



Halton District School Board

Report Number: 08157

Date: November 12, 2008

INFORMATION FOR DECISION

TO: The Chair and Members of the
Halton District School Board

FROM: Administrative Council

RE: French Immersion Entry Point Review

RECOMMENDATION

Be it resolved that the Halton District School Board provide transportation to students opting to study Early French Immersion and Middle Immersion where offered (according to Item 10.1 of the French as a Second Language Policy that states “transportation to the Centre be provided from designated associate schools in accordance with the eligibility guidelines of the Board’s Transportation Policy”).

Be it resolved that, beginning September 2009, the Halton District School Board offer a pilot program of Middle Immersion with a Grade 4 entry point in one school in each of the areas: Halton Hills, Milton, Oakville and Burlington, and

THAT this be consistent with current Policy item 8.5 modified to fit the middle immersion example, “if at the time of registration, enrolment is below 25 (recommended staffing numbers for Grade 4), the program will not be offered at that Centre.”

Be it resolved that, beginning September 2009, the Halton District School Board introduce a 75 minute French Immersion pilot program for kindergarten students in F.I. schools in one school in each of the areas: Halton Hills, Milton, Oakville and Burlington.

Be it resolved that, in 2011, the Halton District School Board consider expanding the French Immersion Program (Extended French) in each of the areas: Halton Hills, Milton, Oakville, IF it is determined that the Middle Immersion Grade 4 entry point is not effective and /or viable. (registration under 25 students)

Implications

For Secondary Programming.

The Middle Immersion entry point will allow these students to be blended with students who have Early Immersion experience for secondary program. This will strengthen the high school offerings. Currently, and in the past, offering late immersion has necessitated a completely different program in high school. This puts strain on the ability to hire appropriate staff and also in justifying running program with low numbers.

Staffing

While the number of staff will remain constant, we will have pressure related to the qualifications of existing staff. We will need to recruit French qualified staff more aggressively.

Middle (Immersion) First vs. Late (Extended) First

The recommendation calls for examining Middle Immersion before expanding Late (Extended) French because previous attempts to offer Extended in Oakville have failed to attract the critical numbers to make the program viable.

Funding

Allocation for each classroom, dispersed over a two-year period, is \$8200. (\$7,000 allocated during the first year; \$1200 allocated the second year). This is to be funded from the working reserve.

Transportation

It costs approximately \$200,000 to \$300,000 annually to provide regional gifted centres. This becomes a good comparative for costing the transportation for centres of Middle Immersion in each area.

Recommended Implementation Timelines

YEAR	ACTION	STAFFING	TRANSPORTATION
2009-10	Begin the Middle Immersion Pilots.	Hiring of French teachers. (0.5 per class)	\$10,000 per class
	Begin the Kindergarten Pilots.	Hiring of French teachers. (0.5 per class)	
	Status Quo on Grade 7 Extended French.	Status Quo.	Status Quo.
	Transportation for the Middle Immersion and Kindergarten Pilots.		Begins.
2010-11	Review effectiveness of the pilots.	Supply Days and meeting costs. (\$20,000)	
2011-12	Choose to offer either Middle Immersion (Grade 4) or extended French in Grade 7.		
2011-12	Choose to offer Kindergarten French in all Immersion schools or discontinue.		
2011-12	Phase out either Middle Immersion or Extended French. If Middle Immersion is phased out, expand Extended French to all areas.		

Assumptions: Costing is per class.

Background:

At its regular Board meeting held in Fall 2007, the Halton District School Board passed the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the Board direct staff to investigate the feasibility and potential implementation of mid-entry and late-entry French Immersion in all municipalities within Halton.

At an initial meeting held in June 2008, Ruth Peden (Associate Director), Don Vrooman (Trustee) and Marcelle Faulds (Curriculum Coordinator) met to address this motion. It was decided a committee comprised of principals, teachers, parents and Trustees be struck to represent all municipalities of Halton.

The committee membership became as follows:

Name	School/Role
Ruth Peden	Associate Director
Marcelle Faulds	Curriculum Coordinator
Laura Klemenchuk	Parent
Anne Scrafield-Goulart	Parent (CPF)
Ian Stuart	Teacher: Aldershot School, Burlington
Nicole Maitland	Teacher: Martin Street Public School, Milton
Bernadette Texeira	Admin Assistant, NSED
John Lowrey	Principal: Sir Ernest MacMillan P.S., Burlington
Gord Truffen	Principal: Alexander's Public School, Burlington
Robert Hamilton	Principal: Martin Street Public School, Milton
Suzanne Leclerc-Harwood	Principal: Linbrook P.S., Oakville
Don Vrooman	Trustee

The intent of the Halton District School Board's Strategic Plan is reflected in the statement:

"The Halton District School is committed to every student."

The committee's task and the team completed this review by responding to the following:

Recommend changes in entry points for the delivery of French Language programs in the Halton District School Board that will meet, most effectively, the needs of all students and reflect the Board's Strategic Plan; specifically, what are the best entry points for French Immersion programs?

Factors influencing this Review of Entry Points for French Immersion:

The committee maintained a system perspective and aligned with the strategic plan when making recommendations. The goals of the strategic plan were the committee's goals. Statements in the strategic plan (For example: "provide opportunities for challenge and choice") were supported by considering:

- a FI entry point for students who missed the Early immersion entry point in Grade 1;
- increased accessibility to the program for students at varying levels of readiness;
- a second entry point that was early enough to allow the merging of early and middle immersion streams at Grade 9.

Access to French Immersion program was considered essential. The recommendations needed to respond to the needs of the community and provide all students reasonable access to the French Immersion Program in the district. This involved considering matters such as:

- location of French Immersion Programs;
- transportation of students to programs;
- inclusiveness of the programs.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruth Peden
Associate Director

Appendix 1

Historical background:

The French Immersion program has been offered in Halton since 1978.

In 1992 the Board moved to the delivery of the elementary French immersion program in centres.

Presently, elementary French Immersion Centres are as follows:

EAST	NORTH	WEST
Munn's	Robert Baldwin	Bruce T. Lindley
Linbrook	Robert Little	Tom Thomson
Sunningdale	Martin Street	Orchard Park
Pine Grove	George Kennedy	Charles R. Beaudoin
Forest Trail	E.W. Foster	Maplehurst
E.J. James	Centennial	Clarksdale
	McKenzie-Smith Bennett	Pineland
	W.I. Dick	Alexander's
		Burlington Central
		Rolling Meadows
		Aldershot Elementary

Today there are 6230 elementary students in Early Immersion and 76 students in Extended French. There are 1622 secondary students in early immersion and 70 secondary students in Extended French.

According to the present policy the French immersion program (Grade 1 entry point) may be delivered in single track Immersion centres (no Core French offered) or dual track Immersion centres (Core French offered). Five elementary Immersion centres are single track, the rest are dual track.

The Extended French program (Grade 7 entry point) is offered at Sir Ernest MacMillan elementary and Lester B. Pearson secondary location school in Burlington only. It remains a viable program in this area.

We continue to offer the French Core program starting at the Grade 4 level in Halton. This is consistent with the funding model for the delivery of the Core French program.

Aims of the FSL Program: (As defined by Ministry of Education)

Core French:

This program is mandatory for every student in Ontario not enrolled in French Immersion. It is mandatory from Grades 4 to 9. It is optional from Grades 10 to 12.

The aim of the Core French program is to provide students with fundamental communication skills in French and an understanding of the nature of the language and its culture.

Core French offers students the chance to develop a usable command of the French language that can be expanded through further study or through contact with French-speaking people.

By the end of high school, students will be able to participate in a straightforward conversation in French; will be able to read – with the help of a dictionary – books, magazines and newspapers in French; and will be able to understand the general meaning of radio and television news and other programs.

French Immersion:

This program is offered to students from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

A number of different immersion programs have evolved in Canada.

Immersion programs may be categorized according to *age* of immersion students:

Early immersion: students begin the second language from the age of 5 or 6.

Middle immersion: students begin the second language from the age of 9 or 10.

Late immersion(also known as Extended French) : students begin the second language between the ages of 11 - 14.

The aim of an **Early and Middle French Immersion** program is to develop and refine students' ability to communicate in French as well as to expand their knowledge of the language through the study of francophone literature. By the end of high school, students will participate easily in conversations and discussions; will be able to take courses at the college or university level in which French is the language of instruction; and will be able to accept employment in which French is the working language.

The aim of a **Late or Extended French** program is to develop students' French-language knowledge and skills and to provide them with an understanding and appreciation of francophone culture in Canada and around the world. By the end of high school, students will be able to converse freely on familiar topics; will be able to read – with the occasional help of a dictionary – books, magazines and newspapers in French; and will be able to function in a French-speaking community.

The Benefits of a Middle Immersion Entry Point

A Middle Immersion Program in Grade 4 provides an added opportunity for children who wish to study a second language.

The program is offered to students who have had several years of primarily English instruction. This entry point is ideal for parents who wish to provide their child with a solid grounding in English Language skills in the primary grades. These first language skills are then applied more readily to the learning of a second language.

Delaying entry into an immersion program provides another entry point for students who did not have the opportunity to enter a program at an earlier time. It also allows more time for parents, educators and children to assess the child's overall adjustment to school and its demands.

Studies have shown that “each additional year of second language training creates a greater positive differential compared to students not receiving a second language and that second language education significantly strengthens first language skills in areas of reading, English vocabulary, grammar and communication skills. “ (Source:

<http://education.gov.ab.ca/languages/benefits.asp>)Parents also look at a Middle Immersion program as a way of improving job opportunities for their child at a later date.

Although research on Middle Immersion students who transition to a second language program are very small, a number of studies (as well as EQAO scores) confirm the importance of second language education on intellectual potential, scholastic achievement, first language skills, and citizenship.

A student who successfully completes the Middle French Immersion program should communicate easily in both language communities and be well equipped to training or further education in either language (Source: www.cpf.ca/english/Resources/Math-English_Language_Skills_brochure.pdf).

Observations:

French Immersion programming benefits the cognitive and social development of students, as well as their opportunities for career advancement. Research demonstrates that students who successfully complete a French Immersion program attain functional bilingualism while doing as well as, or better than, their unilingual peers in the content areas of curriculum, including English Language Arts.

The delivery of French immersion is very complex. Delivery models and course offerings vary from area to area and panel to panel and all are viable. However, parents, students, teachers and administrators are very supportive of their programs.

The draft revised Policy Statement for French 6000-6 attached is a living document and as such must change as the needs of students change and evolve. It must remain an enabling and descriptive document.

When combined with the following specific recommendations for the improvement of the overall delivery of French Language programs, Policy 6000-6 recognizes and supports the value to be gained from the teaching and learning of French as a Second Language and provides the Board with a number of options for the delivery of French language programs. (Sources: see the following bibliography).

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Appendix 2

Ministry FSL Funding: (as provided by the Ministry of Education)

Elementary Funding

Special funding is allocated in addition to basic per-pupil grants for the incremental costs of providing FSL programs. This additional funding is based on the number of pupils enrolled in FSL programs and varies with the average daily length of the programs as follows:

Average Daily Length of Program	Per Pupil Allocation
20-59 minutes (Core)	\$266.67
60-149 minutes (Extended)	\$303.82
150 minutes or more (Immersion)	\$339.89
75 minutes or more for JK/K (Immersion)	\$339.89

Immersion programs are funded from JK to Grade 8. Core French programs and Extended French programs are funded from Grades 4 to 8.

Secondary Funding

Grades	Allocation per pupil credit	
	French as a Subject	Subjects other than French taught in French
9 and 10	\$69.00	\$111.87
11 and 12	\$89.93	\$174.00

Appendix 3

Committee Recommendations:

THAT:

1. The Extended French Immersion Program is expanded to meet the needs of all students in Halton’s municipalities (NORTH, EAST, and WEST) starting in Grade 7:

Rationale:

- Results in improved consistency of opportunity for any student that wishes to enter an immersion program in Grade 7;
- Offers another entry point to many of our students;
- Creates new leadership opportunities for teachers as well as provides occasion for teachers to network and work together;
- Addresses divergent learning needs;
- Allows for an additional language pathway in secondary school.

Conclusion:

- Providing an Extended French Program in only one location renders it inaccessible to many members of our Halton family.

THAT:

2. Transportation is provided to students opting to study French Immersion, Extended and Middle Immersion where offered:

Rationale:

- Makes additional program choices viable to all students in our Halton family;
- Increases the sense of community in each district.

Conclusion:

- Providing transportation to students in second language programs in Halton makes programs accessible to many members of our Halton family.

Additional information:

- Our recommendations for late immersion (and mid immersion) will affect transportation policy (see <http://www.hdsb.ca/temp/Transportation.pdf>).
- Under Section B) CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, Sub-Section 2. Distance to Bus Stops – Urban, the following Paragraph:

Presently reads:	Would now read:
Late French Immersion students entering Grade 7 in September 1999 will not be provided transportation.	Early (, Mid-) and Late French Immersion students will be picked up and dropped off at centrally located bus stops as designated by the Transportation Department.

THAT:

3. A pilot program offering Middle Immersion with a Grade 4 entry point be offered to meet the needs of students of all students in Halton's municipalities (NORTH, EAST, and WEST):

Rationale:

- Provides an alternate Grade 4 entry point in Halton for students who wish to enter an immersion program after Grade 1;
- Addresses divergent learning needs;
- Provides an earlier second entry point and allows for a doable merging of early and middle immersion students in Grade 9.

Conclusion:

- Adding Middle French immersion programs in all municipalities facilitates language acquisition. Studies show that earlier entry to second language studies is pedagogically sound and makes the learning process easier.

THAT:

4. A pilot program introducing a 75 minutes immersion French study block to kindergarten students in F.I. schools:

Rationale:

- Allows parents to make a more informed decision about appropriateness of the program for their child from Grade 1 and on;
- Provides children with opportunities to experience and experiment with another language earlier;
- Gives our students a year to become acclimatized to French in a more social, risk-free environment. (Studies show that the language of social interaction --- JK/SK --- is different than academic language. School (mandatory programming begins in Grade 1) has its own "academic" language.);
- Creates a richer cultural awareness of Canada as a dual language society;
- Provides students with a strong foundational base in oral French and allows for Grade 1 students to follow the mandated curriculum guidelines sooner in both English and French;
- Means fewer transitions from SK to Grade 1 for our students. Students with an interest in French Immersion can begin their education in the same school.

Conclusion:

- Introducing a 75 minutes oral communication French Immersion block to Kindergarten students may increase the number of students in the program and may allow for an alignment of common tools and instructional practices.

Note:

- Students who join the system in Grade 1 will still be able to opt for a French immersion program. Joining kindergarten students who have experienced social interaction in both languages will contribute greatly to a positive experience in second language learning for all involved.