

TO: The Chairperson and Members of the  
Program Standing Committee

FROM: Superintendent of Instructional Services and Leadership

SUBJECT: **FRENCH IMMERSION FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT - PHASE 2**

1. **Background**

On January 26, 2009, the following motion was passed at a special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB):

*That the Board approve that the viability of offering French Immersion to the students of the SCDSB be studied by administration and that a report including recommendations be presented to the Program Standing Committee at its regular meeting in January 2010.*

In response to this motion, the report entitled, *French Immersion Feasibility Assessment - Phase 1*, was presented to the January 6, 2010 Program Standing Committee. This report provided: an overview of current French program offerings in the SCDSB; the availability of French Immersion (FI) programs in other Ontario school boards; evidence related to student achievement; and an outline of a number of feasibility considerations. The latter included resources and funding, qualifications and staffing, student attrition, transportation, location selection, and issues related to special education. The final section identified a number of areas requiring further investigation and described next steps. This report also included the following recommendation:

*That the Program Standing Committee recommend that the Board request that staff prepare a detailed budget analysis of the options for implementing an Early Immersion Program beginning in 2011-2012, and that this analysis be reported at the February 3, 2010 meeting of the Finance Standing Committee to inform budget deliberations.*

This report provides program recommendations and detailed costs to begin implementing early French Immersion (FI) beginning in 2011-2012. Costs are estimated for the following: classroom, literacy book room and school library resources; transportation; and program marketing and community surveys. Staffing implications are also summarized in relation to the number of French Immersion teachers needed to staff the program.

2. **Early French Immersion Program Model**

To qualify as FI, elementary programs must include a minimum of 150 minutes of daily French instruction, with a minimum of 3800 hours of instruction in French from Kindergarten to the end of Grade 8. As noted in the January 6, 2010 report, early FI is the most common implementation model, with French instruction generally starting at the age of 5 or 6. In light of the research summarized in the January 6, 2010 report, the recommended model is to begin with 100% instruction in French in Grades 1 and 2. English instruction would be gradually introduced in Grades 3 and 4 and would constitute 50% of the instructional day in Grades 5 to 8.

### **3. Implementation Plan**

The early FI implementation plan assumes:

- Both English and early FI programs would operate in the same school, i.e., the schools offering early FI would be “dual track”. This would ensure that students within the attendance boundary of the school could continue to access their home school for the regular English program.
- Implementation would be phased in over at least three years beginning with two Grade 1 classes in one location in South Simcoe in 2011-2012. Two classes in Grade 1 would ensure that the program remains viable in that location to the end of Grade 8, taking into account estimated attrition.
- In subsequent years, additional FI locations would be added with priority given to providing geographic coverage in locations where there is sufficient parent interest to ensure a viable program.

To support the implementation of early FI in the SCDSB, a FI policy and related Administrative Procedures Memorandum would be required. If the establishment of an early FI program is approved, a Project Team will be identified and will begin work in the latter part of the 2009-2010 school year.

### **4. Accommodation Issues and Location Selection**

Any location selected to offer a dual track FI and English program requires the capacity to accommodate a minimum of 450 students. This would ensure that there is space to maintain both the English and French programs. A review of long term space and enrolment projections indicates that there are very few schools of this size across the county; of these, most are already at or above capacity. Hence, dividing the early FI program into two divisions, Grades 1 to 3 and 4 to 8, would provide greater flexibility of location. Students would start Kindergarten in their home school then move to the early FI location for Grade 1.

One of the main advantages of pairing schools for the early FI program is that the Extended French as a Second Language (EFSL) program at the current locations could continue in the interim and would be phased out once the early FI students reach Grade 5. During the phase-in period for FI, students would continue to be able to access the EFSL program.

In order to implement a county wide early FI program over the long term, a minimum of 8 locations would be required. There are currently nine schools offering EFSL, all of which could house Grade 4 to 8 FI students as the EFSL program is phased out.

### **5. Staffing**

In Grades 1 and 2, 1.2 FTE French as a Second Language (FSL) qualified teachers will be required per class for a 100% French delivery model. This consists of a 1.0 FTE FI teacher and a 0.2 FTE Planning Time teacher to deliver planning time in French. In Grades 3 and 4 only 1.0 FTE FI teacher would be required per class because the planning time would be delivered in English.

Given this information, the following FTE of FSL qualified teachers would be required assuming one location in year 1 and two more locations added the following year:

- 2.4 FTE French teachers needed in year 1 (2011-2012) for two Grade 1 classes
- Additional 7.2 FTE needed in year 2 – adding two Grade 2 classes in location 1 and adding two more locations, each with two Grade 1 classes. (*Note: If more than two new locations are added in year 2, then additional teachers would be required in this and all subsequent years.*)
- Additional 6.8 FTE needed in year 3 – adding two Grade 3 classes in location 1, adding two Grade 2 classes in the two other locations.
- Additional 6.0 FTE needed in year 4 – adding two Grade 4 classes at the school paired with location 1, adding two Grade 3 classes at location 2 and adding two Grade 3 classes at location 4.

### ***Teacher Qualifications***

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) requires teachers to have FSL Part 1 (reg. 184/97) or a Temporary Letter of Approval from the College to teach any FSL program including Core, Extended or Immersion. A number of the studies cited in the January 6, 2010 Program Standing Committee report indicate that there is a wide-spread shortage of teachers qualified to teach French, particularly in immersion since such programs require full bilingualism. The limited supply of FSL qualified teachers required SCDSB to hire approximately 25 Long Term Occasional and 7 contract teachers on Temporary Letters of Approval for Core/Extended French in 2008-2009. The implementation of early FI may have an impact on staffing of EFSL and Core French programs since bilingual teachers currently staffing these programs may apply for FI positions.

## **6. Financial Considerations**

### ***Per Pupil Funding***

Per pupil funding is generated at the same amount for all students for textbooks, classroom supplies and learning materials, regardless of any language programs. The structure of the Language grant generates *incremental* funding for FI programs that are 150 minutes or more for Grades 1 – 8 in the amount of \$350.86. The structure of grants for Core, EFSL and FI is summarized in the January 6 report for the 2009-2010 year. For purposes of detailed budget analysis, no new enrolment is projected. It is assumed that existing students would move from the English program into the FI program, with no overall increase in total SCDSB enrolment.

### ***Top-up Funding***

Once site selection is determined, a review of the existing level of top-up funding would need to be conducted. This funding is provided where schools have less enrolment than their capacity, at the prescribed ministry rate. If a location currently receives top-up funding, there may be a reduction in this funding if actual enrolment in the FI program increases overall enrolment at that location.

### ***Learning Materials for the Primary Grades***

Based on information gathered from other boards including the Toronto District School Board and the York Catholic District School Board, the start-up cost to purchase Grade 1 learning materials in 2011-2012 is estimated to be \$15,000 per class. This would permit the purchase of French language materials for all areas of the curriculum, and levelled books to establish a Primary French language book room to support literacy instruction. In addition, it is recommended that \$7,000 - \$10,000 be allocated to purchase French language books and learning materials for the school library.

The materials purchased in the first year would focus on supporting the Grade 1 program. Similar resource purchases would be required in subsequent years as the first group of early FI students moves through the grades and the total number of students in the program increases.

**Learning Materials for Grades 3 to 8**

Start-up resource costs for Grades 3 and 4 FI students would generally be similar to costs for Grades 1 and 2 since most of the daily program would be in French. However, per classroom costs for Grades 5 to 8 are projected to be lower since half of the program would be taught in English and thus could use existing materials. This assumption is based on housing the Grade 4 to 8 FI program in the current EFSL locations as EFSL is phased out.

**Transportation Options and Costs**

Provincial funding for transportation of FI students is currently only available for those boards that established FI transportation routes before 1998 when the transportation funding formula was changed by the Ministry of Education. To provide transportation to the students in early FI, additional buses would be required. The bussing efficiencies occurring today would make altering routes or additional shuttles difficult. Geographic distances are also problematic as bus times for elementary schools are to be a maximum of 50 minutes. The table below provides estimated maximum transportation costs for two different geographic locations. These estimates assume no sharing, and would be the maximum costs assuming that most students are bussed. Once final FI locations are selected, and the addresses of students enrolled in the program are known, bussing costs may be reduced.

<b>French Immersion Transportation Information</b>					
<b>Location #1</b>					
	<b>22 Passenger</b>	<b>72 Passenger</b>	<b>Cost of 22 Pass.</b>	<b>Cost of 72 Pass.</b>	<b>Total Cost Per Year</b>
Year 1 - 40 students approx.	5	0	\$152,500.00	\$0.00	\$152,500.00
Year 3 - 120 students approx.	4	2	\$122,000.00	\$86,800.00	\$208,800.00
Year 8 - 260 students approx.	2	6	\$61,000.00	\$260,400.00	\$321,400.00
<b>Location #2</b>					
	<b>22 Passenger</b>	<b>72 Passenger</b>	<b>Cost of 22 Pass.</b>	<b>Cost of 72 Pass.</b>	<b>Total Cost Per Year</b>
Year 1 - 40 students approx.	6	0	\$183,000.00	\$0.00	\$183,000.00
Year 3 - 120 students approx.	5	2	\$152,500.00	\$86,800.00	\$239,300.00
Year 8 - 260 students approx.	2	7	\$61,000.00	\$303,800.00	\$364,800.00
Walk areas of the schools that will house the French Immersion, will have to be remeasured, and may not have a full 1.6 km in all directions. There would be a separate walk area for each school for French Immersion.					
School times would have to be off set at the twin schools approximatley 10 minutes to allow for shuttling between the schools.					
For the first 3 years buses would only have to go to one school.					

***Teacher Recruitment and Training***

In light of the shortage of qualified French teachers that was previously reported, the development of a comprehensive, long term recruitment plan would be required if FI is implemented in the SCDSB. It is anticipated that recruitment would need to occur both within and beyond Ontario. Human Resources staff has estimated that Quebec recruiting would cost \$6,000 over and above the current recruitment budget.

In addition, consideration should also be given to allocating budget to provide a subsidy to teachers who wish to take FSL Part 2 and FSL Specialist additional qualifications (AQ) courses. Similar supports have been provided in past years in the amount of \$500 per course to support priority areas (e.g., Arts AQ courses). Total costs would depend on staffing needs and the number of staff wishing to pursue this opportunity.

***Marketing and Other***

Once a location is selected, according to the YCDSB, paid advertising becomes an important component of program success. This Board has committed \$2,000 per FI school for paid advertising to promote not only the existence of the program but also the continuation of the English program. It is important to ensure that success in attracting students to one program does not become a detriment to the viability of the other program. It is recommended that a similar annual budget be allocated to support marketing for each FI location.

Consideration could also be given to allocating a small amount of funding to purchase French signs and school stationery

***Program Cost Summary***

Attached as APPENDIX A is a summary of the financial considerations noted above.

7. **Next Steps**

***Selection of Additional Locations and Parent Consultation***

If, based on the detailed cost analysis, the implementation of a FI program in one location starting in 2011-2012 were to be approved in the spring 2010 budget process, the next stage would be to announce the location and establish a timeline to notify parents within the catchment area regarding the availability of the program and the registration process.

To begin planning for program expansion to additional locations over the next 3 or more years, a short list would be established of elementary school locations that fit the accommodation criteria. Once the short list of possible locations is confirmed, a survey could be conducted of all parents in these communities who have children in JK and SK to determine the degree of interest and provide possible enrolment numbers upon which to make a final selection of locations for program expansion in year 2. This information would also help identify additional locations for further program expansion in subsequent years. The recommended timing for these parent surveys would be the fall of 2010. This timeline would ensure that any pertinent provisions of the collective agreement are met regarding the notification of teachers affected by staffing changes at the new FI locations. The timeline would also allow school administrators of the selected schools time to hire staff, purchase resources and create timetables.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Program Standing Committee recommend that the Board approve the creation of two Grade 1 FI classes in one location in South Simcoe beginning in 2011 – 2012, as set out in Report No. PRO-D-1, French Immersion Feasibility Assessment – Phase 2, dated February 17, 2010.
2. That the Program Standing Committee recommend that the Board approve the addition of up to eight FI locations and the phasing out of the EFSL program as the FI program is introduced in each Grade 4 to 8 location. The phase-in period would be a minimum of three years, with priority given to adding locations that provide geographic coverage in areas where there is sufficient parent interest to ensure a viable program, as set out in Report No. PRO-D-1, French Immersion Feasibility Assessment – Phase 2, dated February 17, 2010.
3. That the Program Standing Committee recommend that the Board approve the provision of transportation when funded by Ministry of Education, as set out in Report No. PRO-D-1, French Immersion Feasibility Assessment – Phase 2, dated February 17, 2010.

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

Dr. Lindy Zaretsky,  
Superintendent of Instructional Services and Leadership

February 17, 2010

**Simcoe County District School Board  
French Immersion Feasibility Assessment**

**Projected Financial Considerations**

Revenue	Notes	# of Classes		Includes 1 Location		Includes 3 Locations	# of Classes	Fully Implemented at 8 locations Grades 1 - 8
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2011-2012	2012-2013			
Incremental Per Pupil Funding	1	\$ 350.86	\$ 350.86	\$ 350.86	\$ 350.86			
Enrolment	2	-	2	46.0	179.0		119	2,379.0
Additional Language Grant		\$ -	\$ 16,140	\$ -	\$ 62,805			\$ 848,122
<b>Expenditures</b>								
Learning Materials	3			90,000	105,000			127,500
Library Support	4			30,000	40,000			45,000
Teacher Recruitment and Training	5			5,000	11,000			11,000
Marketing and Other	6			8,000	8,000			3,500
Expenditures		45,500	133,000	152,500	164,000			187,000
<b>Surplus (Shortfall)</b>		<b>(45,500)</b>	<b>(116,860)</b>		<b>(101,195)</b>			<b>659,122</b>
Transportation	7				488,000			2,862,100

**Notes:**

- Benchmark funding levels for 2009-2010 have been used with no projected increases.
- Enrolment is based on two Grade One classes in 2011-2012 at the first location, two additional sites with two Grade One classes in 2012-2013. All nine locations will offer Early French Immersion by Sept-2016, with full implementation at nine locations with Grades 1 through 8. Attrition rates are projected to be 10% after the first year, and 2% each year thereafter. Projections assume no additional enrolment in SCDSB; only existing students registering in the program with a phase out of EFSL.
- Learning materials are projected at \$15,000 for each class established in the French Immersion program, with lower resources required in Grade 5 when current EFSL classes are phased out but have existing resources. Materials will be purchased the year prior to implementation in each location, for each grade.
- Library support is projected at \$10,000 per each additional Grade per location, purchased the year prior to implementation of each grade.
- Teacher recruitment costs at \$6,000 per year for out of province and \$5,000 to subsidize 10 AQ course requests per year, with 5 subsidies offered in 2010-2011.
- Marketing and other costs include advertising for both French Immersion and English program (\$2,000/location), plus an amount for other incidentals to create a fully bilingual school climate (\$1,000/new location). Marketing costs over time will not be as great, as the program is already established.
- Represents the annual cost of transportation when F1 is fully implemented in Grades 1 through 8, at nine locations.