



GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

TO: Brenda Blancher, Director of Education & Secretary

FROM: Jamie Gunn, Superintendent of Business & Treasurer

RE: **French Immersion Program Accommodation Update**

DATE: September 12, 2016

Recommended Action: It was moved by _____ Seconded by _____ THAT the Grand Erie District School Board receive the French Immersion Program Accommodation Update as information.

Background:

The Board has recognized accommodation pressures from the growth in French Immersion (FI) program enrolment and completed a consultation through the Elementary French Immersion Consultation Ad Hoc Committee in the spring of 2016. The results of the consultation were reported to the Board in June 2016 which included a number of options for consideration.

Accommodation options presented and discussed during the consultation process were:

1. Retain Ecole Fairview once Coronation is complete.
2. Complete an Accommodation Review of North Brantford Schools to consolidate regular program and free up a third single track French Immersion site.
3. Create a single track French Immersion Middle School at the Ecole Fairview site
4. Cap intake into the French Immersion program.

Discussion of Accommodation Options:

Option 1 – Retain Ecole Fairview as a third single track FI site.

Grants to fund the operations, maintenance and renewal of schools is provided based on actual enrolment. Top up funding was formerly available to support under capacity schools in the past but this line of funding will be fully phased out for the 2017-18 school year. Grants for school administrative staff for an additional school (principal, vice principal and clerical) would only be available if the ministry approved the re-establishment of the Ecole Fairview campus as a stand-alone school. A more likely scenario would be the approval of a twinning of the Ecole Fairview campus with Ecole Confederation. The financial implications of this option are set out in the table below. Based on the type of approval (stand alone or twinned) the costs to keep Ecole Fairview open and operating would be between \$220,028 and \$380,812 annually. In addition, the deferred and future renewal need would have to be addressed sometime in the future.

Given the reductions to facility staff recently implemented to balance the loss of top up facilities funding, it would be counter intuitive to plan to add more operating cost.

Operating costs to open / keep open an additional school building*(based on Ecole Fairview)*

		<i>Cost if not twinned</i>	<i>Cost if twinned</i>
Principal/Vice Principal	Offset by School Foundation Grant for all schools over 150 enrolment **	** Assumes that the school is recognized as an additional school for grant by the Ministry and not twinned with another existing school	115,661
Secretary	Offset by School Foundation Grant for all schools **		45,123
Teaching Staff	Staffing not dependent on number of schools.	0	0

Facility Operating Costs

Hydro	43,353	43,353
Water/Sewer	4,491	4,491
Heat	4,077	4,077
Internet	6,816	6,816
Telephone	1,180	1,180
Property Insurance	1,743	1,743
Snow Removal	8,467	8,467
Grass & Landscaping	1,200	1,200

Custodial Supplies	6,807	6,807
Custodial Salary & Benefits	98,748	98,748

Annual Maintenance	43,146	43,146
Security Monitoring & other montly charges		
Total Annual Costs	220,028	380,812

Building Renewal

Current Renewal Backlog	1,819,499	1,819,499
5 Year Renewal Need	2,257,696	2,257,696

Option 2 - Complete an Accommodation Review of North Brantford Schools to consolidate regular program and free up a third single track French Immersion site.

This option will not be popular with the school communities that would be involved in such an accommodation review. These school communities would see their children shifted to another neighbourhood school and have their home school re-populated by FI students bussed from across town to fill the school. Unpopularity aside, the option does recognize that Grand Erie's FI programs are largely being populated by shifting demand from regular program to FI program. Addressing the accommodation needs by shifting pupil spaces assigned to regular program over to FI program space does not add to the total inventory of school and does not have the effect of adding costs that Option 1 above does.

The Board has commissioned a review of enrolment and accommodation to be completed by Watson & Associates and presented to Board this fall. Once the Board has received the report and the Quality Accommodations Committee has had the opportunity to deliberate and make recommendations to the Board based on the Watson report, the possible areas for consolidation and conversion of program space can be considered.

Senior administration would not recommend the initiation of any new Accommodation Reviews until the Watson & Associates Report has been received, reviewed and the Quality Accommodations committee has reported to the Board with its recommendations based on the new projections.

Option 3 - Create a single track French Immersion Middle School at the Ecole Fairview site

The middle school concept may be something for the Board to consider, however, similar to Option 1, this option is suggesting that the Board open an additional school to create more accommodation space for FI. The same financial concerns expressed for Option 1 apply here. Senior Administration do not recommend that an additional school be opened up thereby incurring additional costs that would have to be balanced by reduced program/services somewhere else.

Option 4 - Cap intake into the French Immersion program

Other Boards in the province employ caps to their FI and other programs of choice. Carefully deployed caps and a fair and open system of allotting available openings to applicants is an effective way to ensure that the program does not face overcrowding of the space assigned. Because Grand Erie accepted all applicants to the FI program prior to the 2016-17 school year, initial caps will be smaller to bring the total enrolment in line with existing accommodation space. Over the longer term, caps should be considered to enrol an even number of students per grade. For example a school with 350 pupil spaces assigned to the JK-Gr8 FI program, should only accept 35 new students into JK/SK each year to maintain the enrolment within the assigned accommodation space. The table attached in **Appendix A** demonstrates how capped intake would bring the enrolment at Ecole Confederation in line with school capacity.

Historic attrition rates from grade to grade have been incorporated into the model above. The reduction in caps is in anticipation that additional FI accommodation would be coming on line in future years as accommodation reviews are completed with a goal to reducing reliance on portable classrooms to address long term enrolment needs.

Should new program space be identified by future accommodation reviews as suggested in Option 2 above, it will still be important to employ caps at intake otherwise the program runs the risk of filling the new space beyond the available capacity. Caps should be established at the rate of $x/\text{total accommodation}$ where "x" is the number of grades to be provided in the fully implemented program. For example, if 240 pupil places were assigned to the FI program from school A following an accommodation review to serve JK to Grade 4, then the cap of 40 (6 grades/ 240 spaces) would be established for new students. In this example the space would be underutilized until the new program were fully implemented, however this would be necessary to ensure that adequate space is available when the program reaches the grade 4 level.

Senior administration recommends that caps be established each year prior to JK registration for all FI programs and that caps for any new program space consider the space that will be required for full implementation of the new planned FI program.

Other Considerations:

The consultation committee heard many comments about grandfathering of students when changing assigned boundaries and catchment areas for existing FI programs. Many families have children in multiple grades in FI programs who depend on an older sibling to ensure safe arrival at school and return home. A strong consideration to grandfather existing students at their current assigned school was suggested by the committee. Doing so may cause additional transportation routing to honour the request to continue to attend after the catchment area has been amended. Any grandfathering should be considered as a temporary measure to accommodate existing attendance patterns and as such, should be in place for no more than 9 years following the change in boundaries. This timing would permit current out of area students time to complete grade 8. Senior administration recognizes the strain change in catchment areas can put on families and recommends that grandfathering be strongly considered where possible with a sunset date on the process.

Many concerns about the number of available, qualified teaching staff were also expressed by the committee and must be taken into account as additional FI program accommodation is considered.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Gunn
Superintendent of Business & Treasurer

Ecole Fairview/Confederation Enrolment Summary

Enrolment History

Year	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
2011	63	56	59	69	60	30	38	50	26	23	474
2012	75	59	60	53	66	59	25	37	48	25	507
2013	68	78	56	51	49	64	59	24	39	47	535
2014	72	77	81	57	47	43	63	58	21	40	559
2015	82	72	81	76	58	46	41	63	58	21	598

Projected Enrolment

Year	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
2016	70	84	74	75	73	55	43	40	61	58	633
2017	65	72	86	69	72	70	52	42	39	61	628
2018	60	67	74	80	66	69	66	51	41	39	613
2019	55	62	69	69	76	63	65	65	50	41	615
2020	50	56	64	64	66	72	59	64	63	50	608
2021	50	51	58	59	61	63	68	58	62	62	592
2022	50	51	52	54	56	58	59	67	56	62	565
2023	55	51	52	48	52	53	55	58	65	56	545
2024	55	56	52	48	46	50	50	54	56	64	531

Portables Needed	Capacity w/portables
4	639
4	639
3	616
3	616
3	616
2	593
1	570
0	547
0	547

School Capacity 547 at redeveloped Coronation site