



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



OCDSB ELEMENTARY PROGRAM REVIEW

A Proposal for **Improved Program Quality** and **Accessibility**





Just like our students, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) is in a continuous state of growth and renewal as a learning-oriented organization: putting down roots in our school communities; branching out into smart new initiatives and opportunities for students; and providing a network of support that empowers our learners to spread their wings and make a lasting impact on the world around them.

To support this robust learning environment, we are proposing a new elementary program model with two pathways: Enhanced English and French Immersion. The model aims to improve program quality and accessibility, with a focus on **community-based education, dynamic, bilingual teaching and learning environments** and a **continuum of inclusion**.

Our key information sources included input from public consultation, district data (internal), and relevant research (external). The proposed model includes changes to grade configurations, attendance boundaries and supports for diverse learning needs.

Here's What You Need To Know:

Why Change?

The existing model is not meeting the needs of all students, as highlighted in the most recent consultation process for the renewed strategic plan. Concerns included:

- Program availability limited at community schools;
- Limited access to French Immersion; and
- Inconsistent supports for special education across programs.

What's Being Proposed?

- **Community-based education** with streamlined program offerings available to all students.
- **Two Program Pathways of Enhanced English and French Immersion** for Grades 1-8 offered in all schools, with only a few exceptions.
- **Fluid entry into French Immersion** for the primary grades, including opportunities to enter the program in Grades 1, 2 or 3, providing more flexible entry options.
- **Supports for multilingual learners**, with English as a Second Language/English Literacy Development (ESL/ELD) classes that currently exist modernized and remaining in place.
- **Supports for students with complex learning profiles**, with 103 of 142 Specialized Program Classes (SPCs) remaining in place.
- **Redistribution of resources to neighbourhood schools**, with the gradual phase out of 39 SPCs.



Community-based Education

Students will attend their local community school, with some exceptions.

Currently, many students must travel outside of their community to access programs and/or services. With the proposed changes, most students will attend the neighbourhood school, learning and interacting with peers from their own community. Some exceptions may apply in the District, with a handful of schools that will offer only Enhanced English or French Immersion.

What's New?

Streamlined school grade configurations

- School grade configurations will be streamlined from eight to five, which means fewer transitions to new schools for students.
- Some schools may have different grade levels (e.g., K-3, K-6, K-8).
- Students will move schools either at the end of Grade 3, Grade 6 or Grade 8.
- Cohorts will move together in more cases.

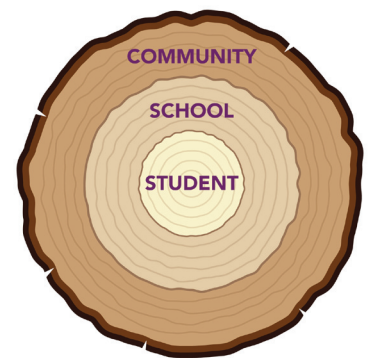
School attendance boundaries that create community schools

- Some school boundaries will shift. A school locator that will allow parents/caregivers to identify their designated school will be released to the public at the end of February 2025.
- Schools currently designated as Alternative will transition to community schools.



How Will This Affect My Child's Education?

- When all neighbourhood children attend the same school, there are more opportunities to interact with peers and form friendships—before, during and after school.
- The closer proximity of the school can lead to increased parental involvement and engagement in school life.



Students and schools will be better integrated into their community.

- The school becomes a hub for the neighbourhood, fostering community development and partnership opportunities for sports and other recreation and learning activities.
- More children are able to walk to school or have a shorter commute by bus.



Dynamic, Bilingual Teaching and Learning Environments

Schools will offer both Enhanced English and French Immersion, with only a few exceptions, and access to French Immersion will be available in Grades 1, 2 and 3.

What's New?

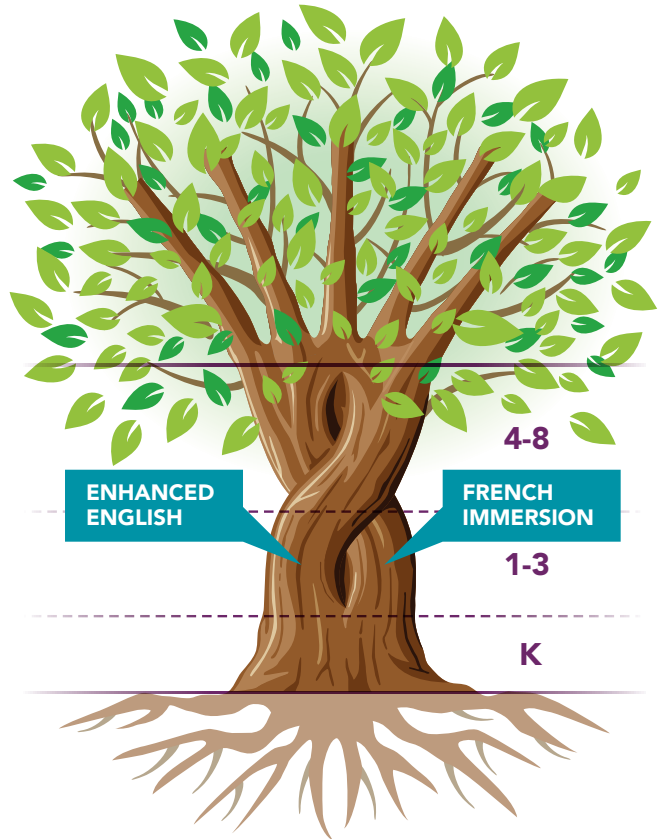
Two Program Pathways

- **Enhanced English (EE):** 84% English instruction, 16% French (increased from 12.5% of French in the current model).
- **French Immersion (FI):** 60% French instruction in Grades 1-6, 50% in Grades 7-8. (English-language instruction in Grade 1 will increase.)

The **English with Core French Program** designated as **Alternative** and **Middle French Immersion** will be discontinued, with transition details to follow.

Kindergarten Program remains 50/50 bilingual (no change).

There will continue to be some schools that will offer only French Immersion, and a few that will offer only Enhanced English, where a dual-track option was not feasible. Both programs will adjust the amount of instruction in the languages of English and French, as shown in the chart on page 5, to meet students' needs.

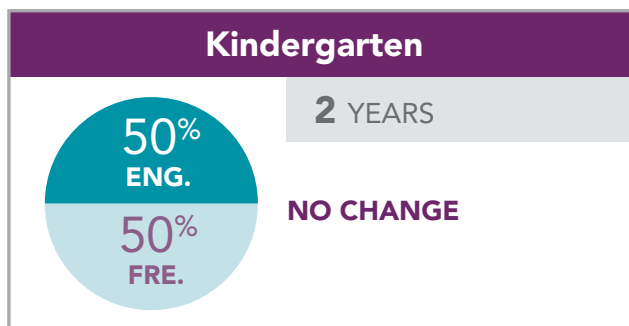
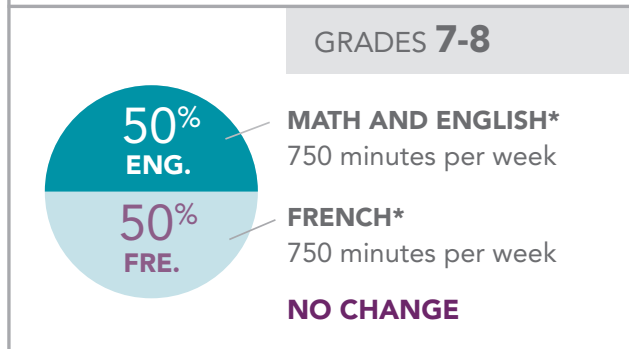
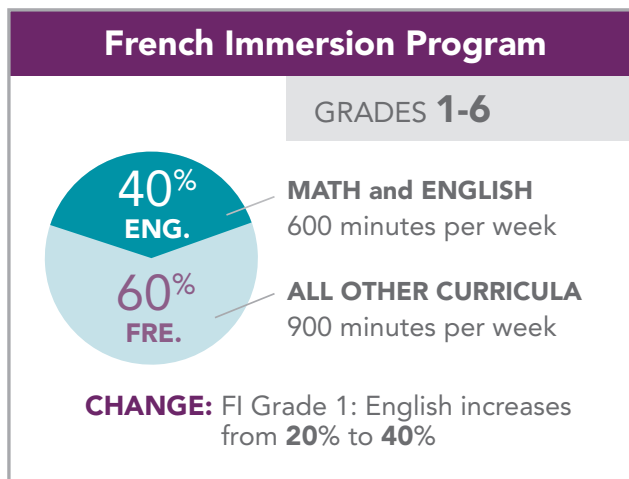
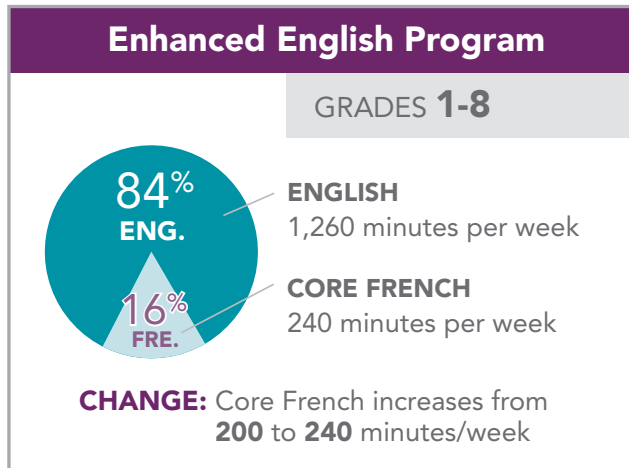


How Will It Affect My Child's Education?

Research shows that children who have the option to learn in a French Immersion environment possess significant strengths, including enhanced cognitive skills, improved cultural understanding and increased future opportunities.

Recognizing the many benefits of French Immersion, the program will now be more accessible and provide dedicated literacy time in the English language in Grade 1, by increasing the amount of English instruction offered. As well, the amount of French instruction in the Enhanced English program will increase.

The following chart provides an overview of the English and French instructional minutes in the proposed model, and the change it represents from what is currently in place:



*Including some other curricular areas

What's New?

Fluid entry points in the primary grades

- Starting in Grade 1, students can choose either Enhanced English or French Immersion.
- Students can enter the French Immersion program at the beginning of Grades 1, 2 or 3.
- Students in Grades 4 through 8 may continue in their selected program through their remaining elementary years.
- Students in French Immersion can choose to move to Enhanced English at any point in time.

How Will It Affect My Child's Education?

- The ability to enter French Immersion in Grades 1, 2 and 3 provides more opportunities for all students to benefit from the program.
- This improvement will provide more equitable access, particularly for families new to the city or those facing other barriers.



Students can now enter the French Immersion program in either Grade 1, 2 or 3. The fluid entry point for the primary grades provides greater flexibility of choice for parents and caregivers.



Continuum of Inclusion

All students in all schools will have their achievement and well-being needs supported in a safe and welcoming learning environment.

What's New?

Enhancement of supports for students

English as a Second Language/English Literacy Development (ESL/ELD) Classes

- All 15 ELD classes that currently exist at the junior and intermediate levels will be modernized and remain in place with an increased focus on maximizing integration.

Relevant research has shown that the provision of targeted, intensive support for multilingual learners can accelerate their learning trajectory and facilitate their successful integration into general classrooms.

Specialized Program Classes (SPCs)

- 103 of 142 SPCs that currently exist will remain in place, be modernized and continue to serve students with the most complex learning profiles. This includes:
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder Program
 - Behaviour Intervention Program
 - Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program
 - Developmental Disabilities Program (Including Specialized Schools and Semi-Integrated classes)
 - Dual Support Program
 - General Learning Program - Intermediate
 - Gifted Program - Junior/Intermediate
 - Physical Support Program



How Will It Affect My Child's Education?

- Roles and responsibilities of classroom teachers and support staff will be continuously reviewed as they relate to instruction, intervention and optimizing resources.
- There will be a continued focus on building capacity for staff in trauma informed and high impact teaching practices.
- A shift in priorities will involve moving from assessment for placement to assessment for learning, with a continuation of collaborating, understanding and intervening.

What's New?

Redistribution of resources to neighbourhood schools

The following 39 of 142 SPCs will be gradually phased out, with future students receiving necessary supports in regular classrooms at their neighbourhood schools:

- General Learning Program - Junior (over three-year period)
- Gifted Program - Primary (over three-year period)
- Language Learning Disability Program (over two-year period)
- Learning Disabilities Specialized Intervention Program (over two-year period)
- Primary Special Needs Program (over three-year period)



How Will It Affect My Child's Education?

- These changes aim to shift services to students, not students to services; to provide early intervention and monitoring to inform programming and keep options open; and to maintain a continuum of inclusion, prioritizing in-class support with withdrawal as needed.
- Students will receive necessary supports from the school-based and central special education teams.
- For students in the Primary Special Needs Program and Junior General Learning Program, phasing out these programs lessens the risk of prematurely making early placement and pathway decisions that inadvertently limit pathway opportunities later on.



Additional Considerations

- ▶ **Transportation:** Bus routes may change due to new boundaries.
- ▶ **Childcare:** Impacts on childcare programs and services will be reviewed to ensure smooth transitions.

How We Got Here

Before proposing these changes, we sought out three fundamental sources of information to ensure programming and delivery meets the needs of all students:

Public Consultation:

In 2024, we consulted with the community to determine where and how programming is offered, whose needs are served and how schools may be redesigned to better meet the needs of current and future students.

Internal District Data:

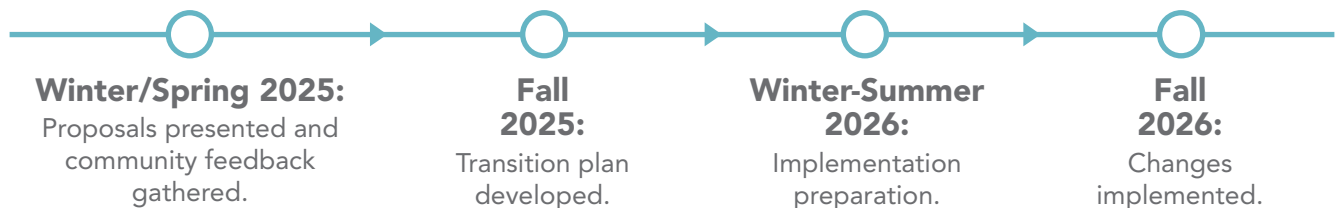
We also dove deep into our own data to analyze the demographics, achievement, engagement and well-being of our students at the elementary level.

External Relevant Research:

Two distinct literature reviews were conducted by external researchers, revealing the benefits and challenges of the proposed changes on student success.

To learn more about the Program Review process, visit engage.ocdsb.ca

Timeline



Questions? Want To Share Your Input?

Stay informed:

Visit engage.ocdsb.ca – your primary go-to source of information about the Elementary Program Review.



engage.ocdsb.ca

Attend:

Community meetings in March 2025.

Complete:

Online survey – Open on engage.ocdsb.ca from January to March 2025.