



GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

TO: Trustees of the Grand Erie District School Board

FROM: Brenda Blancher, Director of Education

RE: **Report of the Elementary French Immersion Consultation Committee**

DATE: June 13, 2016

Recommended Action: Moved by _____ Seconded by _____
 THAT the Grand Erie District School Board receive the Report of the Elementary French Immersion Consultation Committee as information.

Recommended Action: Moved by _____ Seconded by _____
 THAT the Grand Erie District School Board disband the Elementary French Immersion Consultation Committee.

Background

The Elementary French Immersion Consultation Ad Hoc Committee was established to allow for targeted consultation around French Immersion enrolment pressures in Grand Erie. As stated in the approved terms of reference, the committee met over four months to:

- (i) review the French Immersion enrolment pressures existing in single-track and dual-track schools in Grand Erie
- (ii) review proposed plans and offer input to Board staff
- (iii) reflect the opinions and interests of the groups represented by the members of the committee
- (iv) report back to the stakeholders they represent

Meeting notes were shared with committee members and all schools involved. At each meeting the committee members shared input from their communities. Input and options are included in this report and will be taken into consideration as the Senior Administration team develops a French Immersion accommodation plan for Trustee approval in the fall of 2016.

Committee Membership

Brenda Blancher – Committee Chair
 Greg Anderson – Trustee
 Carol Ann Sloat – Trustee
 Linda De Vos – Superintendent of Education
 Jamie Gunn – Superintendent of Education
 Marie-Pierre L'Arrivee – FSL Teacher Consultant
 Andrea Smith – Principal, École Fairview
 Tom Fitzsimmons – Principal, Caledonia Centennial

Stephanie Gibbon – Teacher, École Dufferin
Alicia Corcoran – Teacher, Caledonia Centennial
Nancy D’Aurora – ETFO
Greg Baetz – Parent, École Fairview
Dawn Russell – Parent, École Fairview
Kathleen Paddock-Wilde – Parent, École Fairview
Gord McCreary – Parent, École Dufferin
Chris Greenlaw – Parent, École Dufferin
Candace Young – Parent, École Dufferin
Nadine Morrison – Parent, Caledonia Centennial
Tara Beerepoot – Parent, Walsh Public
Laura Reid – Parent, Burford District Elementary
Joan Faux – Parent, Paris Central
Kim Dawdy – Canadian Parents for French

Valerie Slawich – Recording Secretary

Meeting Dates

February 16, 2016
March 30, 2016
April 28, 2016
May 17, 2016

Data Presented to the Committee

1. Grand Erie Enrolment Trend and French Immersion
2. Grand Erie French Immersion Enrolment and Accommodation
3. Projected English and French enrolments for Paris Central
 - a chart was provided showing the enrolment forecasts for Paris and Burford showing regular and FI program forecasts by grade from 2016 – 2024 following Administration’s recommendation to move the Grade 6-8 FI program from Burford to Paris beginning in 2016
4. Review of Enrolment Projections re: Attrition
5. Enrolment and Capacity by School as of October 30, 2015
 - A report detailing Enrolment vs. Capacity by School as at October 30, 2015 was shared
6. Costs of Keeping an Additional FI School Open
 - A sample analysis was provided based on École Fairview. Sky Acres is presently twinned with École Fairview.
 - Twinned school costs do not generate grants for a second principal or secretary, and would therefore incur the extra costs of \$115,661 and \$45,123. The chart includes all overhead costs to keep an additional building open. It also considers the predetermined building renewal needs for École Fairview at \$1.8 million currently, and \$2.2 million within 5 years.
7. French Immersion Attrition Rates
 - French Immersion attrition rates demonstrate that 100 students in JK ends up being 90 students by grade 8
8. Overview of Moving Burford DES regular program Grades 6 – 8 to Paris Central
9. Cohort of JK/SK at Paris Central

Information Shared at Committee Meetings

1. Options to manage FI immersion growth from Fall 2015 presentations.
2. Other Options Discussed
 - a. Cap enrolment of new registrations
 - b. Modify or eliminate transportation provided for FI program
 - c. Retain École Fairview once Coronation is completed
 - d. Shift program space currently allocated to serve regular program to new FI program space
3. Action Plan for September 2016
 - a. The Board approved the expansion of Secondary French Immersion Programming with the implementation of a Grade 9 FI Program at North Park Collegiate for September 2016.
 - b. Enrolment Caps were set to limit JK/SK enrolment at existing elementary FI programs for September 2016 registrations. Siblings of current FI students were admitted, the balance of enrolments will be admitted.
 - c. Further consultation through this committee will inform long term plans for the management of French Immersion growth in Grand Erie. Recommendations will come to the Board for consideration in September 2016.
4. FSL Staffing – Process that the Human Resources Department goes through to recruit teachers for FSL and French Immersion and challenges faced in recruiting staff for these programs.
5. FSL Funding - FI students generate an additional \$374.22 above the regular per pupil grant. Our projected enrolment next year would generate \$605,000, but our expenses would exceed this at \$856,000. FI transportation is a large part of these costs.

Input and Options from the Committee

The Terms of Reference for this committee under “Statement of Purpose and Responsibilities” lists that committee members will *review proposed plans and offer input to Board staff* and options and input are listed below:

1. The Committee would like to see an improvement in the way information is communicated to parents.
2. A suggestion was put forward recommending that the Board establish a French Immersion Advisory Committee after a decision is made on French Immersion accommodation in the fall in order to monitor the plan.
3. Through members on the Committee, families have indicated that no matter what decision is made for French Immersion accommodation they would still like to see grandfathering stay in place with the understanding that there may have to be a set number of years for this to stay in place and there will be an expiry date.
4. A cap on French Immersion enrolment should be avoided.
5. If the decision is made to start a dual-track French Immersion program at Paris Central, the program should start in JK/SK rather than Grade 6 as recommended in the report of the Brant North Accommodation Review Committee.

6. Middle School Proposal – Presented by Parents representing École Dufferin – attached as Appendix B
7. ARC Proposal for North Brantford – Presented by Parents representing École Fairview – attached as Appendix C
8. Following some decisions coming out of the Upper Grand District School Board's discussion on French Immersion, it was suggested that the Grand Erie Trustees send a similar request to OPSBA. The Upper Grand request is as follows, asking OPSBA "to advocate on behalf of English public school boards for: a comprehensive provincial review of FSL instructional opportunities, qualified French teacher availability, and current funding levels in an effort to alleviate the significant accommodation pressures and more accurately reflect the current reality of parent/guardian choice in a plurilingual society."

Next Steps

Senior Administration will bring a recommendation on French Immersion accommodation forward for Board consideration in the fall of 2016.

Appendices

Committee Q and A and Comments – Appendix A

Middle School Proposal – Appendix B

Proposal for French Immersion in North Brantford – Appendix C

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Blancher
Director of Education

Appendix A

Questions, Answers and Comments from French Immersion Consultation Committee Meetings

FSL Staffing

(Q) – Do teachers lose seniority if moving from one board to another?

(A) – Teachers can be on multiple supply lists at different boards and carry separate seniority lists with those boards.

(Q) – Do you have to take the five most senior applicants?

(A) – No, qualified in French first, and they have to have applied. Once on an LTO list, teachers can apply for LTO positions, then they need to meet more requirements to apply for permanent positions.

(Q) – Do teachers with 20+ years of seniority from outside of GEDSB follow the same process?

(A) – Candidates can apply to be interviewed to get on an LTO list without working on an occasional list for elementary only, not for secondary. We can bypass the process if we don't have any internal qualified candidates.

(Q) – When teachers move from elementary to secondary or vice versa, do they lose seniority?

(A) – Yes

(Q) – How many teachers in our board have the French qualifications that are not teaching French?

(A) – Not sure of numbers off hand, but yes there are a fair number of teachers who choose not to teach French, and we cannot force them to do so. French teachers are hired by the principal as other teachers. It allows principals to be able move teachers out of French into regular classroom.

(Q) – Is there a minimum time commitment that teachers have to stay in French?

(A) – No, they can apply for any position

(Q) – how far do you search outside of GEDSB? Province? Country?

(A) – We post on Apply to Education, as anyone wanting to teach in Ontario will be looking at this site. It's supply and demand. If we don't get a good group of respondents, then we look outside of Ontario. Years ago we did hire teachers from Quebec but it was not successful. The culture change seemed too difficult for them and we were unable to retain those teachers. Nipissing has a viable French program so we do post there as well for French teachers.

(Q) – Is there an active recruitment drive?

(A) – We used to have job fairs at universities, but with Reg'n 274 it made the concept redundant. We can accept applications but we have to stick to Reg'n 274.

French Immersion Funding

(Q) – Do you get extra funding for transportation for FI?

(A) – No, they look at what was provided the previous year and what the rate of enrolment was.

(Q) – In the model of moving the Grade 6 to 8 FI students from Burford to Paris Central, is there the possibility of looking at leaving the 12 students (currently in Grade 5) to finish up and graduate from Burford?

(A) – Often when we consolidate, we leave grades 7&8 behind to graduate from their original school. These tables show the numbers that the software program calculates when we ask it to move certain groups of students or grades. Then we look at the numbers through a human lens.

(Q) – Regarding the difference between funding – if the 32 students on the wait list (March 30 Minutes section 3, b, vi) do not get in FI, would we lose the funding? JK to grade 12 in FI compared to core French is \$3200/student over 12 years. Wouldn't that number would add up?

(A) – Our cap was set as a temporary solution while we decide what we're doing. Yes, we'd have more money but then we'd need to hire more staff and other resources. The cost for FI students for transportation is higher than the cost of students in core French

General Questions

(Q) Can we have an ARC for FI?

(A) – Trustee Sloat explained that FI is not a school, it is a program of choice

(Q) – Does FI have to be offered?

(A)– Although FI does not have to be offered as it is an optional program, it would be not make good sense to eliminate it now as it is an established program

(A)- We could look at the FI transportation costs, but ~~that~~ eliminating transportation to the FI program would not be a good decision

(Q) - If it is decided that moving the 12 Burford students to Paris Central is not an option, does that leaves Paris Central under capacity for another year?

(A)The Brant north ARC is completed, but a decision has not been made yet by trustees.

(A)- We have an FI program at BCI right now, but it is limited

(A)– Principal Smith also explained that FI Principals look at our grades 7 and 8 and look to secondary program to see what is being offered when deciding which courses will be taught in French. She also reminded the group that currently Grade 3 EQAO Math can be completed in French or English but grade 6 EQAO Math is available in English only, not French.

Comments and Q and A's from Final Committee Meeting

(C) It is the choice of the parent(s) to place their child on a long bus ride to their FI program

(C) The 'Middle School' Proposal allows for the inclusion of Burford students that would migrate along with other single track FI students; could share resources for music and phys-ed

(C) This idea was rejected by the Burford parents as they are not interested in bussing their children to Brantford

(C) The number of students that need accommodation in Burford are relatively small compared to the larger demographic areas

(C) The parents of the cohort in Burford that have the 12 students are very concerned

(C) The way in which information is disseminated to parents needs to be improved; would like this included in the report to board

(C) Some parents think that the cap and grandfathering will continue and haven't been paying attention to what may happen

(Q) Of the 2 options presented, what happens if the trustees don't like either one? Could they decide to cap or cancel transportation?

(A) Yes, they will look at all of the information and options and will have many discussions before making a decision. It will be a recommendation based on the information available.

(Q) Could we come up with other recommendations, such as we do not want any caps? Or create a list of 'must haves'?

(Q) Does this committee want the cap to end?

(A) it's not ideal as we want to accommodate FI growth but it is strained by so many limitations

(C) Up until 2011 the board had 2 single track schools with 700 FI; increased gradually and decided to expand; this created greater pressures. If we continue to expand the FI program, we have to cannibalize other schools. Any of these options will create the same situation in these other areas. It is a politically charged decision. Ultimately the board has to make the decision on where we are going to go. We added portables and port-a-paks but we can't keep doing it that. If we are going to make the FI program bigger then we have to close English speaking schools. Dufferin was a mothball schools so it was easy to fill it with a FI program. We have a Director sitting at this table and we are very fortunate to have her so passionately involved to work on this committee.

(C) Any decision is going to make some angry but I want to stress again that the only growth is in the FI program

(C) If you want to look at a solution – leave Fairview school open and make it FI. It will buy 8-10 years but it will be very expensive and we are not funded for that. I can't see that being successful.

(C) Can you do this and do an ARC at the same time? Close a school under capacity?

(C) Do you ever consider that when a new school is built to make it an FI school?

(A) No, The MoE is not funding schools for special programs

(C) Is there agreement around table that you would prefer to avoid a cap?

A) Our first choice is to avoid a cap if things get done to allow the growth. The fallback preference would be a cap

(C) We must think of the greater good of all students

(C) Our preference is to grow the program

(C) Problem based on the numbers is the perception of taking some students to save Paris Central vs. managing the FI; moving all of FI, now the schools are over capacity; we are constantly trying to shove a solution in where one school can be closed to accommodate this without having another school suffer.

(C) No matter what the trustees decide, it will upset some

(A) we can't grow a program where we cannot staff it; school boards around us are also struggling

(C) We could stop transportation which would save the board thousands of dollars; parents may choose differently if transportation is not provided

(C) The response from Burford parents would be that the students have to be bussed no matter what

(C) We could look at central bus stops for FI only

(Q) What would be the impact?

(A) This would reduce the demand for the FI program; pressures would diminish; schools wouldn't be over capacity; could remove caps; wouldn't have to change boundaries

(C) We can only build a program with the space that we currently have

(C) Does this statement reflect your must haves: "avoid cap if possible but would entertain a cap to avoid major disruption"? Burford would stand behind it; Dufferin is not happy with that

(C) The trustees will need courage to take a risk when making their decision

(C) From the Canadian Parents for French position, GEDSB is not at the average for FI compared to English in the province; the average is much higher than what we have so there is need for growth

(C) It is sad that we are sitting here having a hard time accommodating something that parents want

(C) It would be nice if the Grand Erie could be the Board that others looked up to for solving this problem effectively

(Q) "a cap should be avoided"?

(C) Either wipe out transportation so everything stays the same; or close a school and open a middle school; the MoE framed it that we have to have JK and SK in every school, not necessarily FI for JK/SK at schools. We could wait until grade 1 to offer FI

(C) If we don't start FI in JK/SK then there won't be any room at grade 1; students would have to start JK/SK at their home school then apply for FI grade 1

(C) Have you thought about recruitment? Asking for the city and county to help with recruiting and getting the municipalities on board with promoting the need for FI teachers?

(C) Tillsonburg is actively recruiting people to move to their community; our community needs to do same for FI program and teachers

(C) FSL qualifications include standards of fluency, it's very difficult to pick up as an adult

(C) Do we know of the teaching programs being offered now, how many new grads will have the qualifications to teach FI?

(A) We'd have to ask the various universities

(A) Some boards are opting to offer FSL in grade 1 to help students be more comfortable with language

(C) Qualified French teachers spent ¼ day doing primary prep; having to deliver prep to primary teachers, not using their skills. There are skilled teachers not teaching French in schools

(Q) Why can't we hire English teachers to do prep and let qualified teachers teach French?

(A) We could have the same argument for phys-ed and art specialists

(C) Grandfathering is not fair to parents who haven't had children yet

(Q) If middle school is viable, would we still need to look at other forms of caps?

(A) If we open another FI school, we have to understand that the capacity is capacity and need to live within that space only. We have to live within the confines of that building which may mean new caps.

(C) I'd like to recommend a French Immersion Advisory Committee after the decision to keep tabs on what will happen afterwards

(A) The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is statutory; the Native Advisory Committee (NAC) is mandated by federal government. There is no legislation that we need an FSL committee; Supervisory Officer workload would also need to be considered.

(C) It could be an informal group

(C) In 10 years this could be a secondary problem; this will be an ongoing concern

(A) Yes, but our pressure right now is elementary

(Q) How do trustees get assigned to committees?

(A) We have a Striking Committee that decides in the fall, then when the need for Ad Hoc Committees occur throughout the year we ask trustees to represent.

(Q) I still have a question around grandfathering – some families have indicated that no matter what outcome, the opportunity to grandfather existing families is paramount. If grandfathering continues, could it be more specific and include 'x' number of years?

(A) Yes, this can be added as a recommendation in the report

Proposal of a ‘Middle School Option’ to the Ad Hoc Committee on French Immersion by the parent representatives of École Dufferin

18 May 2016

Purpose

1. The purpose of this document is to outline the proposal for a Middle School Option by the Parent Representatives of École Dufferin for the Ad Hoc Committee on French Immersion.

This Middle School proposal was completed independently by the parent representatives of École Dufferin for the Ad Hoc Committee on French Immersion and the Trustees of the Grand Erie District School Board. The contents of this proposal do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the staff or administration at École Dufferin, or those of the Grand Erie District School Board. This report was completed based on consultation with parents and guardians of children at École Dufferin and those at other schools within the GEDSB.

Middle School Proposal:

2. The three Parent Representatives from École Dufferin are proposing a Middle School option for grades 6, 7, and 8 for all of the children within both the Dufferin and Fairview/Coronation catchments.
3. École Dufferin currently has one grade 5/6 split, one 6/7 split, a grade 7/8 split, and one dedicated grade 8 class.
4. École Fairview currently has three dedicated grade 6 classes, two dedicated grade 7 classes, and one dedicated grade 8 class.
5. Using current numbers, the proposed Middle School would end up with four grade 6 classes, three grade 7 classes, and two grade 8 classes for a total of nine (9) classes totalling 270 students (an overestimate of 30 children per class) with a maximum enrolment of 400 students.
6. As a result, four (4) classrooms at École Dufferin and six (6) classes at École Fairview would be freed-up for other needs.
7. We propose to maintain the current École Fairview site after the Coronation School is opened, which would still be able to sustain a maximum enrolment number even without the six-classroom port-a-pack that will be transferred to the Coronation site.

8. Funding to keep the École Fairview site open can be made available as a result of up to three planned school closures elsewhere in the GEDSB (such as Paris).
9. Facility operating costs for keeping the École Fairview site open total \$220,028 per year, which would be paid for by the GEDSB.
10. Teacher salaries and expenses are paid for by the Ministry of Education.
11. Should the Ministry of Education decide that the Middle School at the Fairview site be twinned with one of the existing FI elementary schools, the GEDSB would be required to shoulder the burden of administrative expenses and salaries totalling \$170,000 per year.
12. Benefits of the Middle School option include:
 - i. No need for boundary changes to the catchments of either École Dufferin or École Fairview;
 - ii. Release of pressures concerning classroom space at both elementary schools;
 - iii. Teachers for grades 6-8 at École Dufferin and École Fairview would follow students to new location with no need to hire additional staff;
 - iv. Consolidation of split classes into dedicated classes could free up a teacher for reassignment with primary or junior level class at École Dufferin or École Fairview, which would mitigate the need to hire new staff and is a more effective use of personnel;
 - v. Although family groups may be separated, the challenges associated with splitting children clustered in the primary and junior levels are avoided as those in grades 6-8 are more independent and could better handle bussing/walking and/or being home earlier as latch-key kids; and
 - vi. Peer-reviewed studies on Middle School academic outcomes reveal that this option is neither a hindrance nor a benefit for children in grades 6-8, but do say that their incorporation into High School is generally easier than children coming from a K-8 environment.
13. Detractors of the Middle School option include:
 - i. Children from École Dufferin would lose access to two programmes from which they currently benefit:
 - ii. A music and arts programme as a result of a dedicated teacher (Mme. Coretti); and
 - iii. A dedicated gym and physical fitness teacher (M. Kranenburg).
 - a. *This issue could be mitigated by recruitment of comparable staff by the School Board. If accomplished, a larger number of children could benefit from the music/arts education beyond that which is currently available.*

- iv. Children attending the Middle School would be coming from two separate schools for three years (grades 6-8) only to be separated once more in grade 9 as a result of the second High School FI programme at North Park Collegiate, which covers the École Fairview catchment;
 - a. *Concerning the changing of schools, peer-reviewed studies indicate that this process is generally more detrimental to younger children, particularly in the primary grade levels. Some children may end up crossing the catchment areas as enrolment pressures are eased with the implementation of the North Park Collegiate FI programme at which point the Middle School option would provide these kids with peer connections from grade 9 onward.*
 - v. Splitting of older siblings with associated transportation challenges;
 - a. *We view this as less of a detractor than it may seem. As mentioned above although family groups may be separated, the challenges associated with splitting children clustered in the primary and junior levels are avoided as those in grades 6-8 are more independent and could better handle bussing/ walking and/or being home earlier as latch-key kids.*
 - vi. Moving the children in grades 6-8 would result in a loss of in-school leadership assignments, such as ‘bus-buddies’;
 - a. *Assigning these tasks to children in grades 4 or 5 provides them with the opportunity for leadership roles and allows the older children to encounter more age-appropriate challenges.*
14. Other possible issues concerning the Middle School option with possible solutions:
- i. Middle Schools are something that school boards are getting away from in favour of the K-8 model.
 - a. *Yes, this is largely true. However the rationale for this change is largely rooted in a series of studies completed in the late 1980s and early 1990s that examined inner-city Middle Schools in the boroughs of New York City, and were quantitative in nature. Specifically, these studies focused more on bettering the outcomes for standardized test scores which in turn determined the level funding of funding each school would receive. The authors of these studies argues that a K-8 model would improve test scores and increase funding. In Ontario, children complete a total of four standardized tests between JK and grade 12 as part of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) mandate. By comparison, children in the United States can spend between 20-50 hours per year taking standardized tests. As a result, the*

reasoning behind moving toward a K-8 model is incompatible with the Canadian educational system and not applicable when assessing the merits or detractors of Middle Schools in Ontario.

- ii. Without the close contact of younger children in the K-8 school, those in grades 6-8 put into a Middle School will become less kind or empathetic.
 - a. *Our education system is heavily invested in the development of ‘soft skills’, which concern a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social graces that make someone a good employee and compatible to work with. One of the most important of these is empathy. Programs like “Roots of Empathy”, “Kelso’s Choices”, and other significant changes to the curriculum have done much to change attitudes of children toward one another and helped to instil among them a sense of empathetic reasoning when faced with a difficult situation. We believe that these positive changes and the high level of awareness about bullying and marginalized groups will do much to affect the way in which Middle School-aged kids interact with one another. As a result, the Middle School experience our children will have is likely to be drastically different than that of their parents.*
- iii. A Middle School option won’t work on account of the large grouping of ‘hormone-laden teens’ and the resulting difficulties this brings.
 - a. *There is absolutely no evidence within the literature and studies on Middle Schools to support this theory.*
- iv. If a Middle School option is possible, why not just make it a third K-8 school instead?
 - a. *A third K-8 school in Brantford would be an ideal option, however the GEDSB hasn’t the finances to fund such an initiative because total enrolment numbers are not growing. Despite increased demand for FI, a third K-8 FI school is not feasible given the current funding model, which is set by the Ministry of Education. The hiring of more FI-qualified teachers would be required for the K-8 school than a Middle School option, which is difficult given the current human resources problems facing the GEDSB. Moreover, a third K-8 school would necessitate a change in boundaries, which would recreate the same problems that surfaced in the fall of 2015 concerning family separation and grandfathering of children. Essentially, a third K-8 FI school creates more problems than it solves in both the short and long term.*

- v. What about the children attending the rural schools? Would a Middle School option benefit those families in any way?
 - a. *It may be possible to include the small numbers of children from the Burford school in this Middle School option, rather than sending them to Paris Central. The suggested location of the current Fairview site is essentially equidistant to Burford as is Paris Central. An in-city Middle School could provide a more cosmopolitan and diverse experience for the rural children and allow space for the Paris Central dual-track program to grow on its own, accommodating growth in the new Rest Acres Road subdivisions.*

15. The Middle School option, the enrolment cap, and grandfathering:

- i. The enrolment cap for the 2017-2018 school year was put in place as a *temporary* option to grandfather siblings of children currently enrolled in the French Immersion program and to defer any decision making on the future of FI within the GEDSB. It was under these auspices that the Ad Hoc Committee was formed;
- ii. The purpose of the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee is to consult parents and stakeholders while at the same time looking for more permanent solutions to deal with rapid French Immersion growth across the school board, including overcrowding in Brantford and at Dufferin;
- iii. The parent representatives from Dufferin think that the Middle School option addresses numerous issues caused by increased demand and overcrowding, frees up some space for limited growth. The Middle School option is on balance, the least disruptive option for families and children that is also the most affordable and feasible for the GEDSB. It is not a panacea for French Immersion, but does provide a 5-8 year window to allow for the growth of the student enrolment through an increase in the general population;
- iv. If a solution can not be found, or agreed upon, it is very likely that the enrolment cap may become a *permanent* fixture of French Immersion within the GEDSB and that grandfathering of students will no longer be accommodated; and
- v. Under this proposal, siblings of students currently enrolled will be grandfathered:
 - a. Children who currently reside out-of-area can remain, although no others can be enrolled for the 2016-2017 year onward; and

- b. The exception to this is for siblings of students currently enrolled on or before the start of the 2017-2018 year and born before 1 Jan 2016.
- vi. As already mentioned, funding from the Ministry will not increase without higher enrolment numbers despite increased demand for FI. Until changes are made to the funding model and hiring procedures at the Provincial Level, a “cap” of sorts must always remain in place. The goal is to raise the cap as much as possible:
- a. With the elementary spaces freed-up by the Middle-School option, access to FI cannot be unlimited for the larger cohorts of students arriving at the JK/SK-Grade 1 level will need to be accommodated throughout their progression through Elementary School and matriculation into the Middle School;
 - b. A ‘structural cap’, which is the maximum number of students that a school can physically accommodate within its walls, will always have to remain in place. For example, if the Middle School option frees up several classrooms at both elementary schools, an additional two classes at each school could be made available to take JK students, resulting in an increase of up to 60 children; and
 - c. Even with attrition throughout the primary and junior levels, these additional 30 students per school will require accommodation and space. Therefore, although the ‘temporary cap’ may be lifted, a ‘structural cap’ may be required to properly manage the FI programme until additional Provincial funding is made available.

16. Stretching resources with an English teacher:

- i. One proposal to free-up teacher resources would be the hiring of a dedicated English teacher for each of the city schools, as well as the Middle School. This would free-up as much as three FI-qualified teachers to other duties within the FI curriculum, and provide a strong English language opportunity for our children;
- ii. It would be advantageous if these individuals had a teachable in Core French, as it would enable them to conduct their homeroom class responsibilities in French;
- iii. A further advantage of an English teacher is the possibility of that individual having a teachable in music/arts or physical education. This would enable the children at the Middle School and/or Fairview/Coronation schools to avail themselves of such an opportunity;

- iv. We suggest that having a single English homeroom in each school is not necessarily a disadvantage given that the majority of communication conducted during this time of day is done largely in English anyway; and
- v. This suggestion is presented as a means of stretching available resources in consideration of the difficulties faced by the GEDSB when it comes to recruitment and retention of FI-qualified teachers.

17. Amplifying information:

- i. The financial viability of this proposal is dependent on the outcome of other Accommodation Review Processes (ARC) taking place throughout the GEDSB.
 - a. *The financial needs of city schools are intertwined with those in the county for the GEDSB represents schools in the City of Brantford, the County of Brant, County of Haldimand, and the County of Norfolk. As such, funding to maintain or initiate a program such as a Middle School within the City of Brantford requires a reallocation of resources elsewhere in the Board. In other words, the closure of a school that is operating at low capacity, is required in order to fund the Middle School option.*
- ii. The process of closing an English-stream school for a French Immersion school is not a popular decision and will likely be resisted by the parent body of the targeted school.
 - a. *However, because of declining enrolment and low school usage in certain areas both within the City of Brantford and within the counties the need to streamline facility usage and reallocate expenses is an inevitability.*
 - b. *Because the GEDSB Board faces considerable opposition and emotional arguments from stakeholders concerning the closure or amalgamation of a school, we recommend that any such school closures be presented to the affected parents and stakeholders as a financial necessity for the greater good or welfare of the entire GEDSB instead of couching the closure of a school as, “a necessity to support French Immersion”.*

18. Our goal for this proposal was to provide a feasible solution that approaches the various difficulties facing the GEDSB in the fall of 2015 from as many angles as possible. We sought to propose a solution that can be implemented in time for the 2017-2018 school year, a solution that can be adequately staffed with existing teacher resources and complemented by additional hiring of staff that takes into account the difficulties associated with recruitment and retention of qualified FI teachers, and a solution that provides an opportunity

for limited growth for FI within the short- and medium-term.

19. Although this proposal may seem daunting at first, it provides an opportunity for the GEDSB to set itself apart from other school boards in finding a unique solution that raises the bar for best practices with regard to the increase in demand for FI in Ontario. We would like to see the GEDSB become the board to which the trustees and superintendents of other school boards call upon to follow our lead.
20. Lastly, this option avoids having make permanent the current cap and grandfathering system for siblings of enrolled students. That said, a permanent cap and grandfathering would be our second choice, however undesirable.

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Information for Example if Centennial Grand Woodlands would close to reopen as 3rd French Immersion Site

FI Schools	Oct 15 Enrollment	Oct 15 Capacity	+/-
Fairview/Coronation	596	560	-36
Dufferin	<u>460</u>	<u>409</u>	<u>-51</u>
	1056	969	-87
English Schools	Oct 15 Enrollment	Oct 15 Capacity	+/-
Greenbrier	203	303	+100
Brier Park	317	360	+43
Cedarland	282	334	+52
Centennial	<u>227</u>	<u>343</u>	<u>+116</u>
	1029	1340	+311
GEDSB	Oct 15 Enrollment	Oct 15 Capacity	+/-
Brantford Schools	7431	8083	+652

Summary

According to numbers based on October 2015 statistics, there are 652 empty seats in Brantford Schools. The English schools listed above account for 311 of these empty seats which works out to 47.7%. We are suggesting that an ARC review take place in this area. Any of the above mentioned schools could be considered for closure and reopened as a 3rd French Immersion site.

Once the students are dispersed from the closed school a portopak or portables could be used in some cases if “overcrowding” occurs.

Using Current Numbers using Centennial Grand Woodlands as an example of a school to be closed.

FI Schools	Oct 15 Enrollment	Oct 15 Capacity	+/-
Centennial	N/A	343	+343
Fairview/Coronation	596	560	-36
Dufferin	<u>460</u>	<u>409</u>	<u>-51</u>
	1056	1312	+256

Using current numbers available, if Centennial Grand Woodlands was to close and become a single track 3rd French Immersion site there would be room up to 256 additional French Immersion students.

Alternatively, if one of the above schools are closed, Fairview could be kept open as the 3rd French immersion site. This would possibly allow for keeping the portopak attached to Fairview.

It is noted that Centennial-Grand Woodlands currently houses the gifted/enrichment programs. Presumably, this could be housed at any of the schools in Brantford, as students are bussed anyway.

Understanding the ARC will take some time that this will not be an option for 2016-2017 school year but could be an option for the 2017-2018 school year.

If this was to be approved we suggest that all the boundaries be adjusted and children MUST move to their new designated home school for French Immersion. This will upset some families and students but would be necessary for the overall growth and accommodations of the program as a whole.

MAP OF SCHOOLS

A -Centennial Grand Woodlands

- 41 Ellenson Drive, Brantford

(Example of Proposed School To Close)

B - Cedarland

-60 Ashgrove Ave, Brantford

Centennial 1.4km Brier Park 1.5km Greenbrier 1.5km

C – Brier Park

-10 Black Friar Lane, Brantford

Centennial 1.3km Cedarland 1.5km Greenbrier 2.3km

D - GreenBrier

-33 White Oaks Ave, Brantford

Centennial 1.3km Cedarland 1.5km Brier Park 2.3km

E – Ecole Fairview

-34 Norman St, Brantford

F – Ecole Dufferin

-106 Chestnut St, Brantford

G – Coronation School (2016-2017)

-54 Ewing Drive, Brantford

Bussing is provided only to students who live 1.6km or more from their home school (Student Transportation)

