



**French Immersion Program Review
Final Recommendations from Executive Council**

**Presented at the Board Meeting
On Tuesday, November 22, 2011**

Chair Campbell, Trustees, Members of the Public:

At the annual Accommodation Meeting held on January 24, 2011, Rainbow District School Board Trustees approved a review of the Board's French Immersion Program.

We currently offer French Immersion in 11 elementary schools and 6 secondary schools across the Greater Sudbury area.

The Program has grown significantly over the years, with a greater number of families choosing French Immersion for their children when they start school.

There continues to be strong support for learning a second language in our community.

As a result, we want to offer the best French Immersion Program possible, so students have every opportunity to become bilingual and gain the skills to communicate effectively in both official languages.

Mandate

The mandate of the French Immersion Program Review, therefore, was to ensure the viability of French Immersion programs as well as provide recommendations regarding secondary French Immersion program offerings.

Background

With direction from the Board following the Accommodation Meeting, a French Immersion Program Review Committee was established to lead the process under the guidance of Superintendent Lesleigh Dye.

The Committee was comprised of teachers and administrators in French Immersion schools, including schools that offer both the English and French Immersion Programs - what we call dual track schools.

The Committee met four times in the spring of 2011.

Process

The French Immersion Program Review Committee considered the following information to create viable options to strengthen French Immersion programs in Rainbow schools:

- current research regarding French Immersion instruction
- student enrolment data trends from 2006 to 2011
- geography
- student survey data from March 2011
- secondary course offerings

The options were subsequently presented at public meetings.

Public Input

Members of the public provided input at two community meetings as well as the October Board meeting. Written input was also received.

Community Input Meeting: May 19, 2011

Community Input Meeting: June 14, 2011

October Board Meeting: October 25, 2011

We would like to thank students, parents and members of the community who shared their input. They reaffirmed our belief that there is tremendous support for French Immersion in our schools.

Enrolment data trends

Enrolment on October 31st over the past six years confirms important trends:

- Junior Kindergarten enrolment remains strong.
- French Immersion schools maintain their enrolment over time.
- Some French Immersion students in dual track schools transfer into the English program at their school.
- Dual track schools where there are triple and quadruple grades in French Immersion present a significant challenge due to the language of instruction.

For example, in a Grade 4, 5, 6 combined French Immersion class, Grade 4 science is taught in French and Grade 5 and 6 science is taught in English.

Ideally, we require 45 students in Grades 9 and 10 to maintain a viable program.

Elementary Enrolment

	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ENGLISH ENROLMENT	7456	75	7180	75	7033	75	6723	74	6445	73	6308	72
FI ENROLMENT	2537	25	2404	25	2338	25	2352	26	2368	27	2404	28
TOTAL	9993		9584		9371		9075		8813		8712	

This table provides a summary of elementary enrolment in the English Program and the French Immersion Program over the past six years.

The percentage of students in French Immersion has increased – from 25 per cent in 2006 to 28 per cent in 2011.

We currently have 2,404 students enrolled in French Immersion at the elementary level.

While we continue to experience declining enrolment, more students who are entering Rainbow Schools are choosing French Immersion.

Elementary French Immersion Enrolment

JK & SK French Immersion Enrolment:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
JK	248	250	281	286	332	321
SK	299	247	266	283	280	329

ELEMENTARY overall French Immersion student retention:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Self-Cont. Gr. 1-8	TOTAL JK-8
2006	278	248	251	258	238	244	240	233		2537
2007	284	223	231	230	251	232	219	237		2404
2008	232	248	209	205	224	233	220	220		2338
2009	263	213	236	195	202	219	236	219		2352
2010	272	242	197	232	187	194	204	228		2368
2011	262	260	231	190	230	193	178	209		2404

In 2006, there were 248 French Immersion students in JK and 299 French Immersion students in SK.

There are currently 321 French Immersion students in JK and 329 French Immersion students in SK.

The enrolment, however, is often not maintained as students progress from grade to grade.

This is particularly evident in our dual track schools.

Some students leave French Immersion to enroll in the English Program.

This presents a significant challenge in schools with small cohorts.

Elementary Recommendations

Executive Council has considered these trends in making its final recommendations to the Board. We have also reviewed the public input.

We are recommending that the following elementary schools continue to offer French Immersion:

Alexander Public School
Carl A. Nesbitt Public School
Chelmsford Public School/Chelmsford Valley District Composite School (Grade 7 and 8)
Ernie Checkeris Public School
Lively District Secondary School (Grade 7 and 8)
Northeastern Elementary School
R.L. Beattie Public School
Valley View Public School
Walden Public School
Westmount Avenue Public School

Elementary Recommendations

We are also recommending that the following elementary school no longer offer French Immersion effective September 2013:

Lansdowne Public School

Lansdowne French Immersion Data

JK & SK French Immersion Enrolment:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
JK	13	22	21	11	17	24
SK	13	17	17	18	11	19

Overall French Immersion student retention:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Total JK-8
2006	11	11	10	14	16	4	19	7	118
2007	10	6	10	7	13	16	5	18	124
2008	12	5	7	10	6	10	11	4	103
2009	15	11	5	4	6	3	10	10	93
2010	14	9	7	4	5	6	2	10	85
2011	10	11	6	8	5	6	5	4	98

This recommendation is based on enrolment data.

More students than ever before are entering French Immersion at Lansdowne Public School, but the cohorts for Grades 1 to 8 continue to be small.

Overall French Immersion student retention also decreases from year to year.

The data clearly shows that students leave French Immersion and continue their studies in the English Program, which is also offered at the school.

The steady decline of French Immersion students has a significant impact on the school's ability to offer the program.

There are not enough students in each grade to make it viable.

Rationale

The recommendation to discontinue French Immersion at Lansdowne is based on the following:

- the small cohort enrolment
- the loss of students each year
- our desire to avoid triple grades due to language of instruction

The recommendation to discontinue French Immersion at Lansdowne is also based on the fact that other French Immersion programs are available in close proximity.

Elementary Recommendations Continued

We are, therefore, recommending that students currently enrolled in the Lansdowne Public School French Immersion program attend one of the following schools based on boundaries effective September 2013:

Ernie Checkeris Public School
Westmount Public School
Carl A. Nesbitt Public School
Alexander Public School

These schools offer French Immersion only. Students will be fully immersed in a French as a Second Language learning environment where they will have every opportunity to become bilingual and gain the skills to communicate effectively in both official languages.

Secondary Enrolment

	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ENGLISH ENROLMENT	5659	89	5531	88	5343	88	5278	88	4928	88	4884	88
FI ENROLMENT	727	11	738	12	705	12	700	12	691	12	683	12
TOTAL	6387		6269		6048		5978		5619		5567	

Our secondary school enrolment shows that French Immersion has remained relatively stable over the years, with 12 per cent of students choosing to continue their studies in the French Immersion Program.

There are currently 683 French Immersion students in Rainbow secondary schools.

Secondary French Immersion Enrolment

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
2006	202	165	177	183	727
2007	201	183	155	199	738
2008	174	194	175	162	705
2009	197	150	184	169	700
2010	177	187	146	181	691
2011	196	168	171	148	683

Overall student retention in the French Immersion Program, however, decreases as the years progress.

Let's look at an example:

174 French Immersion students entered Grade 9 in 2008.
There are currently 148 French Immersion students in Grade 12.

The decline in enrolment, from year to year, is particularly significant in some schools and has had an impact on some of the recommendations from Executive Council.

Secondary Recommendations

We are recommending that the following secondary schools continue to offer French Immersion:

Chelmsford Valley District Composite School*
Confederation Secondary School
Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School
Lockerby Composite School
Lasalle Secondary School
Sudbury Secondary School*

You will note that there is an asterisk next to Chelmsford Valley District Composite School and Sudbury Secondary School.

Secondary Recommendations

We are recommending that Sudbury Secondary School retain their French Immersion program for 2013-2014 based on the following criteria:

- That Grade 9 and Grade 10 (Year 1 and Year 2) enrolment on October 31, 2012 be 45 students

Secondary Recommendations

If there are not 45 students in Grades 9 and 10 on October 31, 2012, no new Grade 9 students will be enrolled in the French Immersion program effective September 2013.

Students currently in the French Immersion program at Sudbury Secondary School will continue in the program until graduation.

Sudbury Secondary School French Immersion Enrolment

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
2006	13	7	13	17	50
2007	13	11	7	7	38
2008	10	11	7	6	34
2009	11	12	8	9	40
2010	2	10	10	10	32
2011	19	4	9	6	38

Enrolment data for Sudbury Secondary School confirms that the French Immersion cohorts are very small. The number of students in each grade decreases as the years progress, which has a significant impact on course offerings.

Rationale (if numbers are not maintained)

In summary....

The recommendation to discontinue the French Immersion program at Sudbury Secondary School if numbers are not maintained is based on the small cohort size, the loss of students from year to year, the limited variety of course offerings and the fact that there are other French Immersion programs available in close proximity.

Rationale (if numbers are maintained)

Sudbury Secondary School will have an opportunity to grow the program in its newly renovated facilities in the next school year.

If numbers are maintained, the program will continue.

This will require a significant increase in Grade 9 (Year 1) enrolment by 2012-2013.

Recommendation

The French Immersion programs in Valley North schools will be reviewed through an Accommodation Review Committee process for Chelmsford Public School, Chelmsford Valley District Composite School, Larchwood Public School and Levack Public School.

Secondary FI Course Offerings

As part of the French Immersion program review, course offerings were also considered at the secondary level.

The following, as a minimum, will be offered in all French Immersion schools:

Grade 9: Français, Géographie and
Éducation Physique et Santé

Grade 10: Français, Histoire,
Éducation à la Citoyenneté et Exploration de Carrière

Grade 11: Français

Grade 12: Français

Secondary FI Course Offerings

Secondary schools are encouraged to offer a wide variety of courses to students in the French Immersion Program.

French Immersion schools are mandated to teach only math and science in English.

Chair Campbell, Trustees, Members of the Public:

This is the final report of the Executive Council on the French Immersion Program Review.

Here are the recommendations for your consideration:

Elementary

That the following elementary schools continue to offer French Immersion:

Alexander Public School
Carl A. Nesbitt Public School
Chelmsford Public School
Chelmsford Valley District Composite School (Grades 7 and 8)
Ernie Checkeris Public School
Lively District Secondary School (Grades 7 and 8)
Northeastern Elementary School
R.L. Beattie Public School
Valley View Public School
Walden Public School
Westmount Avenue Public School

That Lansdowne Public School no longer offer French Immersion effective September 2013

That students currently enrolled in the Lansdowne Public School French Immersion program attend one of the following schools based on boundaries effective September 2013:

Ernie Checkeris Public School
Westmount Public School
Carl A. Nesbitt Public School
Alexander Public School

Secondary

That the following secondary schools continue to offer French Immersion:

Chelmsford Valley District Composite School
Confederation Secondary School
Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School
Lockerby Composite School
Lasalle Secondary School
Sudbury Secondary School

That Sudbury Secondary School retain their French Immersion program for 2013-2014 based on the following criteria:

That Grade 9 and Grade 10 (Year 1 and Year 2) enrolment on October 31, 2012 be 45 students

If there are not 45 students in Grades 9 and 10 on October 31, 2012, no new Grade 9 students will be enrolled in the French Immersion program effective September 2013. Students currently in the French Immersion program at Sudbury Secondary School will continue in the program until graduation.

That the French Immersion programs in Valley North schools be reviewed through an Accommodation Review Committee process for Chelmsford Public School, Chelmsford Valley District Composite School, Larchwood Public School and Levack Public School.