

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

**Minutes**  
**Monday, November 12, 2018**

The French as a Second Language Advisory Committee of the Upper Grand District School Board met on November 12, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at 500 Victoria Road North, Guelph.

**The following Parent Representatives were present:** Vikki Brown, Christine Caughill, Core French – City of Guelph; Rachel Cooper, Mark Paralovos, French Immersion – City of Guelph; Paul Smith, French Immersion - Secondary

**Present from Staff were:** Tracey Lindsay, Superintendent of Program; Jonathan Walker, Principal of Program; Chad Warren, Secondary Principal, Jillian Major, Program Staff FSL Curriculum

**Trustees Present:** Marty Fairbairn, Lynn Topping

**Regrets:** Ashley Stott, French Immersion – Dufferin Parent

**Absent:** Kathryn Cooper, Trustee; Cheri Herdman, French Immersion – Wellington County Parent; Robin Ross, French Immersion – Wellington County Parent;

Marty Fairbairn, Trustee, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. He deferred the Elections agenda item to the next meeting, scheduled in March, as new Trustees have been elected to the Board and committee selections will be made at the December inaugural meeting.

**Approval of Agenda of November 12, 2018**

Marty Fairbairn moved that the agenda of November 12, 2018 be approved. Lynn Topping, Trustee seconded the motion.

**The motion carried.**

**Approval of Minutes of October 1, 2018**

Marty Fairbairn moved that the minutes of October 1, 2018 be approved. Lynn Topping, Trustee seconded the motion.

**The motion carried.**

## Upper Grand District School Board

### **French as a Second Language Advisory Committee**

#### **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Deferred to next meeting

#### **Annual French Review Background Report**

Marty Fairbairn welcomed Jennifer Passy, Manager of Planning and Vicki Crandall, Manager of Elementary Staffing and Recruitment to the meeting.

Jennifer Passy thanked the committee and referenced the 2018/2019 Annual French Review Report that was presented to Trustees. The data included in the report for FI schools shows numbers for on-time applications, enrolment caps, placement, waitlists, late applicants, transfers, status of students who refused or withdrew placement, students not in UGDSB schools and holding school student SK placement.

The report identified that the total FI enrolment continued to increase in 2018/2019 reflecting the start of two new FI programs and the larger cohorts of FI students moving through the system. In elementary, FI enrolment represented 27 percent of the total elementary enrolment in 2017/2018 and remains at 27 percent in 2018/2019.

Vicky Crandall advised that recruitment of French qualified staff continues to be a challenge. The Ontario College of Teachers continues to forecast an increase in retirements and a decrease in new teacher licences over the next few years. Hiring challenges will not be lessened. More robust recruitment practices are in place. UGDSB staff interview at job fairs, have ongoing OT roster advertisements, hold interviews with qualified French teachers throughout the year and travel to job fairs outside of Ontario. UGDSB needs to consider the lack of teachers before expanding programs.

Jennifer Passy added that there is FI demand in Guelph but currently no space is available. Staff has recommended to the Board of Trustees that no new programs be added in 2019/2020.

Revisions are being made to the 2019/2020 JK FI Application, Selection and Waitlist Process. These changes include:

- Language has been modified to identify any child applying for a space in JK FI as an applicant
- The pre-registration receipt has been renamed 'application receipt' and language has been updated.
- On-time registration window will open at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 8, 2019 and close at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, January 18, 2019. Random selection will take place on Tuesday, January 29, 2019

## Upper Grand District School Board

### **French as a Second Language Advisory Committee**

- New Non-Transferability Rule has been suggested. Effective for the 2019/2020 year, application and selection process, staff would manage the transfer of JK FI placements between the placement date and December 31 of the JK student year if the transfer would result in piercing the school-level JK FI cap. This would be clearly communicated on the application form and via online and printed materials.

Jennifer Passy added that in September 2018, FDK class size caps were reduced from 30 to 29 students as a result of Provincial class size regulation changes. Staff rolled back JK FI caps in a number of schools in 2018/2019 to reflect the Ministry requirement and is now recommending that JK FI enrolment caps be increased for specific schools for the 2019/2020. Adjusting the caps will create five additional JK FI student spaces in 2018/2019. A chart indicating the changes is included in the report.

Rachel Cooper, FI Parent – City of Guelph, commented that when looking at the numbers and available spots in a school, it is unfortunate that kids cannot attend another school that has space which would give them the opportunity to be in FI because of a boundary review. She asked why the students could not be put on a waitlist and be treated like the on-time registration. Jennifer Passy replied that there are considerations around the waitlist, placement, opportunities for relocation and protecting the integrity of the program overall.

Paul Smith, French Immersion – Secondary, asked if there was documentation or anecdotal evidence regarding parents purchasing another house to have their children attend an FI school. Jennifer Passy replied that with all the boundary reviews that have been done over the past several years, they have knowledge of where parents have opted to move homes to remain in a school boundary or obtain access to a school that they perceive to be better for their child.

Christine Caughill, Core French – City of Guelph, if there is a demand for French teachers, are we ensuring that the teachers that we are hiring are qualified to teach French successfully. Vicky Crandall replied that applicants are screened for both oral and written French skills along with teaching skills. This is a challenge throughout the province. The level of what UGDSB accepts may be different than other boards. She added that UGDSB encourages teachers to apply for any English or French positions, even if it's the small pieces. Some teachers prefer the long-term contract and some can't afford to accept small percentages of positions.

Marty Fairbairn thanked Jennifer Passy and Vicky Crandall for their presentation.

*PowerPoint presentation has been uploaded to the FSLAC folder on UGCloud.*

## Upper Grand District School Board

### **French as a Second Language Advisory Committee**

#### **Overview of Ministry F.S.L. Documents and the UGDSB 3 Year Plan**

Jonathan Walker, Principal of Program, addressed the committee and asked if there were any questions regarding the 3 Year Plan document that was distributed at the October meeting.

He provided an update of the progress of the goals to date. He explained that one of the goals was to increase the number of students in Grade 9 taking French. The data showed that 27.5 percent of students were not taking French in Grade 9 and the question was how to increase the number of students and decrease this percentage. They developed a strategy that was shared with administrators and teachers in supporting and engaging all students in FSL. After all this work, the data showed the percentage of students not taking French was 15.4 percent, indicating a significant increase in students studying French.

He updated the committee on the progress of the second goal; 'Heightened awareness of the FSL program and benefits'. Last year a document was created with strategies to support students and teachers to encourage students to continue in French and be successful. This was shared with administrators.

The curriculum staff also surveyed the French teachers for their input on their professional development. These results will determine the type of PD that will be scheduled for this year. An explanation of the results may be presented at a future meeting.

Also last year, students were surveyed about their feelings about French. At the end of June, Christina Schilling and Jillian Major analysed the student data and shared this with the teachers to work on areas that needed improvement. Action plans will be developed this year.

One question that came up is "Why do students stop taking French"? Jonathan Walker explained that there are students who do not like the course but others can't fit it in, or they didn't know what options were available to them. Courses that were advertised had large increases so this is the strategy that will be used for French.

Rachel Cooper asked if there are plans to reach out to parents to get them excited about French? Jonathan Walker replied that this will be part of the Grade 8 information night and advertising. A goal is for more information to be added to school and board websites, promoting student's work, explaining the benefits of taking French, the Franconnexion event, and showing how excited UGDSB is about French.

Marty Fairbairn thanked Jonathan Walker for his presentation.

## Upper Grand District School Board

### **French as a Second Language Advisory Committee**

#### **Franconnexion**

Marty Fairbairn welcomed Nia Pommier and Aleisha Korga, Franconnexion Co-Chairs from John Black Public School.

The French Immersion and Core French teachers introduced themselves to the committee and explained the purpose of Franconnexion.

Franconnexion is a celebration of French language and culture. It brings students from Grade 7 – 12 together to give them the opportunity to practise French outside the classroom. The event is designed to provide an authentic experience for students. Various activities were built around where 'French can take you' and the UGDSB's FSL goals. It engages high school students with the intermediate group and provides opportunities to collaborate; encourages students to take French past Grade 9 and helps with transitioning into high school.

Several community members fluent in French – a local doctor; a flight attendant; a former FI student that runs a French day care centre in Hamilton; a former FSLAC committee member – were available to speak with students to show them opportunities that are available when they speak French. Breakout sessions included Green Screens, a student panel, a career panel, interactive games, and a music session.

At the end of the event a survey was conducted and feedback was very positive.

Mark Paralovos, French Immersion – City of Guelph, asked what the percentage was of students that continued to take French. Jonathan Walker responded that those numbers could be presented at a future meeting.

Mark Paralovos asked what are the tangible things we are selling to keep students engaged? It may not be fun now but the outcome will provide better job opportunities with higher pay. Nia Pommier replied that students sell to each other. Having the high school panel was very effective. Students have travelled on exchanges, and are speaking French and sharing their experiences. Showing them what others are doing is a major hook to continue.

Mark Paralovos asked if those stories could be leveraged; to record them and post them on the website. They could be used as a tool for parents to get other educators to expand on this to get students interested.

Students from Guelph, North Wellington and Centre Wellington schools attended the event. More schools will be invited but the challenge is to find teachers that are committed to this event.

Students were asked if they would continue French after Grade 9 and 89 percent said yes; 11 percent said no. Mark Paralovos questioned why 11 percent replied no. Jonathan

## Upper Grand District School Board

### **French as a Second Language Advisory Committee**

Walker replied that there are many reasons: it may not fit in their goals or they need to take another subject, etc. Tracey Lindsay responded that we do exit surveys and this data can be shared at the next meeting.

After the event, students were asked how motivated they felt about the importance of learning a second language. Results showed that 75 percent are motivated at level 4 and 5 to continue taking French; even after high school.

Nia Pommier asked the committee to send their suggestions for presenters for the Franconnexion event to Tracey Lindsay.

Marty Fairbairn thanked the teachers for their presentation.

*PowerPoint presentation was uploaded to the folder on UGCloud.*

#### **Adjournment**

Marty Fairbairn thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m. Lynn Topping seconded the motion.