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## Northwest and North Central French Immersion Program – In-Person Sessions March 6, March 21 and April 9, 2018

### Questions & Answers

#### Four Potential Options

The high level of interest in the French Immersion Program in northwest and north central Calgary has resulted in some schools being at or over-capacity, which may limit continued growth at these locations. Four potential options are being considered as we work to develop a longer-term strategy for the French Immersion Program in northwest and north central Calgary. The four options include:

- Change boundaries
- Change grade configurations
- Expand the program/locations
- Long-term cap on enrolment

The final decision could be a combination of the options.

#### School Capacity

##### **At Banff Trail School, they had to sacrifice the music room and other spaces due to an overwhelming number of students, could capacity be reconsidered?**

Schools determine how to use all spaces on a yearly basis depending on enrolment growth or declines within the school. Music rooms are created when space allows however in schools that are at or near capacity, music rooms are not a guarantee.

Please see information further in this document regarding capacity calculations.

##### **What are some of the current under-capacity elementary schools in the NW?**

Schools and their utilization rates are published annually in the School Enrolment Report. Attachment V in the report provides detailed information on capacity and utilization by area. The 2017-2018 School Enrolment Report is available on the [CBE website](#).

##### **University Heights School has significant capacity and the developers of University District have said there is CBE space there – has this been considered?**

University School is the designated regular program school for students residing in the communities of University Heights, University Housing and Parkdale. It is also



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the designated regular program school for students who will be living in the new University District as the development grows.

**In the table the utilization per cent is not 2017 enrollment divided by instruction space avail. Why? Is there some other column or factor missing?**

## Provincial Capacity

Provincial capacity focuses on the “instructional” area of a school and is determined by dividing the total instructional area by an area per student grid based on their grade configuration, plus Career and Technology Studies (CTS) spaces, gym and library spaces.

**Provincial Net Capacity =  $\frac{\text{Instructional Area} + \text{Rated Capacities}}{\text{Area per student}}$**

Instructional Area = total area (m<sup>2</sup>) of all instructional space

Rated Capacities = CTS + Gyms + Physical Activity Room (PAR) + Libraries

## CBE Rated Room Capacity (Instructional Space Available)

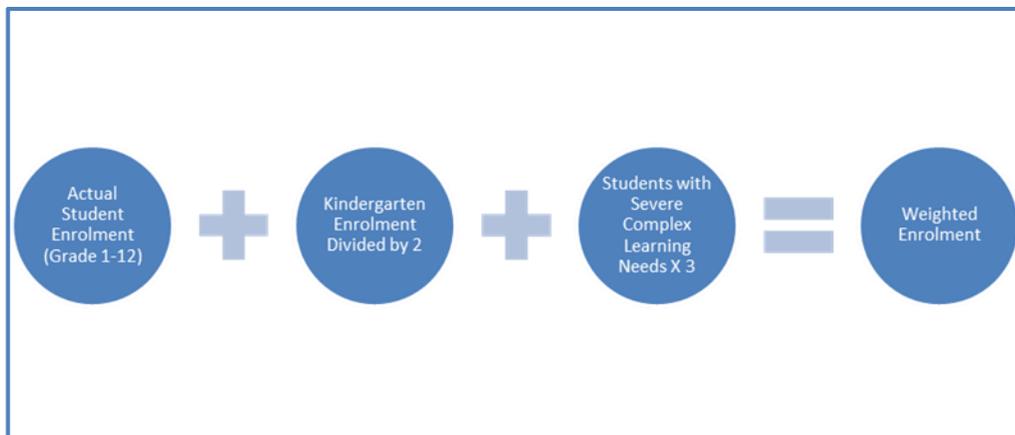
The CBE also calculates a rated room capacity to determine the instructional space available in a school. This approach multiplies the number of actual instructional spaces by 25 students per instructional space. Spaces used for Career and Technology Foundations (CTF) and Career and Technology Studies (CTS) are multiplied by a factor of 20 students per space. The rated room capacity may be used in addressing accommodation challenges at individual schools when a large discrepancy between the provincial capacity and the instructional space available exists.

## Calculating School Utilization

Utilization is based on a provincial formula which “weighs” students based on whether they are kindergarten students or they have severe complex learning needs. The graphic below illustrates how actual weighted enrolment is calculated based on Sept. 30 student enrolment each year:



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Once the weighted enrolment is determined, utilization is calculated by dividing the weighted enrolment by the provincial capacity.

More information can be found in the French Immersion Information document on the [CBE website](#).

### **Has there been consideration for the use of ‘portables’ in order to allow for growth in schools and areas that may be at physical capacity.**

Modular classrooms are intended as a short-term solution to enrolment pressures. Many factors are included in the determination of whether a school site can accommodate modular classrooms. Each year, the CBE submits a modular classroom request to the province based on a set of established criteria. The province determines which modular classroom units are approved based on the plan submitted each year by school boards across Alberta.

The CBE modular classroom report details this full process and is available on the [CBE website](#).

## Designations

### **If communities are re-designated is there consideration for those with older siblings (can a younger sibling follow an older sibling if they are re-designated elsewhere?)**

When school designation changes are implemented, the CBE works with parents and school staff to determine options for implementation. In some previous re-designations, students have been ‘lifted and shifted’ which means all students impacted by the change make the move as a cohort in the subsequent school year. In other designation changes, there has been ‘a one-year grandfathering’ of students which means students were able to complete their final year of the grade



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configuration of the school. The implementation decisions in re-designations depend on various factors including space available in both schools, the grade configuration of the school, transportation and resourcing.

## **Are designations for high schools expected to change?**

The CBE is undertaking a review of all high schools across the jurisdiction. This engagement is expected to commence in the fall of 2018. As this engagement moves forward, designations and other considerations will be part of the ongoing conversations to provide sustainable high schools across the system.

## **Boundaries**

### **It is difficult to decide if a boundary change is a good option if we don't know what that would look like – when will proposed boundaries be available?**

Proposed boundary changes would be available in June 2018 when scenarios are presented for public feedback. There will be opportunities for further feedback at that time.

### **As a supplement to why not have centralized registration – why can't there be more flexibility if transportation is not an issue? Give choice to help alleviate.**

CBE schools are able to accept out of attendance area students provided the school has the space and resources to support student learning. Regulations governing student admissions are contained in CBE Administrative Regulation AR6090 on the [CBE website](#).

## **Grade Configurations**

### **If there is space at William Aberhart High School, why not shift Grade 9 from Branton School to William Aberhart High School so they would offer Grades 9-12, shift Branton School to Grade 6–8 and Banff Trail School to K-5?**

Grade 9 inclusion in high school environments has far-reaching impacts beyond just the addition of students in the French Immersion Program. Programming requirements for various divisions (i.e., Grades 7-9 versus 10-12) vary within provincial curriculum standards and hours of instruction. These factors would need to be considered prior to making this type of decision.

### **Is there consideration in moving Grades 4-6 out of King George School? Why are kids from Panorama bussing there?**

Grade configuration changes, boundary changes as well as opening new program sites are all options under consideration during this engagement. As new



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communities are developed, they are designated to programs of choice in schools that have space at the time which is why Panorama students were designated to King George School.

## Enrolment Cap

**How do you balance / prioritize early versus late French Immersion as students enter junior high (i.e., Branton School) if demand exceeds available spaces?**

The continuing French Immersion Program (early French Immersion) is designed as a K-12 program. As families make the commitment to enter the program in kindergarten or Grade 1, the CBE sets space aside as a priority for these students to complete the program up to Grade 12. Therefore, if demand were to exceed space available, there would be a limit (cap) placed on late French Immersion enrolment in a school. Students could have the option of attending a late French Immersion Program in another school that has space, however in this instance transportation would be the responsibility of the family.

**Follow up on the demand question, is the issue budgeting? Or resource allocation? Regular program does not face these pressures.**

CBE continues to face enrolment pressures in some designated regular program schools as well as alternative programs. For the regular program, when enrolment exceeds the capacity of the school, an overflow school is designated as the CBE is obligated under the Provincial School Act to accommodate K-12 students in their designated regular program schools. The School Act references the fact that school boards may offer alternative programs where space and resources are available.

**How can we cap a program that is one of the two official languages of Canada?**

The School Act is a provincial regulation which oversees school programming in Alberta. According to the School Act Section 21 (1), French Immersion is a considered an alternative program. For more information visit <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/s03.pdf>.

**Would capping only be for kindergarten and Grade 1 entry points?**

An enrolment cap is used to limit the amount of growth in an alternative program due to space constraints. A cap on enrolment in French Immersion may apply to students entering the program for continuing immersion in kindergarten and Grade 1 as well as students entering late immersion at Grade 7.



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## Early and Late French Immersion

**My understanding is that early and late French Immersion outcomes are similar. If that is the case, why not abandon early French Immersion altogether?**

Early French Immersion Programs are ideal for many students and the first choice for a majority of parents for a range of reasons. Research has shown that early immersion programs take full advantage of a young learner's facility at learning a language; young children are especially open to new linguistic and cultural experiences and, therefore, are open to learning new languages in the early grades of schooling. Research supports providing immersion at the earliest age possible.

**Will late French Immersion will be eliminated in favour of early French Immersion? Late French Immersion is generally the student's choice, early French Immersion would have been parent choice.**

The CBE is committed to providing a range of options for language learning that allows multiple entry points and increases student and parental choice. Our Late French Immersion Program provides a successful additional option for students and families. Without a late French Immersion Program, students who miss the entry for early French Immersion (students moving into CBE from outside our jurisdiction for example) would not have an opportunity for immersion.

The CBE sets space aside as a priority for students who entered French Immersion in kindergarten or Grade 1 to complete the program up to Grade 12. Therefore, if demand were to exceed space available, there would be a limit (cap) placed on late French Immersion enrolment in a school.

**What is the split of early versus late French Immersion at Branton and Georges P. Vanier schools? May be useful to split those numbers out on the School Enrolment and Utilization poster board.**

- Branton School is approximately 50 per cent for both early and late French Immersion.
- G. P. Vanier School is approximately 60 per cent early French Immersion and 40 per cent late French Immersion.

## Alternative Program – French Immersion

**What is the teaching capacity? Are there enough French Immersion teachers?**

French Immersion/French Second Language teachers are in demand throughout Canada. The CBE is actively hiring strong K-12 French teachers and is able to meet the demand for French teachers to fill vacant positions within the CBE. Our



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recruitment of graduates from across Canada provides our system with excellent teachers who can teach in our French Immersion/French Second Language programs.

## General

### **Are you able to share the pressures or issues that are requiring the development of a new strategy (i.e., why is this happening right now?)**

Projections show that some schools currently offering the French Immersion Program in northwest and north central schools will reach capacity in the coming years. The timing of this work is to provide for a long term sustainable strategy for the French Immersion Program for future years.

### **Could new schools be built to accommodate the need?**

School boards are required to provide English language instruction for students in the regular program. As space becomes available in schools that experience a decline in enrolment, and interest in alternative programs grows, these programs of choice are often introduced as a means of keeping the community school viable into the future.

The CBE has board-approved criteria for prioritizing new school construction. This criteria currently does not include factors for prioritizing new schools for alternative programs. More detailed information is contained in the CBE Three-Year School Capital Plan on the [CBE website](#).

### **Why is William Aberhart High School French and Spanish? Why not focus on one or the other, given the demand?**

At the time that the two language programs of choice were introduced into William Aberhart High School, there was space to accommodate both. As interest in both language alternative programs has continued to grow, the school is reaching capacity and changes may be required. This conversation will be part of the high school engagement that is expected to commence in the fall of 2018.

### **I've heard the Mandarin Program is coming to William Aberhart High School. The charts show William Aberhart High School being close to capacity. Is the rumour incorrect? If not, how can the program fit?**

There are no plans at this time to consider a high school Mandarin Bilingual Program within the CBE. This bilingual program is currently offered as a K-9 program.



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## Does the CBE own the Jerry Potts building?

The CBE no longer owns Jerry Potts School. Jerry Potts School was transferred to the Francophone Education Region in 2013. The property had been leased to the francophone board for several years prior to transfer.

### Comments

- Many parents have talked about preferring French Immersion but choose their community school so they can walk. They wish French Immersion was everywhere.
- I have heard from many parents that Spanish Program was their second choice for languages and only chosen because the French Immersion schools were too large or too far away.
- The question about transportation not being an issue was valid – please don't be dismissive. Some families don't need transportation to attend the right school.
- It would be great if CBE and the Calgary Catholic School Board could collaborate on alternative programs to better utilize resources.
- No information was shared on what is best for child's academic development and social emotional development.
- Constant restructuring programming moving and consultation cost a great deal of \$. Let's do less programs but do them consistently and do them well.

### Additional Resources

Research outlines the following benefits of learning another language:

- Students studying more than one language are superior in divergent thinking tasks and in memory ability and attention span.
- An additional language significantly strengthens first language skills in areas of reading, vocabulary, grammar and communication skills.
- Literacy and academic instruction in the target language (French, Spanish, etc.) facilitates the acquisition of literacy and academic skills in English.
- Students studying an additional language have superior cross-cultural skills and adapt better to varying cultural contexts.

French language resources located on the [CBE website](#):

- [Is Early French Immersion the right choice for my child?](#)
- [Is Late French Immersion for me?](#)

Resources:

- "Dual Language Instruction from A to Z": Hamayan, Genesee, Cloud. Heinemann Press, 2013



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- “Access for Success; Making Inclusion Work for Language Learners” Arnett, Bourgoin. Pearson, 2018
- “L’approche neurolinguistique”: Claude Germain. Myosotis Presse, 2017
- Why Should Children Learn a New Language:  
<https://slc.teachers.ab.ca/Resources/Pages/SLIC-Resources.aspx>
- Why Learn Languages?: Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers: <https://www.caslt.org/en/>