



Name: Kristina Laperle (representing Canadian Parents for French)

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

I wish to delegate to speak as a parent of a disabled child concerning the elementary program review and its impact to our local school and to children with disabilities.

The ongoing Ottawa Carleton District School Board elementary program review includes recommendations for changes to Core and Immersion French programs, framed as improving program quality and accessibility. As the leading, researchinformed voice on French as a Second Language (FSL) programs in Canada since 1977, Canadian Parents for French views the recommended changes as a matter of concern.

Speaker:

Kristina Laperle,
President (volunteer), Canadian Parents for French, Ottawa Chapter
Parent, OCDSB graduates

Joined by:

Betty Gormley
Executive Director, Canadian Parents for French ON

As Canadian Parents for French, we urge you to pause and consider this:

Do the French Immersion recommendations improve student proficiency and achievement in French?

We applaud the recommendation to expand the Early French Immersion (EFI) program to more schools. This will remove barriers to access. We are cautiously optimistic that this will increase participation and improve French proficiency outcomes for more students.

The recommendation to cancel Middle French Immersion in favour of rolling admissions to EFI through grades 1, 2, and 3 is unusual. It may contribute in a very limited way to increasing participation in EFI and to improving French proficiency outcomes. However, this potential benefit is overshadowed by our concern that grade 4 students will no longer have an entry point to immersion, thereby reducing access overall. We are also concerned that already strained primary



Delegation 6.3.a

EFI teachers will have the added challenge of teaching students who may enter immersion in grade 2 or 3 with no French at all or minimal French compared to their peers.

The recommendation to reduce intensity from 80% to 60% of the day in French in grade 1 immersion further weakens the delivery model adopted for EFI in 2016. It does not align with decades of research and evidence on how best to achieve French proficiency. Leading Canadian academics and experts in second-language acquisition consistently identify effective pedagogy and three design variables that maximize proficiency outcomes in French Immersion programs: an early start, cumulative time in French, and intensity. Intensity means front end loading the program with 100% of instructional time in French during the early years; that is, "total" or "full" immersion.

We are here to amplify the Parents' voices from the September consultation report. French Immersion parents emphasized the importance of bilingualism for their children's futures. They called for increased French instructional time, better support within and strengthening of the FI program.

Please pause and reconsider the reduction in intensity proposed for the French Immersion program and the loss of access for grade 4 students. We ask you to prioritize evidence-based design and listen to parents who rightfully expect OCDSB to meet their goals for French proficiency by improving French Immersion program quality AND accessibility.

We thank you for the work you do for OCDSB students and the community.



Attention: OCDSB Trustees

cc:

Director of Education, Pino Buffone

Association canadienne des professionnels de l'immersion
(ACPI) Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association
(OMLTA) Members, Canadian Parents for French

Re: The ongoing Ottawa-Carleton District School Board elementary program review includes recommendations for changes to Core and Immersion French programs, framed as improving program quality and accessibility. As the leading, research-informed voice on French as a Second Language (FSL) programs in Canada since 1977, Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) views the recommended changes as a matter of concern.

We urge you to pause and consider this:

Do the recommendations improve student proficiency and achievement in French?

New Sites for Early French Immersion (EFI)

We applaud the OCDSB recommendation to expand the Early French Immersion (EFI) program to more schools which will remove barriers to access. We are cautiously optimistic that this will increase participation in EFI and contribute to improving French proficiency outcomes for more students.

Cancellation of Middle French Immersion (MFI), Rolling Admissions to EFI

The recommendation to cancel Middle French Immersion (grade 4 entry) in favour of rolling admissions to EFI through grades 1, 2, and 3 is unusual. The assertion that current MFI students could have started FI earlier as they were already OCDSB students combined with the increase in the number of EFI sites may improve access, increase participation and contribute to improving French proficiency outcomes.

However, this potential benefit is overshadowed by our concern that grade 4 students will no longer have an entry point to immersion, thereby reducing access. We are also concerned that already strained primary EFI teachers will have the added challenge of

supporting and teaching students who may enter French Immersion in grade 2 or 3 with no French at all or minimal French compared to their peers.

Cut to French Time in EFI Grade 1

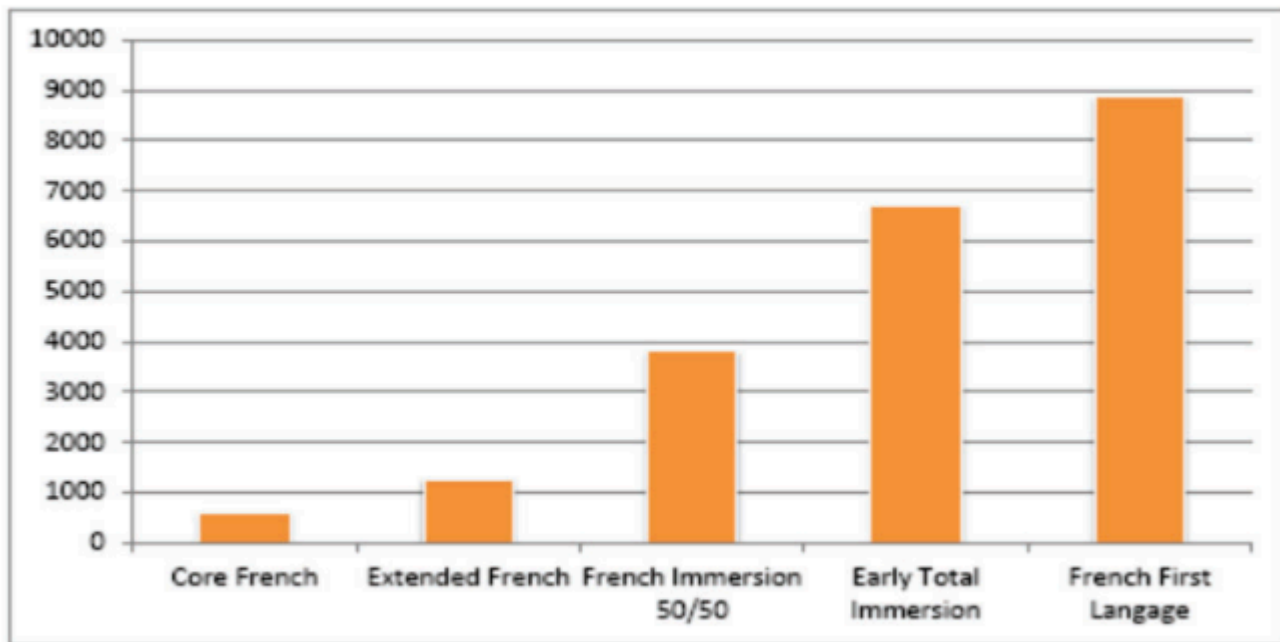
The recommended reduction in intensity from 80% to 60% of the day and total time in French in grade 1 immersion further weakens the delivery model adopted for EFI in 2016 and does not align with decades of research and evidence on best practices for achieving French proficiency. Leading Canadian academics and experts in second-language acquisition consistently identify effective pedagogy and three key temporal design variables that maximize proficiency outcomes in French Immersion programs:

1. **Intensity:** Front end loading the program with 100% of instructional time in French during the early years (commonly referred to as “total” or “full” immersion).
2. **Total Time in French:** Maximizing cumulative exposure to the target language.
3. **Early Start:** Beginning immersion programs in Kindergarten or grade 1.

Intensity of OCDSB Early French Immersion Programs (from 2007)					
Percentage of Instructional Day in French in Early French Immersion					
Year	2007 (K ½ day)	2015 (K full day)	Proposed 2016 (K full day)	Adopted 2016 (K full day)	Proposed 2025 (K full day)
K-Yr 1			50	50	50
K-Yr 2	100	50	50	50	50
1	100	100	60	80	60
2	80	80	60	60	60
3	80	80	60	60	60

Hours of French Instruction in French Second Language and French First Language Programs in Ontario

Hours of French Instruction at the Elementary Level



Hours of Instruction per elementary program: Core (600), Extended French (1260), French Immersion 50/50 (3800), Early Total Immersion (6710), French First Language (8867).

The recommended model sets aside the guidance on intensity provided in “A Framework for FSL in Ontario School, Kindergarten to Grade 12” which states that “An immersion program starting in Grade 1 generally provides instruction in French in all subjects (i.e., for 100 per cent of total instructional times) until Grade 3 or 4” (page 40). This is the foundation of successful, evidence-based French Immersion programs across Ontario and Canada (Appendix A and B).

We want to amplify and draw your attention to Parents’ voices from the September 10, 2024, consultation report (pages 12 and 23). French Immersion parents emphasized the importance of bilingualism for future opportunities, and they called for increased French instructional time, better support within and strengthening of the FI program. The majority of OCDSB families speak English at home. Those who are catholic, who speak a language other than English at home or have French heritage may have a right or an

opportunity to attend another school board, but most do not and are entirely dependent on OCDSB to develop their children's French skills.

In the Relevant External Research Review (page 25), Arnott reminds us that proficiency goals are fundamental to FI program design (intensity, total cumulative time and age of entry). Given the unique context of the National Capital Region as a bilingual hub, where proficiency goals for graduates are high, it is imperative that OCDSB students have the optimal approach - a front- end loaded full French Immersion program. However, the recommendations are to cut French time in French Immersion and to marginally increase Core French time with an extra 8 minutes daily.

About the Review

We applaud the Board for the timeline, opportunities for community participation and materials shared during the Review. The Review website is outstanding, a model of transparency for all Ontario boards who embark on reforms.

However, the information provided does not include an examination of the impact on student learning of the 2015 French Review and changes implemented for Core and Immersion French delivery in 2016. In fact, the students who started Kindergarten Yr 1 in 2016 under that Core and French Immersion program design change will not appear in the results for the DELF (Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française – French proficiency exam) until 2029, their grade 12 year. The 2016 Review anticipated an uptick in enrolment and inclusion in EFI by giving FI to all students in Kindergarten. The data shared in the Review does not provide a comparison of grade 1 enrolment, student demographics or achievement data (EQAO, report card) for 2015- present.

Conclusion

French Immersion programs play a vital role in preparing students for post-secondary education and employment opportunities and in fostering Canada's Official Language Bilingualism. These programs should not only be inclusive, they should also be the highest standard of excellence to create strong, competitive, bilingual leaders for the future.

We urge the OCDSB to pause and reconsider the further reduction in intensity proposed for their French Immersion program and the loss of access for grade 4



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Delegation 6.3.a

students. We ask you to prioritize evidence-based design and listen to the concerns of parents who rightfully expect OCDSB to meet the goal of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan to improve program quality AND accessibility.

Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) is committed to working with parents and educators at the OCDSB. We thank you for the work you do for OCDSB students and the community.

Appendix A – Early French Immersion Ontario School Boards, % French Daily

<https://on.cpf.ca/files/2025/03/Tab-1B-EFI-Daily-French-by-Board-JK-12-2020-2025-Total-FI-Enrolment-by-Board-2022-2023.pdf>

Appendix B- Early French Immersion: Entry Grade and % of French Daily by Province/Territory

<https://on.cpf.ca/files/2025/03/d3-EFI-by-Province-Territory-Feb-2025.pdf>

Appendix C- About Canadian Parents for French



Delegation 6.3.a

Ontario School Board	% of French Daily in Early French Immersion*					FI Enrolment JK-12 (includes all entry points)	Total Board Enrolment JK-12	FI % of Total Board Enrolment JK-12	Notes
	JK	SK	1	2	3				
English Boards									
Halton CDSB			50	50	50	1803	35877	5%	
Peel DSB			50	50	50	15149	107577	14%	
Waterloo CDSB			50	50	50	777	25432	3%	
DSB of Niagara			x	x	x	3705	40872	9%	
Huron-Perth CDSB			x	x	x	525	4631	11%	
						21959	214389	10%	
Halton DSB				100	80	11770	65279	18%	
Waterloo Region DSB				58	58	8470	65386	13%	
						20240	130665	15%	
Hastings & Prince Edward DSB						999	15356	7%	4
Simcoe Muskoka CDSB						0	22973	0%	
Wellington CDSB						0	8282	0%	
Renfrew County CDSB						0	4861	0%	
Rainy River DSB						0	2496	0%	
Superior-Greenstone DSB						0	1442	0%	
Superior North CDSB						0	668	0%	
Penetanguishene PSSB						0	359	0%	
Moose Factory Island DSAB						0	274	0%	
Mosoness DSAB						0	267	0%	
James Bay Lowland SSB						0	205	0%	
						0	41827	0%	
French Boards									
100% French until Core English starts in G4									
CS Diamonde							12565		
CS catholique MonAvenir							17005		
CS public du Grand Nord de l'ON							2513		
CSD du Nord-Est de l'Ontario							2140		
CSDC Franco-Nord							2751		
CSDC de l'Est ontarien							10119		
CSDC des Aurores boréales							832		
CSDC des Grandes Rivières							5742		
CSDC du Centre-Est de l'Ontario							24516		
CSDC du Nouvel-Ontario							6660		
CS catholique Providence							10117		
CÉP de l'Est de l'Ontario							16064		
							111024		
Notes:									
* % of French Daily is subject to change. School Boards are invited to send updates to info@on.cof.ca .									
ON Ministry of Education: French immersion is a minimum of 50% French daily.									
x Data not available at time of publishing.									
1. Some FI schools start in JK, some in SK.									
2. All JK-SK students are in FI. FI enrolment includes G4 entry.									
3. G1-3 is extended: 25%. FI enrolment includes G4 entry.									
4. G4 entry FI only.									

Appendix B

EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION: ENTRY GRADE AND % OF FRENCH DAILY BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY

	% of French Daily*					Sources and Notes
	JK (age 4)	SK (age 5)	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	
AB	NA	100	90-100	90-100	70-80	https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/89892755-0cdf-4335-a84c-4ecfcc88eac3/resource/2c3cd1bf-7ecf-4741-84c2-9c14e7d38531/download/4856138-2014-handbook-french-immersion-administrators.pdf
BC	NA	100	100	100	80-100	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/french-immersion-program
MB	NA	100	75	75	75	https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/fr_imm_pr.html#requirement
NB	NA		85	85	80	https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/policies-politiques/e/309A.pdf
NF	NA	100	100	100	80	https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/k12/french/immersion/description/
NS		85-100	85-100	85-100	70-80	https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/french-immersion
NU	NA					Early French Immersion is not offered.
NW	NA	100	100	100	80-100	https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/curriculumrenewal
ON	50-100	50-100	50-100	50-100	50-100	https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/GSN/2024-25_Technical_paper/Technical-guide-for-school-boards-2024-2025-revised-September-2024_EN.pdf Entry Grade and % of French Daily varies by school board.
PE	NA	90	90	90	90	https://psb.edu.pe.ca/programs-and-learning/french-immersion
SK	NA	100	90-100	90-100	70-90	https://curriculum.gov.sk.ca/ https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/xid-858306_1
YU		100	80	80	80	https://yukon.ca/en/french-language-programs#french-immersion-second-language https://www.whitehorseelementary.com/french-early-late-immersion

*% of French Daily is as stated in Ministry of Education and school board policy and promotion materials. Actual amounts delivered at schools can vary.

NA – 4-year-old Kindergarten is not offered.

Compiled by CPF ON 02/25



Appendix C

ABOUT CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH

Canadian Parents for French (CPF) was founded in 1977 with the assistance of Canada's first Official Languages Commissioner. Thousands of volunteer parent and stakeholder members across Canada promote and support opportunities for young people to learn French. CPF has been recognized by the Commissioner of Official Languages for advocacy and "exceptional work in the area of research and promotion" of French as a Second Language.

CPF Ontario serves on the Minister of Education's Provincial French as a Second Language (FSL) Working Group and has consulted with the Ministry on the development of many policy and curriculum documents, including the "Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, K-12" (2013), the elementary and secondary curriculum for Core, Extended and Immersion French (2013, 2014), "Supporting Your Child's Success in French Immersion/Extended French, K-8 (2014), "Including Students with Special Education Needs in FSL" (2015) and the Official Languages Agreements and Action Plans in the area of French second language instruction.

CPF Ontario creates and implements many projects supported by Canadian Heritage and the Ministry of Education to support FSL learning in and after school. These include our annual French public speaking contest, Concours d'Art Oratoire, our campaign to encourage young bilinguals to consider teaching careers in French, SAYOUI.ca, and extracurricular activities for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students led by FSL teacher candidates, such as, Vive La Parole, Franco-Fun and Cercle de Lecture. CPF has a long-term presence in Ottawa-Carleton supporting FSL students, families and programs at the Board and in the community. Our annual outstanding educator award is named for Russ McGillivray, former superintendent Carleton Board of Education, and our annual outstanding volunteer award is named for Kanata parent, Beth Mlacak, both outstanding contributors to the development of FSL programs in Ottawa-Carleton and beyond.

Kristina Laperle is the proud parent of 2 recent OCDSB graduates and is the volunteer president of our Ottawa-Carleton Chapter.

Betty Gormley is Executive Director of CPF Ontario. She has led many projects to assist French second language learners and works daily with our partners, such as the Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association (OMLTA), Glendon College, Collège Boréal, L'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO) and TFO Éducation (Idélo).