

# FRENCH IMMERSION REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following a number of concerns expressed by parents regarding French immersion programs in the Halifax Regional School Board, the Minister of Education struck a joint committee to address the direction and administration of such programs in the Halifax Regional school system. The French Immersion Review Committee, composed of representatives from the Department of Education, the Halifax Regional School Board, Canadian Parents for French and the Department of Canadian Heritage, examined the movement of French immersion students within the Board and the offering of early and late immersion programs in the same family of schools.

The report presents the issues that were examined and provides recommendations associated with each issue.

It should be noted that consensus was not reached on the recommendations contained in the report due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1).

### **I. Movement of French Immersion Students**

Parents of students in the Halifax Regional School Board regard French immersion as being a highly successful and beneficial program. There were approximately 7300 students registered in French immersion in the Board during the 2001-2002 school year. However, the frequent movement of French immersion students and teachers from one school to another has raised concerns and questions about the impact the movement is having on the quality of the French immersion program. Frequent movement of French immersion students causes frustration and anxiety in students and parents, prevents the creation of a stable and supportive school climate required for the success of the program, and diminishes the availability of French resources needed to support student learning.

The recommendations following each issue are proposed to address the concerns identified and to ensure continued access to a quality French immersion program in the Halifax Regional School Board..

#### ***Issue No. 1: Attendance Boundaries***

The Board's present *Creating School Populations Policy* does not allow the establishment of attendance boundaries for French immersion students attending school offering French immersion programs. It prevents long term planning in regards to the placement of these students and the delivery of the program since the board can assign French immersion students to schools on an annual basis. The Board considers French immersion as a program and therefore parents cannot necessarily register students at the school where French immersion is offered. Communication of information to parents registering their children in French immersion and promotion of the program itself are therefore rendered more difficult.

***Recommendations:***

- That under clause 1.0 of the *Creating School Populations Policy*, it be recognized that French immersion is offered in schools called “French Immersion Area Schools” and that these schools be included in the definition of area school in this policy and its procedures.
- That attendance boundaries be established for French Immersion Area Schools
- That a long term plan regarding the following be articulated:
  - identification of French Immersion Area Schools and the communities from which they draw immersion students
  - identification of the junior high and senior high schools that French immersion students will attend as well as the corresponding feeder schools from which these students originate
- That registration for French immersion take place at the French Immersion Area School in order to facilitate promotion of the program and communication to parents of information regarding the program.
- That the term “area school” be used throughout the policy. The use of the terms “area school” and “home school” in the same policy document can be confusing.

***Issue No. 2: Boundary Reviews***

French immersion students are not considered when school boundaries are reviewed. Decisions regarding placement of French immersion students are made subsequently to and/or separately from school boundary review decisions thus causing much disruption for immersion students and parents. Parents feel that French immersion students are being targeted to solve problems related to school closings and school overcrowding.

***Recommendations:***

- That boundaries for both French immersion and English programs be reviewed at the same time during the boundary review process
- That French immersion representatives be included on the Boundary Review Committee when the review affects or will affect the placement of French immersion students
- That data on actual and projected French immersion enrolment and trends for the area school under review be provided and included in the boundary review process along with other data as indicated in section 6.1 of the *Creating School Populations: Procedures*
- That French immersion students be relocated only when English program and French immersion program students are being moved as a block
- That, before construction, a new school be identified as being a single track, dual track or English program only school and that the boundaries for the new school be established accordingly

## **II. Early and Late French Immersion Programs**

Prior to amalgamation, the individual district boards offered only one French immersion option throughout the board. Parental expectations regarding access to French immersion programs have increased as a result of amalgamation. Since 1998, the Board has begun seven new early

immersion programs in areas that previously offered only late immersion and has begun one late immersion program in the Dartmouth area. In September 2002, four additional early immersion programs will begin, two of which will not be funded through Canadian Heritage.

The recommendations following each issue are proposed to address the concerns identified and to promote and facilitate the implementation of the system standard of two entry points for French immersion.

***Issue No 1: Implementation of two entry points: early and late French immersion programs***

A sub-committee of System Review 16 confirmed the pre-amalgamation program offerings in each of the 3 former district boards. A transition plan was developed for implementation of a second entry point in area/neighbourhood schools where sufficient population and interest exists. There has been little activity regarding the system review in the last few years. However, immersion options have been expanded despite the lack of funding in the strategic plan. The demand for implementation of a second entry point continues to increase in certain areas.

***Recommendations:***

- Since the transition to two entry points is an on-going active process, that the System Review Interim Report and the transition plan be reviewed and updated on an annual basis
- As proposed in the System Review Interim Report and approved by the Board, that the Business Services Department of the Board provide an indication of the actual costs associated with offering new and on-going French Immersion programs
- That funds provided by Canadian Heritage be first allocated to staff French immersion programs that produce additional costs to the Board (i.e. additional teacher not available by board staff allocation formula)

***Issue No. 2 Out-of-area requests***

Since the amendments made to the Creating School Populations Policy in the spring of 1998, placement in French immersion is guaranteed for those students (except for those in the Duncan MacMillan and Musquodoboit schools) who register by March 1, but not necessarily at the area school. However, current policies and procedures of the Board lead to circumstances where students wanting to access French immersion cannot be accommodated. Students may apply for an out-of-area transfer in order to attend a school that offers French immersion. However, staffing in schools is completed prior to the consideration of out-of-area requests. As a result, out-of-area requests may not be granted due to an inability to increase staff to meet the needs of the in-coming out-of-area students.

***Recommendations:***

- As proposed in the System Review Interim Report and approved by the Board, that the availability of early and late French immersion programs continue to be expanded;
- That an additional site, if necessary, for late French immersion be designated in the Dartmouth area in order to accommodate those students seeking to enter a late French immersion program
- That registration for French immersion be held at the school where French immersion is

- presently offered or at the site where it will be offered
- That, in the transition phase, out-of-area requests for French immersion be considered at the same time as registration is held in order to permit a staffing formula based on the total number of prospective students and to facilitate a decision about where to house an additional class if required. (i.e. school from which the largest number of out-area-requests originate)

***Issue No. 3: Merging of Early and Late Immersion Students at the Junior High Level***

In the last few years, the board has started early French immersion classes in families of schools that presently offer late immersion programs. Concerns have been raised about the maintenance of the quality and integrity of both programs once students from different immersion programs attend the same junior high schools. Merging of early and late immersion students in other jurisdictions in Canada was examined. Attrition was considered a possible factor in the ability to teach both groups of students separately.

***Recommendations***

- That students from early immersion and late immersion be taught separately at the junior high level
- That professional development be offered to teachers to facilitate the merger of early and late immersion students where necessary
- That information regarding the merging of early and late immersion students be clearly communicated to parents
- That early immersion expansion occur in more than one elementary school feeding into a junior high in order to ensure that a more viable number of early immersion students will enter a junior high that also possibly offers a late French immersion program
- That resource support be provided to French immersion students as described in the Programming section of the *Special Education Policy Manual* and in the Policy for French Second Language Programs
- That reasons for high French immersion attrition rates in particular schools be identified and that actions be taken to enable more students to remain in the program.

***Issue No. 4 - Availability of French Immersion for students in the Duncan MacMillan and Musquodoboit family of schools.***

At present, students in the Duncan MacMillan and Musquodoboit family of schools do not have access to French immersion programs. Some parents in the area have however requested that French immersion programs be available to their children as it is in other areas of the Board. Interest in learning French may need to be heightened at the elementary level in these areas.

***Recommendations:***

- As proposed in the System Review Interim Report and approved by the Board, that the system standard for French immersion be promoted in these areas
- That ways of increasing student interest in studying French be explored (Grade 6 Intensive Core French; concentrated periods for core French in grades 4-5-6)
- That board staff examine how other small rural high schools in the province configure

themselves to offer French immersion to their students

## FRENCH IMMERSION REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

### BACKGROUND:

Historically, the demand for French immersion programs in the Halifax, Dartmouth and County Regions has always been strong. Since amalgamation, parents' expectations regarding the availability of a second entry point have risen. In response, the Halifax Regional School Board began early immersion programs in areas that traditionally offered only late immersion and in September 2001, began a late immersion program in the Dartmouth area. During the 2001-2002 school year, approximately 7300 students were registered in French immersion programs in the Halifax Regional School board. Parents regard French immersion as a highly successful program and wish to provide their children the opportunity to develop a high degree of proficiency in French, Canada's other official language. Along with potential career opportunities, parents recognise the personal, social and intellectual benefits attached to knowing a second language.

Pursuant to article 145 of the Nova Scotia Education Act, the Minister of Education is responsible for the public school program of education to be provided and administered by school boards. The Policy for French Second Language Programs states that the Department of Education is responsible for providing leadership and orientation for French second language programs in Nova Scotia public schools. The policy also says that Anglophone school boards may offer early and late French immersion programs. The goals of the French immersion program, as described in the Policy and in the Public School Programs document, include the development of effective communicative skills in French and of an understanding and appreciation of French language and culture, among others.

In its French Second Language Policy approved February 24<sup>th</sup> 1998, the Halifax Regional School Board states that it recognizes the value of learning a second language and that it "is committed to providing students with opportunities to access a variety of French Second Language Programs."

Following a number of concerns expressed by parents regarding movement of students enrolled in French immersion programs in the Halifax Regional School Board, the Minister of Education struck a joint committee to address the direction and administration of French immersion programs in the Halifax Regional school system. Representatives from the Halifax Regional School Board and Canadian Parents for French were invited to sit on this committee along with representatives from the Department of Education. An observer from Canadian Heritage subsequently joined the committee.

## **MANDATE**

The mandate of the committee was to review the long-range planning of the Halifax Regional School Board regarding French immersion programming as it pertains to:

- the movement of French immersion students
- the offering of both early and late immersion programs in the same family of schools

**The closure of École Beaufort was not a mandate of the committee.**

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **Nova Scotia Department of Education:**

Anne Baccardax, French Immersion Consultant  
Andrée Green, Director of French Second-Language Programs  
Nancy Mosher, Regional Educational Officer

### **Halifax Regional School Board:**

Lorraine Cooke, Assistant Superintendent, Area C  
Darrell Samson, Principal, Shannon Park School

### **Canadian Parents for French:**

Milton Graves, President, Halifax Regional Chapter  
Gary Robitaille, President, CPF, Hammonds Plains-Tantallon Chapter,

### **Canadian Heritage - Nova Scotia**

Gabrielle Verri, Program Manager

## **I. MOVEMENT OF FRENCH IMMERSION STUDENTS**

### **Background**

Since amalgamation, the Board accommodates all children who register for French immersion before March 1 for the following school year, although not necessarily in their area school.

Three immersion populations in particular seem to be of concern in regards to movement between schools: Mainland North, Hammonds Plains and Peninsular Halifax. In addition, a board boundary review which is presently underway and which will not be complete until the Fall, will also impact on schools in these areas.

The greatest concern has been expressed by parents of students at École Beaufort, a P-4 single-track French immersion school in Peninsular Halifax that is due to close as of July 31, 2002. Similar concerns have been expressed in other areas of the board, in particular from parents of

students presently attending Park West School, a P-9 school with dual-track for grades 7-9 in Mainland North and Hammonds Plains Consolidated School, a dual-track P-4 school in Hammonds Plains.

Most students previously attending École Beaufort will have attended three schools during their elementary school years. In future years, students who would have attended École Beaufort will attend three schools during their elementary and junior high school years.

Parents of immersion students who are presently attending Park West have been informed that all immersion students will be transferred to Fairview Junior High in September 2002. Only French immersion students have been identified for this move. In September 2000, despite the fact that sufficient space was available for immersion students traditionally feeding into Fairview Junior High, the Board opted to open a new immersion site at Park West School thus necessitating the transfer of students from Fairview. Fewer than two years later, the Board has decided to close this immersion site. As a result, many of these students will be attending their 4th school in order to participate in French immersion programs.

Immersion students now attending Hammonds Plains Consolidated School will remain at the school for the 2002-2003 school year. A boundary review commencing in the Fall of 2002 may impact on the placement of French immersion students for subsequent years.

Parents question the Board's commitment to French immersion programs and have expressed their belief that the board moves French immersion students to solve overcrowding issues or to fill vacant classrooms in certain schools without considering the impact and effect of such a move on their children's learning.

The Board provided information related to the movement of French immersion students since amalgamation, and suggested that similar movement has taken place amongst students in English programs.

Recent events and the frequent school changes that have occurred for French immersion students in particular over the last few years indicate that there is insufficient long term planning in regards to the placement of French immersion students and the delivery of the program.

### **Issue No. 1: Attendance Boundaries**

The preamble to the Board's Creating School Populations Policy states that:

“The Halifax Regional School Board (the Board) will be guided by the goal of creating the best possible learning environments for all students.”

The policy also states:

2.0 All students living within the boundaries of the Board must register at the school

serving the area in which they reside by March 1 of each calendar year for the school year commencing in September of the same year.

- 2.2 A child who registers for a French Immersion Program at the area school will be accommodated in the program, but not necessarily at the **area** school.
- 2.4 During the promotion of a French Immersion Program, in the case of early immersion, at the time of Primary Registration it be identified to parents/guardians of this option, with the understanding that the program might not be offered at their **home** school.

According to its Creating School Populations Policy, the Board establishes attendance boundaries for each school in the region and may periodically review any or all school attendance boundaries. The board retains the right to place students on an annual basis and does not recognize school boundaries for French immersion students. Consequently, students cannot register to attend a particular French immersion school. The Board views French immersion as a program and assigns students to schools that offer French immersion programs. This practice is regarded by parents as being unfair. Although French immersion area schools do not exist, parents and guardians must fill out-of-area requests in order to seek a placement for students in a school other than the one to which they have been assigned.

### **Recommendations:**

Consensus was not reached on the following recommendations due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1).

- That under clause 1.0 of the *Creating School Populations Policy*, it be recognized that French immersion is offered in schools called “French Immersion Area Schools” and that these schools be included in the definition of area school in this policy and its procedures.
- That attendance boundaries be established for French Immersion Area Schools
- That a long term plan regarding the following be articulated:
  - identification of French Immersion Area Schools and the communities from which they draw immersion students
  - identification of the junior high and senior high schools that French immersion students will attend as well as the corresponding feeder schools from which these students originate
- That registration for French immersion take place at the French Immersion Area School in order to facilitate promotion of the program and communication to parents of information regarding the program.
- That the term “area school” be used throughout the policy. The use of the terms “area school” and “home school” in the same policy document can be confusing. An explanation of the difference in terms or the use of only one term would alleviate some confusion.

## **Issue No. 2: Boundary Reviews**

At present, French immersion students are not considered when school boundaries are reviewed. Decisions regarding placement of French immersion students are made subsequently to and/or separately from school boundary review decisions. This causes much disruption for immersion communities: the original boundary review process and the subsequent change in placement of French immersion students.

Section 7.0 of the *Creating School Populations: Procedures* states:

- 7.7 By March 30 of each year, the Supervisor of Staffing and Resources will inform principals as to the location of the French Immersion classes for the coming year.
- 7.8 By the end of the first week of April, principals will inform parents/guardians as to the placement of students registered for French Immersion.

Parents recognise that it may not be possible to accommodate students at the area school and that French immersion might not be offered at their “home” school. However, parents expect that once registered in French immersion, students become part of a school and that school decisions are based on what is best for all students in the school. Parents feel that French immersion students are being targeted to solve problems related to school closings and school overcrowding.

They also believe that constant moving of students and teachers back and forth precludes the creation of a stable school climate that supports French immersion students. Creation of such a climate requires time and results from the continued involvement of staff, students and parents. The question of the availability of French resources to support student learning at the new site is also an issue. These resources are accumulated over time and are quite often purchased with Minority Language Funds provided by Canadian Heritage or with funds raised by parent groups. These resources support not only French immersion students but all students in French second language programs. French resources need to be replaced and augmented as French immersion students move from one site to another. Identification and replication of these resources is not only time consuming but also expensive.

### **Recommendations:**

Consensus was not reached on the following recommendations due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1).

- That boundaries for both French immersion and English programs be reviewed at the same time during the boundary review process
- That French immersion representatives be included on the Boundary Review Committee when the review affects or will affect the placement of French immersion students
- That data on actual and projected French immersion enrolment and trends for the area school under review be provided and included in the boundary review process along with

- other data as indicated in section 6.1 of the *Creating School Populations: Procedures*
- That French immersion students be relocated only when English program and French immersion program students are being moved as a block
- That, before construction, a new school be identified as being a single track, dual track or English program only school and that the boundaries for the new school be established accordingly

## II. EARLY AND LATE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS

### Background

Prior to amalgamation, the individual district boards offered only one French immersion option throughout the board: Early French immersion, beginning in grade primary, in the former Halifax District and Dartmouth District School Boards, and Late French immersion, beginning in Grade 7, in the former Halifax County - Bedford District School Board. (Except for Musquodoboit and Duncan MacMillan families).

Since 1998, the Board has begun seven new early immersion programs in areas that previously offered only late immersion and has begun one late immersion program in the Dartmouth area. In September 2002, four additional early immersion programs will begin, two of which will not be funded through Canadian Heritage.

### Issue No 1: Implementation of two entry points: early and late French immersion programs

Four years following amalgamation, a sub-committee of System Review 16 was charged with articulating a system standard for the delivery of French immersion programs. The sub-committee confirmed the pre-amalgamation program offerings in each of the 3 former district boards. In addition, a transition plan was developed for implementation of a second entry point in area/neighbourhood schools where sufficient population and interest existed. The transition plan identified an implementation schedule and was also intended to address issues related to the merging of Early and Late Immersion students at grade 7.

The Board received the report and adopted the following motions:

1. Where the potential exists for the provision of French immersion programs, whether existing or new, boundaries will be determined for the purpose of enrolment in the context of the Creating School Populations Policy.
2. That the Business Services Department provide an indication of true general unit cost associated with the implementation of French Immersion programs with references to staffing, transportation and material costs.
3. That the Halifax Regional School Board approve the attached revisions to the Creating School Populations Policy for the school year 2000-2001, with the expectation that recommendations for designated areas of eligibility for French Immersion programs will come forward on an annual basis.

4. That recommendations be implemented at the earliest possible date.
5. An addition to 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 of the recommended (Creating School Populations) policy, Appendix 1: To ensure equity, serious consideration will be given to areas of geographics where a single school population does not warrant a class.
6. An addition as 2.2.4 of the recommended (Creating School Populations) policy, Appendix 1: That during the promotion of a French Immersion Program in the case of early immersion at the time of primary registration it be identified to parents/guardians of this option, with the understanding that the program might not be offered at their home school.

It appears that the interim report has been the basis for the direction of the Board concerning French immersion.

There has been little activity regarding the system review due to staff changes at the Board as well as a number of other factors. The Board is now using surveys administered by School Advisory Councils as a means of obtaining views regarding expansion. These surveys are considered insufficient because they do not provide an opportunity for meaningful consultations with parents. Board decisions are based on its strategic and business plans. The current strategic plan is coming to an end and a new business plan format has recently been introduced for all regional school boards. The development of the board's next business plan may present an opportunity for further expansion of immersion options.

In the last few years, immersion options have been expanded, despite the fact that expansion of immersion programs has not been supplemented by Board funding through its business plan. Policies have been carefully crafted in order to promote expansion despite the lack of funding in the strategic plan. Early French immersion is now available in some areas that previously offered only late immersion. Similarly, one late immersion program has been introduced in Dartmouth. The implementation of new sites and additional classes has relied on the availability of funds from Canadian Heritage. Funding is an issue. However, in September 2003, the Board will begin two new classes of early immersion which will be funded entirely by the Board.

**Recommendations:**

Consensus was not reached on the following recommendations due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1).

- Since the transition to two entry points is an on-going active process, that the System Review Interim Report and the transition plan be reviewed and updated on an annual basis
- As proposed in the System Review Interim Report and approved by the Board, that the Business Services Department of the Board provide an indication of the actual costs associated with offering new and on-going French Immersion programs
- That funds provided by Canadian Heritage be first allocated to staff French immersion

programs that produce additional costs to the Board (i.e. additional teacher not available by board staff allocation formula)

## **Issue No. 2: Out-of-area requests**

Since the amendments made to the Creating School Populations Policy in the spring of 1998, placement in the program is guaranteed for those students (except for those in the Duncan MacMillan and Musquodoboit schools) who register by March 1 but not necessarily at the area school. Currently, all students of the HRSB (except for those in the Duncan MacMillan and Musquodoboit schools) have access to the system standard for French immersion programs. Registration for French immersion is held at the “area” school and not necessarily at the school where the program is offered. At the present time, staffing in schools is completed prior to the consideration of out-of-area requests. As a result, out-of-area requests may not be granted due to an inability to increase the staff to meet the needs of the in-coming out-of-area students.

Current policies lead to circumstances such as the present one in Dartmouth where there is only one late immersion offering (Ellenvale Junior High) and a demand exists for the program from students outside the traditional boundaries of the school. For September 2002, approximately 26 out-of-area requests were received for the late immersion program at Ellenvale. These requests could not be accommodated because staff allocations had already been completed by the time the requests were received. As a result, these students will not have access to late French immersion now or in the future. Unless another site is identified, the problem could reoccur for another group of students in September 2003.

### **Recommendations:**

Consensus was not reached on the following recommendations due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1).

- As proposed in the System Review Interim Report and approved by the Board, that the availability of early and late French immersion programs continue to be expanded;
- That an additional site, if necessary, for late French immersion be designated in the Dartmouth area in order to accommodate those students seeking to enter a late French immersion program
- That registration for French immersion be held at the school where French immersion is presently offered or at the site where it will be offered
- That, in the transition phase, out-of-area requests for French immersion be considered at the same time as registration is held in order to permit a staffing formula based on the total number of prospective students and to facilitate a decision about where to house an additional class if required. (i.e. school from which the largest number of out-area-requests originate)

### **Issue No. 3: Merging of Early and Late Immersion Students at the Junior High Level**

The Board is starting new early immersion classes in families of schools that presently offer late immersion programs. No communication regarding the long term plans for these students when they reach junior high has been shared with parents.

In the last few years Halifax Regional School Board has started early French immersion programs and intends to begin another 3 classes in September 2002. These students (some of whom will be entering grade 4 in September) will eventually attend junior high schools that presently offer late French immersion programs that begin in grade 7. Late immersion programs are well established in these schools as a result of having been offered for many years.

In Dartmouth, late immersion students from Ellenvale will continue French immersion at Dartmouth High with students from early immersion.

Questions have been raised regarding the merging of early and late French immersion students in the same junior high. The board was requested to share their plans for the merger of these students at junior high.

Most jurisdictions in Canada offer early and late French immersion programs. When students from these programs enter the same junior high, the groups are taught separately, for as long as possible. It is considered good practice to do so given the fact that late immersion students begin the program at a later date. In some jurisdictions, early and late immersion students are merged in grade 9 or grade 8, depending on the entry point for late immersion. In other jurisdictions, the students are taught separately even at the high school level, especially in the case of French Language Arts.

In Nova Scotia, late immersion students will be entering grade 8 at Yarmouth Junior High which early immersion students also attend. The students were taught separately in grade 7 and will also be taught separately in grade 8 and 9. Both groups will then attend Yarmouth Consolidated Memorial High School. French immersion students from Maple Grove Education Centre attend Yarmouth Consolidated Memorial High School which early immersion students also attend. Early and late immersion students are taught separately as much as possible.

In a May 2002 report to Executive Council, the Halifax Regional School Board proposed two implementation options for students eventually attending the same junior high school:

- Option 1: Keep both programs separate if the student enrolment at the school site is high enough to sustain two classes
- Option 2: Grade seven and eight early and late immersion are delivered separately. The two programs are merged at the grade nine level with a determination at the time of implementation as to whether the French Language Arts curriculum is delivered separately.

The report indicates that the preferred implementation option is the first one, keeping both the

early and late immersion programs separate with the flexibility of using implementation option 2 to merge the two programs at the grade nine level at junior high sites where student enrolment is declining or there exists an inability to configure classes.

Attrition occurs in both early and late French immersion programs. Attrition may occur for many reasons including family relocations; in early immersion, it often occurs because of a lack of support services (i.e. resource) for immersion students experiencing learning difficulties. Historical data on attrition in early French immersion programs would suggest that the number of early immersion students from any particular class entering grade seven will be lower than the number who began in grade primary. This could be problematic if only one class of early immersion students is feeding into a particular junior high.

### **Recommendations**

Consensus was not reached on the following recommendations due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1).

- That students from early immersion and late immersion be taught separately at the junior high level
- That professional development be offered to teachers to facilitate the merger of early and late immersion students where necessary
- That information regarding the merging of early and late immersion students be clearly communicated to parents
- That early immersion expansion occur in more than one elementary school feeding into a junior high in order to ensure that a more viable number of early immersion students will enter a junior high that also offers a late French immersion program
- That resource support be provided to French immersion students as described in the Programming section of the *Special Education Policy Manual* and in the Policy for French Second Language Programs
- That reasons for high French immersion attrition rates in particular schools be identified and that actions be taken to enable more students to remain in the program.

### **Issue No. 4 - Availability of French Immersion for students in the Duncan MacMillan and Musquodoboit family of schools.**

At present, students in the Duncan MacMillan and Musquodoboit family of schools do not have access to French immersion programs in part as the result that the schools in these areas have lower student enrolments. Parents in the area have however requested that French immersion programs be available to their children as it is in other areas of the board. Other small schools in the province offer French immersion programs. They do so by providing multi-age groupings and by alternating courses from year to year at the high school level. Late French immersion may be the most viable for these two areas of the Board.

In order to provide an opportunity for students in these areas to access French immersion

programs, interest in learning French may need to be heightened at the elementary level. This could be accomplished by considering alternative ways of offering core French at the elementary level. Initiatives such as the Grade 6 Intensive Core French program or the use of more concentrated periods of time for core French instruction may provide ways of creating more interest in French immersion programs.

**Recommendations:**

Consensus was not reached on the following recommendations due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1).

- As proposed in the System Review Interim Report and approved by the Board, that the system standard for French immersion be promoted in these areas
- That ways of increasing student interest in studying French be explored (Grade 6 Intensive Core French; concentrated periods for core French in grades 4-5-6)
- That board staff examine how other small rural high schools in the province configure themselves to offer French immersion to their students

## **Appendix 1.**

The following motion was passed by Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board on 24 June 2002:

"Executive Council confirmed its previous direction to Lorraine Cooke and Darrell Samson that the Halifax Regional School Board Policy and Procedures should be supported and that recommendations for changes to Board Policy and Procedures, if any, may not be endorsed without further direction from the Board or Executive Council, respectively."

**French Immersion Review Committee Report  
Summary of Issues and Recommendations**

Section	Issue	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p><b>Consensus was not reached on the following recommendations due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1)</b></p>
<p><b>Movement of French Immersion Students</b></p>	<p><b>Issue No. 1: Attendance Boundaries</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That under clause 1.0 of the <i>Creating School Populations Policy</i>, it be recognized that French immersion is offered in schools called “French Immersion Area Schools” and that these schools be included in the definition of area school in this policy and its procedures.</li> <li>• That attendance boundaries be established for French Immersion Area Schools</li> <li>• That a long term plan regarding the following be articulated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identification of French Immersion Area Schools and the communities from which they draw immersion students</li> <li>- identification of the junior high and senior high schools that French immersion students will attend as well as the corresponding feeder schools from which these students originate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• That registration for French immersion take place at the French Immersion Area School in order to facilitate promotion of the program and communication to parents of information regarding the program.</li> <li>• That the term “area school” be used throughout the policy. The use of the terms “area school” and “home school” in the same policy document can be confusing. An explanation of the difference in terms or the use of only one term would alleviate some confusion.</li> </ul>

French Immersion Review Committee Report  
 Summary of Issues and Recommendations (continued)

Section	Issue	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p><b>Consensus was not reached on the following recommendations due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1)</b></p>
<p><b>Movement of French Immersion Students</b></p>	<p><b>Issue No. 2: Boundary Reviews</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That boundaries for both French immersion and English programs be reviewed at the same time during the boundary review process</li> <li>• That French immersion representatives be included on the Boundary Review Committee when the review affects or will affect the placement of French immersion students</li> <li>• That data on actual and projected French immersion enrolment and trends for the area school under review be provided and included in the boundary review process along with other data as indicated in section 6.1 of the <i>Creating School Populations: Procedures</i></li> <li>• That French immersion students be relocated only when English program and French immersion program students are being moved as a block</li> <li>• That, before construction, a new school be identified as being a single track, dual track or English program only school and that the boundaries for the new school be established accordingly</li> </ul>

**French Immersion Review Committee Report**  
**Summary of Issues and Recommendations (continued)**

Section	Issue	<b>Recommendations</b> <b>Consensus was not reached on the following recommendations due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1)</b>
<b>II. EARLY AND LATE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS</b>	<b>Issue No 1: Implementation of two entry points: early and late French immersion programs</b>	<b>Recommendations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since the transition to two entry points is an on-going active process, that the System Review Interim Report and the transition plan be reviewed and updated on an annual basis</li> <li>• As proposed in the System Review Interim Report and approved by the Board, that the Business Services Department of the Board provide an indication of the actual costs associated with offering new and on-going French Immersion programs</li> <li>• That funds provided by Canadian Heritage be first allocated to staff French immersion programs that produce additional costs to the Board (i.e. additional teacher not available by board staff allocation formula)</li> </ul>
	<b>Issue No. 2: Out-of-area requests</b>	<b>Recommendations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As proposed in the System Review Interim Report and approved by the Board, that the availability of early and late French immersion programs continue to be expanded;</li> <li>• That an additional site, if necessary, for late French immersion be designated in the Dartmouth area in order to accommodate those students seeking to enter a late French immersion program</li> <li>• That registration for French immersion be held at the school where French immersion is presently offered or at the site where it will be offered</li> <li>• That, in the transition phase, out-of-area requests for French immersion be considered at the same time as registration is held in order to permit a staffing formula based on the total number of prospective students and to facilitate a decision about where to house an additional class if required. (i.e. school from which the largest number of out-area-requests originate)</li> </ul>

**French Immersion Review Committee Report**  
**Summary of Issues and Recommendations (continued)**

Section	Issue	<b>Recommendations</b> <b>Consensus was not reached on the following recommendations due to the motion passed on June 24 2002 by the Executive Council of the Halifax Regional School Board (see appendix 1)</b>
<b>II. EARLY AND LATE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS</b>	<b>Issue No. 3: Merging of Early and Late Immersion Students at the Junior High Level</b>	<b>Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That students from early immersion and late immersion be taught separately at the junior high level</li> <li>• That professional development be offered to teachers to facilitate the merger of early and late immersion students where necessary</li> <li>• That information regarding the merging of early and late immersion students be clearly communicated to parents</li> <li>• That early immersion expansion occur in more than one elementary school feeding into a junior high in order to ensure that a more viable number of early immersion students will enter a junior high that also offers a late French immersion program</li> <li>• That resource support be provided to French immersion students as described in the Programming section of the <i>Special Education Policy Manual</i> and in the Policy for French Second Language Programs</li> <li>• That reasons for high French immersion attrition rates in particular schools be identified and that actions be taken to enable more students to remain in the program.</li> </ul>
	<b>Issue No. 4 - Availability of French Immersion for students in the Duncan MacMillan and Musquodoboit family of schools.</b>	<b>Recommendations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As proposed in the System Review Interim Report and approved by the Board, that the system standard for French immersion be promoted in these areas</li> <li>• That ways of increasing student interest in studying French be explored (Grade 6 Intensive Core French; concentrated periods for core French in grades 4-5-6)</li> <li>• That board staff examine how other small rural high schools in the province configure themselves to offer French immersion to their students</li> </ul>