

FRENCH PROGRAM CONVERSATION

BOARD COMMITMENT:

Continue to provide a French language program which enables students to graduate with strong French Language skills.

PURPOSE OF THE CONVERSATION:

Consider ways to increase the number of students who graduate from a strong French language program in Golden.

MOVE TO INTENSIVE FRENCH GRADE 6 – 12, PHASE OUT FRENCH IMMERSION

PROS:

- older students would be more able to make a responsible choice about whether or not they want to learn a second language. It would be their choice, thus they would be more motivated to be successful.
- Students only learn French in French. Some students in FI struggle in math, science, and social studies, not because they are not able to understand the concepts presented, but due to the fact that they struggle with the language (French) in which those core subjects are taught.
- By gr. 6, schools have a better idea of which students have difficulty learning to read, write, and process language. Such students have a hard time learning one language, let alone two. Intensive French allows for a more educated choice of what type of instruction best meets each individual student's needs.
- Students can pursue French language studies if in keeping with future career directions.
- Parents are able to play a more active role supporting their child's learning in English through the important elementary years.

- By gr. 6 it will be more obvious which students really want to, and are capable of, taking Intensive French.
- Allows students to develop a solid foundation of first language skills upon which to build a second language.
- Language learning disabilities would likely be identified by gr. 6 and therefore necessary adaptations could be in place.
- Children can be a part of the decision.
- More families may consider a late immersion.
- Gives children from Nicholson and Field an opportunity that is better than FSL but nothing like French Immersion.
- Gives more students different options and ways of enriching their education with a second language.
- A great option to replace the existing Core French program.
- In this manner students having done Intensive French could also be streamed into the French Immersion program to boost enrolment numbers.
- Appears to be experimental to undertake Intensive French in Golden.
- Only as an addition to the French Immersion program, so that the children that could not get in to French due to capping can also benefit from French.
- Ditto in addition to the FI it would be a pro not as a substitute for FI.
- If it was added in addition to FI as an enhancement to FSL it would increase the number of students learning French and the French level of all students.
- To have an option other than immersion to enrich FL instruction, in addition to FI. There should be a choice. We agree with Intensive French as a possible addition to replace Core French, but not to replace French immersion.

CONS:

- Meant to enrich Core French.
- Elite
- Needs strong follow-up program – may have to change entire high school system; they are meant to have one hour of French gr. 7–12. They actually have less time for electives than immersion students, therefore attrition will probably be high.
- If no strong follow-up is in place level of French will be significantly low, even with strong follow-up level is not bilingual.
- Some say Intensive French will be elitist, with only the strongest academic students permitted to enroll.
- Students may not be as fluent by the end of gr. 12.
- Finding teachers specifically trained in Intensive French methodology (a must).
- Layoffs for current K–5 FI teachers who do not have requisite English skills and usually less seniority.
- I feel gr. 6 is too late
- Why increase homework load on students with the extra burden of learning another language.
- This is an elitist option because only the strong students will opt into the program.
- Evidence proves a 2nd language is picked up easier at the younger levels.
- How would this option possibly increase enrolment and reduce attrition if it remains an optional program? It would only work if Intensive French replaced FSL. Then you would have strong bilingual students.
- Increased work load
- Not as effective as French Immersion.
- Six less years of the best time for learning a language in a child's life.

- Would have some social negativity among certain people as immersion, so would not attract that many more students.
- Too late to learn a significant amount of French if they need to drop out in high school due to electives.
- This is what we are really after isn't it, only in addition to Early Immersion.
- Miss early learning
- 5 months of Intensive French followed by 7 months of English (3 core subjects in English and 2 months summer) with no great French continuity.
- Students may graduate with strong French but no bilingual.
- We don't know the success rate of this type of program.
- More homework for kids who already have lots of homework.
- Kids will not graduate fully bilingual from this program unless they also enter French Immersion.
- Abandon something that is working.
- Gr. 6 homework too much.
- Lack of proven materials.
- French that starts in K works.
- Not enough French culture outside of the classroom to support this learning environment
- Grade 6 students will have peer pressure to not do something new or different, harder to attract kids at this age.
- Federal funding would be lost.
- Families will leave this community if FI is phased out.
- Does not meet the school district goal of having students graduate bilingual.
- Unproven program - no stats.

- Weaker French language than FI.
- Takes lots of time away from learning other curriculum like sciences and social studies and rich discussions in class such as French novel student (they learn language mostly)
- No benefits from exposure to second language at young age; brain development, proper accent.
- Less exposure to culture (less time to expose).
- Resistance to learning and more self-conscious, less open to new experiences.
- Second generation siblings won't have the French Immersion option, gap in siblings, household's overall learning.
- Community upheaval – families move out of FI.
- Could force families to choose English, then we need support network to transition to English, furthermore could further lessen French enrolment.
- Parents who have young kids in FI right now that are under gr. 6 get screwed – forced to take kid out.
- Early exposure in primary years (K) is optimal.
- Phasing out FI will take away from the town of Golden. Many families move and stay here on the understanding that French Immersion is here as an opportunity. Intensive French is not a powerful drawing card for families to elect to move to Golden and stay here. Without French Immersion the local economy will suffer many millions of dollars of contraction. The quality of life and the standard of living for everyone in Golden will suffer if French Immersion is phased out.
- Intensive French was designed to replace Core French, not FI.
- Intensive English may work in Quebec where there are many opportunities to practice English but there are not the same opportunities to practice French in the west.
- As a pilot project, it is questionable as to the success of enrolled students. We want to see statistics/research before we do for Intensive

French. Let's wait 4 years before we think about this option, once we get results.

- Job losses to primary (K-4) teachers
- This is not an option that parents of French Immersion would accept.
- Too late to learn a significant amount of French if they need to drop out in high school due to electives.

COMMENTS:

- This is the best alternative. Before there was only French Immersion there was a strong French program from which students graduated and went on to university and continued to take French. This French program would allow more options available to students because there would be more funding available per student (class size). The Immersion program takes a disproportionate amount of the funding.
- Would be a good program in addition to the existing early French Immersion but is not a viable replacement.
- If was an additional program in gr. 6, students could join in French Immersion in gr. 7.
- More time is needed for the process.
- To give this important decision due consideration give it the time it deserves.
- More options for high school students so that they can continue with FI (renew schedules).
- Get bilingual teachers so they can offer more options, not just English.
- Set up split classes, i.e. English and French physics, same teacher bilingual.
- Support the struggling FI students with more SEA time in French.
- In high school, the program needs to be flexible enough to accommodate the FI students' need to have a full range available in terms of electives in

their school. Many students leave the FI program in high school because of this.

- Intensive English program in Quebec cannot be compared to Intensive French program in BC (talk to Hugo at GSS)
- New Brunswick has recently moved to Intensive French program. Do they still have a French immersion program as well?