

Northwest and North Central French Immersion Programs Engagement Roadmap



Calgary Board
of Education

dialogue)))

May 2018

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUE

Students in Calgary have the opportunity to attend their designated community school or register in one of the many alternative programs offered by Calgary Board of Education (CBE). Early and Late French Immersion Programs (known as “French Immersion Programs”) are popular choices for students.

- Early (continuing) French Immersion Program is an alternative program with entry in kindergarten or Grade 1. Students enrolled in the Early French Immersion Program have instruction in French for 100 per cent of their school day until Grade 3 and then instruction in French for 70 to 80 per cent of instructional time to the end of Grade 6. In Grades 7 to 9 instructional time in French is 50 to 70 per cent. High school completion of the French Immersion Program requires 45 credits through courses such as French as a Second Language, Social and Math.
- Late French Immersion Program is an alternative program with entry availability in Grade 7. Students enrolled in the Late French Immersion Program have instruction in French for 50 to 70 per cent of their school day for Grades 7 to 9. High school completion of the French Immersion Program requires 45 credits through courses such as French as a Second Language, Social and Math.

Note | Intensive French is an option offered to regular program students in Grades 5 or 6 at a few schools in the CBE. The CBE Learning department is investigating opportunities to expand Intensive French at more schools across the system. Intensive French is not considered part of this engagement.

For additional information on these programs, please visit [Language Programs](#) on the CBE website.

In response to interest, the CBE offers families both the Early and Late French Immersion Programs. We are not considering discontinuing either program through this engagement process. The CBE is committed to providing strong learning opportunities to all our French Immersion students and working with families to explore possibilities for the future.

The high level of interest in the French Immersion Programs in northwest and north central Calgary has resulted in some schools being at or over capacity, which may limit continued growth at these locations.

The schools initially identified to participate in the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs engagement process include: Banff Trail, Branton, Georges P. Vanier, Hidden Valley, King George, Valley Creek and Varsity Acres. Four additional schools have been identified to participate and they include: Eric Harvie, F. E. Osborne, Tuscany and Twelve Mile Coulee. Other school communities may be identified to participate at later stages of the process.

Decisions about the long-term strategy for the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs affect students, staff, parents, future parents/students and others within affected school communities. The CBE is committed to involving stakeholders, whenever possible, in decisions that affect them. Stakeholder input and feedback, CBE values and CBE planning principles will guide us in decision-making. Other factors will also be considered including available space in schools, financial sustainability and government legislation.

Any decisions that are made through this process may be implemented for the 2019-20 school year or later.

Engagement in alignment with the CBE Dialogue Framework available at www.cbe.ab.ca/dialogue.

2. [ENGAGEMENT TO DATE](#)

Preliminary discussions regarding the French Immersion Programs in northwest and north central Calgary began with decision makers, Planning and Transportation, Communications and Community Engagement and principals of the identified schools in November 2017. In-person engagements with staff, parents and community members began in March 2018.

At these in-person sessions, participants learned more about the factors considered in making decisions and had opportunities to share their thoughts on possibilities for the future of the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs. These sessions were the first opportunities provided to staff, parents and community members to share their perspectives on this topic. Four broad options were discussed by participants at the sessions including: boundary changes, grade configuration changes, program/location expansion and long-term cap on enrolment. Feedback and input gathered through these sessions are available on the CBE website.

3. [WHAT IS TO BE DECIDED?](#)

The CBE has decided that:

By December 2018 the CBE will communicate plans for the long-term strategy for the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs. Plans may be implemented for the 2019-20 school year or later.

4. [DECISION MAKERS](#)

- Brant Parker, Director, Area 1
- Darlene Unruh, Director, Area 2
- Scott MacNeill, Director, Area 3
- Carrie Edwards, Director, Planning and Transportation

5. PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of engaging stakeholders on this initiative is to gather input and feedback on a long-term strategy for the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs that best meets the learning needs of students. It is important that affected students, parents, staff and community members have an opportunity to share perspectives on these important decisions.

6. IN SCOPE

Factors that stakeholders can influence (in scope) in this engagement process are as follows:

- School boundary and designation changes
 - This would involve adjusting existing boundaries/designated communities of a school attendance area.
- Grade configuration changes
 - This would involve expanding or reducing the grades that are offered for a specific program at a school(s).
- Program / location expansion
 - This would involve increasing the number of school sites that offer a specific program. May involve boundary changes and/or grade configuration changes to balance enrolment between schools.
- Long term cap on enrolment
 - This would involve setting an enrolment limit per grade for a specific program at a school that is at or over capacity.
- Timing and considerations related to implementation
 - This would involve timing of implementation and/or factors that need to be paid attention to during implementation.

7. OUT OF SCOPE

The factors that are not negotiable, meaning stakeholders cannot influence, include:

- French Immersion is defined as an alternative program in the [School Act](#), the provincial regulations governing school boards across Alberta
- legislative and regulatory requirements
- how transportation services are provided
- programming for students with exceptional needs
- availability of qualified teachers for the French Immersion Programs
- bell times
- curriculum
- availability of space in schools
- possible government requests for school space

- funding (provided on a per student basis)
- financial sustainability
- other system needs, i.e. accommodation of refugees

It's important to remember that decisions for one school can affect other schools and there is a finite number of students in the CBE system. An increase in the number of students at one school means a decrease in students at other schools.

In addition, it's important for stakeholders to keep in mind that some existing alternative programs may be moved or expanded, but the available funds for these moves/expansions are limited at this time. Decisions about which expansions and moves go ahead will be based on stakeholder input, financial feasibility and the CBE planning principles (listed in section 8 below).

8. STRATEGY

In addition to all combined stakeholder input and feedback, the decision-making process considers CBE values and planning principles, available space in schools, financial sustainability, government legislation and more. Together, all of these factors must be carefully considered in making recommendations and decisions.

The CBE values are:

- Students come first.
- Learning is our central purpose.
- Public education serves the common good.

The CBE planning principles are:

- minimize disruptions for students
- provide program continuity from kindergarten to Grade 12
- keep cohort groups of students together
- allow students to attend school as close to home as possible
- provide long term sustainability
- use space and resources effectively
- provide equitable access for all students to quality learning environments and choice of programs

The decision-making process began with conversations among decision-makers, Planning and Transportation and Communications and Community Engagement to understand the issues, concerns and system pressures with respect to the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs and the schools affected. Further discussions with affected principals

helped to identify issues, opportunities and options to explore with stakeholders. These discussions formed the basis for this engagement roadmap and the engagement design process.

We know we make better decisions when we work together to solve problems and find solutions, therefore, our strategy includes three distinct phases of engagement, each offering both in-person and online opportunities for stakeholders to share their thoughts on the future of the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs. Information and feedback gathered in each phase will be incorporated and considered in the next phase. The first phase shares factors considered in decision-making and begins the broad discussion of options. As we move through the next two phases (phase two: scenarios and phase three: proposed plans) discussions become more specific as options are added, removed or refined until a decision is made and an implementation plan is developed. The decision and implementation plan will be communicated with staff, parents, students and community members prior to kindergarten registration for the 2019-20 school year. Decisions may be implemented for the 2019-20 school year or later.

A pictorial view of the strategy and its associated timeline can be found in section 12 below.

A number of design parameters will guide the strategic approach to this engagement:

- Engagement conversations will be values-based. That is, they will be framed by CBE values.
- CBE planning principles will play a key role in decision-making.
- Communication of background information and engagement opportunities (times, dates and venues) to stakeholders will happen in a reasonable time prior to engagement.
- Existing communication channels and mechanisms will be exploited to the maximum degree.
- We will set out the context for the conversation early.
- Both internal and external stakeholders will be engaged and have opportunities to provide input.
- Concerns and aspirations will be discussed in order to formulate options for consideration.
- CBE trustees, decision-makers and affected school principals are encouraged to attend engagement events. Their primary role is to listen to the concerns and aspirations of stakeholders.
- Online and in-person engagement opportunities will be available.
- School principals will play a leading role in this engagement, working closely with Planning and Transportation and Communications and Community Engagement to help ensure school-specific issues and concerns are well understood and considered throughout the engagement process.

- Throughout the process, as new information is available and considered, this sequence of communication and engagement will be followed for affected school communities:
 1. Principals
 2. School staff
 3. Students, parents and others (community members, partners etc.)

9. STAKEHOLDER AUDIENCES

Directly affected

Directly affected stakeholders include students, parents and staff from Banff Trail, Branton, Eric Harvie, F. E. Osborne, Georges P. Vanier, Hidden Valley, King George, Tuscany, Twelve Mile Coulee, Valley Creek and Varsity Acres schools. Other school communities may be identified to participate at later stages of the process.

Directly affected stakeholders also include prospective French Immersion families who are considering the Early or Late French Immersion Program for their children in the future.

Other stakeholders

Other stakeholders that may be considered through the process include:

- Other school communities identified as affected during the engagement process
- Community associations and community members within communities that attend northwest and north central French Immersion Programs
- General public
- School partners (e.g., before and after school care) at affected schools identified during engagement process

10. ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

This engagement seeks to achieve three goals:

1. Build understanding and support for decisions on proposed plans for the affected school communities.
2. Facilitate inclusive engagement among stakeholders to gather feedback that will be considered, along with other factors, in decision-making.
3. Use the input and feedback gathered to influence decision and implementation plans.

This requires the CBE to meet several objectives, which will result in outputs (tangible deliverables) and outcomes (changes in understanding, perspective, relationships, level of trust, etc.). Both the outputs and outcomes will support the CBE in its decision-making.

Objective #1: To inform and communicate with stakeholders about the plans to develop a long-term strategy for the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs.

- a. *Outcome: Stakeholders understand why changes are needed.*
- b. *Outcome: Stakeholders understand the factors affecting decision-making.*
- c. *Outcome: Stakeholders understand the opportunities and challenges of proposed changes.*

Objective #2: To gather input from stakeholder representatives about the engagement process.

- a. *Outcome: Stakeholders know how to participate.*
- b. *Outcome: Stakeholders are motivated and participate in engagement activities.*
- c. *Output: An engagement plan that identifies the engagement process (this document).*

Objective #3: To gather input from stakeholders on possible options for the long-term strategy for the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs.

- a. *Outcome: Stakeholders say they have been meaningfully involved in the engagement process.*
- b. *Outcome: Stakeholders accept the changes as necessary to allow the French Immersion Programs to continue to be successful.*
- c. *Output: Stakeholder input will help inform decision and implementation plans.*
- d. *Output: Detailed records of engagement activities.*
- e. *Output: Contact lists of stakeholders who wish to be involved in the dialogue on the development of a long-term strategy for the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs.*

Objective #4: To inform and communicate with stakeholders how their involvement influenced the long-term strategy for the northwest and north central French Immersion Programs.

- a. *Outcome: Stakeholders support the decision, based on the engagement process.*
- b. *Outcome: Stakeholders can see they have influenced decision-making as a whole.*
- c. *Output: Appropriate communications to stakeholders summarizing input and how it influenced decisions.*
- d. *Output: A summary of participant evaluations of the engagement opportunities.*

11. COMMUNICATIONS

Clear, consistent and timely communication with our stakeholders is critical to the success of this engagement. Communications will:

- Provide stakeholders with an understanding of issues, proposed changes and how they may be affected.
- Demonstrate how feedback influenced decisions.
- Identify when feedback cannot reasonably be acted upon, and explain why.
- Ensure people are aware of engagement opportunities.

Key Messages:

- The CBE is committed to providing quality education to all students.
- Decisions will be sustainable and fiscally responsible.
- Stakeholder feedback and input will be considered in decision-making, along with the CBE values, planning principles and other factors.

Channels:

We will communicate regularly and consistently through multiple communication channels. Channels may include, but are not limited to:

- SchoolMessenger (sends emails directly to identified communities of stakeholders)
- CBE and school websites
- Staff meetings
- School council meetings
- Council of School Councils meetings
- In-class opportunities
- Community advertising
- Twitter

Audiences:

- Staff
- Parents
- Students
- Community associations
- The public
- Trustees

12. ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE: NOVEMBER 2017 – DECEMBER 2018

Engagement Design	Phase 1: Options	Phase 2: Scenarios	Phase 3: Proposed Plans	Decision(s)
Nov. 2017 – April 2018	March – May 2018	May – June 2018	Sept. – Nov. 2018	Nov. – Dec. 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify issues, concerns and possibilities ▪ Identify affected schools and decision to be made ▪ Confirm enrolment and five-year projection numbers ▪ Share proposed engagement timeline with principals ▪ Inform affected parents about upcoming engagement opportunities ▪ Gather feedback on the engagement process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform communities about upcoming engagement opportunities ▪ Share information about options online ▪ Host in-person sessions to discuss options ▪ Launch online opportunity regarding options for staff, parents, students and community members ▪ Build understanding of factors related to decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review all input and feedback gathered on options ▪ Develop scenarios ▪ Share scenarios online ▪ Host in-person sessions and online opportunity to gather input and feedback on scenarios from staff, parents, students and community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review all input and feedback gathered on scenarios ▪ Develop proposed plans ▪ Share proposed plans online ▪ Host an open house and online opportunity to gather input and feedback on proposed plans from staff, parents, students and community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review all input and feedback gathered on proposed plans ▪ Make decision(s) ▪ Share decision(s) with staff, parents, students and community members ▪ Identify timing for implementation ▪ Share how input and feedback influenced the decision(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project planning meetings ▪ Principal meetings ▪ School staff informed about engagement ▪ Emails to affected parents ▪ Information posted on CBE website about engagement plans and opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Principal meetings ▪ Principal-led sessions ▪ Emails to feeder school parents and community associations ▪ In-person and online engagement opportunities conducted ▪ CBE website updated with feedback and evaluation results ▪ Opportunities communicated using SchoolMessenger, websites, schools, Twitter, BOLD signs, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project planning meetings ▪ Principal meetings ▪ Principal-led sessions ▪ In-person and online engagement opportunities conducted ▪ CBE website updated with feedback and evaluation results ▪ Opportunities communicated using SchoolMessenger, websites, schools, Twitter, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project planning meetings ▪ Principal meetings ▪ School staff meetings ▪ In-person and online engagement opportunities conducted ▪ CBE website updated with feedback and evaluation results ▪ Opportunities communicated using SchoolMessenger, websites, schools, Twitter, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project planning meetings ▪ Principal meetings ▪ School staff meetings ▪ Emails/letters to parents ▪ Students informed ▪ CBE website updated with decision(s) and how input and feedback influenced decision(s) ▪ Decision(s) communicated using SchoolMessenger, websites, schools, Twitter, etc.