



**French Immersion Program Review
Public Meeting #2
Tuesday, June 14, 2011, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
Lockerby Composite School Auditorium**

MINUTES

Lesleigh Dye, Superintendent of Schools and Facilitator
Michèle Smethurst, Recording Secretary

Senior Administration in attendance:

Norm Blaseg, Director of Education
Sharon Speir, Superintendent of Schools
Ada Della Penta, Superintendent of Schools
Bruce Bourget, Superintendent of Schools

Trustees in attendance:

Tyler Campbell, Chair
Judy Hunda
Robert Kirwan
Bob Clement

Welcome

Superintendent Lesleigh Dye welcomed everyone to the second French Immersion Program Review public consultation session. As the Superintendent responsible for French Immersion, she served as the facilitator.

Trustees and members of the Executive Council who were in attendance were introduced. Superintendent Dye introduced Michèle Smethurst, the recording secretary and Nicole Charette, Senior Advisor, Corporate Communications and Strategic Planning. The purpose of the meeting and agenda were reviewed. There were four community presentations.

Lesleigh Dye delivered a PowerPoint presentation. She outlined the membership and mandate of the program review committee. She provided an overview of French Immersion in Rainbow Schools, including enrolment; reviewed the process, including timelines and important dates; and outlined options from the French Immersion Program Review Committee, including the rationale.

Key messages included:

- There is growth in French Immersion with increased enrolment in Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten.
- At the secondary level, French Immersion enrolment and English Program enrolment has experienced a decrease (2006 to 2010)
- The French Immersion Review Committee considered current research, enrolment trends, geography, student survey data and secondary course offerings and presented the following options:
 - Secondary schools: Confederation Secondary School, Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School, Lockerby composite School and Lasalle Secondary School will continue to offer French Immersion. Sudbury Secondary School will no longer offer French Immersion. Students currently in the program will continue until graduation. No new students will be enrolled in the French Immersion program at Sudbury Secondary effective September 2012.
 - Elementary schools: Alexander P.S., Carl. A Nesbitt P.S., Chelmsford P.S. Chelmsford Valley D.C.S (grade 7 and 8), Ernie Checkeris P.S., Lively District S.S. (grade 7 and 8), Northeastern Elementary School, R.L. Beattie P.S., Valley View P.S., Walden P.S. and Westmount Avenue P.S. will continue to offer French Immersion. Lansdowne will no longer offer French Immersion. Students currently enrolled will attend Ernie Checkeris P.S., Carl A. Nesbitt P.S. or Alexander P.S. depending on boundaries.
- Schools in Valley North: There will be a need to look at the French Immersion program at Chelmsford P.S, Chelmsford Valley D.C.S., Larchwood P.S. and Levack P.S. This will be reviewed as part of the Accommodation Review Committee process being considered within the next five years.
- The course offerings in French Immersion for grade 9 will include Français, Géographie and Éducation Physique et Santé; for grade 10, Français, Histoire and Éducation Physique et Santé. In grades 10 and 11, Français and Éducation Physique et Santé will be offered. Secondary schools are encouraged to offer as many different courses as possible, including Co-operative Education, to students in the French Immersion Program. Only Math and Science are mandated to be taught in English.

Superintendent Dye reviewed timelines and important dates.

Superintendent Lesleigh Dye advised that letters of support have been received. Written feedback will be accepted until Friday, June 24, 2011.

Community Presentations:

- **Kate Barber – Lansdowne Public School**
- **Marcel Rainville – Sudbury Secondary School**
- **Sabrina Rainville - Sudbury Secondary School**
- **Jason Rainville - Sudbury Secondary School**

Lesleigh Dye indicated that the presentations would not exceed ten minutes in length. She would stand to advise presenters when one minute was remaining.

Kate Barber introduced herself as the Chair of Lansdowne School Council. She indicated that many people in the audience are supporters of Lansdowne and contributed to the presentation. She indicated that she works for the City of Greater Sudbury and, therefore, has some knowledge of demographics, as outlined in her presentation.

She delivered a PowerPoint Presentation in support of the French Immersion Program at Lansdowne Public School.

In her presentation, she indicated the decline in enrolment may be due to the transitional neighbourhood. She showed a map of the area and indicated the dots show a high concentration of children under the age of six. She indicated that Walden Public School is the only other school that offers French Immersion and Ojibwe language.

Marcel Rainville read a letter from his wife, Josephine Rainville, supporting the French Immersion Program at Sudbury Secondary School.

Sabrina Rainville read a letter in French supporting the French Immersion Program at Sudbury Secondary School.

At Trustee Judy Hunda's request, Sabrina gave a summary of her letter in English:

She said she is a Laurentian University student who attended Sudbury Secondary School. She and her peers began as a group of 15 students in grade 9 and each had a specialty in the Arts. As the years went by, their number dropped to eight or nine, but those who left, for various reasons, will always have fond memories. She gave testimony to the excellent program and teachers who were passionate about the French language and culture at the school. She thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak and asked if there were any further questions.

Q. Did you find you were given enough variety in French Immersion courses at Sudbury Secondary School?

A. The arts teacher did not speak French. If there are enough students, there will always be enough programs offered.

Jason Rainville read a letter in French supporting the French Immersion Program at Sudbury Secondary School. He summarized in English by saying that he is a recent graduate of the school with a bilingual diploma, a certificate for both Visual Arts and the Specialist High Skills Major program. He is also an Ontario Scholar. He hopes the decision to remove the French Immersion program from Sudbury Secondary will be re-examined because students should not have to choose between the Arts and a French Immersion education. He also stated that many people did not know that French Immersion was offered at Sudbury Secondary. Enrolment into the program would increase if more people were made aware of it. Jason indicated that he believes Sudbury Secondary is the only school in Ontario that offers both the French Immersion and the Art programs. He concluded by saying: "We should offer our students every possible opportunity to help them succeed in the future".

Comment: Catherine Debassige

I was born in M'Chigeeng and attended school in Ottawa from grade 2 to 12. I could not learn my own culture and was raised speaking French. Languages bring people together.

Lesleigh Dye thanked the four presenters for their input. She advised that tonight's presentations and letters of support will be available on the Board website:

<http://www.rainbowschools.ca/boardroom/accommodation/FIreview/commConsult.php>

The floor was opened to questions.

Kate Barber – Lansdowne parent and School Council Chair

I am curious about triple classes. What evidence is there to say that it is not good?

Mindi Amalfitano – Lansdowne parent

I can answer that. I have two children at Lansdowne, one in grade 4 and the other in grade 5. They are in the same class and have no problems. The support they get is amazing.

Austin Marshall - Student at Lansdowne

I am in the same class as the two students mentioned before. We have a fantastic teacher who teaches grades 4, 5 and 6.

Chantal Marshall – Lansdowne parent (Austin's mother)

Austin has been in multiple grades since grade 2 and has no problems. It is not wise to take the kids out of Lansdowne. They are all doing well. My son will be in grade 7 next year. Moving them around may hamper their education. We live in the downtown core. We don't know in the next 10 to 20 years how many will stay or move into the downtown area.

Shirley Peloquin - Carl A. Nesbitt parent

The numbers are what they are. Looking at the French Immersion accommodation information that was presented and the geography, there is a hole being created. Alexander is close, but it feels like French Immersion is moving to the suburbs.

Eric Cloutier – Lansdowne parent

Q If you take French Immersion out of Lansdowne, the kids will have to leave the school only to end up in a school that only goes to grade 3. They will then have to move to a different school for Grade 4 to 8. Lansdowne goes from JK to grade 8.

Why not bus the kids from New Sudbury to Lansdowne.

A. As a committee, we looked at the current location and tried to find the next closest location.

Q. They don't know anyone there. I think you should move the New Sudbury kids downtown so they can see another culture and learn how the downtown people live.

Shirley Peloquin

Carl A. Nesbitt is full French Immersion, not dual track. The kids are fully immersed in French.

Eric Cloutier:

I have three kids in French Immersion. The kids still learn French without full immersion.

Austin Marshall

My teacher is higher than grade 3 and we do not do all day French. We have English in the morning and French in afternoon. And we have a full French principal. She speaks French some of the time and English some of the time.

Helen Henesniemi – Sudbury Secondary School

Q. For the kids with a strong ability in arts, what options do they have if they want both programs? (French Immersion and the Arts)

A. The school will still offer Core French.

Comment: My boys went to French Immersion. If kids are then put into Core French, they will stagnate.

Kerri Weirmeyer – Lansdowne parent

1. You showed enrolments for Alexander, but there is no comparison with other schools. It would be beneficial to have the enrolment of other schools to see why Lansdowne was chosen to lose the program.

2. Lansdowne students have special needs. It's the kind of school that focuses on the community and their needs. What will be addressed when lower income students move to a new school? Right now we have the Early Bird program, the breakfast program, and other supports. I'm afraid kids will get lost in the shuffle. Parents there don't have issues like those downtown. If you do take away French Immersion and the kids move, will you move those support programs also. How will children's needs be met?

3. Enrolment numbers are declining. Instead of shutting down the French Immersion program, try to focus on showing the value of the program, offering opportunities, increasing enrolment.

4. For courses offered to the French Immersion students going to Lockerby, Lo-Ellen Park etc., the ten courses that are needed do not offer variety (only French, Phys Ed., etc.) At Sudbury Secondary School, drama is offered in French.

Lansdowne focuses on the needs of the community. As a parent, I'm leery that the new schools will not address these needs, and will hinder their education.

A.

1. The enrolment for all of our French Immersion and Dual Track schools is available on the Board website (rainbowschools.ca). For those who do not have access to the Internet, the schools can provide hard copies of the information, on request.

2. Rainbow Schools offer various programs. The Early Learning Program will be in all schools by 2015, whether French Immersion or English. Ernie Checkeris does have a breakfast program. I'm not sure about the other schools.

3. In the past five years, we have implemented a number of strategies to encourage parents to choose French Immersion education for their children. We have the French Immersion Info Soirée. We have information on our website, including the "Say OUI to French Immersion" brochure. Hard copies of the brochure have also been distributed. We have the FSL (French as a Second Language) toolbox, which provides print and online resources for parents to help their children learn French.

4. When the committee looked at course offerings, schools are encouraged to offer more courses in French such as Drama, Music, Technology, etc. These offerings are school based and can change from year to year depending on whether the school has staff who can deliver the courses.

Marcel Rainville

Q. If a student wants to be in the Arts program and has been since grade 8, he/she will have to give up French Immersion to stay in the Arts?

A. Having an Extended French Program was suggested at the first Public Meeting on May 19th. The French Immersion Review Committee will gather next week to explore the possibility.

Q. Tara Labranche-Brosseau – Lansdowne parent

My oldest is in grade 7 in the English Program and the others are in French Immersion. If I have to send them to another school in September, they will be separated. They all have ADD and Lansdowne has been exceptional with them. Will looking after their needs be continued at another school? Transportation is not easy for me. I'm always at the school. I will not be able to do this if they move.

A.

Other schools also provide programs and services for students with Special Needs.

Comment: Kerri Weirmeyer

This mom is an asset to the school by volunteering. If the money is not there for her to get to the new school, how will she be able to participate? She wants to be there for her kids. The oldest will be separated from the others. How can she split herself between two schools?

Kate Barber

Q. It would be good to have strategies on how to keep kids in French Immersion. At Alexander, enrolment drops. At Lansdowne, we lose them because of different situations. It would be a good idea for the French Immersion committee to explore why.

A. We have conducted a survey of present and past French Immersion students. This feedback was considered by the committee, particularly the drop in number of students from elementary to secondary. Secondary students will be invited to participate in focus groups to explore what can be done to retain students in the French Immersion Program.

Shirley Peloquin

Q. You mentioned at the last meeting about Co-operative Education being offered in French. Perhaps short courses and workshops that would keep French involvement strong and teach things that would keep the students interested (such as web design) could be considered. Workshops could bring kids in from multiple schools.

Lesleigh Dye thanked everyone for attending. She advised the audience that further questions can be emailed to frenchimmersion@rainbowschools.ca at any time.

For further information, please visit the board's website:

<http://www.rainbowschools.ca/boardroom/accommodation/FIreview/commConsult.php>

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm