

Policy II-51 Optional French Programming (Early French Immersion and Extended French)

Summary of Stakeholder Feedback

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Introduction

This report summarizes feedback from Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) stakeholders about the amendments to Policy II-51 Optional French Programming (Early French Immersion and Extended French). At the May 14th, 2019 Policy Meeting, staff advised the Board of Trustees that amendments were required to both the policy and procedure in order to update the relevant privacy references and records management processes to ensure processes are aligned with the relevant acts. As per *Recommendation P#41/19*, passed by Trustees, staff sought feedback on the draft policy from HCDSB stakeholders, between May 15th and June 5th, 2019.

All feedback analyzed by Research and Development Services for the purposes of this report was submitted via online form. The following sections provide a description of the method of data collection and analytic procedure, followed by a data summary.

Feedback

On May 15th, 2019, the Director of Education invited all HCDSB stakeholders to provide input about the amendments to the Optional French Programming (Early French Immersion and Extended French) policy, via an online form on the HCDSB website. Parents were also directly invited via email on May 16th to provide their feedback on the policy amendments.

The data received were reviewed to obtain counts of the number of responses in different categories (i.e., for the policy, against the policy, neither, and feedback). The following limitations should be considered:

- The online form was anonymous (aside from a field to include name voluntarily), and not password protected, so it was not possible to:
 - prevent duplicate names and duplicate comments
 - ensure that the responses came from authentic HCDSB stakeholders who reside, work, or study in Halton (i.e., HCDSB ratepayers, parents, students, staff, trustees)
- The online form did not include a close-ended question to quantitatively collect number of votes for/against the amendments, so all comments had to be coded and analyzed qualitatively

However, care was taken to keep track of duplicate names/comments. As described later, the duplicate names were not included in the analysis of the data.

A) Who Responded?

Number of responses submitted by the feedback form

In total, 161 responses were submitted using the online form on the HCDSB website. All responses can be found in Appendix A, below. Thirteen comments were removed due to duplication, resulting in a total response count of 148.

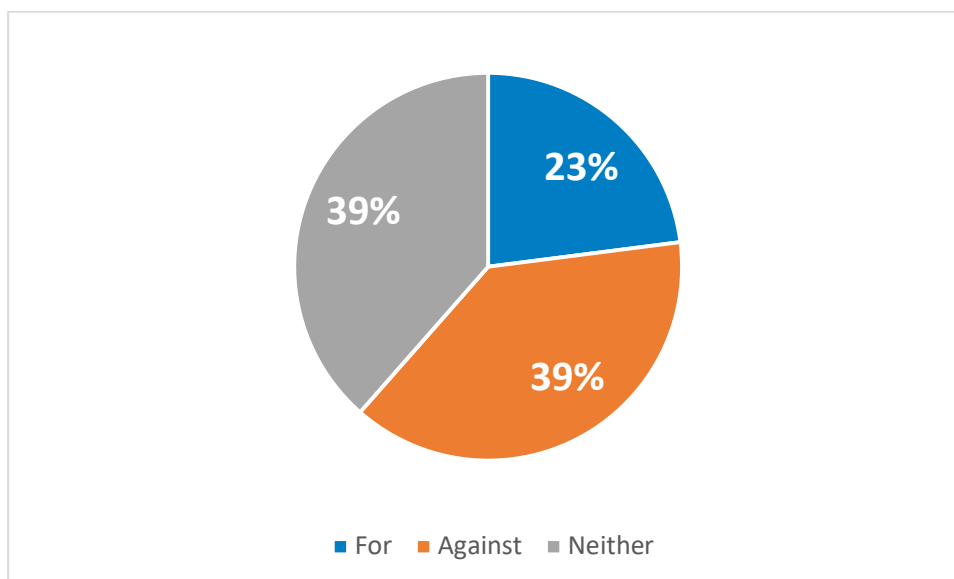
B) Position on the Policy Changes

There were 148 responses included in the thematic analysis of the stakeholder data; as noted above, all duplicate comments or names were deleted and therefore excluded from the analysis. Of the ten different stakeholder groups identified on the online feedback form, five were represented in the thematic analysis. Of the roles selected on the form, the majority were HCDSB parents (93%, n = 137). One respondent selected 'Other'.

Role	Count
HCDSB Parent	137
HCDSB Staff	5
Catholic School Council	2
Halton Catholic Ratepayer	2
HCDSB Union	1
Other	1
TOTAL	148

The data from the online form were reviewed and coded based on whether the respondent's comments indicated that they were 'For' or 'Against' the amendments to the policy. Comments coded as 'For' include those that specifically stated that they agree with the policy. Comments coded as 'Against' include those that do not agree with the policy and expressed concerns with the proposed components of the policy, such as the entry process, community communication/consultation, etc. Thus, comments were not coded based on respondents' views on Optional French Programming, but their views on the policy specifically. For example, if a respondent indicated that they support optional French programming, but do not agree with the certain aspects of Policy II-51, then their comment was coded as 'Against'. If the respondent's position on the proposed changes to the policy was unclear or not explicitly stated, this was coded as 'Neither'. Note that one comment may only be coded once.

Coding Breakdown (n = 148):



As shown in the chart above, 23% of comments (n = 34) were *for* the policy and 39% of comments (n = 57) were *against* the policy. Thirty-nine percent of comments (n = 57) were coded as neither. Such comments may have discussed their views on optional French programming rather than the policy, or may have been unclear in their position on the policy.

C) Common Themes Found within the ‘Against’ Comments¹

The responses submitted that were coded as *against* the proposed changes (n = 57) were analyzed to uncover themes related to their disagreement. The comments can be aggregated into the following themes.

Note: The percentage provided with each theme refers to the proportion of stakeholders who were coded as having concerns with the policy. The theme/topic counts are greater than the number of responses to the question, since some responses reflected multiple themes. These themes do not account for all opinions expressed but provide a summary of the most frequent comments.

Theme 1: Increased availability. Respondents expressed the need for increased availability and enrollment in the optional French programming, specifically by increasing the number of schools that offer such programs (51%, n = 29). Examples:

“As a parent I see the need for more spaces in the extended French immersion programs. The number of kids that would like to attend but do not make it into the program is quite large.”

¹ There were no apparent themes within the ‘For’ comments, as such comments were often shorter and only indicated that they agreed/supported the policy

"The EFI should be offered in more schools if not all. Its sad that we had to go through a lottery system and only ONE school offers it in the whole of Milton..."

"Ultimately, the underlying issue is the inadequate number of FI schools in the Catholic system; in Burlington, I'm amazed there's only one elementary school with FI and I struggle to accept that the demand for FI by Catholics is actually that low, relative to the public system. "

Theme 2: Program entry. Respondents disliked the enrollment process for optional French programming, specifically the lottery system (39%, n = 22). Examples:

"I really like the opportunity for my kids to be able to be a part of the French programs. I would like to see more done to ensure that all kids who apply get accepted instead of leaving it to a lottery."

"There should not be a lottery for the Extended French Program. Anyone who wishes to enrol their child should be able to do so. French is one of Canada's national languages. To prevent a french education from someone who wants one is unfair and unjust."

"...The other rule that must be relaxed is of entrance into the program. It should be based on previous marks and should include a signature and recommendation from a previous teacher. Not for first grade but definitely for the extended french..."

Theme 3: Sibling allowance. Respondents believed that siblings of children already enrolled in optional French programming should be allowed to also enter such programs, bypassing the lottery system, or at least enroll in the same school as their siblings. (22%, n = 19). Examples:

"...Siblings of children in the program should automatically be allowed to attend the same school as their older sibling who may be attending Early French Immersion. Our younger child is still awaiting to hear if change of boundary is accepted and this is causing us undue stress of potentially having to drop off kids to 2 different before school programs at 2 different schools"

"It was stressful not knowing at the time of lottery if my second daughter would get in. A sibling rule should be in place. If one is in then the other should be accepted as well, before the lottery."

"If the board is not going to implement a sibling policy for EFI, then at the very least, there should be an automatic acceptance of siblings of children in the EFI program into the English stream in order to ensure families are not split up and siblings don't end up in different schools."

Additional Results

D) Feedback on the Policy

Three respondents, regardless of their position on the policy, provided feedback on the policy itself. Their comments are as follows:

Item number 3.3 and 3.5 are confusing to me. In 3.3 it says the aim is to ensure all that all students will be given placement. However in 3.5 it says it is a random selection for placement. What is the strategy for placement? Everyone gets in or is it random selection?

Your language is very vague, uses constantly "when possible, where feasible" etc. changes like the relocation of french programs that affect so many kids and families should be really taken as a really important issue and kids should be the priority.

What happens with situations like the phasing out of the French Extension and St. Matthew where there wasn't any consultation? Are these decisions being reconsidered? To be honest I don't feel this draft addresses the issues is just a paper so the Director of Education can make his decisions like he has done in the past and you can say there's a policy to back it up.

It's really disappointing to see how the board only looks at numbers, forecasts that may not be accurate and don't think the students as their priority.

I don't think the policy reflects what needs to be addressed. The policy just gives the board the possibility to do all the changes to the french program (like they did with the phasing out at St. Matthew) without taking into consideration the effect on students and families. The policy should give the trustees the right to vote any change regarding the french programs and through this give families the chance to participate and have a real input in the board's decision. The language used on the policy is very vague "when possible" etc. Instead of setting processes that should be strictly followed. The policy doesn't specify anything regarding registration dates and then parents receive a last minute notice saying that registrations have been moved up and they need to register asap. Finally family acceptance for the lottery process should be incorporated. This policy definitely needs to be reviewed and shouldn't be approved as it stands out now.

Appendix A:

I approve
When considering to locate or relocate an optional french program it is asked that teacher input be used in making the decision as changes to programming can impact teacher working conditions. If changes to locations need to be made, teachers should be notified prior to filling out teacher preference forms so that they have all information prior to the start of the transfer rounds.
The Board's mandate is to educate English-speaking students first and foremost. These french programs are optional, not mandated by the Ministry, therefore, in this climate of budget constraints, all optional programs should be reviewed and possibly cut, before any cuts to the required curriculum. Transportation to optional programs should be discontinued.
Yes please keep French learning and curriculum in place. It is very important to me as a parent that the school system gives every child the opportunity to learn the French language. There are so many known benefits.
I support this program
I work in an FI school in a different board and am very displeased with the way HCDSB handles FI enrollment. I strongly feel teachers should have a say in which children would be good candidates for FI. I have been told my son would be great in the FI program and he is way down the waitlist. Aside from that, I tried to find how long they will accept kids off the waitlist as working in an FI school I know kids will transfer out before the year is up and was told they will accept kids until the end of September. I find that ridiculous as likely everyone will give there child at least a 1 month shot at it and now children that would have been great in the FI program have completely lost their chance.
While i recognize that French is an important language here in Eastern Canada (I have spent a considerable amount of time in Western Canada to which it is simply not), on the Global stage it is not. Spanish and Mandarin are certainly more important on every front today and in the future. French is dear to our hearts based on the founding and history of Canada but not as relevant in the future. If we look through the lens of what is most important for the future of our kids. My two are in JK i would strongly consider Spanish or mandarin. I would also be willing to pay for this separately as a second language is not a right but would be a privilege to learn, whether during the academic year or in the summer or both. I would welcome the opportunity to present my case.
I think it is essential to teach other languages to students in the early stages. I think it is an excellent program for our kids.
My household is in full support of the Optional French Program.
I live in Burlington and the only school that offers French immersion is Sacred Heart of Jesus. In my opinion, this is unacceptable and should be offered at multiple schools. Public schools offer a lot more options and as such; it makes me think that perhaps my tax dollars should go to a Board of Education that is in line with what is right in Canada. Since the French language is highly regarded in the political realm, I feel it's necessary to award this opportunity to my children, however the signup process is stressful (you basically have 10 seconds to finish the application in order to try to get a spot in the first-come-first-serve online application).
I would be interested in my children learning French. I believe it is a great tool to have in future jobs later in their lives.
We are in full agreement with moving French programs to schools that have the space to support them. St. Matthew Oakville currently has French and it is way over-subscribed. The only other concern I have is that it seems that out of boundary parents have led the charge in opposing moving the French program from St. Matthew to St. Bernadette. We would ask that any consultations for specific schools occur only with those families in direct boundaries. The same happened with the uniform vote and now all in boundary families have to live with a decision made by people who aren't in boundary; many of whom, now won't be attending based on the most recent information of subsequent siblings not be allowed entry. It would be preferable as well that once the decision for French to move, that it be upheld. We understand it was meant to move in September but is moved to 2020. Let's just do it and move forward. Finally, the role of the trustees is superfluous. It seems the squeaky wheel gets the grease and I'm not sure I agree with how their role affects big decisions based on a few loud and aggressive

<p>opinions. Why are we delaying the move of French when there's a class on the stage and we're adding portables, and there are empty classrooms at St. Bernadette's?</p>
<p>Currently there appears to be a significant shift of boundaries within the Georgetown area. I cannot speak for other areas.</p> <p>It is my understanding that there are now 4 schools offering either EFI or extended French. Those being St Catherine, st Brigid (which is bursting with portables) and Holy cross schools.</p> <p>There is a small school St Francis that holds a small population.</p> <p>Why not move the boundaries for the st Francis school to other local schools and have the extended and early French immersions at the one location. It appears that the amount of students in each program would be approximately that of the total French program students. This allows for teachers to overlap classes therefore saving costs and utilizing the school to maximize the French programs.</p>
<p>I agree and support this initiative</p>
<p>This policy does nothing to address the fact that the HCDSB is seriously lacking in offering a French education to our students. It's a joke that there is one school in north Burlington, operating on a lottery system that is supposed to accommodate those who'd like the opportunity to enter early French immersion programming and it's the parents' responsibility to provide transportation to such school if a child is one of the chosen few who are privileged to get this education.</p> <p>Please consider the inadequacies before bothering with these changes.</p>
<p>The program is quite popular as evidenced by the requirement to have a lottery for attendance. We need this program expanded to more than 1 school in Oakville which is the current state of the program.</p> <p>Siblings of children in the program should automatically be allowed to attend the same school as their older sibling who may be attending Early French Immersion. Our younger child is still awaiting to hear if change of boundary is accepted and this is causing us undue stress of potentially having to drop off kids to 2 different before school programs at 2 different schools</p>
<p>HCDSB should ensure that the FSL teachers engaged for these programs are highly proficient in both speaking and writing (a B2 at the CEFR level).</p> <p>These teachers should have the choice to teach the specific content courses because teaching geography in French but not in English, does not seem fair for staff workload. For example, many of us French teachers went to university to teach French and not geography or math. This should be considered in the French Immersion process.</p> <p>I propose to create new courses geared more towards the arts and sociology, such as cooking in French, philosophy in French class, leadership in French class, etc. and avoid science and math classes as much as possible for both teachers and students.</p> <p>With any new program, funding should be a priority for French Immersion. The funding should be transparent, and shared to FSL teachers to better assist them with resource requests. Perhaps, an FSL library to share resources might be an alternative to cut costs.</p>
<p>I do not support early french immersion. We left the public school board because of this so-called 'feature' and I would be very disappointed if we went this route. The result we saw first-hand is that the English stream becomes 'second class citizens.' Just because a parent chooses not to enroll their child into French Immersion in grade one, should not mean they suffer academically, which is exactly what happened when we were at <i>[identifying information removed]</i>. We pulled our children out and were so happy with St Bernadette (both for the Catholic beliefs and values standpoint, but also because of the fact that French Immersion did not start in grade 1). By offering French Immersion in grade 1, you will be forcing parents to have their kids go this route, even if it is not in their child's best interest, since no parent would want their child in the English stream where the organic result is a sub-par program. It would be so disappointing to see this happen.</p> <p>I am completely supportive of Extended French.</p>

<p>I wished the policy included enrolling kids more often, we sacrificed having our second kid going to french program because we were not granted the cross boundary request. Being a working parent, having 3 kids, working at train distance is very hard to coordinate with kids in 3 different schools.</p> <p>So, if frequency of the programs were sooner, or if there was french as regular program in the school, that would offer an advantage for families like mine.</p> <p>Thanks for taking into consideration stakeholder's opinions.</p>
<p>The EFI should be offered in more schools if not all. Its sad that we had to go through a lottery system and only ONE school offers it in the whole of Milton. It's the fastest growing city in Canada yet we can't keep up to have our children bilingual if we choose. Its becoming more of a demand and once again a disappointment that my child was not able to take advantage of.</p>
<p>I believe that the Extended French Course is an excellent program for children entering Grade 5. Being bilingual, certainly, will be beneficial especially when they enter the workforce or just plain applying it in their daily lives.</p>
<p>Hi,</p> <p>While I appreciate you asking for my advice I don't know what my kid needs in these programs. I'd like you to contact the teachers of these programs and ask them for their professional input on the policies and procedures. Listen to them.</p>
<p>You should NOT be relocating students already in FI to another school. These sneaky little policy changes will NOT be looked kindly on. Parents were told when they enrolled their kids in FI that there children would NOT be relocated to another school once admitted to the program. THIS AFFECTS PEOPLES LIVES!!!</p>
<p>French immersion is a charade. These kids are NOT immersed in French. Parents wanting their kids to learn French should have to send them to a French School.</p> <p>The French Immersion "program" has turned into a tool for parents to use to stream their higher achieving (real or perceived) students together and segregate them from other students with lower academic achievement.</p> <p>It has become nothing more than that!</p> <p>Why doesn't the school just admit it and start streaming students at an earlier age instead of continuing with this thinly veiled deception.</p>
<p>we want this in our schools</p>
<p>Great opportunity for students, need more availability as too many students are turned away</p> <p>Would love a full French option also right from Kindergarten which doesn't require parents to speak French - which is pretty much required to go to a full French school</p>
<p>I would love to try my children in Early French Immersion and Extended French programm.</p>
<p>That it's great. I wish my kids can be benefit from at least the extended program.</p>
<p>I really like the opportunity for my kids to be able to be a part of the French programs. I would like to see more done to ensure that all kids who apply get accepted instead of leaving it to a lottery.</p>
<p>Absolutely agree with the expansion of the optional French Programming to meet the existing demand.</p>
<p>I'm very pleased to hear this!</p> <p>Thank you</p>
<p>Its a competitive world...the more we offer our children the greater they become on the other side...</p> <p>yes to french!</p>
<p>French programming is not a priority and with recent provincial cuts, this money should go towards keeping support staff in their roles. If extra funding were to exist, Indigenous culture and language should take a priority.</p>
<p>I approve of the policy.</p>
<p>As a parent I see the need for more spaces in the extended French immersion programs. The number of kids that would like to attend but do not make it into the program is quite large. Also, some priority should be given to families that already have a child in the program as I don't think is fare that one sibling gets to learn French while the other ones doesn't because it didn't get picked in the lottery and both children are attending the same schools.</p>

<p>Equal opportunity to siblings should be given.</p> <p>Thank you for providing parents with the opportunity to voice their concerns.</p>
<p>It should not be a lottery system for choosing students, does this occur with any other subject? all students should be able to be enrolled, after all French is Canada's second official language and receives govt. funding. Increase number of classes so no one needs to relocate and teacher training and PD. This disrupts Extended French programs and takes away French importance and continuity for students. Immersion K to 12 should also be offered, not only Extended French starting at grade 5.</p>
<p>Item number 3.3 and 3.5 are confusing to me. In 3.3 it says the aim is to ensure all that all students will be given placement. However in 3.5 it says it is a random selection for placement. What is the strategy for placement? Everyone gets in or is it random selection?</p>
<p>Brilliant Idea and I certainly hope this gets approved.</p>
<p>Hi!</p> <p>I think this will be a wonderful program to have at Lumen Christi Public School. I will challenge our children in the right way (is they are strong in linguistics and capable of learning another language).</p>
<p>I'm a taxpayer and a parent. I have been fascinated by the French education for some time now realizing that students are required to take French throughout their educational cycle in elementary and perhaps high school yet after billions of dollars spent on French education I don't know one student that can order a double double in French. So to me I find it completely unnecessary to dump any money into French education. The budget should be zero. 99% of the students won't use the language in their lifetimes. If any language - Spanish should be offered. That way more students would be able to use it in the Caribbean as well as South America.</p> <p>So in conclusion the voluntary French immersion education should stay. But other than that why blow billions of taxpayer dollars on education the kids can get on YouTube for free in 10 minutes.</p>
<p>Absolutely agree</p>
<p>I think it is a good idea to start learning French as early as grade 1 and extend it in grade 5. I wish this program will start earlier at my kids school.</p>
<p>I think that early immersion and extended French should be available for parents that want their kids to have that option. Also kids learn better if it's introduced at a younger age.</p>
<p>I can not see how anyone could object to this proposal. Only concern is financial resources. With so much of the pie going to teacher salaries and pensions, what's left for the actual students is slim at best. The memo should include actual budget forecasting - real numbers on what this will cost.</p>
<p>As a bilingual country I like to think both languages should be taught just the same. As an immigrant in Canada and had been working in other countries I do not just see this as an essential life skill as I can't see any downside having two languages.</p> <p>I understand it is all about budget but considering we are talking about education, I wouldn't mind paying more taxes to consequently have better schools with more classes options, better contents and qualities. After all this is the future of our children and nation.</p>
<p>Hi there,</p> <p>It is my understanding that, as is, it is extremely difficult to staff French teachers due to the lack of permanent/ supply teachers in our Board that are qualified to teach in French. We notice this with the huge lack of supply teachers that accept positions in our schools to teach day-to-day in French when a teacher is absent. Why then, is the Board even considering expansion of the French Immersion program if it can't even staff its existing programs in French? Perhaps I don't have my facts right but it's an ongoing school level concern when supply teachers in French are unavailable to cover PT and this also translates to the children losing their instruction in French day to day. How does the Board propose staffing additional French language classes without the staff to teach them? Why promise parents something we cannot deliver effectively?</p>
<p>It would be great to have more students be able to participate in the extended French program. A few years ago we tried to place my daughter in the early French immersion program only to be placed on the waiting list after the first 2 mins. of the registration online.</p>

<p>All French school programs need to remain very very local and within three kilometres of where the students live. . I do not agree with any moving of the French programs to different locations. If you want fi or extended French in a new location then fine build it there but for example do not take the french immersion program that is close to our family home now and move it even further away. All of these issues should have stakeholder input and be voted on by parents . One director should not be calling all the shots here nor should one director or a small group of bueauracrats be unilaterally be making these decisions. Parental input and parent consultations are the key to gaining and keeping public buy in. I do agree with growing and building on our exsisting halton catholic school biard frenchs immersion programs. Thank you.</p>
<p>I am agree with this 100% and I wish it was approved earlier.</p>
<p>In favor. In total agreement.</p>
<p>I feel that anyone interested in perusing French should have the opportunity to experience immersion or extended French.</p>
<p>More locations for French optional programs to be offered. Also provide transportation for student.</p>
<p>I'm in support that French should be in taught in schools to give our kids an edge over their peers in future.</p>
<p>The early and extended French programs have been a collosal failure.</p>
<p>This policy looks promising, however, I think there needs to be better flow of information for parents other than electronic. Any provisions for possible "late" registrants for the extended French immersion? Also, how will this work (eg. what subjects will be taught in French, if any or is it just like an extra French language subject).</p>
<p>I hope the Board would continue to deliver Early French Immersion and Extended French</p>
<p>As a resident of Burlington I would like to comment on the discrepancy between the number of schools offering the EF program. There is only 1 in all of Burlington compared to 5 in Oakville and 3 in Milton. This discourages many families to take advantage of the program, depending on which part of Burlington one lives in the bus ride is relatively long. This is unfair to kids in Burlington. My recommendation is to add more schools, such as in east Burlington or merge both program (EFI an FI) and make it a grade 2 or 3 entry like the Public board did and expand the program to more schools.</p>
<p>I do not feel adding any extended French for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investing more time in English at a young age is extremely important. Mixed language will leave children good at neither. 2. Had pulled out 2 of my kids for the above reason despite both being very bright kids 3. Had to invest a lot of time to get get both back up to speed 4. Costs our system more to have teachers in 2 languages 5. Application of French in the workplace of in Canada is almost none existent except if you plan to work for the government or live in Quebec or Ottawa. <p>Individuals that do wish to seek such language skills should go to a purely French speaking school that is currently available already in some school boards in Ontario.</p>
<p>I vote no.</p>
<p>I think that the Board has the right to decide where the French Programming in offered. But the decision to move the location of the Extended French program should be communicated to parents with more than 1-year timeframe. We know several parents that bought their houses within the school boundary because of the reputation/EQAO of the school (St. Matthew in our case). One of my kids is already registered in EF and will finish in St. Matthew the other one is in grade 2 and he wants (and we want) to do the EF, but EF will be offered in St. Bernadette and the reputation/EQAO is not as good as ST. Matthew, so we have to decide if we privilege the additional language or English/Math learning.</p> <p>I truly think that it is not fair.</p> <p>The possible solution should be to communicate the move not just 1 year before, the communication should be in Grade 1. So, people know that the change will affect the kids' education during the elementary period. In that way, the decision to establish the family within a school boundary could be decided with confidence.</p> <p>I appreciate you understand that this kind of change is really affecting not only the infrastructure needs from the school board perspective it is also affecting the decision the families have taken in relation to the desired education</p>

for their children. Thanks for your time for reading the comments.
I believe adding French Immersion one of our national languages can only enhance the already outstanding education for our children. My girls school is amazing but I feel we are losing out by not having French. We speak it at home and have a tutor because we don't have the option in class.
I think adding this is beneficial to know da as a lot of jobs now a days are bilingual.
I think the board should better plan changes and relocations related to the French program. Parent should be informed at least 5 years in advance of any potential changes so as to properly enroll their children in the school they think is more appropriate.
I support this proposal.
My daughter is going into Grade 2, and she was not selected by the lottery for the French immersion program when she was going into Grade 1. She missed that opportunity. We would love for her to have the chance to learn french, and would love it more if it can be even before Grade 5. Thanks.
Offering more French Immersion opportunities is fine as long as it doesn't remove teachers from the main stream French. This past year my daughter in grade 5 lost her French teacher for a few months as she had to be redeployed to the French Immersion classes because they didn't have a teacher. So my daughter would have supply teachers who were not French teachers running her classes. This is not the first year that this has happened as my older daughter who is now in Highschool had one of the resource teachers do her French class as there wasn't a French teacher for the immersion classes. Our school has ballooned in size the last couple of years because of the French Immersion program which has impacted all 3 of my children that attended or now attend . The school is Saint Brigid. My daughter who is in gr 9 currently ended up doing the applied French in gr 9 as she would not of been prepared for the academic French because of her elementary school French classes. My son who is now in gr 11 had similar issues but he was in gr.8 when the lack of French teachers at the school was starting to happen. St. Brigid is a massive school right now and I now feel so disconnected from the school and so many less opportunities for the students due to the size of the school which is as a result of the French immersion program.
We need to keep the children with open options to pursue higher learning. We should keep both early entry and grade 5 entry, so as not to exclude children which have passed the entry age. It is important to keep children at the same school as their siblings. It over complicates life when we need to have children at multiple schools. I will have 3 children in 3 different elementary schools this school year, due to French boundary changes. We parents count on a system that is currently in place. When options and boundaries are changed, it affects our future plans and deters our children from following in the footsteps of siblings.
I agree to both new policies. I absolutely want my daughter to be introduced to French classes. Yes for policy #II-51 and #II-52. Thanks
I agree with II-51
Section 7 of the Policy seems contradictory to the original intention of the Policy to allow for "all students" to experience French. Those secondary students unable to attend due to transportation issues (at home) are exposed to an undesirable barrier to continuing their studies. Consider revising this to allow for "every effort will be made" language instead, in order to accommodate them re: bus transportation. Also to be consistent with the intention of the Policy, out-of-region applicants (i.e. new families moving into HCDSB areas) should be allowed to apply without barriers. This was NOT the case for us in applying for EFI from the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) - online registration did not allow for us to enter a non-Halton address and hindered our application, for example. Finally, albeit unrelated to the Policy directly, please consider expanding early French immersion programs to JK and

SK (Kindergarten) if demand allows in the future. We found earlier exposure to French extremely helpful for our daughter enrolled in the TCDSB before moving to Oakville (Halton).
Yes, it will be a good addition.
I think it's a great idea.
Glad to see that the board is starting french in grade 1 ... finally! Too late for my kids unfortunately. The french program should really start in JK. When we lived in Sarnia, french started in JK AND they had full day kindergarten even waaaay back then.
No thank you
I feel the Board should reconsider having both of these programs in light of the budget cuts provincially, including any transportation costs associated with the programs.
French Immersion at the early stage is the best because children learn fast when they are little (that is: at their early stages)
The policy still do not address the Need to make the Early French Immersion (EFI) program more accessible to all due to the random selection. The Lottery/ Random selection fails to give an Equal Opportunity to all interested as it already limits the number of students in the program. Please open more EFI schools and classes in the HCDSB specially here in Milton (as it is Only St.Benedict) . We sincerely wanted to get our son into EFI in the HCDSB (Milton-St. Benedict) but failed due to the "existing Lottery Selection" . It is for this reason (with heavy heart) that we will take him out of Catholic School and enroll him in an EFI-public school (HDSB) with a sure spot (No Random Selection, No Lottery). All students are accommodated. I hope that such open accommodation and spot-availability will be improved here in Milton, On. (HCDSB).
I think this is a perfect opportunity for our kids. It will be so great to add to the curriculum.
I think this is a wonderful idea !- yes please :)
I think that theses programs ate a great idea.
My daughter will be attending the Extended French program this fall. Hopefully relocation would be an absolute last resort as it would be a huge disruption to the students. She is at her home school so if the St Mary's extended French program was to be relocated then we would withdraw her from that program and place her in the English stream. It would be more important to us to keep her at her home school then disrupt her learning and school routine.
I disagree with the lottery section 3.5
I believe everyone tends to gain from the application of French. Because it is a bilingual country and interested in preparing its young people for this immersion in a new language, the country and this generation will only grow.
I agree that the french programs should be in schools with excess capacity and that the home school should have a stable population of students in the near and long term; extended french starting in grade5 is enough, early french immersion is simply a distraction for the HCDSB. What the board should consider is removing early french immersion and instead focus on earlier introduction of core french to all students.
French This policy is fine with me too. Gives parents and students the option to enroll in extended frech programs should the children/families wish. So long as students don't fall behind in learning and communicating in both languages it's a great idea. Also, so long as the entry requirements are fair for all those who apply and transportation is provided by the board.
I agree with the extention of these program to be offered by the HCDSB
I think early French Immersion should be available in every school. it would make it more accessible to all children not just the ones lucky enough to win the lottery. Coming from Ottawa i was quite disappointed that there is no french instruction in the core English program until grade 4.
If students move out of the district this puts them at a great disadvantage to their peers in other districts

Strongly in favor in getting students started in French sooner. I think all students would benefit from getting exposed to a new language as soon as possible.
<p>Your language is very vague, uses constantly "when possible, where feasible" etc. changes like the relocation of french programs that affect so many kids and families should be really taken as a really important issue and kids should be the priority.</p> <p>What happens with situations like the phasing out of the French Extension and St. Matthew where there wasn't any consultation? Are this decisions being reconsidered? To be honest I don't feel this draft addresses the issues is just a paper so the Director of Education can make his decisions like he has done in the past and you can say there's a policy to back it up.</p> <p>It's really disappointing to see how the board only looks at numbers, forecasts that may not be accurate and don't think the students as their priority.</p>
I think it is a good idea to provide French Immersion/extended French whenever possible.
Early French Immersion and Extended French is ideal for students interested in the program and they will acquire skills that are practical in workplace. This is a good policy to implement for our future leaders
<p>I like the Early French Immersion program however, my son will be going into Grade 6 in September 2019 and will not be able to take advantage of this program which is disappointing. I think a transition period for the students in grades 6 to 8 should be included in this new program so they get the benefit of it and not just the upcoming Grade 5 students.</p> <p>I'm also in agreement with the service animals in the schools.</p>
I agree and support this policy.
I have a one daughter currently enrolled in Grade 1 French immersion, and a second one in SK (going into French Immersion). It was stressful not knowing at the time of lottery if my second daughter would get in. A sibling rule should be in place. If one is in then the other should be accepted as well, before the lottery.
I agree with having Extended French take place at St. Joan of Arc (Oakville) beginning with the 2019-2020 school year. As a parent, I have seen the decline in enrollment over the years. There is an abundance of space at the school and I like the idea of that space being used for programs that enhance the students' learning options, rather than it being used for community purposes.
<p>Both my wife and I are in full support of II-51 particularly as it relates to the early French immersion option.</p> <p>Our daughter is completing SK this year and we have discussed what we would be doing come grade school in terms of receiving optional attendance for another school so that she can receive French immersion.</p> <p>This would make the decision easier.</p>
This policy is long overdue. St Mary's is overcrowded due to EFI program. 7 portables now with more needed for next school year. Too many kids, not enough space. It affects all the kids negatively. There are other schools with free space - use that space!!!!
It is a great opportunity for the children.
<p>Extended French and early French should be available to all student in Canada.</p> <p>French is our second language, ALL KIDS, ALL schools should have it since grade 1.</p> <p>No just the ones that have space, BUT ALL.</p> <p>The demand is BIG, there is never enough space for kids that wants to learn French. IT SHOULD NOT BE this way.</p> <p>We should not have to compete for space in a special school to learn our second language.</p>

<p>While I fully support the extended French program, I worry they the Early French Immersion does not give the students enough time to develop their English literacy. By Grade 4 the brain is fully developed and any cognitive challenges will have or should've been addressed. Early primary is when we see students struggle and if they can barely survive in the english language, I fear how they will cope with the pressure of another language.</p> <p>What about the shortage of qualified French teachers?</p> <p>Sorry, but I feel that a lot of this is to give parents bragging rights and feel superior since I had a a parent strongly recommend that I put my kids in extended French because "the smarter and well behaved kids do it".</p>
<p>Early French Immersion should not begin in Grade 1 it should begin in Grade 2. Fundamental literacy skills are still needed in Grade 1 and early entry should happen in Grade 2 for a greater chance of success. Students who lose early literacy skills in English have a tougher time later on in school.</p>
<p>In favour of this.</p>
<p>I am agree with the policy.</p>
<p>As a parent of a EFI child, I cannot say how important this is for us. I have 1 child in the program and 1 not. I wish that one day we can come to an agreement that French should not be an optional subject. It should be as important as Math and Religion. Can Math be optional? Can Religion be optional? Can English be optional? So why is French when we have a whole province who is French speaking as well as it is imperative to know a 2nd language. I am not a parent that speaks a 2nd language at home therefore my child is only exposed to English therefore French is highly valued. Do we need to pay for it?? What is it going to take to make this subject taken more seriously?</p>
<p>There is a shortage of French teachers, so I believe that the early immersion should not be offered. What is happening with this shortage of teachers is when we have no one to fill a French position, teachers who are unqualified end up taking on these positions. It is not fair to the students, the parents, administration or teaching staff. The early immersion should no the offered.</p>
<p>In a bilingual country like Canada a high quality mandatory French program (available to all students) should be a golden standard. It is extremely disappointing to see this policy taking a selective approach structured around "chosen" locations and "chosen" students (lottery and waitlists). This type of structure and planning limits future opportunities for a lot of students and undermines the principle of equality. Your proposal means that as a tax payer, I pay for another child's future advantage over my kid, whereas my child may not have access to the French program? How is this approach aligned with the values of Canada and the catholic church?</p>
<p>Hello,</p> <p>I hope this note finds you well. I feel that the French immersion program is essential to our children's learning and development. As it is an official language of this great country that we live in, I feel that every student that would like the opportunity to learn in the French immersion program should be allowed to. There should not be a lottery system and the boards should not hide behind false excuses of staffing. I know several French teachers that are willing and have applied to the Halton Board, but ended up in other boards for various reasons. So, it's not for a lack of teachers. They should also have an allotment for siblings. I currently have two children attending two different schools and this must continue until/if my youngest gets accepted to the French immersion program. The fact that the principal shrugs off our questions and says "Good luck" does not leave a good impression on the community or the parents. The program should not be optional, but mandatory. The fact that we personally fought to keep this program and the repeated growing interest reflected in the waiting lists shows that this program is essential. If there is a waiting game list year after year, then we need to realize the demand is growing and we need to be able to supply the education to these students.</p>
<p>My two sons are in the extended program and I think they and their peers have greatly benefited.</p>
<p>Relocate the early French immersion program to schools that have the space to accommodate..there is an adverse affect to the main track at some schools...portables being added to an overpopulated school as a result of the early French immersion program..parents are frustrated...main track students seem to be pushed...</p>
<p>St Mary elementary school in Oakville</p>

There should be a sibling policy. It's ridiculous that parents have to drive from school to school to pick up their kids if one of the kids are in a French program that's out of the boundary lines. The French program is vital to our city as you can see from the amount of interest there is. It's crazy to think that there is only one catholic school that offers EFI. And as a mother of three it's so stressful to have to worry about where my kids will go to school and make sure I can pick up at different locations. We need to do better!

Also, since parents like me have to make arrangements for kids at out of boundary schools, there should not be a location change. If you want to open another school that offers EFI, then it can be up to the parents if it is more conventional to that family to switch.

Good afternoon,

We are writing regarding to the french Program. We are strongly agreed about the Early French Immersion. We are highly recommend to our child and It will be a very positive step toward our childs education path.

We are so plassed to receive the great the news and looking forward to get the registration instructions regarding to the French Immersion program.

I am very frustrated, realize that Canada is NO a bilingual country with equal opportunities for everyone no for our kids.

Move programs from one school to another just because of operational decision indicate that we treat our students and families like production units.

Instate to move programs from one school to another with a board discretion why no the board ask the school students how much interest for French exist and make a democratic decision.

Why no looking for maintaining French at current school for current families (I refer to current french student and siblings). and minimize students and families impact with the program relocation.

For a family will be inexplicable why some of our kids can attend the French program at the same school and their siblings have to move to another school leaving your friends behind.

How our taxes will be compensated for additional therapies and social support that our kids will require with the school move?

how our families will be compensated for the difference in busing and start time? are the board able to provide supervision for kids at the bus stops due to schedule conflict?

Love the EFE program, the engagement has kept my child smiling daily, created confidence. Ready for grade 2.

I feel for some of my friends and their children who are 24th on the waiting list...just goes to show the need for the program.

There should not be a lottery for the Extended French Program. Anyone who wishes to enrol their child should be able to do so. French is one of Canada's national languages. To prevent a french education from someone who wants one is unfair and unjust.

Any changes to the Extended French Program, especially location, should be established and communicated a minimum of 2 years beforehand. Many parents make decisions about where they are going to reside based on the kind of education they wish their children to have.

Extended French Program:

You need to have the capacity to place French Immersion teachers in these french programs or else it will not be successful! My daughter had a core french teacher for a full year to my dismay(no Immersion teacher available!) then a maternity leave teacher leaving a gap of 2 months-hence her french is by far inadequate!

Service Animals:

I am torn with this as my child is allergic to dog hair and severely allergic to cat hair.

Considering a dog in school to assist with learning is VALUABLE however like peanut allergies how will you control the environment?

Our hope is that the Early french immersion program remains available for all our children to attend and learn in.

We have relocated our family in order to attend St Brigid school specifically for this program. It's unfortunate that it

has been moved to St Catherines. Our first child has shown so much growth and success in only her first year in the program. Happy child equals happy parent!
Relocation may impact enrolment and continuity of the program over time. It has to be done in consultation with parents.
With respect to the Extended French Program it does make clear how or what additional subjects are taught in French to allow parents and students decide if a right fit. Also the lottery system is not a fair way of placement into the program as it should be known how many students will be accepted into program and it be a first come first serve.
<p>Policy does not address the following:</p> <p>Communication to community stakeholders when relocation of a program is occurring - specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -notification to entire school community vs the grades affected immediately -accommodation arrangements for exceptional students -what form of consultation the community can expect <p>Secondly, would prefer that you include the following parameters around changes to programming/relocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -determine the lifecycle for review of programming - every 5 years? And communicate the cycle to all board parents. <p>There should not be significant shifts inbetween regular reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -grandfather in all existing students in a school when relocating at program - ie., phase it out over a number of years vs immediately. Again this should be planned with the lifecycle point above
<p>I have two children in extended french and one entering second grade in the early immersion program. I appreciate this programming very much. Several of the rules need to be adjusted to prevent the schools just moving the program around again and again. Parents typically have more than one child and those who selected this program often wish for all of their children to benefit from the same education experience. They also need to have all of their children in the same elementary school, particularly with vastly different school start times between schools. The rule that a child who opts out of the french program must return to the school within their boundary causes families not to apply at all or to move their family into the boundary of the school currently offering french. This must be considered on a case by case basis, but all efforts should be made to keep children from the same family in the same school regardless of the french program or school boundaries. The program is not for everyone and the academic standards and behaviour of students in the french program must remain high. The one child shouldn't be separated from siblings and friends. The other rule that must be relaxed is of entrance into the program. It should be based on previous marks and should include a signature and recommendation from a previous teacher. Not for first grade but definitely for the extended french. Behaviour issues should be excused from the program.</p> <p>One thing I can see that happens is that enrolment goes down at a certain school because of other issues (problem children, teachers not meeting certain expectations of parents or the principal is not well received, extracurriculars, etc). Consistency is key in creating good schools. Parents and students must be given equal opportunities to review teachers and principals at the end of each reporting period. This is the same thinking for art, music and athletics. Equal emphasis must be placed on these courses at each school. It's not okay to have instruments at one school and not the one just down the street. If you put the immersion programs in schools with the least enrolment, the students typically are not getting quality music, art and physical education classes. Non-french families will move boundaries for these things and this increases enrolment forcing the french classes out.</p> <p>Our children are currently at a school where the french program will leave for another school come September. We are thankful that they will all stay at their school and not be relocated. This is very much appreciated that they will experience some consistency and not be following the program around to different schools. Thank you</p>
<p>This is a terrible and expensive idea. Offering programming to an entitled and niche group has a detrimental impact on all learners of the Board, due to the funding impact on the staffing and organization of schools. It also creates the problem of finding enough French teachers.</p> <p>The goals of the Board can be met by offering French, as it currently does, later in elementary school.</p> <p>As a parent whose child will be facing a class size of 29+ this September, it is difficult to comprehend how funding would be used for French programming when you should be focused on creating safe classrooms with smaller class sizes.</p> <p>Additionally, there comes a point where we need to say that if French matters to families, they should fund it themselves, much like families do who speak other languages, or focus on particular sports or other interests.</p>

<p>The reality is, despite significant historical investment in regular French programming and French immersion, most students are not fluent and do not use French in Ontario. We cannot justify the high costs.</p>
<p>I would love a french immersion program at St. Anne's Elementary school in Burlington.</p>
<p>I am disappointed in this policy there is no change to the growth of the efi program when there an obvious demand plus other Board's are growing with demand smaller and larger board + when you receive in addition additional funds for these programs. No change in registration parents have not been in favour of this new registration. Certain trustee are not returning parents calls how can you make a one sided opinion you are clearly the board puppet what is the point of your position then?</p>
<p>If I understood the policies correctly, the intention of HCDSB is to offer the existing Extended French Secondary program to future graduates of the HCDSB EFI Program (currently, students from the pilot year of HCDSB EFI are entering Grade 6 in September). I would like to know if the Extended French program will be altered in any way to ensure that it is an appropriate and sufficient fit to the children from EFI who will graduate Grade 8 with more hours studied in French than the existing Extended French students (Grade 5 entry level). Should we expect the Extended French program (Secondary) to not change when the incoming EFI students have a different background and Mid-French learned than Extended French students? We need to make sure we continue to nurture and grow these EFI students who have been working hard on their French education from Grade 1. Please reconsider and keep the community informed.</p>
<p>Please do not move the EFI program from Sacred Heart of Jesus as it is a great location with good kids and nice administration. Thanks</p>
<p>This is a much needed policy. It provides structure on how this program is run. It also provides the parents clarity on expectations. I hoped that this policy would consider allowing siblings to attend French programming if they have older brothers/sisters that are already in the program. This provides family equity. Currently without this rule all my three kids are going to be in three different schools starting September 2019. This will make morning drop-offs, after school pickups, parent-teacher interviews, and other school activities much more complicated than it already is. I hope the school board considers this from the parents point of view. At the end of the day this is inline with the school board's mission and vision statement and values where it partners with parents to provide exceptional Catholic education.</p>
<p>Parents appreciate the fact that the importance of Optional French Programming is being considered now that there are 2 permanent programs in place. On the other hand, parents do not appreciate that trustees are not returning their calls in regards to this policy as they want their voices heard. The proposed policy reiterates what is already in place in our Board rather than addressing blatant issues that exist. Numerous Catholic families are choosing to attend the Public board to give their children access to French programming. A sibling policy should exist as per numerous other Boards that have utilized this method for decades. This mentality emphasizes the importance of giving siblings equal learning opportunities rather than placing families in an impossible situation if all of their children don't randomly get into either program. Who would contest this? Most families have multiple children and once they make a commitment to a program, it should be for all members of their family. The current registration process has caused an incomprehensible level of stress to Catholic families in Halton. Please help keep Catholic families together in our Board. Parents should never have to choose between faith and programming.</p>
<p>I think that students in need having service dogs is school is a good idea. and an early french immersion and extended french is a good idea.</p>

Fully support both programs. The use of service animals in Schools and Long term care facilities should be adopted it can make a significant impact on ones mental health and over all well being. Optional Extended French makes sense not making it mandatory to those uninterested or whose children struggling with English language or other core subjects. However giving the option to those with keen interest is great to see not only to maintain our culture but it may provide future opportunities for children that would be possible otherwise.

Yes, I Fully support Use Of Service animals in schools!

It should be adopted in both schools and in Long term Facilities (some have been doing this for many years) . It has significant positive impact on certain anxiety and depression and other mental health Disorders,. It also can improve ones overall well being. Not to mention many different important life lessons can be learned from service dogs.

I'm a little disappointed in the policy. my children are in the efi program and love it. I can't believe how fluent they are. If the program is in demand it should be something the board should take pride in growing considering the teachers are doing an amazing job under a board who has not been in full support . The only struggle has been the board trying to remove the program. It time to move forward and show surrounding boards we are in support and will grow the same they have . The policy does not touch on growth, does not touch on the change in registration last year was a struggle . Siblings should be considered how can one have this gift and not the other. Guaranteeing sibling would make a family more committed in staying in the program and board . Please give the efi gift to more students . Thank you

Thank you for providing an opportunity for parents to provide feedback on Policy II-51 Optional French Programming. Although we welcome the creation of this policy, we are still deeply concerned with the pending relocation of the Extended French program from St. Matthew school. The criteria for determining the relocation of the program were in fact not met. The "overcrowding" issue at St. Matthew is one that was created by the Board by approving cross-boundary applications to St. Matthew even when the school was at or over-capacity. This deliberate plan by the Board to essentially create an over-crowding situation at St. Matthew is unacceptable. There are options that the Board can choose that would provide a fair and equitable solution for the St. Matthew community. One option would be to keep one class of Extended French at St. Matthew and one at St. Bernadette - providing two classes in the Glen Abbey community, but not removing it wholly from one site. The St. Matthew community is looking forward to the consultation meetings you are required to provide for us, as per section 1(1.2) of the Policy ("Relocation of current programs must include consultation with the communities being affected). Kindly inform as ASAP as to the dates and location of said consultation meetings. We look forward to meeting you in person to further discuss the status of the Extended French program at St. Matthew.

If the board is not going to implement a sibling policy for EFI, then at the very least, there should be an automatic acceptance of siblings of children in the EFI program into the English stream in order to ensure families are not split up and siblings don't end up in different schools. Furthermore, families should not need to submit a cross boundary application for siblings of EFI students every year. Alternatively, the school boundary for EFI schools should be made smaller to allow for the acceptance of cross boundary applications of EFI siblings. The board needs to ensure that families can attend school together. This would also assist the board in directing more English stream students to schools with lower enrolment.

This feedback follows my letter dated May 23, 2019 to Trustees DeRosa, Guzzo and Karabela providing my views and concerns relating to the proposed Policy 11-51 Optional French Programming (Early French Immersion and Extended French). My detailed viewpoints are set out therein and will not be fully reproduced here for the sake of brevity. The below is meant as a summary of and supplement to that letter. In my view, proposed Policy No. 11-51 Optional French Programming (Early French Immersion and Extended French) is a watered-down version of the draft policy that was originally proposed by Trustee Karabela. As currently drafted, the proposed policy does very little to address the needs of EFI families as well as the need to increase access to the EFI program. The main deficiencies, in my view, are as follows:

1. The proposed policy does nothing to attempt to mitigate potential hardships that may result from the Board's current administration of the program vis-a-vis siblings of optional French students, namely those that arise from siblings of optional French students not being granted admittance to the program(s) and/or having to attend a different school altogether (either to access French programming elsewhere or because of not being granted cross-boundary status to attend the English stream in the optional French school). The proposed policy has no mechanisms whatsoever to align access to programming and/or attendance at optional French schools for families. I disagree strongly with the assertion that a sibling policy is not equitable. In fact, it is my view that NOT having sibling policy is extremely unfair to those families who have demonstrated a commitment to both French language learning and a Catholic education at HCDSB. The proposed policy, including the lottery admission process (discussed further below) and the Board's present cross-boundary policy, which requires out-of-catchment students to re-apply for cross-boundary status annually, has led, and will continue to lead, to EFI families suffering the hardships of having their children in different language streams and different schools. It is simply not fair for a child to not only be denied an educational opportunity granted their older sibling, but potentially having to attend an entirely different school altogether. For this reason, the proposed policy and the Board's current administration of its French programming has and will continue to create divides within families. This is a non-sensical result that is not at all in the best interests of the students and, moreover, is causing HCDSB families to reconsider their options for French language learning in Halton, including leaving the Catholic Board altogether. If admission priority is not given to siblings of students currently enrolled in optional French programming at the same school, then there at least has to be some mechanism(s) put in place – such as automatic admission into the English stream) at the cross boundary school – to alleviate these hardships. The HCDSB's policies and current administration of the optional French programming make it very difficult for French stream families to want to stay with HCDSB, particularly when the HCDSB offers unlimited enrollment for EFI programs. Given the political climate, it is surprising that HCDSB seems to be going out of its way to make program access more difficult for families, rather than the other way around. One would think that the HCDSB would be doing everything in its power to increase enrollment in the Catholic board.

2. The random selection ("lottery") process for determining entry into optional French programming as set out in the proposed policy and as is currently administered by HCDSB is deficient as it is completely lacking in transparency. The policy does nothing to address this concern, save a meaningless line that the "registration process for the optional French Programs shall be made available to the public". What does that even mean? For a lottery process to be "fair", there needs to be full transparency of the process, including:

- what platform(s) are used to conduct the draw and how random numbers are generated and assigned;
- who conducts the draw;
- what day is the draw conducted;
- how many applications are received;
- how many children are placed on the waitlist;
- what "glitches" might occur and how they are dealt with; and
- whether the process is subjected to any kind of objective oversight or audit to ensure that the process is truly random and fair.

Moreover, a lottery system attracts speculative applicants who take a "wait and see" approach and many of whom will decline a spot if offered and/or will leave the program altogether at some point, at the expense of another family who is truly interested in Optional French programming. In contrast, a "first come, first serve" ("FCFS") is not inherently unfair or less fair than a random lottery. A FCFS process does a better job of allocating spaces to the families that want them the most and who are committed to the program. With a FCFS system, everyone who truly wants to enroll in the program has an equal opportunity to obtain a spot. Unless the Board is prepared to implement information sharing measures and documentation to bring much-needed immutability and transparency to the lottery process, I would strongly argue that the FCFS system is a highly preferable and more equitable way to

determine program allocations for optional French programs offered by HCDSB.

3. The proposed policy does not reflect a commitment by the HCDSB to increase access to Early French Immersion (EFI) programming, despite the fact that there is clearly a high and growing demand for EFI programming in Halton and that this trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Notwithstanding the decreasing enrollment in the Extended French (EF) program and the obvious growing demand for EFI, the Board seems inexplicably determined to expand and allocate resources to the EF program at the expense of the EFI program. It is inconceivable to me that the Board would continue offer an EF program through Our Lady of Peace, which has a mere 15(!) students enrolled for the 2019-2020 school year, taking away teachers and resources that could otherwise be used to support the EFI program. At the same time, no measures whatsoever are being taken to expand the EFI program to meet increasing demands and interest, and the program remains stagnant both in terms of numbers of sites and spaces offered. Although, historically, the EF program offered by HCDSB has been successful, but that is, quite simply, because there was no other choice for optional French programming. With the implementation of EFI, this is no longer the case. It is incumbent on the Board to start taking affirmative action to expand the EFI program (not simply move the current program to a new location) and provide the French language learning opportunities that HCDSB families want and deserve.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my feedback. I trust that you will do so. In the meantime, I would be happy to discuss these matters further by phone or otherwise upon request.

This policy refers multiple times to Policy VI-53 about the specifics regarding registration, particularly the lottery system. I would like to comment on my experience with both public & separate/Catholic systems. I'm very surprised that Catholic students who fail to be randomly selected (via lottery) in Kindergarten II have no chance to re-enter early French Immersion (FI) but public FI students are admissible, especially considering that public FI does not begin until Grade 2. Therefore, for an entire grade, Grade 1, if a child drops out of FI, the Catholic board's own students—who fail the lottery in kindergarten—are denied taking that spot but, in Grade 2, a child from the public system who's only had a couple month's of FI may be accepted. It seems like a system that's designed to fail, long term. Please keep the FI waiting list open at least through Grade 1 and preferably through Grade 2; most kids should be capable of “catching up”. Ultimately, the underlying issue is the inadequate number of FI schools in the Catholic system; in Burlington, I'm amazed there's only one elementary school with FI and I struggle to accept that the demand for FI by Catholics is actually that low, relative to the public system.

I have two children enrolled in the EFI program (starting grades 6 and 3) and I only have great things to say about this program. Almost all the teachers they've had so far are highly skilled and very caring, and my kids are capable of enjoying French tv and having conversations for 10-15 minutes in French with others by mid grade 2 (both parents don't speak French). I have a third child starting JK and I'd love to have her experience the same bilingualism education. A siblings rule makes so much sense when considering how prepared a family is when they have a child in the program already, from online resources to tv channels to books and tools as well as the sibling support itself, and that was the case in my house when our second child started the program. But in fairness for everybody, I would be more in favour of increasing the enrolment to the program and expanding to a different location which will have many benefits:

- location diversity. Opening a new location in an opposite end of the city decreases the costs of student bussing and could encourage more parents to apply when knowing their kids will spend less time on the bus as opposed to one location.

- decrease the capacity strain on schools that have existing EFI program and eliminate the need to transfer the program to a different location and all the entailed process in boundary review.

- utilize any surplus French teachers from the Extended program resulting from the decline in enrolment in some schools and preventing them from moving to different boards.

My kids go to school in St Mary and I'm aware that there is a move going among the English track parents aiming at moving the program to a different school due to capacity issues. I believe splitting the program for new registrations will be an excellent solution for both French and English tracks until capacity levels up and possibly goes down due to aging community around the school.

Thank you for all your efforts with enhancing the French programming in our schools and taking our board to a higher level.

The policy needs to set out the board's plans for expansion of the EFI program. The waitlists in Oakville, Milton and Burlington range from 30-50 children- the demand is there. The board needs to stop expanding extended French and focus on EFI. We are blessed to have two children in EFI in Oakville but we still have a third child we need to get into the program. He has already been declined a cross boundary to his siblings school and he and his siblings are devastated- they can't understand why they can't be in the same school together. And I can't imagine what the littleness one will feel if he doesn't get into EFI like his siblings. He already shows an interest and aptitude for the French language and we couldn't imagine denying him of a great opportunity as his siblings. We want our kids to have a catholic education and learn French. We shouldn't have to choose between the two. Please expand the program. And at the very least, please make cross boundary applications for siblings automatically approved. Reduce the cross boundary for EFI schools to allow for this.

I think this policy keeps proving and will keep hcdsb as the laughing stock. All the board surrounding us think this board is the wild Wild West. This board keeps closing their eyes to reality if you keep losing students to the Halton board because your choosing to discriminate, you are not a representation of being catholic. Any striving business does not close their eyes to reality and listens to the end user. The kids are the one who suffers from your blind eye no one else. Time to bring the Catholics back to the catholic board and bring the way you are currently choosing to be you are pushing them away . At the end you will be the example for the government to move into one board and eliminating the catholic board the ones who didn't face reality now will have to look at themselves and blame themselves for the abolishment of the catholic board. The surrounding boards use efi in schools with declining enrolment and guess what they have no decline and keep retention of numbers. No teachers really talk to surrounding boards they are laughing at us as they are hiring the teachers we are not interviewing or the ones we are making hard for. Just because we just can't face reality. I hope you wake up before it too late .

To Whom It May Concern:

While I am glad that the Early French Immersion program has finally been deemed NOT a pilot anymore and that school buses continue to be provided, I'd like to recommend the following for consideration:

- 1) Allow for siblings to attend the same school without cross-boundary applications as those students admitted into the program so that families can stay together
- 2) Consider providing school buses for siblings to maximize cost savings for buses rather than having them run half-empty
- 3) Consider overall number of requests for the French programs to see if it is worth it to expand to more than one school per city/town.
- 4) Allow for more frequent assessment of the policy to understand where it is working well and/or needing to address gaps given its relatively new status of being permanent.

Recognizing that staffing has been an issue in past:

- 5) Consider having more lenient qualifications for teachers on the level of French acquired for the lower EFI classes in order to keep the higher qualified teachers for the upper grades
- 6) Consider using previous demand statistics to create a funnel for committed 'guaranteed jobs' for those currently in education streams that may be ideal candidates for teaching positions in the French programs - some considerations for this may include seeing how many students have left the program because there was no consideration for siblings to be in the same school with access to transportation - see (1) and (2) above.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this policy. I'm happy to answer any questions or help in any way.

Absolutely! All children should learn French the sooner the better!

I would be very pleased if the HCDSB offered an optional Early French Immersion and extended French programs. It would be tremendously beneficial for my children. I would love to see this come to fruition in the coming years.

I believe the French immersion program is vital to our kids. They learn so much and my child really loves it. However, what is not included in your policy is a sibling policy. Other school boards include a sibling policy. How is it that halton does not have it? As a parent who is working full time, it is extremely stressful to be able to get kids from school on time. Every year I depend on the Ymca program to allow me extra time to get to the school. How are, without a sibling policy, how am I, a mother of 3 expected to retrieve my children from 3 different locations? It's absolutely ridiculous to me that this is not in the policy. Am I supposed to pull my child who is in French immersion from the halton catholic board in a public school so that they can all be in the same school that is closest to my

house? Is that what you our trustees expecting from parents? Please, help parents which such a small token of gratitude, and allow is to ease even a little bit of stress from our lives!
I think its unfair to have a policy that forces me to send my kids to 2 different schools. My daughter is entrolled at St. Mary Elementary French immersion program. My son was attending a montessori last year and I'm trying to get him into SK at St. Mary. But because St. Mary is not my home school, I have to send him to Pope John Paul elementary. I have a third child that is in daycare. My wife works some evenings which means I would have to make 3 different pickups by myself!!! Why does the Toronto board make exceptions to allow siblings to be in the same school? The current Halton policy is outdated and needs to be revised to allow exceptions for siblings to attend the same school.
I'm am happy to see that there is now a policy in place to notify the community with regards to changes in program location. The situation with the attempt to close the program at St. Matthew school this year was a disaster. There was no consultation with the community. There was no advance warning. There was no consideration of the impact it would have on the school community. Also, only notifying a small portion of the community who you thought will care - was very short sighted. A decision to change the dynamic of the whole school needs to be reviewed by everyone at that school! How can you not think that matters? Also, you shouldn't try to hide decisions around changing program locations within the body of a large mass announcement where community members had to dig through to find out what will happen at their school. Send out notices to that school as to what specifically will happen at their school. Stop trying to hide!! No one from JK to grade 4 has any idea that extended French will not be offered after next year unless someone who has done their research has told them. Send specific communication to the affected parties. Lastly, our trustees should have final voting power on decisions that affect specific communities. That is why they are our voted trustees - they have intimate knowledge of the community and therefore know how decisions will affect their communities.
I don't think the policy reflects what needs to be addressed. The policy just gives the board the possibility to do all the changes to the french program (like they did with the phasing out at St. Matthew) without taking into consideration the effect on students and families. The policy should give the trustees ti vote any change regarding the french programs and through this give families the chance to participate and have a real input in the board's decision. The language used on the policy is very vague "when possible" etc. Instead of setting processes that should be strictly followed. The policy doesn't specify anything regarding registration dates and then parents receive a last minute notice saying that registrations have been moved up and they need to register asap. Finally family acceptance for the lottery process should be incorporated. This policy definitely needs to be reviewed and shouldn't be approved as it stands out now.
My daughter is currently in the French immersion program at St. Mary. My daughter enjoys the program and we do, as well, as her parents. The teachers are great and school is fantastic. Getting our daughter into the program with the old system of "first come first serve", although challenging, allowed us as parents to demonstrate our resolve to have our daughter be apart of the program. We preferred this method instead of the lottery system. We have a son that we would love to have in the French program, so one of our children does not go with out this opportunity. We believe the sibling rule would help us, help our son. Allowing younger siblings to follow their older siblings into French immersion program without having to worry about the lottery or "first come first serve". Siblings should be given the opportunity to learn the same things as their other siblings, and go to the same school as their siblings. The sibling rule will allow parents like us, to keep our kids together and help with our family life as a whole. We hope French immersion stays at St. Mary's, we hope that the lottery system is reinstated and we hope the sibling rule is applied.
All students wishing to take the optional Extended French program should be enrolled and staffing adjusted accordingly. If that is not possible, the lottery system should be removed and the "first to register" system returned. Keep the secondary EF program at Bishop Reding in Milton. Return the elementary EF program to Holy Rosary. More efforts should be made to support French teachers.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the School Board for listening to the plea of the EFI HCDSB parents to save the EFI program back in 2017. It has been proven that there is a huge demand for French Programs (specifically Early French Immersion) in the Catholic School Board and we would like to see an expansion of the EFI program in order to accommodate the growing demand for such. We look forward to seeing more HCDSB schools offer it and for the school board to continue to find ways to address its staffing situation for French Programs. We hope as well, that the issue of sibling registration be addressed. I am asking that siblings be given priority in registering for EFI (or cross-boundary, to be under the same school system at least) so we can keep our kids in the same school and avoid running into issues such as logistics, scheduling, transportation (school bus), etc. We hope that HCDSB students be given the same opportunity to qualify and register for EFI (and other French programs) as their public school counterparts. Thank you very much and we hope to work hand in hand with the Halton Catholic District School Board in order to provide our children with the best Catholic education possible.

I agree with this policy and would like it to be applied to future decisions as well as some changes made in the past few years (i.e. St. Matthew's Extended French Immersion program)

I agree with this policy, it seems fair and accurate. Should apply not only to future changes, but to the ones made not long ago, particularly St. Matthew's Ex. French immersion program.