

## 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.

### CONVERSATION:

The school district is asking for suggestions as to how we can encourage more students to complete French Immersion once they begin, therefore decreasing the attrition throughout the grades.

What are your suggestions on how to reduce attrition throughout kindergarten to grade 12 and therefore increase the number of students graduating from grade 12 through the French Immersion program?

Please Note: Legislated Class-Size:

Kindergarten 22

Grades 1 - 3 24 (K/1 max 22, Grade 3 / 4 max 24)

Grades 4 - 7 30 (over 30 with teacher consent)

Grades 8 - 12` 30 (over 30 with teacher consultation)

- Need to know more about the reasons for attrition
- Tutoring
- More French language instruction in the whole school system to increase the French culture throughout the schools. This could encourage more students to continue to pursue French immersion. To support this idea, French Immersion students can mentor unilingual students studying French, as Intensive or otherwise.

- More French field trips, camps, etc.
- Increase enrolment in kindergarten and allow and encourage students to join the French Immersion if they are capable at any point in the program.
- Do not cap the kindergarten French immersion.
- Improve course selection
- What are the impacts to a French immersion student or English student's scholastic career looking at university entrance requirements based on electives choices?
- How do our attrition rates from FI compare with other districts in English speaking Canada where FI is offered?
- Are FI attrition rates worse for French than they are for English here in Golden?
- I think that by gr. 6/7 children are bilingual and I wouldn't worry about them graduating or not. Early immersion is most effective.
- Do not use graduation from gr. 12 as a benchmark for program evaluation, instead bilingual ability.
- Eliminate all day kindergarten for families who can provide alternatives, then kids can get off to the right start.
- Full immersion plus Intensive French.
- Allow more than 1 class FI in K/1/2 since attrition will even things out by gr. 3 or so. Allow costs increase in the beginning grades.
- Bring FI high school kids to elementary level to share trip, etc. experiences and conversation.
- Eliminate the cap in all early grades and put extra students in split grades or hire another French teacher if there's enough need.
- Promote the program at registration and when families move into the community (Welcome Wagon, Chamber of Commerce, Town website, brochures/flyers at schools).

- Have more French courses available to high school students (College of the Rockies could partner to provide more) enhanced extra-curricular activities in French.
- Public forum – parents and students need to know the benefits of learning another language.
- Have more cultural community events to raise awareness to promote French culture.
- Have more early learning French programs, start the interest at a young age where they are learning the language in a natural and fun way.
- Look at ways of giving the high school students more options and take the French courses also.
- Figure out a way for FI students entering grade 8, to be able to remain in FI and still take the courses they want to.
- Is our goal to have the numbers of FI students on the page or is our goal to have our children go out into the world with a strong 2<sup>nd</sup> language? Even if a student leave the FI program in high school because they want to partake in a course that is only available in English, their French is still very strong, much stronger than if they start later. What is the goal, numbers on a page or students with a strong 2<sup>nd</sup> language?
- My daughter started in French immersion K–10, gr. 11 she was on a Rotary Exchange. Because of a time-tabling conflict she wasn't able to graduate with a French dogwood. She wrote the gr. 12 exam and scored 94% on it. She was not approached or asked about this issue.
- I would like to see a late entry FI. As a 'transplant' to Golden, our children are excluded from any French program due to the grades they are in.
- Perhaps students who want to enter at a later date (and who could handle it) could be accommodated into the FI program.
- In grades 10/11/12 FI is blocked against other options, and vice-versa; there will naturally be an attrition rate in FI. Students are forced out. Don't block against FI and people will stay in.

- If school board does not have budget problems, enrolment and graduation rates are the same as English, then why are you (school board) considering changes?
- Be clear, we are all lost, what is your plan?
- More course options in high school.
- Hire/request more dynamic teachers with maybe 2 French teachables and electives, i.e. social studies and photography or gym.
- Implement/incorporate online learning in gym in the school.
- Keep kids motivated for online learning by keeping them all in the classroom while going through an online program.
- Allow movement into French program. The apparent greater attrition from FI is due to the one-way nature of movement, unlike English (and alternate school).
- Allow and encourage more students into the kindergarten and above.
- High school electives availability in French.
- More learning assistants to support students to stay in French.
- Allow a counsellor to be there for a student who is having problems. (there is a counsellor presently in place and always has been – all children have been accommodated in last 5 years.)
- Allow more K enrolment – 2 classes.
- Promote French language at pre-school level
- Unlock FI resource dollars at high school level to be released for more wages/support staff.
- Con: segregation between French and English. – solid language skills need to be in place as a foundation for learning a second language. – programs need to be equally weighted in terms of student need..inequity between programs presently exists. – if we are a true bilingual country, why are we not all learning French at the appropriate grade level? – how do you meet a child's social/emotional needs and teach them the 'rules'

when they enter a classroom and have no prior experience with the language – K is too soon.

- Why are we measuring the number of students who graduate French immersion? This is not the correct thing to measure.
- Start a strong French language at an early level, kindergarten for all children. It used to be like this in Golden.
- Offer more support to special needs children so they can stay in FI.
- Do more active promotion of the availability of FI.
- Approach the College of the Rockies for assistance in delivering electives to students in high school.
- Process evaluation on when and why kids leave the program to the English program.
- Provide the option to enter Core French students at any grade into the French immersion.
- Offer stronger French program in rural schools or late FI with qualified subs and teachers across the board.
- Is attrition rate important? Kids still learn good French language skills for later in life. Adding other French options is the only way to ensure attrition is minimized.
- Not capping kindergarten French immersion classes.
- Current FI program attrition is in line with provincial average – Current English program is 20–25% below provincial average attrition levels.
- Allow parents to volunteer in the classroom when teacher request help. Currently administrators (APES) seem to put up roadblocks and discourage parents volunteering at the school.
- Different scheduling at high school , i.e. 9–day schedule to give more flexibility for course choices.
- Celebrate our program (dual track).
- Take the cap off French K – why have a program we are proud of and limit it? Directly related to small classes at high school.

- Parents have been turned away each year and no list (or it's a secret list) is made public for the French system to keep track of these families and encourage them to join later.
- Try to have more support for kids that are more susceptible to dropping out. Having a 2<sup>nd</sup> language for these kids would be a great asset in life, maybe their best asset.
- Include teachers in a discussion about creating the schedule in high school to get creative ideas (work with College of the Rockies?)
- Get more kids in . keep them in. we have a great system, great teachers; let's use our strengths to make this program work better for you without getting rid of the best part: early French Immersion.
- Add Intensive French to a core program that starts in kindergarten, in addition to the existing French Immersion so that kids can stream into FI at any level.
- Get more accurate information out to all parents about the financial side of this issue (because some people think that the French program takes money away from the English program).
- This community wants to see an honest open view of what's available for the education; what are the pros and cons of what's available for these programs.
- An opportunity to increase support to the parents of the children in French Immersion.