accepting positions in our school if there is no guarantee that their children can participate in a program they sustain
4. Students that are already enrolled in the FI system did so with the current curriculum in place. They should at least be permitted to complete the FI program in which they enrolled. IF it is necessary to reduce the current level of French instruction time, then every attempt should be made to ensure that current students of the FI track become 'grandfathered' out of the plan and supported through the currently proposed framework
5. The Math – lost/reduced instruction time in the first four crucially foundational years:
  - a. 16% of 300 mins= 48 minutes less instruction time per day
  - b. 48 mins/day x 180 instructional days = 8640 minutes or 144 hours/year
  - c. @ 5 hours a day = 28.8 instructional days/year
  - d. 28.8 days x 4 years = 115.2 lost instructional days - which is basically 2/3 of one school year.
  - e. This only addresses the loss of French instruction time for the first 4 four years. Needless to say, our children will be missing much, much more over the subsequent years of the proposed new plan.
6. Norwell DSS is a secondary school that is consistently dropping in enrollment. There has been a recent introduction of new courses in the arts in an effort to promote it and help sustain and retain registration from the feeder schools. One such program is the extension of FI into the high school grades which was previously an Extended French program. With PPS being one of the only feeder schools into this FI program, this program is already in serious jeopardy especially if the proposed jk cap is left at a mere 25 students.

February 10<sup>th</sup> - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Questions: Realizing that no individual responses are going out, perhaps it is reasonable that these can be addressed at the public meeting on March 3.

1. Some towns/cities have multiple FI schools. Would the amalgamation of these schools not make more sense in order to pool French speaking personnel and teachers? For example Fergus, Guelph, Orangeville. Would this free up teachers for other areas that the board covers?
  
  2. Since there seems to be a shortage of French speaking staff, what efforts have been made to recruit French speaking teachers from other areas of the country/world? Is there a committee specifically designated to addressing this problem?
    - a. Is the shortage of FI teachers and staff a problem that reaches beyond our board? If so, what are other boards doing to recruit or address this issue? Is this something for which our ministry needs to held accountable and should be dealt with from a provincial level?
  
  3. In regards to the selection of the Review Committee, how was it determined that there would not be representation from all areas of the board and more specifically North Wellington?
- 

## **February 19, 2016**

Hello,

I have two comments;

1)The peel board which has recently implemented a restrictive french immersion enrollment plan has permitted families who currently have a child between grade 3-8 enrolled in French immersion to enroll their siblings as well. This continuity and consistently supports the needs of time constrained families (some of whom are single parents) who require a synchronized routine while benefiting children's developmental needs and reducing stress for the family unit.

**CONTINUITY AND CONSISTENCY OF SYNCHRONIZED ROUTINES TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AND CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

2) In the interest of conserving financial resources and prudent use of citizens' tax dollars, families who's first choice is french immersion should be permitted to enroll at a french immersion school instead of the English track school if attending the English track school would necessitate funds being wastefully allocated to busing for a child who would prefer to walk to French Immersion. This supports healthy kids and healthy communities by increasing activity and reducing pollution. **NO BUSING TO ENGLISH TRACK SCHOOLS FOR KIDS WHO ARE WITHING WALKING DISTANCE OF FRENCH IMMERSION.**

---

## **February 23, 2016**

What other French Immersion options do we have if not all my children get into the same school. We currently have 2 children enrolled in PPS and are very happy with the

February 10<sup>th</sup> - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

school. But we would like all our children to attend the same school. We will most likely move within a 60km of the Palmerston area if we find a school that will take all our children.

---

### **February 28, 2016**

If the draw system goes through how are to get better qualified teachers? No french teacher will move to our area if they have children or grandchildren they wish to attend school.

---

### **March 1, 2016**

We have 3 children with the eldest in █ this year. My primary concern is that a 'registration lottery' could force our children to attend different schools with some in French immersion and others not. This seems absurd as I can see Couling Cres PS from my front window. I am much more concerned about creating a thriving community and family life than I am about maximizing the percentage of French instructional time. I'd much rather lose a bit of French instructional time versus sending my children to different schools and creating a fractured family dynamic. I understand that the system needs to give somewhere but I implore you to keep families together and adjust the program in other areas. Let's not lose focus of what it truly important. Thank-you.

---

### **March 3, 2016**

1. The north needs better representation on the committee
  2. Committee needs to take a close look if it is a full board issue, or just a Guelph issue.
    - If just Guelph then use them as the guinea pigs- then if the North (in the future) has the same issues, and the plan that gets implanted in Guelph worked- then add it- as needed- to other areas
  3. We like option 1 for the JK-Gd 2 be 84% French and so on if that will help with staffing issues
  4. Staffing is a provincial-National issue- so fight to have French teachers have their own teachers college 1 year program. They went to 2 years to solve the too many teachers problem, not an inability to teach problem.
  5. Siblings need to be grandfathered in. How do you tell a child you can't when 1-3 others in the same house could.
  6. If staffing is an issue then core French starting at grade 1 should not be an option at this time- revisit if a surplus of teachers come about
  7. What about baby booms?? These are more predictable- and all schools of both languages are affected. The cap will not help at all in these years.
-

February 10<sup>th</sup> - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## March 6, 2016

To Whom it May Concern:

First of all, it was an absolute pleasure to attend Thursday night's information session regarding the French Review Committee's Report. I very much enjoyed interacting with committee members, board members and trustees. Not only was this a welcome and rare opportunity to meet with our policy makers and program planners, but I must admit that I was pleasantly surprised to meet such passionate and caring people in support of such a valued program. I am sincerely grateful for everyone's dedication to the preservation of French Immersion within Upper Grand District School Board, so thank you for that opportunity.

I spoke to several people on Thursday night, and I indicated that I felt there is a lack of creativity and resourcefulness in the problem solving of things such as recruiting and programming. Superintendent MacDonald asked me to compile my ideas and suggestions and email them in. I did send in questions and feedback already, but I guess I didn't realize that by 'feedback', the review committee was specifically looking for ideas and suggestions to potentially implement. I have chosen to submit this in the general format on the feedback form, but also to email Mr. MacDonald directly as I felt we had connected on some key points.

Secondly, I feel that the Board of Education needs to start viewing French Immersion as an industry that is beginning to fail due to a lack of skilled workers. What do industry and business sectors do when there is a shortage of workers? To my limited knowledge, they campaign, they recruit and they engage marketing partners, consultants and various tiers of government in the process. Perhaps this type of large scale approach would be a worthwhile endeavour (and expense). If this is not a viable option maybe it could become a project for a group of university students in the field of marketing, business and/or human resources to take on in order to answer any or all of these questions:

- What processes for dealing with gaps in the labour market are effective? Are any of them suitable for use in this situation?
- How can we attract and support people to work in this industry?
- What is the government willing to do about it? How can the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Education (and any other ministries with a vested interest) collaborate to address the many issues this industry is facing?

Specifically regarding staffing and recruitment:

1. There absolutely needs to be a committee or task-force specifically dedicated to "Creative Recruitment". To me this includes, but is not limited to:

A) A multiphase campaign:

i. Immediate front line, face-to-face type recruitment (ie job fairs etc)

1. Quebec seems like an obvious place to recruit, but perhaps New Brunswick is a better choice since it is our only bilingual province. Also, look at all communities that have a high percentage of French speaking people

February 10<sup>th</sup> - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

ii. Multimedia marketing campaign to create general awareness about the need for FI teachers and French speaking staff – (and the Ministry needs to be on board with this too.)

iii. Advertising on FSL websites and agencies around the world

B) Long term recruitment in general!!

C) Targeting of French Language High School students in Ontario about a career in teaching FI

D) Approaching MTCU:

i. ...in regards to possible incentives for current high school students and graduates to commit to teaching French Immersion 5 years from now. Incentives should include but not be limited to reduced tuition for teacher's colleges, free course materials, grants etc. (Skilled-Trade Apprenticeship programs currently offer a variety of bonuses. Apprentices can receive up to \$4,000 in grants to pay tuition, travel, tools, or other expenses.)

ii. ...in regards to "Second Career Ontario". Currently 'jobs in demand' that qualify for their funding include: healthcare, skilled trades, road construction, mining, power generation and more. How can we get 'French Speaking EA and French Speaking ECE Teacher' added to the list of "jobs in demand" and therefore qualify for their extensive support and funding?

iii. Similarly, in the past several years (at least 5), MTCU has supported Conestoga College in various tuition free pre-apprenticeship and training courses for qualifying individuals based on gaps discovered in the labour market. Surely, the lack of French speaking educational support staff should qualify as a gap in the labour market (across the province) and could therefore be presented as a proposal for one of these tuition free programs (EAs and ECEs)

E) Creating a SHSM for French/French Immersion Teacher: (We have one for everything else in our high schools.) Can something like this be created to get high school students on board early on? Then, hopefully if all goes well with #1.d., by then there could be additional incentives once they get to teacher's college. Also, consider offering some sort of UGDSB scholarship competition for anyone pursuing French as a teachable subject.

F) Using current high school students enrolled in FI courses and/or academic level senior French courses (3U and/or 4U) in the FI classrooms as part of their course requirements

i. particularly in the JK – SK classrooms where the ECE teachers are not French speaking.

ii. particularly in grade 6, 7, 8 combined with Video Conferencing and Webinar style classrooms (see #1. a. i)

G) Considering the hiring of 'unqualified French speaking support staff'. For long term: Host job/education fairs for ANY French speaking people to come and get information on how to become an EA or an ECE teacher

Specifically in regards to programming:

1. There needs to be a committee or task force specifically dedicated to "Creative Programming" for bridging the gap between the 100% and the proposed 84% instructional time for jk – grade 2 and bridging the gap between the 80% and the

February 10<sup>th</sup> - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

proposed 68% instructional time for grade 3 – 5 etc. These programming ideas could be used to either assist in maintaining the current FI framework of instructional time, or they could be used to augment the proposed framework. Either way it equates to more French in the classroom. (It's important to note that some parents may be even opposed to the idea of replacing the traditional structure of the classroom with some of these technology based ideas, which may in itself become its own self-regulation in terms of 'keeping the lines down', so-to-speak. )

A) Use of Skype and/or Video Conferencing and/or Webinars for older students...ie Intermediates – Senior Grades 7 – 12

1. Perhaps a centralized hub of experienced, qualified teachers delivering new material, developing evaluation tools/tests/exams, culminating tasks etc. and course outlines. Less experienced or unqualified French speaking teachers could be on site, in the classrooms, to support students with the assigned materials and research. This process could simultaneously provide mentorship to the less experienced qualified teachers. Then, add in French speaking high school and/or university students and/or unqualified French speaking staff to support students in person at individual classrooms. (see 1. f in staffing and recruitment)

B) Use of French educational videos and movies in the primary and junior grades to help offset the proposed (lessened) instructional teacher time

1. For subjects such as science, social studies, art
2. For some of the time when French speaking supply teachers are not available
3. Add in French language students (see 1. f in staffing and recruitment)
4. A sub-committee for special attention to the collection of such materials for each subject in each grade

C) Use of FSL software with tablets and chrome books

1. Head-sets, lab-style practice and worksheets
2. Audio books, podcasts
3. Add in French language students (see 1. f in staffing and recruitment)
4. A sub-committee for special attention to the collection of such materials for each subject in each grade

Since this is a province wide problem, I'm sure I am not alone when I say that some of the responsibility and accountability for this situation lies with the Ministry. Naturally, the entire province would benefit from some of these longer term initiatives, so there needs to be a committee or task-force specifically dedicated to the drafting of proposals and/or appeals to multiple ministries to assist with this widespread problem for a long term plan - including points made in # 1. d. of staffing and recruitment. It may become necessary and worthwhile to collaborate with the senior administration of multiple boards in order for this to occur, but I think it's absolutely crucial.

Other points:

A) French speaking Europeans may be a good choice for recruitment because many of them speak 2 or 3 languages and English is likely to be one of them...as opposed to Quebecois who do not necessarily speak English, and who may find travel to 'rivaling Ontario' less attractive than the those who might see the benefit of an international travel experience from Europe.



February 10<sup>th</sup> - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

1. Approach the colleges and universities in France/Europe to see:
  - i. Whether a year of teaching here could become part of their programming. These students could be teamed up with English speaking teachers for supply work, serve as EA type staff, or simply teach with work placement style model
  - ii. If incentives can be offered to entice French teachers to come here after graduation to teach for a minimum term ( ie 2 or 3 years).

Unfortunately, I do believe the issue of increased enrollment was a foreseeable one that could have been expected by anyone involved in planning...and not just within the UGDSB. The participants of the first French Immersion programs are now parents and naturally would like their offspring to be educated in something they experienced and believe in. That, coupled with (an increase in) general interest, means the interest in FI was bound to swell.

In closing, I wish to reiterate that the problems facing the board (and the province) in regards to French Immersion need to be approached specifically from the perspective of a business failing from the imbalance of increased demand and a lack of skilled workers - rather than an educational program that is overextended. No matter how you look at it, we need to be proactive in ensuring the future of this valuable program. There are many positive, potential resolutions towards saving the existing French instructional time framework or augmenting the newly proposed one; either way, we can't just give up.

---

### **March 7, 2016**

I am not able to attend the meeting as it occurs after my children's bedtime however I do have a strong opinion that French should be available to any Canadian student who is interested in learning it. Seeing as Canada is the home of two official languages an opportunity should be given to all through our publicly funded school system. A lottery process as suggested in the review is inadequate and not a solution to staffing issues. The union should work on ways to get French teachers to Ontario. Eg exchange initiative with Quebec or East coast French speaking teachers. Incentive programs such as free French language skills for teachers who want to advance . A proactive approach will always do better then one that is based on scarcity. Let Ontario University and High School students be aware of the need for French language teachers so we will have a future workforce. If we need more teachers reach out do not just cut the program down. I feel your current solution embraces the wrong approach.

---

### **March 7, 2016**

1. Has the Board considered the loss of French qualified teachers if a provision is not made to allow the children of French teachers into the programme?
2. How is the process fair and transparent when teachers and ETFO reps were not even present for the French review committee meetings due to job action? How were ALL the ""voices"" heard?

February 10<sup>th</sup> - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

3. Would it not make more sense for UGDSB to wait a couple of years to determine with certainty, and using concrete data, that the recommendations proposed will have a positive effect on students? Without concrete and substantial evidence, how can we move forward with this? Is student success not one of our main goals?

---