



REPORT TO

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL BEING, CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

# FRENCH IMMERSION SCHOOL OPTIONS FOR THE NORTH-WEST QUADRANT

***“AND THEY WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BEGAN  
SPEAKING IN DIFFERENT TONGUES, AS THE SPIRIT ENABLED  
THEM TO PROCLAIM.”  
(ACTS 2:4)***

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
2/24/2016	May 5, 2016	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>
Dan Koenig, Superintendent of Learning, Curriculum & Accountability John Volek, Senior Coordinator, Planning and Accountability Gina Iuliano Marrello, Superintendent of Learning, Area 3		
<b>RECOMMENDATION REPORT</b>		

**Vision:**

*At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.*

**Mission:**

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge and to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*



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## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Arising out of a Trustee motion at the Student Achievement and Well-Being Committee Meeting of December 3, 2015, staff was directed to rank no less than 3 schools in the north-west quadrant in the proximity of St. Conrad and conduct an initial consultation discussion with the Principal and the parent council as part of the report that is presented to the board for approval by the board of trustees at the February 2016 Student Achievement and Well Being Committee Meeting (later deferred to March and then to April). Three schools were initially identified based on a consideration of the French Immersion criteria. Consultation, in the form of a CSPC information meeting, parent survey, and a Town Hall Meeting, took place in each of the school communities identified and the three schools were ranked in the following order: St. Jerome, St. Robert, and St. Jane Francis.

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a ranked list of 3 schools in the north-west quadrant in the proximity of St. Conrad to be considered for French Immersion. In addition to recommending a ranked list of 3 schools to consider, the report will provide the rationale used to rank the schools, as informed by the consultation with the parent community at each school as well the list of criteria to be considered when deciding to implement a French Immersion program in a school.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

1. On December 3, 2013, at the Student Achievement and Well-Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee meeting, recommendations were made for oversubscribed French Immersion Program schools. Staff was directed to investigate possible solutions for the oversubscribed French Immersion Program at St. Cyril Catholic School.
2. A trustee motion arising out of the Corporate Affairs, Strategic Planning and Property Committee of January 23, 2014 was referred to staff to investigate the feasibility of a French Immersion program at St. Conrad Catholic School.

3. On March 6, 2014, at the Student Achievement and Well-Being Committee Meeting, a five year plan was recommended by staff which listed St. Conrad as a French Immersion site commencing in the 2016-17 school year.
4. On December 2, 2014, at the Student Achievement and Well-Being Committee Meeting, a motion was passed to select St. Conrad as the location for a French Immersion program during the 2016-2017 school year and that students in Junior and Senior Kindergarten in 2015 be included in the French Immersion program.
5. After receiving the results of a French Immersion Parent survey where a majority of parents indicated that they did not feel that a French Immersion program should be implemented at St. Conrad, the Trustee presented a Consideration of Motion out of the Regular Board meeting on October 22, 2015 that rescinded the previous motion of March 6, 2014 regarding the selection of St. Conrad as the site for a French Immersion program. Arising from an amendment to this Motion, staff was directed to research other options for the French Immersion program in the north-west quadrant of the city that will accommodate the French Immersion needs of the St. Conrad Community.
6. At the December 3, 2015 Student Achievement and Well Being Committee Meeting, following a staff report was presented which identified St. Robert as a possible option for a French Immersion program and recommended that further consultation with the school community take place. Following a discussion of this report, a Trustee Motion was brought forward that directed staff to rank no less than 3 schools in the north-west quadrant and in the proximity of St. Conrad and conduct an initial consultation discussion with the Principal and the parent council as part of the report that is presented to the board for approval by the February 2016 Student Achievement and Well Being Committee Meeting (later deferred to March and then to April).

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

1. Currently there are no French Immersion programs in the north-west quadrant of the city. An Extended French Program exists at the following schools in this area: D'Arcy McGee, All Saints, and St. Benedict.
2. There are 7 TDSB Early Immersion programs and 4 Extended French Programs in the north-west quadrant of the city.
3. There continues to be an increasing demand for French Immersion programs across the city, as described in recent news articles.
4. Parents in the St. Conrad community have requested that staff consider an alternate location for a French Immersion program in close proximity to St. Conrad CS.
5. The closest TCDSB French Immersion program resides at St. Cyril (Ward 5). There are 189 students living in the north-west quadrant who are registered at St. Cyril, with only 9 of these students living west of highway 400.
6. The establishment of a French Immersion program is governed by Toronto Catholic District School Board Policy S.P. 10. In addition, selection criteria are applied when potential French Immersion start-up sites are being considered. These include [but are not limited to] the following considerations:
  - Utilization rate: less than 75% (current and projected)
  - Capacity: should be around 400-500 for a Dual-track FI program school
  - Current school population
  - Size of school building and property
  - Enrolment to ensure a self-sustaining dual-track program: minimum of 400 students
  - Boundary review completed/in progress
  - Enrolment and utilization rate of neighbouring English program schools
  - Available classrooms: Minimum of 5 classrooms for a fully established FI program (e.g., JK/SK, Gr. 1 / 2; Gr. 3/4; Gr. 5/6; Gr. 7 / 8)
  - Parent demand following consultation (e.g., survey results)

- Space for further expansion due to parent demand
  - Existing specialized programs
  - Existing lease agreements
  - Proximity of other TCDSB English program schools
  - Proximity to FI and Extended French program schools in other Boards
  - Proximity to Secondary school offering a FI program
  - Childcare; before and after school program
  - Sufficient Board budget funds have been allocated to support the implementation of the FI program.
7. Schools in the proximity of St. Conrad were considered based on an initial review of the above French Immersion Criteria. The following three schools were identified for further consultation with each school community: St. Jane Francis, St. Jerome, and St. Robert. (See [Appendix A](#) for a summary review of each school based on the FI Criteria.)

**Review of Data Based on FI Criteria:**

- Although all three schools have a Utilization Rate above 100%, St. Jerome is the lowest at 104% (St. Robert – 116%, St. Jane Francis 105%).
  - Regarding classroom space, there are potentially 3 classrooms at St. Jerome which could be converted to classroom spaces. The ISP Behavioural program has been housed at the school for the last 13 years and may be relocated to a neighbouring school. Because an available classroom existed within the school at St. Jerome, it had been converted to an ESL/Spec. Ed. Room. However, with a fully integrated model, a smaller room in the school could be used to meet the needs of those students who may need to be withdrawn from time to time. In addition, there is an empty portable on the premises at St. Jerome, which could be used should there be a need.
  - St. Jerome, with a student body of 456, has the ideal number of student to begin and sustain a dual track English and French Immersion Program. Both St. Robert and St. Jane Francis have student populations of over 500 students.
  - Lastly, St. Jerome is the closest school to St. Conrad.
8. During the month of January and February, a consultation process took place which consisted of: a CSPC Information Meeting, a Parent Survey, and a

Town Hall Meeting. The following is a summary of the results of the process:

- In January, an initial information/consultation meeting took place with members of the CSPC at each of the three schools identified to discuss the possibility of a French Immersion Program at each respective school site. The meeting was facilitated by the Area Superintendent, the Trustee, and members of the TCDSB Central French Department.

Below is a summary of the findings which reflect the level of CSPC support for a French Immersion program:

<b>School</b>	<b>CSPC Response</b>
St. Jane Frances	Members of the CSPC executive expressed the opinion that they do not believe that French Immersion is an appropriate program for their school community.
St. Jerome	Discussions reflected mixed support for the program among members of the CSPC Executive. After the meeting, the CSPC voted on the matter with results as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 in favour of French immersion</li><li>• 5 opposed to French immersion</li><li>• 3 undecided</li></ul>

St. Robert	<p>It is the opinion of the parent council that a French Immersion program would not have the support of the majority of the entire community. This opinion is based on the consultation process that took place at the January 12, 2016 CSPC meeting and the February 24th, 2016 Town Hall Meeting, as well as the survey results that were received as of February 25th, 2016. At the January 12, 2016 meeting, the parent community that was present expressed many concerns some of which included school population and possibility of over population, school staffing, quality of French instructors, and availability of French Immersion feeder schools for St. Robert students.</p> <p>The CSPC wishes to support the views of the parent community who have expressed the opinion that an Extended French program would be more beneficial, as it would meet the needs of both the existing students and future students. It is also the opinion of the council that further consultation should take place with the community.</p>
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- A parent survey, developed in consultation with the principal and members of each respective CSPC, was distributed to all members of the parent community. Copies of the surveys are found in **Appendix B**.

Survey Results:

School	Incoming JK and SK families - Sept. 2016	Current SK to 8 families
St. Jane Frances	<p><b>12 were in favour</b> 17 surveys returned 71% of surveys returned were positive</p> <p>There are 130 students registered (79 SK, 51 incoming JK). <b>Return rate 13%</b></p>	<p><b>74 were in favour</b> 116 surveys returned 64% of surveys returned were positive</p> <p>Total Number of Families 600 <b>Return rate: 19%</b></p>

St. Jerome	<p><b>32 in favour</b> 34 surveys returned, 94% of surveys returned were positive</p> <p>There are 65 students registered (38 SK, 27 JK).</p> <p><b>Return rate: 52%</b></p>	<p><b>114 were in favour,</b> 145 surveys returned, 79% of surveys returned were positive</p> <p>Total Number of Families 323</p> <p><b>Return rate: 45%</b></p>
St. Robert	<p><b>42 were in favour</b> 58 surveys returned 74% of surveys returned were positive</p> <p>There are 86 students (47 JK, 39 incoming JK) registered for FDK.</p> <p><b>Return rate: 67%</b></p>	<p><b>34 favour FI</b> <b>114 favour Extended</b> <b>126 Core</b> 274 surveys returned</p> <p>Total Number of Students from SK to Grade 8: 543</p> <p><b>Return rate: 50%</b></p>

- A Town Hall, facilitated by the Area Superintendent, took place at each school. Members of the Central French Department as well as administrative and teaching staff from some of our TCDSB French Immersion Schools were invited to provide information and answer questions both in a large group setting and in small group table discussions. The purpose of the Town Hall was two-fold: to provide information and answer questions for the parent community and to collect anecdotal feedback from parents regarding what they saw as possible benefits and concerns regarding implementing a French Immersion program at their school.

School	Feedback from Town Hall
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St. Jane Frances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 families were present; 1 was opposed, 1 left before table discussion, 4 were in favour of a French Immersion program for their children.</li> <li>• Most parents acknowledged the benefits of a French Immersion Program</li> <li>• Concerns regarding: Infrastructure, small JK/SK yard, washroom facilities</li> <li>• Concerns expressed regarding not being able to fill a class</li> <li>• Concern expressed as to whether this was the right school for French Immersion given the other needs</li> </ul>
St. Jerome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 families were present; 10 families had students in JK/SK and were very positive about the implementation of French Immersion at St. Jerome</li> <li>• While families of JK/SK families indicated support for French Immersion, those whose children would not be in JK/SK did not feel that French Immersion should be implemented at St. Jerome.</li> <li>• Some parents indicated concern with increased enrolment at their school because of demand from parents outside of the area.</li> <li>• Concern expressed with how an FI program would impact the ESL community.</li> <li>• Benefit – learning another language opens up doors to the future.</li> <li>• Fear of students being left behind if they do not experience success early on.</li> <li>• Concerned with the potential for a two-tiered system.</li> <li>• Expressed that everyone should be bilingual in Canada.</li> </ul>
St. Robert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 families were present; 9 families had students in JK/SK, of which four were in favour of FI in JK/SK.</li> <li>• While some families supported FI, several expressed a concern with a program that required</li> </ul>

	<p>students to study in French for more than 50% of the time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some were concerned with student falling behind in Math and Science.</li> <li>• Some were concerned with the school being able to maintain the dual tracks over the years.</li> <li>• Several were concerned about potential overcrowding by having students from out of the area registering in the program should there be less than desirable interest in the program from those in area.</li> <li>• Those with children in grade 1 to 8 indicated a strong preference for an Extended French Program to begin as early as September 2016 and possibly consider French Immersion at a later date.</li> <li>• Several parents indicated that they spoke French as a result of studying the language in school.</li> </ul>
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9. As a result of the analysis of the consultation data collected, it appears that there is greater parent support for a French Immersion program at St. Jerome. In addition, St. Jerome is the closest school to St. Conrad and families from St. Jane Francis will also be able to access the program at St. Jerome. Results from the St. Robert community indicated some interest in exploring a French Immersion Program. However, more parents were interested in Extended French. Support for French Immersion, based on the community consultation, was the lowest at St. Jane Francis. The following is the recommended ranking for the three schools in the north-west quadrant being considered for French Immersion:

- St. Jerome
- St. Robert
- St. Jane Francis

## E. VISION

VISION	PRINCIPLES	GOALS
To create equitable learning environments for	All students in TCDSB	To introduce a

VISION	PRINCIPLES	GOALS
all students we will be providing equal access to learning and technology and strive to close the opportunity gap so that the most vulnerable students achieve their full potential.	schools across the city will have equitable access to all programs.	French Immersion Program in the north-west quadrant of the city where none currently exists.

**F. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. Continue to dialogue with the St. Jerome school community to plan a smooth implementation of French Immersion in September 2017.
2. Staff to continue to monitor interest in the program over the years.

**G. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

1. That school staff begin the process of implementing a plan to place JK/SK students of interested families in the French Immersion program to begin at St. Jerome in September 2017. The plan is to open one French Immersion class with the possibility of a second in future years based on community demand.

**H. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the board approve the implementation of French Immersion at St. Jerome in September 2017.
2. That the board consider the implementation of an Extended French for St. Robert as part of our long term accommodation plan.