



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)**  
**Report No. 17-057**

**20 June 2017**

**Update on the Implementation of the Two Year Bilingual 50/50  
Kindergarten and Primary Mathematics in Early French Immersion**

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**PURPOSE:**

1. This report provides an update on the first year of implementation of the two year bilingual 50/50 kindergarten program and shift of the language of instruction for the Early French Immersion Primary Mathematics Program from French to English.

**CONTEXT:**

2. In February, 2016 the Board of Trustees approved changes to the delivery model for French instruction in the Kindergarten and Primary Early French Immersion programs. The changes included:
  - a) The establishment of a two year bilingual kindergarten program for all students. As of September 2016, the language of instruction for the two year kindergarten programs is 50% English instruction and 50% French instruction
  - b) A change in entry point for Early French Immersion moving from senior kindergarten to grade 1.
  - c) The shift of language of instruction for mathematics from French to English in grades 1 to 3 in Early French Immersion beginning in September 2016. The District is now fully aligned with all students in grades 1-12 in the district receiving mathematics instruction in English.

The goals of these changes were to provide a two year seamless kindergarten experience aligned with the new kindergarten curriculum program, to support

smooth transitions between grades for all students, and to provide equity of access for all of our students to learn French.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS:**

**3. Overview**

The consultation process and Board deliberations helped to identify several areas for the implementation committee to address. These included:

- providing additional learning materials to support the French portion of the kindergarten program and for the instruction of mathematics in English in grades 1-3 EFI;
- providing enhanced FSL cultural funding to the cohorts in year two kindergarten and grade 1 EFI,
- enhancing professional learning opportunities for teachers and early childhood educators new to the program or the teaching of primary mathematics;
- timetabling to minimize the number of adult contacts for our youngest learners;
- working with school-based Learning Support/Resource teachers to ensure that appropriate supports continue to be in place for students with special needs;
- working with school-based English as a Second Language teachers to ensure that appropriate supports continue to be in place for English language learners; and
- providing program support through Learning Support Services for our most vulnerable early learners through a referral process.

Principals, in consultation with their Early Years teams, determined whether the kindergarten program at their school would be delivered as a half day French/half day English model or an alternating day model with one day in French and the next day in English.

**4. Enrolment**

Enrolment figures have remained stable through the first year of implementation of the 50/50 bilingual kindergarten program.

Kindergarten Enrolment	
October 2015	8933
October 2016	9034
Projected 2017 as of March 24	8936

Similarly, total enrolment figures for grades 1-3 have remained stable through the first year of the implementation of mathematics with French as the language of instruction. There continues to be a pattern of increasing enrolment in Early French Immersion and decreasing enrolment in the English program with Core French.

October 2015				
Program	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total
ENG	1407	1758	1907	5072
EFI	3123	2870	2649	8642
October 2016				
Program	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total
ENG	1357	1645	1963	4965
EFI	3323	2981	2745	9049
2017 Projection (as of March 24)				
Program	Grade1	Grade2	Grade3	Total
ENG	1242	1463	1734	4439
EFI	3431	3162	2860	9453

Retention rates in both the English and Early French Immersion Programs have remained consistent with the exception of an increase in English enrolment last year reflecting the increased numbers of newcomers to our district.

English Program	Gr 1	Gr 2	Gr3
5 Year Avg Retention	104%	110%	107%
3 Year Avg Retention	105%	111%	108%
1 Year Avg Retention	111%	117%	112%

Early French Immersion	Gr 1	Gr 2	Gr 3
5 Year Avg Retention	101%	94%	95%
3 Year Avg Retention	100%	94%	95%
1 Year Avg Retention	101%	95%	96%

#### 5. Implementation of the Two Year, 50/50 Bilingual Kindergarten Program: Year 1 Support

Support has been provided to schools in the areas of resource materials, professional learning, and Learning Support Services programs and resources.

## **Resources**

- a) Educator teams: All individual kindergarten educators (teachers and ECEs) have been provided with copies of the Kindergarten Program 2016 and the Addendum to Growing Success.
- b) Classroom materials: Each kindergarten classroom was provided with French classroom libraries similar to those provided to Year 5 full day kindergarten sites, including sets of books focused on mathematics, science and social sciences. Each classroom was also able to choose between two options to supplement the classroom library with fiction books.
- c) Schools: FSL Cultural Funds were allocated to each school to support kindergarten and grade 1 classes. Suggested options for use included involvement in cultural activities or events or purchasing of materials such as music or French audio books. Schools were also provided with examples of activities and learning opportunities directly tied to curriculum expectations and supportive of the Common European Framework of Reference.
- d) Parents: Program information has been provided for parents at kindergarten information nights in May 2016 and updated through the established channels of communication at the school level. Program information has also been presented to the community on the board website and support materials such as the 'Welcome to Kindergarten' booklet and through kindergarten information nights held prior to or during the registration period in January 2017. Ongoing communication with parents occurs through parent/teacher interviews and regular classroom dialogue with educator teams.

## **Professional Learning**

- a) Kindergarten teachers received three half days of professional learning focused on several aspects of the Kindergarten Program 2016. Topic areas included the creation and maintenance of an inclusive learning environment, child development, language acquisition, inquiry in the classroom, play-based learning, pedagogical documentation, planning and assessment practices and tools for gathering evidence of student learning. The sessions were differentiated for: teachers new to teaching kindergarten, teachers new to teaching Year One kindergarten students, and teachers new to teaching in partnerships. Additionally, each teacher selected a half-day of interest-based professional learning in one of three areas: Mathematics, French, or Self-Regulation and Well-being.
- b) Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) received two half days of professional learning related to the implementation of 50/50 bilingual kindergarten and grounded in the Kindergarten Program 2016. These included learning about planning, language acquisition, how to support students learning French and resources.

- c) Kindergarten teachers and ECEs participated as educator teams in an additional half-day of professional learning to support the implementation of the Kindergarten Program 2016 and the Addendum for Growing Success (Communication of Learning). Direct links to the 50/50 bilingual Kindergarten program were included in this learning, the funding for which was provided by the Ministry of Education for the Implementation of the Communication of Learning.

Educator teams have on-going access to the professional learning from this year through the Google platform.

## **Learning Support Services (LSS) Programs and Resources**

All LSS kindergarten supports were accessed this year through a common referral process. Services available to school teams included:

### a) Early Learning Intervention Program (ELIP)

The Early Learning Intervention Program (ELIP) is a class-wide service that provides a research-based approach to foster oral language and cognitive skill development in kindergarten. The premise is that training kindergarten teams (teachers and ECEs) regarding foundation skills in our youngest learners will result in increased academic success, motivated and engaged learners, and fewer behavioural challenges. The team of speech-language pathologists and psychology staff provide workshops on foundation skills and strategies that are developmentally appropriate. ELIP offers support to the educator teams throughout the year by providing resources and follow-up visits to the classrooms. ELIP has been formally evaluated regarding efficacy of the intervention. The results showed significant gains in the areas of vocabulary acquisition and narrative recall (e.g., ability to recall the beginning, middle and end of a story) for at risk learners. Both these areas of language development are essential for academic success.

### b) Kindergarten Speech Language Intervention Program (K-SLIP)

The K-SLIP provides support for educators and parents of Kindergarten students with severe oral language difficulties. Specific students are referred through the school Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) to the K-SLIP team, who provide an initial workshop followed by ongoing site visits, specific materials, in-class demonstrations, and consultations with both the educators and parents. This intervention provides supports and strategies for students who may struggle with both languages of instructions. Although this is a student-specific service, other students in the class also benefit from the oral language/literacy strategies. Formal evaluation regarding efficacy of this intervention was reported following initial implementation.

Services to schools for the 2016-2017 year included:

- 56 K-SLIP referrals (including classroom and parent meetings)
- 40 ELIP classroom interventions

- Parent workshop

Workshops for SLIP and ELIP educators were combined for efficiency and provided a total of 50 workshops with 260 educators in small groups in their schools, encouraging educator team collaboration.

c) The Early Learning Resource Team (ELRT)

ELRT is composed of a team of 5 Educational Assistants and provides support for the classroom as a whole. Services include observations and consultation for the environment of the kindergarten learning space, use of visuals to support communication and learning, and class-wide behaviour management strategies. Working together with kindergarten teams, the goal is to support an alliance of ideas to foster positive learning environments. 234 kindergarten classrooms have been supported so far this year. All kindergarten classes will be provided with a bilingual visual tool kit by the end of this school year.

d) Kindergarten Itinerant Educational Assistants (K-IEAs)

A team of Kindergarten-Itinerant Educational Assistants (K-IEAs) provide behavioural support for individual and groups of students. Based on consultation, observation and data collection, the K-IEAs develop behaviour programs, coach and support staff in the implementation of behaviour strategies and provide recommendations for promoting resilience, fostering self-regulation and enhancing pro-social behaviours. The K-IEAs also model and coach staff in the use of specific approaches including, Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS), Above the Line/Below the Line, and Zones of Regulation. Class-wide programming is also provided. To date 93 referrals have been completed.

e) Additional LSS Supports

LSS staff co-developed and presented with curriculum coaches the interest-based professional learning sessions for kindergarten teachers. During these sessions, teachers were provided with strategies such as translanguaging, a classroom strategy that allows students to draw from their entire language repertoire to demonstrate what they know and what they can do with language. It is a method of using all of the linguistic resources for their learning, reading, writing and thinking. Reading the same book, translated in both English and French, is an example of this methodology. Other strategies discussed in these sessions included the use of visuals and gestures and pre-teaching vocabulary to support bilingual instructions for all learners.

## 6. **Implementation of Shift of Language of Instruction for Primary Mathematics**

Support has been provided in the areas of resource materials and professional learning. Grades 1-3 mathematics programs were allocated funds for a range of resources to complement Balanced Mathematics instruction in the classroom as well as teacher guides and support materials.

Professional Learning Support for Primary Mathematics was provided for all teachers new to teaching mathematics or to mathematics teachers who had not taught primary grades in the past three years. Three half-day sessions were facilitated by Marian Small, a Canadian educational researcher, academic, and author, with the following areas of focus:

- a) To provide an overview of the balanced mathematics program in the primary grades with a specific focus on essential understandings in the curriculum, using resources effectively, and purposeful planning.
- b) To continue the focus on the balanced mathematics program with a specific focus on planning and assessment.
- c) Building educator fluency of essential understandings in the mathematics curriculum; using diagnostic assessment and associated intervention strategies; implementing Number Talks and exploring number line as a tool for representing student thinking.

## **7. Challenges in the Early Years**

Across the province, educators have observed an increasing number of students experiencing challenges with self-regulation in kindergarten and primary classrooms. The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has expressed concerns at the provincial level. The Ministry has responded by providing additional funds to cap kindergarten class sizes as well as to provide supports for our youngest learners.

In the OCDSB, we are seeing similar challenges. Input has been collected through the first year of the implementation process from principals and educator teams via surveys (staff and federation), town halls, exit cards from professional learning sessions, and school operations meetings. Notwithstanding the intent to provide direction and supports, several issues emerged as requiring ongoing consideration. These included:

- numbers of educator contacts for kindergarten students despite guidelines for timetabling provided in the spring of 2016,
- communication challenges between Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators,
- student self-regulation (Kindergarten/Primary), and
- a continued need to support teachers new to the kindergarten role.

In response, the following investments were made:

- a) Timetabling sessions for elementary principals and vice-principals provided explicit support for implementing a strategy to reduce numbers of educator contacts significantly across the district in kindergarten classrooms. This included providing specific guidelines for timetabling both models (Half Day English, Half Day French or Full Day Alternate Day) taking into account whether the school has the extended day program or third-party provider. This has resulted in the number of educator contacts falling in the 4-6 range per day/week.

- b) A working group comprised of ECE's, teachers, principal, and Early Years instructional coach are developing a placemat as a resource and support for best practices in communication protocols and strategies between kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators
- c) In addition to the program supports provided through LSS, a joint committee comprised of central staff from Curriculum Services, Learning Support Services, Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Teachers Federation (OCETF), principals and teachers have been sharing information and considering possible supports to classrooms with high levels of self-regulation issues. It is of note that the challenges identified may not be specific to our district. Over the past several months, discussions have emerged from across the province related to children between the ages of 3-6 years who are demonstrating challenging behaviours in the full day kindergarten program. Within this context, the Centre of Excellence, in partnership with School Mental Health ASSIST, proposed a collaboration between school districts, mental health organizations, early childhood researchers and representatives from ministries of education and Child and Youth Mental Health Services to identify the scope and scale of the issue and to develop responses and supports to address it.

The mental health lead from the OCDSB is participating in the provincial think-tank and is helping to inform the work team we have established at the OCDSB. The next steps include: working toward a policy-ready paper focused on mental health in 3-6 year olds in schools (to include current literature and evidence-based practices and identify policy recommendations for community, school board and government), an educator mental health literacy resource on early childhood, and an early years pathways to care document.

- d) Further support for the implementation of the kindergarten program with a specific focus on our French Immersion teachers will be a priority.

## 8. **Ongoing Monitoring**

It will be important to continue monitoring the implementation of the Two-Year 50/50 Bilingual Kindergarten Program and the delivery of mathematics in the primary division in English. Given that some of the information that would be useful for this purpose is embedded in existing annual (or cyclical) reporting structures (e.g., Official October 31 Enrolment, Annual Student Achievement Report, results from the Early Development Instrument, etc.), staff is anticipating that formal updates such as the one provided here are brought forward as follows:

- Spring 2019 – the first cohort of students enrolled in the program would be in grade 1, allowing for further exploration of enrolment trends and patterns with respect to program choice (i.e., EFI, English/Core French) and EDI results from Cycle 5 (anticipated to be conducted in the spring of 2018) would likely be available for inclusion;

- Spring 2022 –the first cohort of students enrolled in the program would have participated in the grade 3 provincial assessments of reading, writing, and mathematics in May 2021 allowing for analysis of achievement data for this group of students in comparison to those who did not have access to the program.

Staff is also exploring the feasibility of partnering with external organizations to support program evaluation and monitoring initiatives, which may help to provide insight into such things as impact of these programming changes for identified groups of students. This information will also be incorporated into the updates described above and into the annual memo of externally-initiated research projects.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

9. Provision for professional learning and resources to support implementation of the change in programming included:

### **Professional Resources**

Additional one time central funds to enhance French resources in JK and SK classes and to augment the resources in schools to support the instruction of mathematics in English in grades 1-3 as follows:

- French in JK and SK: approximately \$1000 per JK and SK English classroom in order to purchase a range of French resources;
- Mathematics: approximately \$1000 per grades 1-3 EFL classroom in order to purchase a range of resources to complement Balanced Mathematics instruction in the classroom, as well as \$250 for teacher's guides/support materials.

Central budgets utilized to purchase resources that complement the series of existing resources already in place for other grades in the school.

The total estimated cost to augment resources in support of the instruction of French in kindergarten was \$200,000. The total estimated cost to enhance resources for the instruction of mathematics in English in grades 1-3 was \$551,250.

### **Professional Learning**

Guided by the kindergarten curriculum policy document, professional learning sessions to be provided to all kindergarten teachers and ECEs related to the implementation of a 50/50 model kindergarten. Professional learning for kindergarten educator teams (teachers and ECEs) would continue to focus on collaborative planning and assessment rooted in inquiry, and play-based

learning. The total estimated cost is \$120,760, comprised of three half-day sessions per teacher and ECE.

Using the Framework for Balanced Mathematics, K-12, professional learning sessions to be provided to teachers new to instruction of mathematics in English at the primary level. These sessions will also be differentiated based on the needs of participants. The total estimated cost is \$206,500 (comprised of three half-day sessions per teacher) and to be funded within the existing 2015/2016 budget.

### **FSL Cultural Funds**

A commitment was made to augment SK and grade 1 classes impacted by the change in number of minutes of French language of instruction.

The table below provides actual expenditures for the 2016-2017 school year.

<b>Support</b>	<b>Funds allocated</b>
<b><u>Kindergarten</u></b>	
<u>Resources/Materials</u> \$1000/class for a base kit of resources	\$250,000
Learning Support Kits Learning Support Materials, Visual Kits	\$22,750 \$29,729
<u>Professional Learning</u> Three half days per teacher/ECE Staff release for ELIP training	\$177,400 \$16,925
<b><u>Primary Mathematics</u></b>	
<u>Resources/Materials</u> \$1000/grade of EFI mathematics for print resources and manipulatives and \$250/primary mathematics teacher for teacher guides and support materials	\$511,000
<u>Professional Learning</u> Three half days per teacher	\$71,126
<b><u>FSL Cultural Support</u></b> \$1000/class	\$70,980
<b>Total Allocation</b>	\$1,149,910

### **Staffing Support**

Additional staffing was allocated through the budget process to support the implementation of the 50/50 Bilingual Kindergarten Program.

2.0 FTE Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP) - \$200,000

2.0 Educational Assistants - \$100,000

## **COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:**

10. With the number of initiatives targeted towards the early years from different departments within the organization, a cross-departmental approach to the monitoring of program implementation is required to promote effective and responsible management of human and financial resources. Central staff will be meeting prior to the end of June to review projects and identify opportunities for joint collaboration in this regard moving forward.

## **STRATEGIC LINKS:**

11. The District is committed to reducing barriers to learning, to improving equity of access and opportunity for all students, and to improve and increase access to the educational pathways for every student. The changes to the Kindergarten delivery model were intended to improve equity of access to French instruction in the early years.

## **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

The following questions are provided to support the discussion of this item by the Committee:

- How has the program change implementation affected schools and students?
- Are there additional areas to prioritize going forward?
- What additional evidence will support the ongoing monitoring of the implementation?
- Do the changes support the Board's commitment to equity of access?

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