

Upper Grand District School Board French as a Second Language Advisory Committee

Minutes

Monday, January 8, 2018

The French as a Second Language Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on Monday, January 8, 2018 in the Boardroom at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph, Ontario commencing at 5:30 p.m.

The following **Parent Representatives** were present: Korb Whale (Co-chair); Wendy Davidson, Core French, Wellington County; Dan Jones, Secondary; Lindsay MacDonald, French Immersion, Dufferin County; Michelle Phoenix, Core French, City of Guelph; Kate Shirton-Smith, French Immersion, City of Guelph.

Present from **staff** were: Peter LeBlanc, FSL Lead; Jillian Leslie, Curriculum Lead (FSL); Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program; Christina Schilling, Curriculum Leader, Secondary (FSL); Jonathan Walker, Principal of Program.

Trustees present: Marty Fairbairn (Co-Chair), Kathryn Cooper.

Regrets: Lynn Topping, Trustee; Vikki Brown, Core French, City of Guelph; Robin Ross, French Immersion, Wellington County.

Vacancies: French Immersion Parent Representative, City of Guelph; Core French Parent Representative, Wellington County; Core French Representative, Dufferin County.

Co-Chair Korb Whale called the meeting of the FSLAC to order at 5:33 p.m. on January 8, 2018 in the Boardroom of the Guelph Board Office.

Approval of Agenda January 8, 2018

Co-Chair Korb Whale moved that the agenda of November 13, 2017 be approved.
Trustee Kathryn Cooper seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes November 13, 2017

Korb Whale moved that the minutes of November 13 2017 be approved. Kathryn Cooper seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Overview of FSL 3-year Plan 2017/20

Principal of Program Jonathan Walker summarized the 3 FSL Provincial Goals in the UGDSB's Three-Year FSL Plan (2017/18 - 2019/20). He focused on one aspect of the plan from each of the 3 provincial goals.

Goal 1 - Increase Student Confidence, Proficiency, and Achievement in FSL

Jonathan Walker highlighted the creation of a walkthrough document for school administrators to support the implementation of effective practices in planning, teaching and assessment. This goal of the FSL plan also includes expanding student learning opportunities and heightened engagement. One example from the plan is to provide various exchange opportunities to students.

Parent Representative Dan Jones stated that he was receiving community feedback that students and parents were unaware of opportunities to challenge the DELF (Diplomes d'Etudes en Langues Francaise). Jonathan responded that the data shows the DELF is being challenged in significantly growing numbers across our system. This was confirmed by **Superintendent of Program** Tracey Lindsay.

Korb Whale asked about measures of proficiency. Jonathan replied that proficiency will be one of the foci of the FSL walkthrough. The triangulation of data, which includes the collection of observation, conversation and product data, is also important to assess a student's proficiency. Curriculum Lead Jillian Leslie added that through conversation and observation, teachers can gather important assessment data.

Dan Jones asked about teacher proficiency in French. Jonathan stated that teachers have varying degrees of proficiency and that all FSL teachers have access to support through professional development and training. **Parent Representative** Kate Shirton-Smith added that the Additional Qualification FSL Part I is required to teach French. However, their proficiency is not measured in other ways. If they pass FSL Part I, they are qualified. Tracey Lindsay also added that after we hire teachers, the Program Department supports teachers with professional development.

Kathryn Cooper stated that it is important when hiring that language proficiency is combined with a strong teaching ability.

Parent Representative Michelle Phoenix asked if the PD opportunities are available to both Core and French Immersion teachers and if all teachers participate in PD. Jonathan Walker answered that PD is available to both groups of FSL teachers, a lot of it is voluntary and after school, and that uptake for PD is strong. Workshops for FSL teachers are widely advertised.

Dan Jones asked if PD covers all geographic areas. He also asked if we allow for travel time to workshops. Jonathan Walker confirmed that we do on both counts. Tracey Lindsay also added that Program Department also lead in-school PD during the school day, which eliminates the need for travel.

Korb Whale asked if we have looked at online learning opportunities for staff. Tracey stated that there are online opportunities and that we are always looking for new ways to provide learning to staff.

Kathryn Cooper asked how we assess and allocate resources in FSL. Tracey Lindsay highlighted that there are 5-year cycle reviews for schools. There is also equity funding and demographic data that may allocate additional support as needed to schools. French is part of the overall cycle planning along with all other subject areas. Principals will ask directly for resources and are often strong advocates for the needs of their school communities. They meet with staff to create short and long term plans. They make direct requests for different kinds of support. Resources are also sometimes provided as a result of specific training.

Kathryn asked if the FSL walkthrough document could be shared with FSLAC.

Goal 2 - Increase the Percentage of Students Studying FSL until Graduation

Jonathan Walker summarized goal 2. Overall, student retention in FI is quite high. Goal 2 of the 2017-2020 3-year FSL plan focuses on supporting all FSL students. The plan will also look to increase opportunities for student voice about the importance of taking French after high school.

Dan Jones asked about the links between the goals of the 2017/20 3-year plan and the previous one. Jonathan answered that a template for the plans is provided by the Ministry and we try to ensure we can see links between the plans. The provincial goals are consistent from board to board. Tracey added that the previous 3-year plan is always available for reference and that the data is linked. She also added that at times data is received that is not indicative of the original goals of a plan and that the plan can be adjusted.

Michelle asked if there is a continued focus on student retention in French Immersion. Jonathan stressed that each student in FI is important and that student retention in FI is high. Any decision to withdraw a student from FI is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. He also added that students often leave for reasons that are not-related to struggles in FSL (for example, they move out of the area, their course choices in high school bring them along a different path). Tracey Lindsay also added that we are trying to offer as much support as we can once a parent makes a decision for their child to enter the FI program.

Goal 3 - Increase Student, Educator, Parent, and Community Engagement in FSL

Jonathan focused on the district goal to heighten awareness of FSL programs and

benefits. He stated that there will be an effort to focus FSL promotion on Intermediate and French Immersion students. Student-created work will also be included as part of the heightened awareness.

Dan Jones asked about the results of the previous three-year FSL Plan. Jonathan Walker stated that the majority of the goals were met. He added that we did not meet the goals on FSL retention and that the numbers on retention may not tell a complete story. For example, the retention numbers don't tell us why a student may choose to leave an FSL program.

Dan Jones observed that the current plan did not have a lot of quantifiable data. Jillian Leslie responded that qualitative data is also important for assessment. We need to make sure we have both kinds of data: qualitative and quantitative. Michelle Phoenix added that numbers as data can be misleading and may not always be reliable.

FSL Professional Development

Curriculum Lead Jillian Leslie and **Curriculum Leader - Secondary** Christina Schilling summarized Professional Development opportunities in FSL.

The first PD this year for FSL teachers looked at the foundation of Curriculum document and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The Program Department also offered a number of Core French collaborative inquiries throughout the region in October. Examples of topics included the promotion of student-to-student interaction in classrooms and how to teach vocabulary through meaningful tasks.

These sessions are offered regionally by the Program Department in Guelph, Centre Wellington, and in Dufferin County. They are also looking to start a session in North Wellington if numbers permit.

There are French Immersion Collaborative Inquiries focused on the goals of each school's School Improvement Plan. These take place at individual schools.

There are Core French Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in 4 regions. This initiative has just started. It is a place for teachers to come and share resources and best practice.

DELFL 'correcteur' training was offered in the fall. This PD focussed on DELF test administration but also supports the changing of teaching practice in classrooms to better reflect the philosophy of the CEFR and the practices of authentic second language learning.

There are also upcoming meetings for the transition between Grade 8 & 9 teachers held at feeder and high schools.

We are newly involved in 'Franconnexion' and a partnership with University of Guelph, which highlights the practical reasons for learning French in high school and beyond.

PD information is shared widely with teachers and principals on a digital platform.

There is a monthly conversation series called FRendez-vous, an after-school opportunity to speak French and build French fluency with other educators.

Online and in-person PD sessions also occur through the Toronto and Area Regional Office (TARO) of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry provides access to training from all over the province. Recent focus has been on the CEFR and authentic learning in FSL.

Student surveys also provide important information about student voice and help guide discussions amongst educators about what is going on in FSL.

Kathryn Cooper added that the information gathered from parent surveys was also valuable.

Korb Whale asked about the participation rates in PD. Jillian Leslie stated that it varies by region. She also stated that, at this time, after-school workshops are not as well attended as workshops that occur during the school day.

Korb Whale asked if there was anything that parents can do to support PD for teachers and then offered to promote teacher PD through the FSLAC parent network. He also asked where topics come from. Jillian Leslie answered that topics for PD are based on Ministry FSL goals and direction.

Kate Shirton-Smith asked if it is possible to gather FSL teachers during PD days. Jillian Leslie stated this was done this year in September and October for targeted PD for Core French teachers on system PD days.

New French Immersion Program Updates

FSL Lead Peter LeBlanc briefly updated the committee on new FI programs for 2018/19. Boundaries were set and received by Board in the fall of 2017 for West Guelph and in the spring of 2017 for Orangeville/South Dufferin.

A JK/SK FI program will begin in September 2018 at Gateway Drive PS. The JK FI enrolment cap at this school will be 29. This FI program will grow each year and will eventually feed into Willow Road PS.

A JK-3 FI program will begin in September 2018 at Parkinson Centennial PS. The JK FI enrolment cap at this school will be 50. This FI program will eventually feed into Spencer Avenue E.S.

Transition teams will support students who are moving to the new schools. These teams are school-based and are a part of the Boundary Review process and the creation of the new FI programs.

JK FI registration training for office coordinators at each of the new FI schools occurred in November.

JK FI registration opens on January 9.

Framework for Advice to Board

Korb Whale asked if there were any objections for the agenda item 'Framework for Advice to Board' to be postponed until the next FSLAC meeting.

There were no objections.

Adjournment

Korb Whale motioned for adjournment of meeting at 7:12 p.m. Kathryn Cooper seconded the motion.

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