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## French Immersion proposal for Perth Avenue Junior Public School

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Hi Maria,

Thanks for calling me back so quickly!

As we discussed on Monday night, I (and many other parents) are very concerned about French Immersion options available from Perth Avenue Jr Public School. We are all very concerned about the lack of communication from the board regarding our options, the decision making process and the extremely short time lines allowed to make an informed decision. I would love to have a local community meeting so we can all understand what the needs&options are.

As you requested, here are some of my thoughts about how to make a FI program work at Perth. I would be happy to join you on Thursday when you are meeting with the Director of Education to personally explain these ideas.

My understanding is that there are 17 families (14 at Perth, an additional 3 in our catchment area) who have applied to start French Immersion in SK next year and have been redirected to Rawlinson. There are more families who applied and received a placement at Regal Road due to siblings who are already there. When we applied in the fall, the TDSB website ONLY listed Regal Road as the designated pathway. That has since been revised to include Rawlinson. What has happened with Operational Procedure PR597 4.7.b.ii? (<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/ppf/uploads/files/live/91/1751.pdf>) Doesn't board policy regarding changing boundaries involve some sort of Program Area Review? As far as I'm aware there has been NO consultation with our community regarding this change.

Rawlinson is NOT the closest FI school to Perth if Regal Road has run out of room. Rawlinson is 3.6km from my house. Dewson is 3.3km from my house. Fern Ave is 2.8km from my house. Howard is 2.2km from my house.

I am very concerned about being redirected to Rawlinson as I understand it's currently a 50 minute bus ride (7:50 pickup at Perth, 8:40 arrival at Rawlinson)! Of course this assumes good weather & traffic.... A bus ride that long is completely unacceptable for 4/5 year old children! I can't even imagine 17 of them unsupervised in a bus for almost an hour, let alone the older children in there with them. Also, when children are old enough to take public transit, this is not the most accessible school from our neighbourhood. It looks like it will take 2 separate TTC buses for a 30-50min trip depending on what connections you make.

For several years now our community has expressed a desire for a LOCAL French Immersion Program. We were told that starting a Middle Immersion program was not possible as everyone was accommodated elsewhere.

When I attended the information night at Regal Road in January, we were told it was 'very likely, but not guaranteed' we'd all get in as they've been able to accommodate everyone who applied in the past. Now we're being told that's no longer possible. I believe this is the 2nd time in the past couple of years a significant number

of Perth students have been 'bumped' from Regal Road. We are NOT being accommodated elsewhere.

I have two main ideas I think the board needs to take a serious look at.

- 1) Perth Ave needs a local FI program starting in Sept 2013.
- 2) The Bloor/Dundas West area needs a French Immersion Center like Lester B Pearson Elementary.

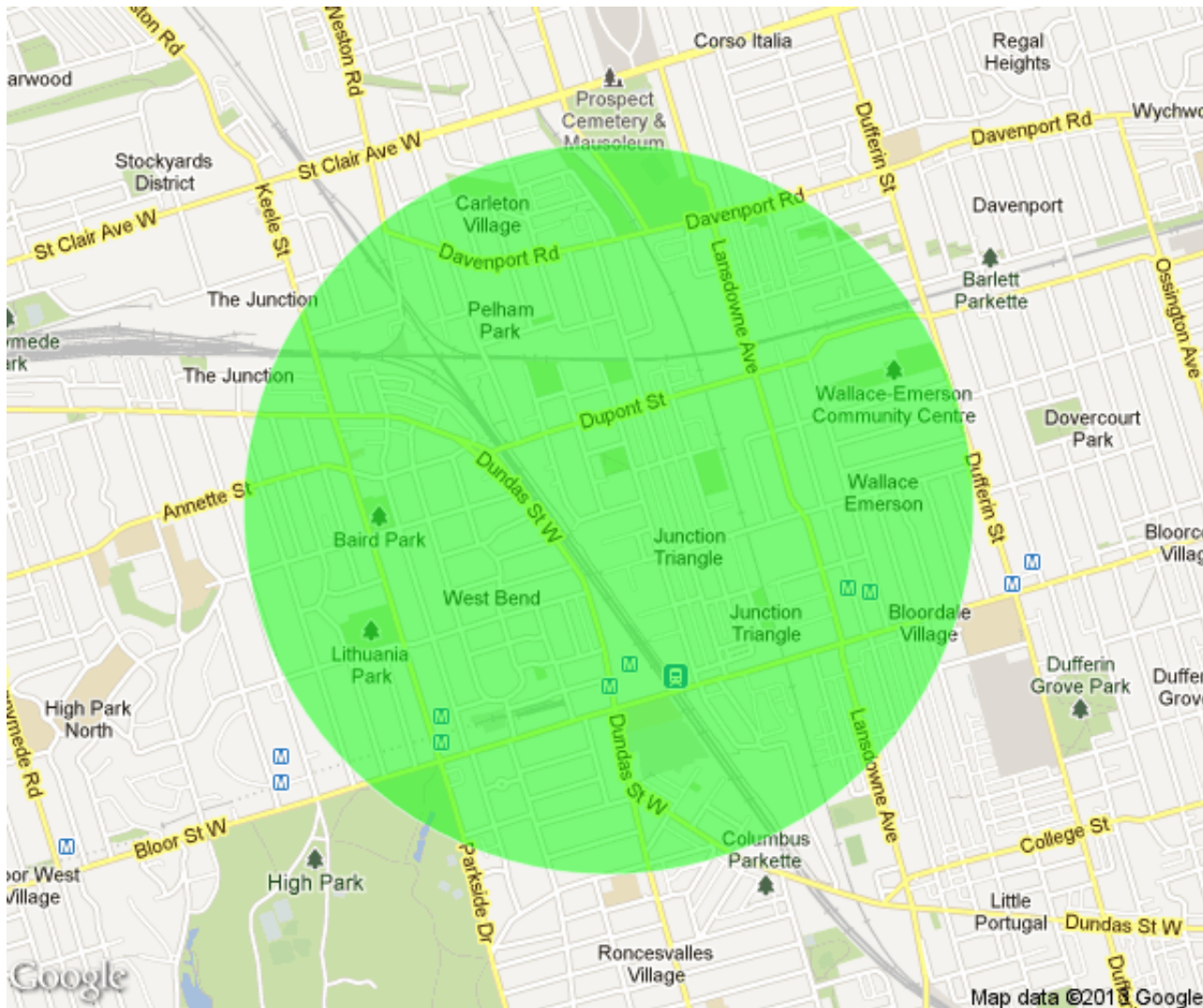
In the June 3, 2011 "FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ANNUAL REPORT" ([http://www.tdsb.on.ca/boardroom/bd\\_agenda/uploads/generalinfo/110603%20FSL.PDF](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/boardroom/bd_agenda/uploads/generalinfo/110603%20FSL.PDF)) there is a clear & growing demand for Elementary level French Immersion in the TDSB. The same report shows that the board has started FI programs with enrolments of 19 students at Parkdale Public in 2009, 18 students at Duke of Connaught in 2008, 19 students at General Crerar in 2010. When we look at Extended French, the board has started programs with 8 students at Valley Park in 2009, 14 students at Hodgson in 2009, 18 students at Presteign Heights in 2010, 17 students at Milne Valley in 2007, 15 students at Joseph Brant in 2009.

Based on the board's past practices and persistent community demand we have sufficient numbers to start a FI program at Perth. If a FI program is offered at Perth this fall there is **at least** one more family interested that did not apply for FI.

With the demographic shift and development boom in our area enrolment at Perth is only going to increase.

When you look at my neighbourhood and surrounding areas, there are NO local FI schools. Everyone is bussed away.

When you look at a walking distance of 1.6km at the kindergarten to grade five level, that works out to about a 1.26km radius around Perth Public school, that's a LOT of busing costs the TDSB could be saving by having a FI program at Perth.

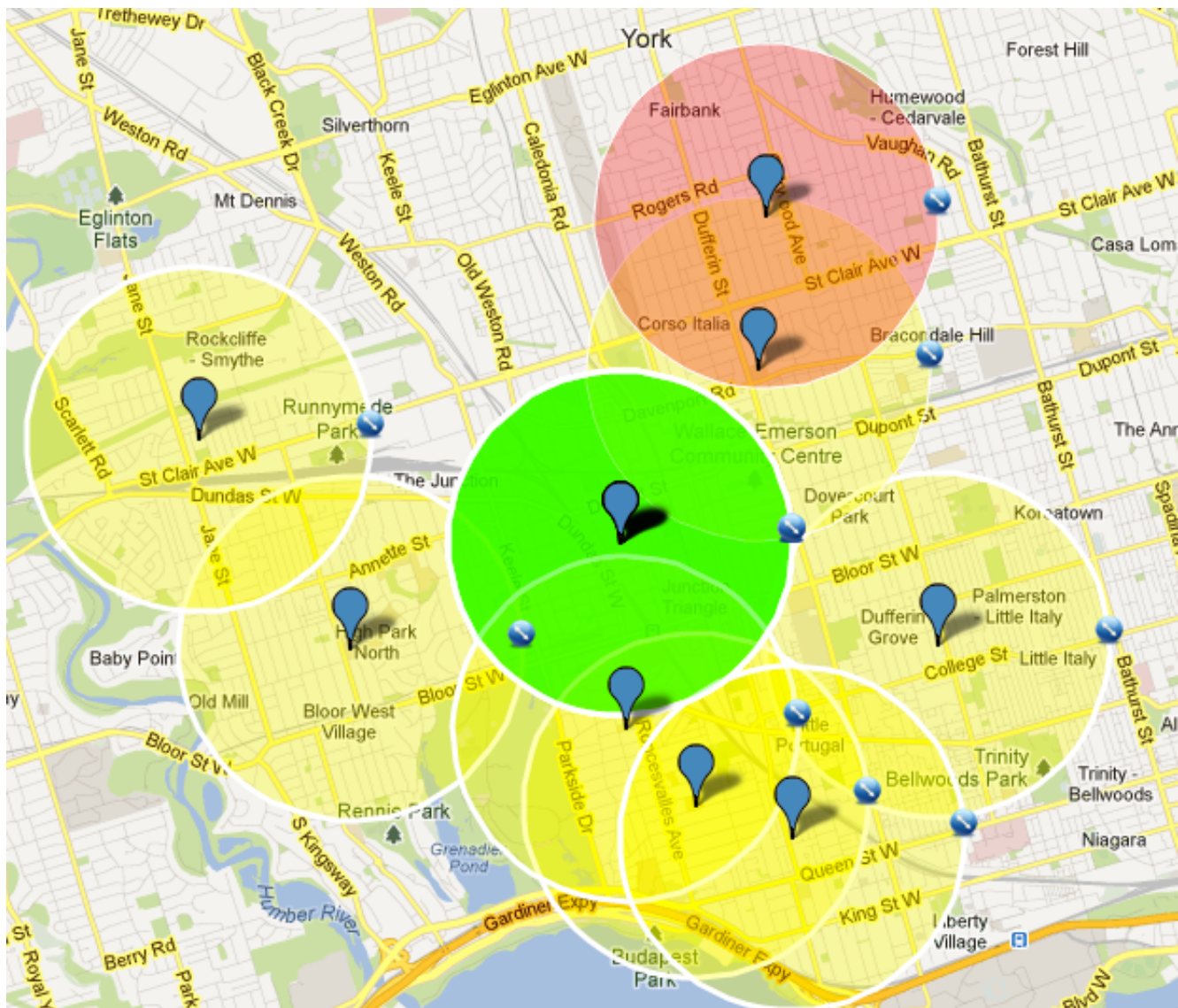


(attached: Perth FI 1.6km walking distance.png) The green circle shows the approximate area that can walk to Perth with a 1.6km walking distance. Note that Pauline, Indian Rd & Keele are all within this area. Howard & Dovercourt are **just** outside this area but could have some students feed into Perth without busing.

- Perth is bussed to Regal Road, now Rawlinson as well.
- Pauline is bussed to Regal Road
- Dovercourt goes to Regal Road, some bussed
- Indian Road Crescent is bussed to Fern !?!
- Keele goes to Howard Park, some bussed

It is my impression that Regal Road, Fern and Howard Park are all bursting at the seams. Full day kindergarten is only going to exacerbate that problem since it seems like the Ministry will not be providing additional funding for these new classes.

When you look at the nearby FI schools and the demand for the FI program, there is clearly a void centered on Perth



(attached: Perth FI and surrounding schools.png) The green circle is the same as above - 1.6km walking distance to Perth. The red circle is for Rawlinson - note that it includes most of the 'local' catchment area for Regal Road. The yellow circles show other FI schools.

My Proposal is to start a local French Immersion program at Perth Ave starting Fall 2013 to address the immediate need of the 17+ families that want a local FI program and establish a French Immersion Centre in the next year or two. If enrolment at some combination of Perth, Regal Road, Fern, Howard or Dewson merit it, the board could move the whole lot of us to a local French Immersion Centre to take pressure off the schools where enrolment is continuing to grow.

I can think of several options for space for a local French Immersion Centre. I'm sure the board planning Dept. can come up with more and do a proper evaluation for the costs, benefits & drawbacks for each location.

- Take back the building Perth is sharing with St. Luigi. (buy them out, swap property, something)
- There is a school building at 160 Franklin Ave that has been vacant for years (the old, old, old St. Josaphat). Lease it!
- What is being done with Kent Sr. Public? Has the property been sold?
- Perhaps the old 11 Division police station at Mavity could be torn down and turned into a school?
- There is a new development being planned just around the corner from Perth. Perhaps a new community centre & school could be part of the project using some section 37 money!
- There are new developments being planned off Sterling Road between Bloor & Dundas. Perhaps the board could collaborate with a developer here.
- There is talk of a new development at the corner of Campbell & Dupont. Perhaps the board could

collaborate with a developer here.

If a FI Centre isn't feasible and Perth runs out of space in the future you can always put an addition on to Perth. One of the two parking lots to the north of the school would be a great spot. The board could also contribute to the playground revitalization that's already being planned by the local community.

I would like some more information to help me understand the feasibility and challenges with my ideas:

- an updated version of the June 3, 2011 "FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ANNUAL REPORT"
- an updated version of the June 24, 2011 "ENROLMENT IN FRENCH IMMERSION/EXTENDED FRENCH PROGRAMS 2011/2012"
- FI enrolment numbers for the past 5 years for: Regal Road, Rawlinson, Howard, Fern, Dewson, Parkdale
- FI application numbers for the past 5 years from: Perth, Pauline, Dovercourt, Regal Road, Howard, Keele, Indian Rd, Fern, Garden, Parkdale, Dewson
- Current utilization & capacity information (same information as: [http://laureriese.files.wordpress.com/2009/10/669\\_tdsbschool-utilization-rates-list-v1.pdf](http://laureriese.files.wordpress.com/2009/10/669_tdsbschool-utilization-rates-list-v1.pdf))

Can you please let me know how the TDSB plans to meet the immediate need of our community for a local French Immersion program?

Sincerely,

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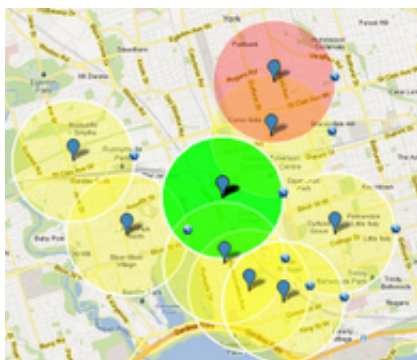
Lisa Thibodeau

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**2 attachments**



**Perth FI 1.6km walking distance.png**  
91K



**Perth FI and surrounding schools.png**  
403K