Administrative Procedure 1000

FRENCH IMMERSION - ELEMENTARY

Responsibility:
Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being
Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services & Treasurer of the Board

Legal References:
The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core, Grades 4–8; Extended, Grades 4–8; Immersion, Grades 1–8, 2013
Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2016

Related References:
Administrative Procedure 1010 – Junior and Senior Kindergarten Registration
Administrative Procedure 1020 – Admission of Underage Pupils
Administrative Procedure 1040 – Out of Boundary Requests – Elementary Schools
Administrative Procedure 1160 - Instructions for Temporary Student Withdrawal
Board Policy 4009 – Student Transportation
Administrative Procedure 4260 – Student Transportation
Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013

Revisions: December 2020
Reviewed: December 2021

1. Preamble

1.1. The following procedures provide guidelines and expectations regarding French Immersion instruction to Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) elementary students. Class formation and consolidation guidelines, program descriptions, staffing, and transportation regulations are also described.

1.2. The WRDSB provides an optional continuous French Immersion program beginning in Grade 1 through to the end of Grade 12. All students are encouraged to apply to the program before their Grade 1 year.

1.3. The WRDSB provides all students with French-language instruction through the Core French program beginning in Grade 1 and ending in Grade 9. Optional Core French classes are offered in Grades 10-12.

1.4. The Business Services division oversees admission into the French Immersion program for the WRDSB.

1.5. The Learning Support Services division oversees French as a Second Language (FSL) programming, including French Immersion for the WRDSB.
2. Definitions

2.1. **Assigned School:** A student may have an Assigned School status if they attend a school other than their Home School because of a programming assignment (e.g., Special Education) or because their sibling is enrolled in French Immersion.

2.2. **Core French:** French language instruction provided to all WRDSB students. All elementary students in the Core French stream are provided with 620 hours of French language instruction by the end of Grade 8 (8% of the instructional day).

2.3. **French Immersion:** An optional French language program provided to all WRDSB students who apply and are admitted through an application. All elementary students in the French Immersion stream are provided with 3880 hours of French language instruction by the end of Grade 8 (50% of the instructional day).

2.4. **Home School:** A student's Home School is determined by their Primary Home Address eligibility for school attendance boundary.

2.5. **Limited Enrolment School:** A school may be designated as Limited Enrolment due to overutilization (enrolment exceeds capacity) and site constraints. Limited Enrolment Schools may not accept any Out-of-Boundary applicants.

2.6. **Out-of-Boundary Student:** Any student who attends a school that is not their Home School based on their Primary Home Address or their Assigned School for program reasons.

2.7. **Primary Home Address:** The student's home address as supplied by the parent/caregiver to the school or Central Registration. The Primary Home Address will determine the student's Home School.

2.8. **Sibling:** Students having one or both parents or caregivers in common.

3. Administration

3.1. Students anticipating enrolling in Grade 1 French Immersion should attend their Home School for Kindergarten (refer to [Administrative Procedure 1010 - Junior and Senior Kindergarten Registration](#)).

3.2. Students at any grade level with a sibling enrolled in French Immersion at an Assigned School may also attend the Assigned School (refer to [Administrative Procedure 1040 – Out of Boundary Requests – Elementary](#)).

4. Applying to French Immersion in Grade 1 (Phase 1)

4.1. At times applications to a Grade 1 French Immersion program at a school exceed the WRDSB’s capacity to offer the program. In that case, a prioritized lottery system is used to determine which students are accepted into the program. Parents/caregivers (hereinafter referred to as students) must apply for Grade 1 French Immersion on or before January 31 in the student's Senior Kindergarten year using the online application system to be eligible for the Phase 1 lottery.

4.1.1. If a student requires assistance with the online application form (e.g., translation, access to technology, etc.), they may contact their Home School/Assigned School or the Planning Department to access assistance.
4.1.2. The Planning Department will send information about French as a Second Language program pathways and the Phase 1 application process to all Senior Kindergarten students through electronic communication (e.g., School-Day) and posted on the WRDSB’s website and social media platforms before January. While the Planning Department will make every effort to communicate this information through the means available, it is the responsibility of the student and their parents/caregivers to actively seek out this information.

4.2. Students who submit applications on or before January 31 will form the basis of the Phase 1 lottery and will be placed in the following order:

4.2.1. Home School and Assigned School students with a sibling in French Immersion will be placed first. Note: this only applies if the sibling attends French Immersion at the Home School/Assigned School when the applicant enters Grade 1. Siblings must be identified on the student’s application form. Refer to Section 6.2 for additional information about out-of-boundary attendance.

4.2.2. Home School students without siblings in French Immersion will be placed second.

4.2.3. Out-of-Boundary students, including Assigned School students who do not meet the criteria laid out in Section 4.2.1, will be placed third, except at Limited Enrolment schools (refer to Section 7.2).

4.3. The Planning Department will run a data verification process prior to conducting the computer-generated randomized lottery in Section 4.2.

4.4. Before March 15, the French Immersion application system will email status notifications to applicants (e.g., French Immersion class list or waiting list). If a student is accepted into a Grade 1 French Immersion class, they will have two (2) weeks to confirm they accept the placement electronically or by contacting the Planning Department.

4.5. All students not placed in a class due to the lottery outlined in Section 4.2 will be placed on a waiting list. The position in the lottery determines the order of the waiting list (e.g., If a class is loaded to 20 students and a student from the Home School is 24th in the lottery, they will be placed 4th on the waiting list).

4.5.1. At times positions become available for students on the waiting list. In that case, applicants will be notified by email that a spot has opened. If a student is offered acceptance into a Grade 1 French Immersion class, they will have five (5) business days to confirm they accept the placement electronically or by contacting the Planning Department.

4.5.2. Waiting lists will remain open, and applicants will be placed in available spaces up to the 20th instructional day of the school year. A student may remain on up to three (3) waiting lists to increase their chances of acceptance. A student must secure a spot in French Immersion by the 20th instructional day of the school year. No students will be added to the program after that date, except for those qualifying under Section 6.1.1.

4.6. To maintain their spot in French Immersion, the student must be in attendance on the first school day in September. If the student is not in attendance on the first day, the parent/guardian must provide a written explanation to the school’s Principal or frenchprograms@wrdsb.ca. Failure to do so may result in the removal of the student from the French Immersion program.

5. Ongoing Grade 1 French Immersion Applications (Phase 2)
5.1. Students who apply between February 1 and the 20th instructional day of the school year will be considered for placement in a Grade 1 French Immersion class on a first-come, first-served basis after the Phase 1 process (refer to Section 4) is completed.

5.1.1. If a student applies after January 31 and there is space in the French Immersion program (refer to Section 7), the student will be placed in the class.

5.1.2. Students applying after January 31 to schools that are full will be placed on the waiting list in sequential order (first come, first served) behind students outlined in Section 4. Alternatively, the student may be offered a French Immersion class placement at a school with no waiting list.

5.1.3. Students with siblings in French Immersion do not receive priority placement in Phase 2.

5.2. Phase 2 closes after the 20th instructional day of the school year.

6. Internal Transfers and New Registrants (after Phase 2 and Grades 2-8)

6.1. For students who transfer into the WRDSB from another school district or a geographical area within the WRDSB after Grade 1 or within their Grade 1 school year, the following procedures apply:

6.1.1. A student can attend a WRDSB school for French Immersion if they are enrolled in French Immersion or have French Language experience.

6.1.1.1. Proof of previous French Immersion or equivalent French language experience is required (e.g., a report card).

6.1.1.2. Admission into the French Immersion program may require an assessment. Prior knowledge can be assessed informally at the school site by the classroom teacher. Learning Support Services staff may be invited to assist.

6.1.1.3. The school may request a six-week trial period before admission is finalized.

6.1.2. In cases where the Home School offers French Immersion at the student’s current grade level:

6.1.2.1. If the student registers/transfers before the 20th instructional day of the school year and is in Grades 2-8, the student is guaranteed placement in French Immersion at the Home School.

6.1.2.2. If the student registers/transfers after the 20th instructional day of the school year and is in Grades 2-8, the student may be placed in French Immersion at the Home School.

6.1.2.3. If the student registers/transfers before the 20th instructional day of the school year and is in Grade 1, then the application process in Section 5 applies. Students with proof of previous French Immersion or equivalent French language experience will be guaranteed placement at a school with space available. The student may be added to the waiting list at the Home School. When space is not available at the Home School, students must follow the process outlined in Section 6.1.4.
6.1.2.4. Grade 1 students with proof of previous French Immersion or equivalent French language experience who register or transfer after the 20th instructional day will be guaranteed placement at a school with space available. Students moving within the WRDSB may remain at their current school for French Immersion for the remainder of the school year.

6.1.3. If the student’s Home School does not offer the French Immersion program at the student’s current grade level, the student will be offered a placement in that grade level at a school that has an opening.

6.1.3.1. If the student registers/transfers before the 20th instructional day of the school year and is in Grade 1, then the application process in Sections 4 or 5 applies. Students with proof of previous French Immersion or equivalent French language experience will be guaranteed placement at a school with space available.

6.1.3.2. Grade 1 students with proof of previous French Immersion or equivalent French language experience who register or transfer after the 20th instructional day will be guaranteed placement at a school with space available. Students moving within the WRDSB may remain at their current school for French Immersion for the remainder of the school year.

6.1.4. The following process is followed to place students in out-of-boundary schools:

6.1.4.1. Students must fill out the Registrations/Transfers after Grade 1 request form (Form PL-21-A) and submit it to the Planning Department (frenchprograms@wrdsb.ca).

6.1.4.2. The Planning Department will contact the French Immersion school(s) on the student’s list. A school may only refuse an Out-of-Boundary student for French Immersion with approval from the Manager of Planning and Superintendent, Student Achievement and Well-Being. Schools with staffing pressures or site/facility constraints may have grounds for refusal. Limited Enrolment schools shall not accept Out-of-Boundary students at any grade level without approval of the Manager of Planning.

6.1.4.3. An Out-of-Boundary request form (IS-20-A) or Student Transfer Form (FS-21-HT) must be completed for the student (and any of their siblings) to finalize the transfer/registration of the student(s).

6.1.4.4. Transportation is not provided for out-of-boundary attendance (see Section 11).

6.2. Students accepted into French Immersion at an out-of-boundary school in Grade 1 will be required to transfer back to their Home School for Grade 2 (only if their Home School offers French Immersion).

6.2.1. All other transfer requests may be made following Administrative Procedure 1040 - Out of Boundary Requests - Elementary Schools.

6.2.2. An Out-of-Boundary request form (IS-20-A) or Student Transfer Form (FS-21-HT) must be completed for the student (and any of their siblings) to finalize the transfer/registration of the student(s).
6.3. Administrative Procedure 1020 - Admission of Underage Pupils, for enrolling under-age children, applies to the French Immersion program.

7. Class Formation/Consolidation

7.1. Grade 1 French Immersion classes will be formed before the school count date for staffing purposes (typically March 31).

7.1.1. By January 31, a school must have at least eighteen (18) Senior Kindergarten students apply for French Immersion (Home School and Assigned School) before it can be considered for offering a Grade 1 French Immersion class.

7.1.1.1. Special consideration may be given to schools geographically isolated from other French Immersion schools and where combined grade classes are possible.

7.1.2. When a class reaches a total of twenty-three (23) applicants, a waiting list of additional students who wish to enroll in the program is established (refer to Section 4).

7.1.3. With the approval of the Coordinating Council, a school may add additional Grade 1 French Immersion classes using the following criteria:

- Home School andAssigned School waiting list applicants total eighteen (18) or more students (if combined grade classes are possible, fewer Home School waitlist students are required, refer to 7.4.1);
- additional French Immersion classes will leave a minimum of eighteen (18) students in the Core French program;
- the WRDSB has enough French-qualified teaching staff to deliver the program; and
- space is available in the school (to be assessed by the Planning Department).

7.2. Limited Enrolment schools will be identified and reviewed annually by the Planning Department, identified on the Grade 1 French Immersion application form. The application form and WRDSB website will provide the listing and explanation of Limited Enrolment schools. A minimum of twenty (20) Home School applicants will be required to open an additional Grade 1 class at Limited Enrolment schools.

7.2.1. The Planning Department reserves the right to maintain vacancies within a Grade 1 French Immersion class at Limited Enrolment Schools after Phase 1 to be held for Home School applicants during Phase 2.

7.3. Should a non-Immersion site generate a minimum of thirty-six (36) Home School applicants for Grade 1 French Immersion by January 31, the WRDSB may consider adding a French Immersion program. In consultation with the Planning Department, Learning Support Services, Human Resource Services, the Family of Schools Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being and school Principal, the following criteria will be used to assess program viability:

- the WRDSB has enough French-qualified teaching staff to expand the program;
- adding French Immersion classes will leave a minimum of eighteen (18) students in the Core French program;
- the school is geographically isolated from other French Immersion sites, and
- space is currently and projected to be available in the school (to be assessed by the Planning Department).
7.3.1. Recommendations for adding new French Immersion sites will be brought forward to the Board of Trustees for approval.

7.4. Collapsing Existing Classes and Programs

7.4.1. When enrolment at any grade level falls below eighteen (18), the Principal will form a combined class.

7.4.2. If by February 15, a class falls below an enrolment of eighteen (18) in Primary or twenty-three (23) in Junior/Intermediate, and a combined class is not formed, the Principal will consult the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being and Manager of Planning, to develop a course of action which may include:

- transferring to a Core French program in the Home School;
- continuing French Immersion at another school where space permits and where parents/caregivers are willing to transport their student(s).

8. Staffing

8.1. Staffing of French Immersion programs is done in accordance with established WRDSB staffing procedures.

9. Withdrawal from French Immersion

9.1. Students experiencing challenges in French Immersion, in either the English or French half of the day, are entitled to support through a referral to the In-School Support Team. The primary support will be through the classroom teacher and could also include a Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), resource withdrawal, and/or an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The language of instruction for Special Education support outside the French Immersion classroom can be French or English. In-class support for French Immersion subjects must be in the French language.

9.2. Students may withdraw from French Immersion and transfer to the Core French program. Withdrawal of a student from the French Immersion program will require an administrator to consult with the parent(s)/caregiver(s). This consultation will include reviewing the student's work, teacher, student (if applicable) and parent/caregiver input, and examining supports in place. Principals must inform their Superintendent, Student Achievement and Well-Being of students withdrawing from the French Immersion program.

9.2.1. Withdrawal requests initiated by the student or parent/caregiver must be approved if they choose to follow through after the consultation in Section 9.2.

9.3. Assigned School or Out-of-Boundary students who withdraw from French Immersion must be redirected to their Home School. Requests to continue to attend the Assigned School as a Core French student are subject to an annual Out-of-Boundary request (IS-20-A) process (Administrative Procedure 1040 - Out of Boundary Requests - Elementary).

9.4. Any siblings in attendance at the Assigned School who are not in French Immersion will also be redirected to their Home School or are subject to an annual Out-of-Boundary request (IS-20-A) process (Administrative Procedure 1040 - Out of Boundary Requests - Elementary).

9.4.1. If the student withdraws from French Immersion but has a sibling in French Immersion at the Assigned School, the student may remain at the Assigned School (refer to Section 3.2)
9.5. Temporary withdrawal may be granted under Administrative Procedure 1160 - Instructions for Temporary Student Withdrawal.

9.5.1. Students wishing to return to French Immersion may be subject to an assessment (refer to 6.1.1.2 and 6.1.1.3).

10. **Program**

10.1. The following instructional language time allocations in Grades 1 to 6 must be adhered to as the Ministry of Education mandates them:

10.1.1. English (50% or 750 minutes of instructional time across a 5-day cycle):

- Language Arts
- Science
- Any three (3) of the following *(note: can be a combination of these subjects)*:
  - Health & Physical Education
  - Music
  - Visual Arts
  - Drama

10.1.2. French (50% or 750 minutes of instructional time across a 5-day cycle):

- French Language
- Social Studies
- Any one (1) of the following *(note: can be a combination of these subjects)*:
  - Health & Physical Education
  - Music
  - Visual Arts
  - Drama

- Mathematics *(note: 300 minutes of Math instruction in French must be allotted per 5-day cycle in 60-minute blocks)*

10.2. The following instructional language time allocations in Grades 7 and 8 must be adhered to as the Ministry of Education mandates them:

10.2.1. English (50% or 750 minutes of instructional time across a 5-day cycle):

- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology

10.2.2. French (50% or 750 minutes of instructional time across a 5-day cycle):

- French Language
- Geography/History
- Any combination of the following to create 50% of instruction in French:
  - Health & Physical Education
  - Music
  - Visual Arts
  - Drama
10.2.3. Subjects that can be taught in either French or English depending on teacher qualifications and timetabling considerations:
  
  ● Physical Education
  ● Health
  ● Music
  ● Dance
  ● Drama

11. Transportation

11.1. Student transportation is governed by Board Policy 4009 - Student Transportation and Administrative Procedure 4260 - Student Transportation.