

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 14, 2006

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Acting Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Response to Trustee Request for Information

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Executive Director

RESOURCE

STAFF: Stuart Wachowicz

INFORMATION

TRUSTEE REQUEST #164, FEBRUARY 14, 2006 (TRUSTEE COLBURN): RE TT#161 - PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING DISTRICT INITIATIVES TO RETAIN STUDENTS IN THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM MOVING FROM JUNIOR TO SENIOR HIGH. The following are efforts and activities that the district is undertaking to encourage grade 9 French Immersion students to continue in French Immersion in grade 10:

Regular French Immersion Principal Meetings - As part of the work continuing from the French language renewal project, principals of French immersion programs and Curriculum staff continue to meet regularly to ensure the articulation of French immersion programming across the district. The focus on the fact that the district offers K-12 French immersion programming and that staying in the program will ensure working proficiency in the French language, is the foundation of our work. The work of articulating the program from junior high to high school begins before grade 9. Curriculum staff and principals of French immersion programs work together to ensure that information is regularly shared among French immersion sites as to opportunities for French immersion students to interact. Such activities include:

National and International Recognition of French language proficiency – In addition to French language assessment done by teachers and the province, Edmonton Public Schools has offered French immersion grade 12 students the opportunity to be certified by external organizations like the Public Service Commission of Canada. This opportunity to gain an external credential has been instrumental in the increased enrollment in the high school French immersion program. Students and their parents have shown increasing support for staying in the French immersion program in order to have the opportunity to take these exams in grade 12. This year, the district will offer grade 12 students in French immersion the opportunity to take three different international French language proficiency exams Test d'évaluation du français (TEF), Test de connaissance du français (TCF), Le Diplôme d'études en langue française/Le Diplôme approfondi en langue française (DELFDALF)) in order to be certificated by the French government and to receive a French language level rating on the European language portfolio. Negotiations are continuing with the Public Service of Canada to retain district access to the federal government's national French language tests.

- **Gala** - This district French speaking competition and celebration event is held each April at Harry Ainlay High School. At this time, all French second language and French immersion students have an opportunity to attend the school and to interact with French immersion high school students. By attending this event at the high school, students in early French immersion grades see clearly that the French immersion program is a K-12 district program and remaining in it through grade 12 build stronger levels of fluency than dropping at the end of grade 9.
- **French cultural activities** – During the last couple of years, several French immersion schools have hosted French cultural activity days, during which French immersion high school students from Harry Ainlay High School have coordinated and helped to supervise cultural activities. By being an integral part of these events, the high school students model the level of French language used in the high school programs. Junior high students there also have opportunities to dialogue with the high school students. A recent example of this type of event was the French cultural day recently held (February 7) at Fort Edmonton Park for all French immersion grade 7 students.
- **Promotion of French immersion high school programming** – In the course of promoting their own sites each spring, elementary and junior high French immersion schools host information evenings at which high school students, teachers and principals present the high school French immersion program to interested parents and students. At this time, students in elementary and junior high are able to get a glimpse of programming at the high school level and to hear about the benefits of staying in the program. The French immersion high schools host French immersion information evenings for prospective students and their families, and at these French immersion students and teachers are able to dialogue with families about the opportunities in high school. In addition, Campus Saint-Jean is often present at the elementary, junior high and high school information evenings to inform students of the University of Alberta opportunities for French immersion graduates.
- **Marketing:** Curriculum has also supported the development and distribution of a variety of marketing materials promoting the benefits of French immersion and the opportunities for K-12 programming. These include a web site, radio, TV and newspaper ads, as well as brochures, posters and pamphlets explaining the benefits of knowing the French language. Every effort is also made to ensure the news media is informed about initiatives, benefits and the quality of our French Immersion program. (S. Wachowicz)

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