



# Public Meeting French Immersion-Accommodating Enrolment Growth

Tuesday October 13, 2015  
Joseph Brant Learning Centre, Grand River Hall  
7:00 p.m.

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## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Director Blancher welcomed those present and made introductions to Trustees and staff present:

Trustees: C A Sloat, D Dean, R Collver A Felsky, G Anderson, T Waldschmit,

Principals: Beth Lougheed, Leanne Smith

Staff: B Blancher, J Gunn, A Nesbitt, Wayne Baker, D Abbey, Liana Thompson, S McKillop, K Underwood

## 2. Setting the Context

Director Brenda Blancher welcomed those present and walked through the process to date in terms of Enrolment Growth and Accommodations in French Immersion. The Director noted that the meeting purpose is to present various options and impacts and then receive feedback from the school communities.

## 3. Enrolment Growth and Options

J Gunn presented information on Census, Enrolment and Population data, Enrolment history, and the various options to manage French Immersion program growth and the process for community consultation. (See attached slides)

## 4. Secondary School Considerations for French Immersion

A Nesbitt outlined the various options for the Secondary School French Immersion program taking into account the increase in Elementary French Immersion. (See attached slides)

## 5. Feedback and Next Steps

J Gunn reported that the presentation and maps will be located on the Board website along with the responses to tonight's questions. Options to provide feedback include submitting questions by email to [info@granderie](mailto:info@granderie) or by requesting delegation status at a future Board meeting.

Feedback will be presented along with a final recommendation to the Committee of the Whole Board No. 2 meeting on November 9, 2015, with a final decision at the Board meeting on November 23, 2015.



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### 6. Questions/Comment and Feedback

The following is a summary of questions/answers and comments received:

#### Q-Question, A-Answer, C-Comment

C Believes the program has tripled, why is there no growth plan for the future? Why is the Board treating the FI students differently than the English program students? Why do we have to displace FI students? Would like the enrolment numbers for all the Board schools, and would like to look at the Enrolment numbers for Tollgate Technological Skills Centre.

C Thank you for accommodating French Immersion Students.

Q Is there a preference between the North Park or PJ sites when considering Secondary FI?

A No

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Q Are you going to be offering grandfathering if you offer the program at Branlyn for those families that have multiple children in the current FI schools?

A We have heard your comments and Trustees will consider these comments as they deliberate the recommendations.

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Q Concerns for the Human Resources for the Elementary level when FI is expanding, what is the plan?

A This is a concern for School Boards across the Province. It is important to focus on recruitment to build capacity with FSL and with French Speaking teachers. FI Programs only require 50% of the teaching program to be taught in French.

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Q Given the current capacity why can't we keep Fairview School?

A While FI Enrolment has increased, total Elementary Enrolment across the Board has remained static. This does not support adding French schools and we need to find spaces within the existing facilities.

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Q Is Branlyn being recommended as JK-2 only for French Immersion?

A Correct.

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Q Will you Grandfather Secondary Students currently attending BCI and provide transportation?

A That is one option that is being considered.

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C Encourage the teachers in Teachers College to get the required qualifications.

Q Was Coronation planned to be a bigger school and wouldn't this open more spaces? Concern that students will have to move three times in Elementary School and would like the programs all at one school.

A Coronation is opening with 547 pupil spaces as approved by the Ministry. There are enough spaces for a full JK-8 FI program at Coronation.

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C Can we not look at the whole Board to accommodate FI programming not just pockets? Please be inclusive and involve the parents to provide input.

Q Concern from a teaching perspective, the hiring for quality teaching, would staffing locations change?

A Would work within the collective agreements, there would be a posting process for requesting staff at another location.

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Q Fairview will be sold, why can't we use that money and buy Sky Acres Campus to keep a third FI School?

A Proceeds from a sale are a one-time event, opening a third school incurs ongoing operating and maintenance expenses.

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Q Shift from English to French Enrolment, would there be the capacity to accommodate French Immersion students to go back to the English program? We need to find a school that could accommodate a full FI school so that the value of the education is not diminished.

A The Board in the last 10 years has closed more than 15 schools and shifted students to other schools in the resulting consolidations. The Ministry is not providing additional funding so we need to find the spaces where we are under utilizing a school.

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Q Concern that West Brant parents are not informed with the boundary changes, are you considering grandfathering these students?

A We are hearing your comments and will consider this.

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Q Is the decision for Paris Central being made on November 3, 2015? Is the Board deciding on Paris Central at that meeting?

A The Board is not considering the Paris Central program change at the November 23 meeting. The Accommodation Review Process will be followed, the process is inclusive and will give opportunities for input.

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Q Projected enrolment, has there been any consideration in the forecasting for the development growth? (in Paris)

A In our projected enrolment we take into consideration the development growth and the yield from the development. There are currently over 100 surplus pupil spaces at Cobblestone.

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Q Have you considered the loss of the English students at Paris Central to the Catholic Board?

A When reviewing the options, we consider this possibility of parents moving to the Catholic Board.

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Q Enrolment overall is stagnant, are both Boards stagnant?

A The share of elementary population is not changing at either Board. If FI parents weren't registering in Grand Erie then the enrolment numbers would decrease.

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Q The FI program doubled but you're only projecting to open 300 more spaces. If you open more spaces, won't more FI attend?

A Yes, that is a possibility but it is difficult to predict.

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Q For NP and PJ, have you determined the catchment areas? Has there been consideration at looking at Tollgate Technological Skills Centre for the new FI High School and displacing the English speaking students?

A The first step is to receive feedback, second step is to take a recommendation to the Board. No we have not considered Tollgate Technological Skills Centre at this time.

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Q Besides looking at the capacity of PJ and North Park as a secondary location, is there any other criteria?

A A capacity audit would need to be completed and a full understanding of the dynamics of each school to reorganize and once complete this will trigger further criteria.

C Concern that the current Fraser Institute reporting on the two FI schools would impact the FI students attending Pauline Johnson.

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Q Attracting the proper talent, what if you can't attract the qualified and skilled staff for the increased Enrolment?

A We would consider some additional options discussed earlier to manage the size of the program.

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C Isn't it better to have all the FI program students at one school to help with the staffing resources? Suggest to change the catchment of English schools to not split up the FI Program.

C Branlyn is only showing a cap of 98 students, would prefer a single-track FI program over a dual-track FI program.

C If FI was offered at Banbury, there is a safety concern for her child who would be required to walk 1.3 km.

C Worried that Coronation won't be able to accommodate the students in four years.

Q Concern with a middle school at Burford, no consideration that West Brant would be effected and West Brant was not informed of this option and have not had the opportunity to come to this venue.

A The options for Board consideration are evolving and will probably change after the meetings. We will certainly reach out to parents to ensure that they are informed and given the opportunity to provide comments.

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Q What will the accommodations be to ensure that the quality of my child's FI program is sustained if she were to be diverted to a dual-track FI program? Concern that the dual track program is not equal in quality.

A Differences are that dual track offers French Immersion and English while single track offers only French Immersion program. For dual-track FI, it's important to build a



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community within the school, having to ensure that where there are opportunities to communicate, that you do so in both languages. Wherever you add a new component, you have to build the program and it is a challenge but Grand Erie is committed to ensuring the same experiences for FI students.

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Q Paris Central School students would be diverted to Cobblestone, this would maximize the Enrolment with the additional FI and development growth. Expressed a problem with busing the students out of the downtown core.

A We do not feel that this will be a problem and students will be able to be accommodated. If and when the development East of Rest Acres and North of Powerline proceeds, another school will be considered.

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C Pauline Johnson Collegiate and Vocational School is committed to teaching the whole student. The Fraser numbers can be misinterpreted and if French Immersion students were to come to Pauline Johnson, they would be experiencing the same benefits and positive environment of a school committed to the whole student.

Q Separating older kids from younger kids was wonderful at Sky Acres. Where did the funding come from to rebuild Coronation?

A The Board submitted a capital request to the Ministry and it was approved for Capital funding. However, since the last submission, the Ministry guidelines for capital funding have changed. The Ministry clearly indicated that funding is only for total board Enrolment growth not program growth. A similar request would not be successful under these new guidelines.

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Q Seems really rushed to have something implemented for the Fall of 2016. Seems that the Paris question will be affected by the boundary review.

A Yes, the Boundary review is dependent on the Accommodation Review outcome. If the growth continues and there are no boundary/program changes the Board will have to cap program Enrolment.

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Q How is the Board going to address the 59% EQAO at Branlyn, how are you going to guarantee the same level of teaching that the FI schools are offering now?

A There are excellent teachers and excellent programs at all of our schools. Those students at Fairview and Dufferin who excelled in the EQAO testing will continue to do



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well. The EQAO testing is only one means to measure a student's success. The Fraser Institute only looks at EQAO.

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C French Immersion means different things in different Boards. Kids need to see older kids speaking French. Separating the grades does not work.

Q Looking at the numbers of growth, have you considered that this is an exponential growth?

A Part of the growth (477 students) is due to the dual-track FI program implementation at three new sites in 2011.

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Q If you open the program for further growth, would it not allow for further growth of the FI program and supporting the long term sustainability?

A That is a possibility. The options presented here would create 327 additional FI pupil spaces. This fall, there were only a few FI students that were not able to be accommodated.

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Q Planning over the next 10 years with the growth in FI, are you still seeing the decline in English schools and should you consider closing an English school? Where is the most decline in the English schools?

A Accommodation review is a continuous process that takes into consideration an area of schools where there are available spaces. The spaces in the areas where FI is growing the most is currently under review.

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Q Need to clarify that Paris Central students will be bused out to either North Ward or Cobblestone ES and other FI students will be bussed in?

A That is a consideration that is being presented for discussion on November 3, 2015 Accommodation Review Committee meeting.

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Q Can we approach the BHCNDSB to engage in discussion to develop a joint FI school that would be mutually beneficial?

A We will consider this suggestion.

### 7. Next Steps and Conclusion

The Director informed the parents that the notes of the meeting will be shared with all Trustees and available to the public. The Director commented that the Grand Erie District



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School Board is listening to the parents and highlighted the different methods to provide feedback. The Director shared that a number of trustees present tonight, heard your voices and she thanked everyone who came out.