



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

Questions from the Brooklin French Study
February 20, 2020 | Public Meeting – St. Leo C.S.

45 people in attendance

**Why were the families from St. Bridget not informed of this meeting?
Daniela Dattomo – St. Bridget**

All families were informed of the meeting through the school and all schools affected received a School Messenger message as a reminder. There was a Family Event scheduled at St. Bridget for the evening. (Family Bingo night as per the principal)

**Are you using traditional projection methods to determine these numbers?
Sean Follwell – St. John Paul II**

We have been watching the decline, don't want to overestimate. We also consider history of past challenges – (i.e. Pickering French Study - having 4500 students at start, now down to 2800). Presently families are not having larger amounts of children as in the past. We are hoping for additional growth, but this is years away. Currently we are hoping to maintain a sustainable French program in the Brooklin area.

Is there a reasoning for 90% -10 % formula for the early grades and then dropping to 50% for Junior? Are you allowed to change formula to solve this problem?

The accumulated hours of instruction for French Immersion are set out by the Ministry of Education. These hours are recorded at the end of each year in the Ontario Student Record. The Early Immersion Program in our board was implemented 10 years ago based on extensive research and analysis of successful models across the province. The decision to provide a 90% -10% model in grades one to three (90% of day in French language instruction and 10% in English, specifically Religion and Family Life) supports the development of a strong foundation in French proficiency in order to support student success. The 90-10% program has been working successfully for 10 years. English language instruction in all strands of Language and Mathematics are introduced in grade 4, as the complexity of these curriculums increases, in order to support students in the junior and intermediate grades in developing these key skills. This helps prepare students in their French Immersion secondary school pathways as only 10 of the 30 credits required for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma are taught in French.

OPEN FORUM QUESTIONS:

Are all committee agendas and minutes going to be posted?

Sean Follwell – St. John Paul II

Yes – in fact the slides for the Committee Meetings are exactly the same. The committee meetings are being used as a field test, so we may tweak the slides as a result of what comes up in the committee meetings to further clarify any questions that come up.

When is this going to be implemented?

Stephanie Crouch – St. John Paul II

September 2021. The report from this study is due to the Board of Trustees in June of 2020.

I am concerned about the English track – will the English track population be sustainable when you remove the FI students?

Siobhan Quinn – St. John Paul II

The English Track will drop by 175 students and then grow to 221 students.

Is this sustainable?

Yes it would be as our Board has schools of that size currently.

I am anticipating that you are choosing one school to have all FI students, does this mean that you will be looking at changing the boundary of St. Bridget as well?

Daniela Dattomo - St. Bridget

Right now, we are considering just the French Immersion program and we anticipate growth at St. Bridget. We are not looking at the English program at this time. St. Bridget is included because they are a feeder school for the St. Leo French Immersion program.

What factors and criteria will you be looking at?

Sandra Marsili – St. John Paul II

Possible options will be introduced at the second meeting, the board has some idea given the data and we are seeking input from the public and we will be analyzing every option that is suggested. We will be looking for your input, buildings' capacities, and locations (St. Leo being central). We are here tonight to hear your concerns and suggestions. We are trying to collect as much information from all of our key stakeholders.

As a parent of a special needs child and with the challenges that we are already facing with the government, I am concerned about the sustainability of the English Program if the French program is lost at St. Leo, what will happen if the population gets so low, will you close the school?
Virginia Ahou – St. Leo

The Ministry of Education currently has a moratorium on school closures, therefore we are not contemplating closing any schools.

Would you consider moving all English students to one school and all French students to the other?
Stephanie Crouch – St. John Paul II

This would mean that we would be moving half the student body and the province will not allow this.

Is it possible to have an all French Immersion school?
Claudio Abreu - St. Leo

We do not have the tools to move all the English students and all the French students at this time. The province will not allow this.

If you do not have the tools, why are we not putting the process on pause?
Siobhan Quinn – St. John Paul II

In terms of the French Immersion program, it is more pressing to look at this program first. This will be on the list for next steps. We are looking at this as a step by step process.

With statistics showing that the English track is increasing and the French Immersion Program decreasing – why the decline – is this a board marketing problem for the French Immersion Program? Currently we are only accepting Grade 1 students to start in the FI program; can we take in Grade 2 or 3 to increase the numbers?
Sean Follwell – St. John Paul II

We cannot bring students in at later years because of the Ministry of Education requirements for accumulated hours of French instruction in French Immersion. The latest possible entry point to achieve these hours is the middle of Grade 2. In terms of overall student success, we would be concerned with gaps in French proficiency. In Brooklin – the challenges are the program demission and takes a while to change the path of the program. This is the fourth year of declining class cohorts and the program is diminishing. We cannot change enrolment in French because there is only one grade that can increase the numbers. Total participation is the highest in Brooklin because of the amount of homes, decline in program is because there are less children in the household in the same number of houses (families are not as large as they used to be)

Question about the projections – what are actual numbers for 2020?

Agnes Liut - St. John Paul II

It is hard to project Kindergarten. There are less available children in the current census. For the credibility of projections, we look back over 10 years of data.

Have you considered the effect of having families in both FI and English, how will this affect the family and the school community?

Stacey Beck – St. Leo

We want to hear what the impact will be and will bring your concerns forward to the board. Ultimately it will be the Board of Trustees that make the decision. Before making a decision, we want to allow time to process and consider all the factors (i.e., special needs, family challenges). We also know that we will come out with a positive outcome on the other side.

It appears that the St. Kateri school is exploding in population – has there been any talk of St. Anne's becoming a French school?

Melissa Wickramasinghe – St. Leo

No – when it opens it will already be at full capacity with a need for an addition and portables – we will be studying St. Kateri in the fall.

Is there any thought of changing the boundaries in order to accommodate the size of over-population?

No – because this would be considered cross municipal, the bus ride time would be a challenge and the Board has a longstanding commitment to the belief that children should remain in their own neighbourhoods.

Is there consideration of parents to have families remain at the home school? We moved into the neighbourhood of St. John Paul to have the kids in that school.

Siobhan Quinn – St John Paul II

We recognize that different family decisions could be made, we don't typically find that this is what happens. We have never seen a mass exodus out of the program (St. Patrick as an example).

Recognizing that children are resilient and able to accept change, what type of resources would be put in place to assist them with the transition?

Sandra Marsili - St. John Paul II

Part of the transition plan will involve gathering student voice, social pieces and community activities. School teams would look at all students' needs on an individual basis at the school level, taking into account parent input and program support. There

will be funds allocated to allow for transition activities, such as excursions, visits, divisional activities to help build community and provide an opportunity for students to build friendships.

**Will you be looking at phasing out the French program gradually - Stop accepting new students at the current school and allowing the current students to remain?
Claudio Abreu – St. Leo**

We could definitely look at a type of phasing out divisionally (i.e. allowing the older grades to remain - similar to St. Patrick). The phasing out option is challenging as having smaller cohorts present challenges. Feedback is very important. Everything is being considered.

When thinking about transportation, what would be the bus numbers and the length of ride?

The two schools are 1.3 km apart; a guideline would be to double the time that google maps provides. We would be looking at a 15-20 minute bus ride, may have extra bus to help with bus ride in the first year.

If my child is currently bused to St. Leo for French from St. Bridget where would she go?

Savio Dias – St. Leo

Whichever school becomes the French school would be where she would attend.

Stats are shown up to 2029 – will there be a checkpoint and reassessing?

Every year we do a 5-year touchstone on all processes. We look to see that the numbers are manageable with a limited number of options. We leave a lot of room to make adjustments and ultimately want to fill the schools up to capacity.

Concerned about Regular track – if there is upheaval with the French movement, will you analyze the English piece in 5 years before you decide to change again?

Andrea Milne – St. John Paul II

We have never had to do a huge change, just little tweaks. We are also looking long-term and will list all possibilities for feedback. We are trying to avoid too much change in a short amount of time.

Looking at the numbers, are we looking at adding portables and/or adding daycares? Can you clarify what capacity means?

Kim Anthony – St. Leo Catholic School

Capacity is what the Ministry of Education tells us that the school can hold based on available classrooms – we will not be going backwards with childcare. They are happy with the space. We project that with declining enrolment, we may require a portable at St. Leo, but it likely will only be required for a short time. With growth and development north of Columbus and west of Ashburn in the future, we do have additional sites for building.

For those of us not able to attend future meetings, how soon will feedback be posted?

Sean Follwell – St. John Paul II

The community can email us at planning@dcdsb.ca, call the direct line at 905-576-6150 ext. 42252 or provide feedback on paper form available at the meetings– we will try to have feedback posted 48 hours after the meeting and feedback will be received at anytime.

Questions from Feedback forms:

Siobhan Quinn – St. John Paul II

“I would encourage the committee to send an additional letter to the Brooklin schools clarifying that each of the parent meeting have different topics being addressed. I’m not sure that parents in our St. John Paul community appreciated that each evening is distinct.”