



REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS TO FRENCH INSTRUCTION FOR KINDERGARTEN AND PRIMARY EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION

What is Happening with French Instruction in Kindergarten & Grades 1-3 French Immersion?

This fall, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) has been considering changes to the delivery of French as a second language in kindergarten and grades 1-3 Early French Immersion (EFI). In October 2015, parents and staff were asked to provide feedback about the recommended changes to how we deliver these programs. We heard from many people, but we also heard that more time was needed for consultation. Additional consultation is now underway and we would like your input.

Why are changes being proposed?

Currently students move into Early French Immersion in senior kindergarten. This is the middle of the two-year kindergarten program. Moving students in the middle of the two-year program creates additional transitions for some students, separates peer groups, makes it more challenging to organize classes and may result in large differences in class size. The proposed changes are intended to align the EFI program with the two year kindergarten model.

What are the changes being proposed?

There are three recommendations for change.

1. All OCDSB kindergarten students (junior and senior) would receive 50% of their instruction in English and 50% in French (there would no longer be an option of 20 minutes French/day for JK or SK);
2. Students in Early French Immersion would have a change in the language of instruction of mathematics from French to English for grades 1 to 3 EFI (see table on next page);
3. Students in grade 1 Early French Immersion would receive 60 minutes of daily English (as a subject) instruction (see table on next page).

When would these changes take effect?

The first step will be deciding what changes will occur, including the date of implementation. There has been discussion about implementation beginning September 2016, but this decision has not yet been made.

The current recommendations propose the following timelines:

- **Effective September 2016** – the changes to the amount of French instruction in JK/SK would be introduced and math instruction in grades 1-3 would shift to English (recommended changes #1 and #2); and
- **Effective September 2018** – English would be introduced as a subject in the Early French Immersion program (recommended change #3).

What is the decision making process?

It is important to note that no decision has been made about changes to the programs at this time. These are recommendations for change – the recommendations will be considered by the Committee of the Whole on February 2, 2016.

This kind of decision is made by the Board of Trustees. Staff is responsible for reviewing the program model and making recommendations for change based on curriculum requirements, research, program design, staffing, resource requirements, and parental and staff input. Staff puts forward a recommendation to the Committee of Whole and the Committee debates the recommendations and can amend, defeat or recommend approval of the recommendations. The Committee decision goes to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

BACKGROUND

The OCDSB currently offers 3 types of FSL elementary programs; English with Core French; Early French Immersion, and Middle French Immersion.

How would this change?

The following table shows how the change will apply to the English with Core French Program and the Early French Immersion Program.

Note the addition of 60 minutes English as a subject is not recommended for implementation until 2018.

Comparison of English with Core French vs Early French Immersion Program Models				
Grade	English with Core French		Early French Immersion	
	Current # Minutes French	Proposed Change	Current # Minutes French (% French)	Proposed Change (% French)
JK	20 min/day	150 min/day	20 min/day (7%)	150 min/day (50%)
SK	20 min/day	150 min/day	150 min/day (50%)	150 min/day (50%)
1	40 min/day	40 min/day	300 min/day (100%)	240 min/day (80%) until Sept 2018 and then would change to 180 min/day (60%)
2	40 min/day	40 min/day	240 min/day (80%)	180 min/day (60%)
3	40 min/day	40 min/day	240 min/day (80%)	180 min/day (60%)

What can you tell me about the consultation on these changes?

The first phase of consultation took place from September 28th to October 31st. Thank you to those of you who took part. As a result of the feedback from that consultation, 2 things happened:

- the recommendation to add English as a subject in September 2016 was amended to phase in the implementation in September 2018. This phase in would ensure additional French exposure for those students who are currently enrolled in kindergarten, by not implementing English as a subject until these students have reached grade 2; and
- the Board decided to undertake additional consultation to ensure as many people as possible were aware of the recommendations and had a chance to provide input.

A lot of thought went into this proposal and the staff report explains why we believe these changes are good for student learning. However, we received a lot of feedback, both positive and negative, on the proposed changes and that feedback merits additional consideration. We have posted some of the benefits and concerns that parents and staff identified in the Frequently Asked Questions section of our website. You can also read the [detailed analysis of the first consultation](#) on our website, including more information about the benefits and concerns of these changes.

Are there financial implications related to these changes?

Yes. Although the recommendations were not made for financial reasons, there are implications to both revenues and expenditures. Revenues will increase as a result of the changes to the kindergarten model because the changes will increase our French immersion grant funding. There may also be some savings related to the number of classes. There will be some expenditures in terms of teacher training and the acquisition of learning resources. The overall impact is an estimated financial gain of approximately \$2.7M per year. However, due to staffing constraints, the changes are inter-related – for example it is not possible to only increase the kindergarten French instruction, without decreasing the amount of English instruction in grades 1-3 EFL.

How can I provide input?

As part of the additional consultation, a second survey has been developed. All interested parents are encouraged to complete this survey by January 11th (even if you took part in the first survey). Your input is important to us. Please take a few minutes to review the [information on our website](#) at www.ocdsb.ca. This may assist you in completing the survey.