



Administrative Procedure 1000 FRENCH IMMERSION - ELEMENTARY

Responsibility:	<i>Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board</i>
Legal References:	<i><u>The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core, Grades 4–8: Extended, Grades 4–8; Immersion, Grades 1–8, 2013</u> <u>Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2016</u></i>
Related References:	<i><u>Administrative Procedure 1010 – Junior and Senior Kindergarten Registration</u> <u>Administrative Procedure 1020 – Admission of Underage Pupils</u> <u>Administrative Procedure 1040 – Out of Boundary Requests – Elementary Schools</u> <u>Administrative Procedure 1150 - Temporary Withdrawal of Elementary Students From the Core French Program</u> <u>Administrative Procedure 1160 - Instructions for Temporary Student Withdrawal</u> <u>Administrative Procedure 2240 - Absenteeism: Prolonged Absences and Temporary Withdrawals</u> <u>Board Policy 4009 – Student Transportation</u> <u>Administrative Procedure 4260 – Student Transportation Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013</u></i>
Revisions:	November 2023, December 2024
Reviewed:	

1. Preamble

- 1.1. The following procedures provide guidelines and expectations regarding French immersion programming for Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) elementary students. They also describe the application process, class formation and consolidation guidelines, staffing, withdrawal, program overview, and transportation regulations.
- 1.2. The WRDSB provides French immersion programming from Grade 2 to the end of Grade 12. All students can apply to the program before they reach grade 2.
- 1.3. The WRDSB provides all students with French-language instruction through the core French program, which begins in Grade 1 and ends in Grade 9. Students may take optional core French classes in Grades 10-12.
- 1.4. The Business Services division oversees admission into the WRDSB's French immersion program in consultation with the Learning Support Services.

- 1.5. The Superintendent, Student Achievement and Well-Being responsible for the Learning Support Services division oversees French as a Second Language (FSL) programming, including French immersion for the WRDSB.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Designated School:** If a student's *Home School* does not offer French immersion, another school may accommodate them for French immersion. This school is their *Designated School*. If the student's *Home School* offers French immersion and they attend a school other than their *Home School*, they are considered an Out-of-Boundary student.
- 2.2. **Core French:** WRDSB elementary students not in French immersion receive core French language instruction (some exceptions apply; refer to *Administrative Procedure 1150 - Temporary Withdrawal of Elementary Students From the Core French Program*). Elementary students enrolled in core French are provided with a minimum of 600 hours of French language instruction by the end of Grade 8 (16% of the instructional day in Grade 1 and 8% in Grades 2-8).
- 2.3. **French immersion:** An optional French language program provided to WRDSB students who apply and are admitted through an application process. Elementary students enrolled in French immersion are provided with a minimum of 3800 hours of French language instruction by the end of Grade 8 (58% of the instructional day in Grades 2 to 6 and 50% in Grades 7 and 8). Refer to Section 10 for Subject Time Allocation.
- 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 Limited Enrolment when student enrolment exceeds building capacity and/or has site constraints. *Limited Enrolment Schools* may not accept any *Out-of-Boundary Students*.
- 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 *Designated School* for program reasons. Refer to *Administrative Procedure 1040 – Out of Boundary Requests – Elementary Schools*.
- 2.7. **Primary Home Address:** The student's home address as supplied by the parent/guardian to the school. The *Primary Home Address* will determine the student's *Home School*. In cases where students live under a joint custody agreement, the parties are expected to decide the student's school or programs following their custodial agreement.
- 2.8. **Sibling:** Students having one or more parents or guardians in common.

3. Administration

- 3.1. Students anticipating applying for Grade 2 French immersion should attend their *Home School* for Kindergarten to Grade 1 (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 a *Designated School* may also attend the *Designated School* (refer to *Administrative Procedure 1040 – Out of Boundary Requests – Elementary*), except where students are required to transition to another school for Grades 7 and 8 (i.e., where a Junior Kindergarten (JK) to Grade 6 school feeds to a JK to Grade 8 school for Grades 7 and 8, a sibling in JK-6 may not attend the feeder school with the sibling unless approved as an Out-of-Boundary request).

4. Applying to French Immersion in Grade 2 (Phase 1)

- 4.1. A prioritized lottery system determines admittance to the French immersion program. Applications occur in the student's Grade 1 year using an online application system to qualify for the Phase 1 lottery. Grade 2 French immersion applications are due on or before January 31.
 - 4.1.1. If an applicant requires assistance with the online application form (e.g., translation service, access to technology, etc.), they may contact their *Home School/ Designated School* or the Planning Department.
 - 4.1.2. The WRDSB will share information about FSL program pathways and the Phase 1 application process with all Grade 1 students before January through electronic communication (e.g., School-Day), the WRDSB's website and social media platforms.
- 4.2. Applications received 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* students and students with a *Designated School* sibling in French immersion will be placed first. Note: This only applies if the sibling attends French immersion at the *Home School/Designated School* when the applicant enters Grade 2. Siblings must be identified on the student's application form. Refer to Section 6.2 for additional information about out-of-boundary attendance.

Please note: *The priority given to siblings will be discontinued following the 2025-26 school year. This means that for the application process for the 2026-27 school year, all Home School and Designated School students will be entered into the first round of the lottery.*
 - 4.2.2. *Home School* and *Designated School* students without siblings in French immersion will be placed second.
 - 4.2.3. *Out-of-Boundary* students, including *Designated 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 verify the data before 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 offered a placement in a Grade 2 French immersion class, they will have two (2) weeks to confirm their acceptance of 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. If the student's *Home School* offers French immersion, they will only be offered a placement at an out-of-boundary school if they are on the *Home School* waiting list.
 - 4.5.1. Waiting lists will remain open, and applicants will be placed in available spaces up to the 20th instructional day of the school year. To increase their chances of acceptance, a student may remain on a maximum of three (3) waiting lists. 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 those qualifying under Section 6.1.1.

- 4.5.2. If a student is offered acceptance into a Grade 2 French immersion class, they will have five (5) business days to confirm their acceptance electronically or by contacting the Planning Department. All necessary paperwork (e.g., student transfer forms, online registration, etc.) must be provided to the *Home School/Designated School* by March 31st or within ten (10) business days of confirming acceptance.
- 4.6. To maintain their spot in French immersion, Phase 1 and Phase 2 students must be in attendance on the first school day of school. If a student is absent 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 student's removal from the French immersion program. Students must attend school by the 15th instructional day to hold their placement in French immersion unless they remain in the register (refer to *Administrative Procedure 2240 - Absenteeism: Prolonged Absences and Temporary Withdrawals*, s.3).

5. Ongoing Grade 2 French Immersion Applications (Phase 2)

- 5.1. After the Phase 1 applicants have been accepted into the French immersion program or placed on a waiting list, additional applicants will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis (Phase 2).
 - 5.1.1. If a student applies after January 31 and the school has space in the French immersion program (refer to Section 7), the student will be placed in the class.
 - 5.1.2. Applications after January 31 to full schools 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 if applying after January 31st.
- 5.2. Phase 2 opens on February 1 and closes after the 20th instructional day of the school year (September/October).

6. Internal Transfers and New Registrants (after Phase 2 and Grades 3-8)

- 6.1. For French immersion students who transfer into the WRDSB from another school district or within the WRDSB after Grade 2 or after Phase 2, the following procedures apply:
 - 6.1.1. Students can attend a WRDSB school for French immersion if they are enrolled in French immersion (i.e., the student has equivalent or greater hours of French language instruction to meet graduating year Ministry of Education requirements) or have French language experience. French language tutoring differs from French language experience or instruction and would not satisfy the requirements referenced herein.
 - 6.1.1.1. Proof of previous French immersion instruction or equivalent French language experience (e.g., a report card indicating greater or equivalent hours of instruction or language proficiency is required. If the conditions in section 6.1.1 are met, the school Administrator(s) should initiate an assessment process.

Assessment Process: At the school Administrator's request, Learning Support Services or a WRDSB designate will assess students' French language proficiency and collect data to support the parent/caregiver and the school Administrator's decision to continue the French immersion pathway. The assessment does not require a student to pass a test; the data collected will be used to plan for and support the student's transition into the French immersion classroom. This assessment may occur at a designated location arranged between Learning Support Services staff and the school Administrator.

- 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 is in Grades 3-8 and meets the criteria in Section 6.1.1, the student can attend French immersion at the *Home School*.
 - 6.1.2.2. If a student registers/transfers during Grade 2, they may remain enrolled in the school they moved from unless the new *Home School* can accommodate them (e.g., considering the size of the class, waiting list information, etc.). The student may also be transferred to another school where accommodation is possible.
 - 6.1.2.3. Should a student attend a school other than their *Home School* for Grade 2, they may transfer to their *Home School* after Grade 2. All other requests must follow the Out-of-Boundary Request procedure (*Administrative Procedure 1040 - Out of Boundary Requests - Elementary Schools; IS-20-A*).
- 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 at a school with an opening.
 - 6.1.3.1. If the student is in Grades 3-8 and meets the criteria set out in Section 6.1.1, the student will follow the process outlined in Section 6.1.4.
 - 6.1.3.2. If a Grade 2 student registers/transfers before Phase 2 closes, then Sections 4 or 5 apply.
 - 6.1.3.3. Grade 2 students meeting the criteria set out in Section 6.1.1 who register or transfer after Phase 2 closes may be placed at a school that can accommodate them (e.g., considering the size of the class, waiting list information, etc.). Students moving within the WRDSB may remain at their current school for French immersion for the remainder of that school year. For Grade 3, a student may elect to go through the process outlined in Section 6.1.4.
- 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 Entry Point 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.

6.1.4.3. A school may only refuse an *Out-of-Boundary student* for French immersion with approval from the Senior Manager of Planning in consultation with Human Resources and Equity Services. *Limited Enrolment schools* shall not accept *Out-of-Boundary Students* at any grade level without the approval of the Senior Manager of Planning.

6.1.4.4. If a suitable school cannot accommodate a student, they may withdraw from the French immersion pathway and attend their *Home School* (Section 9.2 will not apply in these circumstances).

7. Class Formation/Consolidation

7.1. Grade 2 French immersion classes will be formed before the school count date (typically March 31) for staffing purposes.

7.1.1. A school must have at least twenty-three (23) Grade 1 students apply by January 31 to form a Grade 2 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 the predetermined class size cap, 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 Senior Administration (i.e., Leadership Council), a school may add additional Grade 2 French immersion classes using the following considerations:

- Phase 1 waiting list applicants total twenty-three (23) or more students (if combined grade classes are possible, fewer waiting list students are required);
- additional French immersion classes will leave an adequate number of students in the core French program;
- a feasibility review of staffing a class with a qualified teacher has been completed in consultation with Human Resources; and
- space is available in the school (to be assessed by the Planning Department).

7.2. The Planning Department will identify and review *Limited Enrolment Schools* annually. These schools will be identified on the Grade 2 French immersion application form. The application form and WRDSB website will list and explain *Limited Enrolment Schools*.

7.2.1. The WRDSB reserves the right to maintain vacancies within a Grade 2 French immersion class at *Limited Enrolment Schools* after Phase 1 for *Home School* applicants who apply during Phase 2.

7.3. The WRDSB may consider adding a French immersion program to a non-immersion site using the following considerations to assess program viability:

- it is feasible to expand the program with qualified teachers (to be assessed in consultation with Human Resources);
- a minimum of two classes (46 students) have applied for entry into the Grade 2 French immersion program at the site;
- adding French immersion classes will leave a minimum of twenty (20) students in the core French program at the school;

- space is currently and projected to be available in the school (to be assessed by the Planning Department);
- a student population stability threshold is met (e.g., assess neighbourhood turnover rate, age cohort demographics, etc.);
- the program has a clear pathway to completion of Grade 8 or Grade 12 French immersion(e.g., where will students attend Gr. 2-6, 7-8 and 9-12?);
- the school will have been in active operation for over five (5) years.

7.3.1. Senior Administration will recommend adding new French immersion sites in consultation with Business Services, Learning Support Services, Human Resources and Equity and Human Rights Services, the Family of Schools Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being and the school's Principal.

7.4. Collapsing Existing Programs

7.4.1. Before the annual staffing process (typically March 31), the Planning Department and Human Resources will report to Leadership Council on enrolment status at each elementary school offering French immersion classes. Decisions to collapse programs will use the following guiding principles:

- the French immersion cohort in any given year falls below the average class size for that grade, and combined grade classes are not feasible;
- maintaining a French immersion program at the school is not financially feasible; and
- staffing the program with French-qualified teachers is challenging.

A recommended course of action may include:

- the program is fully removed from the school with the following options presented to students:
 - transfer to a core French program in the Home School;
 - continue French immersion at another school where space permits and the parents/guardians can transport the student(s);
- the program is phased out of the school over time;
- the program continues at the school.

7.4.2. When a decision is made to close an existing French immersion program, a communication plan will be developed in consultation with the school's Principal, Superintendent, Student Achievement and Well-Being, and Senior Manager of Communications.

8. Staffing

8.1. Staffing of French immersion programs follows established WRDSB staffing procedures.

9. Withdrawal from French immersion

9.1. Change of address

- 9.1.1. When a student leaves the WRDSB, no Superintendent's signature is required to facilitate the withdrawal from the program.
- 9.1.2. A student may withdraw from French immersion if their *Primary Home Address* falls outside the attendance boundary of a school with French immersion at the student's grade level. Should the student opt to continue in French immersion, the process in Section 6 applies. No Superintendent signature is required to facilitate withdrawal from the program.
- 9.1.3. Students/families and/or caregivers may be asked to complete an exit survey (FLS-24-C) for data collection.

9.2. Change of pathway

- 9.2.1. Students have equal opportunities to access support regardless of the FSL pathway. Students experiencing challenges in the French immersion pathway, in either the English or French portion of the day, are entitled to support through the Student Support Process.
- 9.2.2. Before initiating a change of pathway request, the Student Support Process must have been implemented and documented in the student's S4S profile. Once all efforts to support the student in the current pathway have been exhausted, the form LS-23-A (Change of Pathway from Immersion to core French) form must be completed. The LS-32-A form requires that the school provide proof of strategies and supporting data implemented over a reasonable period.
- 9.2.3. Change of pathway requests that do not fall under the need for student support must also follow the process in section 9.2.2.
- 9.2.4. The Superintendent overseeing Learning Support Services must approve decisions to change a student's pathway from immersion to core French based on the student's needs and parent/guardian choice. The Superintendent is responsible for the final decision.

9.3. *Designated School* or *Out-of-Boundary students* who withdraw from French immersion will attend their *Home School*. Requests to continue to attend the *Designated School* as a core French student are subject to the Out-of-Boundary request (IS-20-A) process (Administrative Procedure 1040 - Out of Boundary Requests - Elementary)

- 9.3.1. Any siblings in attendance at the *Designated School* who are not in French immersion will be redirected to their *Home School* or subject to the Out-of-Boundary request (IS-20-A) process (Administrative Procedure 1040 - Out of Boundary Requests - Elementary).
- 9.3.2. If the student withdraws from French immersion but has a sibling in French immersion at the *Designated School*, the student may remain at the *Designated School* (refer to Section 3.2).

9.4. Temporary withdrawal due to extended absence may be granted under Administrative Procedure 1160 - Instructions for Temporary Student Withdrawal. For absences beyond 15 days, please refer to Administrative Procedure 2240 - Absenteeism: Temporary Student Withdrawal on short term basis.

9.4.1. Students wishing to return to French immersion may be subject to an assessment (refer to 6.1.1.2 and 6.1.1.3). Students with extended absences wanting to return to French immersion may not be guaranteed readmittance.

10. Subject Time Allocation

10.1. The instructional language time allocations in Grades 1 to 8 align with the Ministry of Education requirements. Administrators should refer to the current Subject Allocation document for detailed subject allocation recommendations for students to achieve the minimum required hours upon completion of Grade 8.

10.2. The school administrative team is responsible for completing the French minutes/hours of instruction reference card. Reports must be printed and submitted into the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) by the last day of the student's enrolment at that school site. Students participating in extracurricular activities that require them to miss portions of French instructional time are not penalized in hours for their absence.

10.2.1. Core French Yearly Hours

Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 113 hours of core French instruction ● 38 hours with French as the language of instruction from an administrator choice between either one or a combination of: Visual Arts, Music, Drama, Dance, Health, and/or Physical Education <p style="text-align: right;">Total of 151 hours with French as the Language of instruction</p>
Grades 2-8	A minimum of 75 hours per instructional year

10.2.2. French Immersion Yearly Hours

Grades 2-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In grades 2-6, the following subjects must be taught in French: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● French Language Arts ● Social Studies ● Visual Arts ● Drama, Dance, Music ● Physical Education and Health <p>Minutes for Daily Physical Activity (DPA) will also occur during French as the language of instruction time.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total of 545 hours with French as the language of instruction</p>
Grades 7 & 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In grades 7 and 8, the following subjects must be taught in French: French Language Arts, Geography/History and some combination of Visual Arts, Drama, Music and/or Physical Education

	<i>Total of 470 hours with French as the language of instruction</i>
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11. Transportation

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