

École Pine Grove PS 2003 French Immersion Survey

Summary of Responses

REVISED – August 2003

The summary has been done by area. Comments pertaining to specific questions are summarized by that question. General comments are at the end of this document.

1. Number of Surveys Received

Area

West Oak Trails (WOT)	29
Westmount	9
Glen Abbey East	40
Glen Abbey West	11
Southwest Oakville East	47
Southwest Oakville West	50
Blank location	<u>7</u>
Total	<u><u>193</u></u>

Note that 2 other surveys were received but the Fax copies were illegible.

2. Number of children in family

	French Immersion Grades 1-6	French Immersion Grades 7-8	French Immersion Grades 9-12
WOT	40	2	1
Westmount	10	0	0
G.A.East	58	8	5
G.A.West	12	1	0
SW Oakville E	66	6	4
SW Oakville W	64	17	5
Blank	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u><u>257</u></u>	<u><u>37</u></u>	<u><u>16</u></u>

	English Kindergarten	English Grades 1-6	English Grades 7-8	English Grades 9-12
WOT	2	1	0	0
Westmount	1	1	0	0
G.A.East	2	4	3	4
G.A.West	2	1	0	0
SW Oakville E	2	1	1	4
SW Oakville W	5	1	0	3
Blank	0	0	0	2
Total	<u>14</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>13</u>

	Catholic English Kindergarten	Catholic English Grades 1-6	Catholic English Grades 7-8	Catholic English Grades 9-12
WOT	1	0	0	1
Westmount	0	0	0	0
G.A.East	1	1	0	0
G.A.West	0	0	0	0
SW Oakville E	0	0	0	0
SW Oakville W	0	0	0	0
Blank	0	0	0	0
Total	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>

	Private Other Preschool	Private Other Kindergarten	Private Other Grades 1-6	Private Other Grades 7-8	Private Other Grades 9-12
WOT	2	3	0	0	0
Westmount	1	2	0	0	0
G.A.East	1	0	0	1	1
G.A.West	2	0	0	0	0
SW Oakville E	2	2	0	0	1
SW Oakville W	3	0	0	0	0
Blank	0	0	0	0	0
Total	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>

3. In general, how would you prefer to have elementary French Immersion (FI) delivered?

	Single Track FI Centre	Dual Track FI Centre	Undecided	Doesn't Matter
WOT	23	3	0	3
Westmount	9	0	0	0
G.A.East	38	1	0	1
G.A.West	11	0	0	0
SW Oakville E	43	2	0	2
SW Oakville W	42	3	1	4
Blank	6	1	0	0
Total	172 89%	10 5%	1 1%	10 5%

Comments:

- Single track FI checked with note that the program is ideally close to home. Also noted that Dual track is not a bad option.

4. Which scenario would you prefer?

	Option 1	Option 2	Undecided	Doesn't Matter
WOT	17	6	3	3
Westmount	7	0	0	1
G.A. East	33	4	2	1
G.A. West	8	3	0	0
SW Oakville E	25	18	1	0
SW Oakville W	30	17	3	0
Blank	5	2	0	0
Total	125 66%	50 26%	9 5%	5 3%

Option 1 – Single Track French Immersion Centre for West Oakville on the other side of QEW from your home to which your child must be bused.

Option 2 – Dual Track French Immersion Centre in your community on the same side of the QEW as your home to which your child might be walked or bused.

Comments:

- Dual track FI on same side as QEW picked from a resident south of the QEW checked but the preference is to keep Pine Grove open as is.
- Doesn't matter checked noting that resources must be adequate and classes are not split.
- Left unchecked since single-track French immersion within walking distance is preferred.
- Left unchecked since single-track K-8 French Immersion at Pine Grove preferred.

5. Would you place your children in French Immersion if the program was only available in a dual track centre?

	Yes	No	Undecided
WOT	24	0	5
Westmount	3	3	3
G.A.East	29	2	9
G.A.West	8	1	2
SW Oakville E	33	7	7
SW Oakville W	39	4	7
Blank	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>140</u> 73%	<u>19</u> 10%	<u>34</u> 18%

Comments:

- Answered yes reluctantly.
- Answered yes if there was no other alternative.
- Answered yes since some French immersion is better than none.
- Answered Undecided since the decision would depend on the quality of the program offered.
- Answered yes if the program is well organized and supported.
- Answered yes but continued placement would be determined based on quality of program.

6. Would you place your children in French Immersion if the program was relocated to an existing school where English program children were a significant majority?

	Yes	No	Undecided
WOT	12	9	8
Westmount	4	3	2
G.A.East	15	12	13
G.A.West	7	3	1
SW Oakville E	19	12	16
SW Oakville W	25	11	13
Blank	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>84</u> 44%	<u>54</u> 28%	<u>54</u> 28%

Comments:

- Undecided checked since the decision would depend on the number of split classes, how diluted the French program became and the location of the school.
- Yes checked but single-track French immersion preferred.
- Yes checked with reservations.
- No checked but would check yes if that was the only option to remain in French immersion.
- Checked yes if the school is within walking distance.
- Checked Undecided since decision would depend on proximity of school to home.
- Checked yes only if program quality is maintained.
- Checked yes noting we have already had to do this at Eastview.
- Checked yes noting I would not be happy about it though.

7. Would you place you children in French immersion if the program was relocated to a new school where English program children were a significant majority, but the programs were introduced on an even footing (i.e. with the expectation that the populations would be balanced in three to five years)?

	Yes	No	Undecided
WOT	23	2	4
Westmount	6	2	1
G.A.East	25	3	12
G.A.West	8	0	1
SW Oakville E	29	10	7
SW Oakville W	36	1	12
Blank	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>129</u> 69%	<u>21</u> 11%	<u>39</u> 21%

Comments:

- We are tired of our children having to switch schools. School culture is very important and cannot be delivered in this environment.

8. Would you place your children in French immersion if their classes were all likely to be two grade splits beyond grade 2?

	Yes	No	Undecided
WOT	7	16	5
Westmount	5	3	1
G.A. East	12	21	7
G.A. West	3	8	0
SW Oakville E	19	23	5
SW Oakville W	11	26	13
Blank	0	6	1
Total	<u>57</u> 30%	<u>103</u> 54%	<u>32</u> 17%

Comments:

- Undecided checked since the decision would be based on whether or not the school is single or dual track and on the class size.
- Undecided checked but probably no.
- Checked yes as long as there were sufficient resources.
- Checked no noting that progress may be hindered.
- Checked no noting the program would be comprised.
- Checked yes with a note only if no other option is available.
- Checked no noting that the option is very disturbing.
- Checked yes if single track.
- Checked yes noting a strong preference against grade splits, but would go along with it if we absolutely had to in order to keep French Immersion.
- Checked yes but wouldn't like it.

9. In particular considering grades 6-8, how would you like to see French immersion centres (single or dual track) configured?

	Grades 1-8 9-12	Grades 1-6 7-8 9-12	Grades 1-5 6-8 9-12	Grades 1-6 7-12	Undecided	Doesn't Matter
WOT	18	5	0	3	2	1
Westmount	4	2	2	1	0	0
G.A.East	14.5	9.5	1	6	2	7
G.A.West	7	2	1	0	0	1
SW Oakville E	28	12	1	2	1	3
SW Oakville W	27	6	7	5	1	4
Blank	3	1	0	1	1	1
Total	<u>101.5</u> 53%	<u>37.5</u> 19%	<u>12</u> 6%	<u>18</u> 9%	<u>7</u> 4%	<u>17</u> 9%

Comments:

- The .5 indicates that two answers were checked.
- First choice was Grades 1-6,7-8,9-12 and second choice would be 1-8, 9-12.

10. French immersion in West Oakville may be relocated or consolidated again as early as 2008. How many such moves between grades 1 and 8 are you prepared to tolerate before you withdraw your children from the program?

	One	Two	Undecided	Doesn't Matter
WOT	14	5	5	5
Westmount	6	0	0	3
G.A.East	22	3	9	6
G.A.West	6	2	0	3
SW Oakville E	25	5	10	5
SW Oakville W	20	7	17	4
Blank	2	0	4	0
Total	95 51%	22 12%	45 24%	26 14%

Comments:

- Undecided checked since the decision would be based on where the children would be moving to, are resources available and is the program viable.
- Doesn't matter checked with a note that there are children switching schools every year for three years and there is a concern with the quality of the program.
- Doesn't matter checked based on the understanding that students, staff and resources are all moving, so the relocation is purely physical
- Doesn't matter checked noting the quality of the program is more important than the number of moves.
- No moves would be best.
- Nothing checked stating withdrawal from Board if there are more changes.
- Nothing checked noting I have already tolerated four for my Grade 9 student.

11. If French immersion is offered only in a dual track centre, where would you enroll your children?

	Dual track FI centre	English program home school	Private or Catholic school	Other	Undecided
WOT	21	4	1	0	3
Westmount	5	2	1	0	1
G.A.East	27	0	2	0	11
G.A.West	6	1	2	0	2
SW Oakville E	27.5	5.5	5	1	8
SW Oakville W	34.5	5	4.5	0	6
Blank	3	1	1	0	2
Total	124 64%	18.5 10%	16.5 9%	1 1%	33 17%

Comments:

- Dual track FI checked with a note that it would have to be on the same side of the QEW i.e. south, otherwise English program home school
- Undecided checked since the decision would depend on the number of split grades and whether the program is viable.
- Dual track would have to run as well as Pine Grove.
- The .5 indicates that the decision would be based on the better alternative at the time.
- Dual track FI checked noting that it must be close to home.
- Dual track FI checked with a comment to see how it goes.
- Checked private or Catholic school noting especially if they have to travel far from home or if they will be in a portable or if they will continually be moved from school to school.
- Checked Undecided stating would prefer to stay with French immersion, but if diluted program and grade splits required, would go private.
- Checked private or Catholic school noting that the Catholic school offers French Immersion.
- Checked Undecided depending on the location of the dual track centre.
- Dual track FI checked depending on quality of the program.

General Comments

- Many people prefer single track French Immersion but their main concern is that the quality of the program maintains its excellence. Splitting resources jeopardizes the program.
- Our thoughts on French Immersion are that we'd choose a less than ideal setting rather than not at all. We would prefer a single-track school, large enough that split classes were mostly avoided and are not concerned about whether our children are bused or can walk to school. With children entering grades 6 and 8 September 2003 we/they have already invested many years in the program and this is where their friends are. So while we certainly have our preferences for the program, we would have to come up against a very negative change in order to remove our children from the program. (As far as "placing" our children in the program or not – that is hard to answer when we do not have younger children and will not be faced with that decision.)
- We believe very much in the French Immersion Program, in particular the single-track centre. Single track is so effective, as it allows a limited amount of resources to be best used; it has children all in the same learning format together; it fosters a strong sense of the French language, and so on. While we would continue to send our children to a dual track immersion program, we strongly believe it will water down and make the program much less effective. Recent discussions with my brother-in-law, who is a principal in the Saskatoon Public Elementary School system, confirmed the possibility of the worst possible outcome of splitting the immersion program into a dual track one, among various schools. A number of years ago, Saskatoon's single-track immersion program was made dual track in various schools; within a very short number of years (less than five, I think) the whole immersion program was gone. Without resources at each school, the program was not as effective, parents withdrew their children from the program, apparent demand fell and it eventually ended. Let's hope our program does not suffer the same fate.
- If it is a dual track immersion, I would hope one of the schools accommodating our children (i.e. Heritage Glen) would have a principal from a French school to stand up for our French speaking children. I have already heard rumblings that Pine Grove students are not wanted.
- According to the Fraser Institute, Pine Grove was the top public school in Halton with a near perfect score of 9.9. Why would they want to close a school with such great achievement?!?!?
- The Halton District School Board has failed the children of Southwest Oakville.
- I have no car and I cannot help at school if she is bused.
- I am committed to the French Immersion program. However if any of the above conditions were detrimental to my child's well being (i.e. multiple moves, majority English) I would have to reconsider.
- The Board needs to stand up and be proud of Pine Grove and its fine program! The school is a model of excellence and should be treated as such.
- National Post Fraser Institute Report Card June 17, 2003 Pine Grove is top rated Halton school.

- Attention: Halton District School Board – After having the pleasure of my three children ages 16, 13 and 9 in French Immersion for many collective years, I have these suggestions to offer: The French Immersion system is already quite watered down in comparison to the all French program; Dual track centers further water down the program; announcements, the anthem, musical presentations, talk amongst teachers in the hallways....is all in English instead of French in a dual track system; Presently I have three kids in three schools because of the 1-6/7-8/9-12 school grade configuration; this is extremely difficult on a family. K-8 and 9-12 would make much more sense; I would be glad to drive my children to any location in West Oakville that offered single track 1-8 French Immersion; Our family made a commitment to the French Immersion program many years ago; Why can't the Halton Board make a serious commitment to the French Immersion Program? We feel like second-class citizens; My son had to move from Q.E.P. to Blakelock and forfeit a school bus and the walk for him became 4.5 km. This prompted our family to move from our home of 17 years (on Riverside Dr.) to Lees Lane (our new home is .7 km. Away from Blakelock). My daughter has to attend Eastview for grades 7 and 8 in a small segregated student body. My youngest is at Pine Grove; Keep the French Immersion together K-8, 9-12; Keep the program pure; After all, French is one of Canada's official languages.
- One of my children is among those who will have gone from Pine Grove to QEP to Eastview to Blakelock within 4 years. I do not see this as a positive situation and have seriously reconsidered whether I want to keep either one of my children in the French Immersion program. I was especially disturbed to have him in a grade 7/8 split class this year. I do not believe it was a great help to the furtherance of his education, and may in fact have been a step backward. The only positive element in all the moves he has made is the fact that he and his classmates moved together. That will not be the case once the students north and south of the QE are divided. My other concern is the division of resources to accommodate the dual track schools. We do not have enough English textbooks and reference materials in the schools, not to mention French books. I do not see that becoming any less of an issue as the students are divided up among a number of dual track schools. Textbooks are not readily available for at home study as it is, and for students like my son to depend on scattered note taking is unacceptable.
- As we all now know, Pine Grove was just rated the highest school (aced the provincial tests!), so why change something that works? Single-track immersion is obviously effective, why not keep it? The school is functioning at capacity and enrollment is rising. Does this not meet the board's criteria to keep a school open?
- Pine Grove is an amazing school. It works well because it is a French Immersion Centre. People aren't concerned that their children are being bused because they think it's well worth it. There are many French resources and the Pine Grove population is a very close-knit proud community. If this could somehow be duplicated it would be very beneficial. Also, the recent ranking by the Fraser Institute placing Pine Grove at the top of Halton schools indicates what all parents know, Pine Grove should not be on the closure list, it should remain open.
- Beginning in grade nine, I attended a French immersion program conducted in a majority English school. Such a format is not ideal for French language training for a host of reasons. Chief among them is the reality that French immersion students are made to feel different, odd, peculiar by their mainstream 'normal' English counterparts. Secondly, the

host environment in a majority English setting is not equitable or welcoming to the minority language. In contrast, Pine Grove excels at promoting and spotlighting the French language in a variety of subtle yet important ways, ranging from bilingual banners at school functions to the posting of French words and phrases on school documents and communications. In our English only, unilingual environment, these supportive and important measures are overwhelmed and lost through the benign dominance of the majority language.

- Please keep French going or don't call French an official language of Canada.
- There are basic truths that cannot be denied:
 - Pine Grove School is full to capacity with bright, eager students, who have proven time and time again that their school is providing them with one of the finest educations that the region has to offer.
 - Pine Grove School has an exceptionally strong parental support structure. It is a family.
 - The school is therefore not broken.
 - Does it make sense to fix something that is not broken?
 - Single track is the most effective form of immersion.
 - Shuffling students between schools unnecessarily is unconscionable.
 - The Eastview foray into dual track has not worked.
 - Due to the uncertainty in the integrity of French immersion in West Oakville, countless families have not enrolled their children into the immersion system, although it would have been their first choice. Since we only have one entry point into the system, these children have missed out for the entire duration of their education.
 - The only logical solutions to the problem are:
 - Move **all** immersion students to one school that is 'allowed' to stay open while moving the English students out.
 - Keep the immersion students at Pine Grove until they can be moved to one school.
 - Keep Pine Grove open and separate immersion from the funding formula.
 - Trustees are elected to promote and safeguard the educations of our most precious resource. They are not in place to make the best of a bad situation. Populations are fluid and this situation will come up *ad infinitum*. The time to fix the problem is now. Otherwise, what message is being sent to our children? Shall we teach them to 'pass the buck' at age 6? The choices made now have huge ramifications. These aren't numbers. They are children. It is time to act like grown-ups.
- I am prepared to work with French Immersion program as long as my children are not compromised. The program quality must remain high and my children must be able to cope with the changes.

- I always ask my kids if they want to continue in French Immersion. So far the answer has always been yes.
- We have a strong preference for single track, but will do whatever we have to in order to keep our children in French Immersion (even if it means going along with a dual track model).
- We are not French speaking adults however feel it is important that our children learn the skills of a second language.
 - Currently as it is proposed one of our children will leave Pine Grove in '04 move on to another school for 1 year, then move to another school for 2 years and then move again for the balance of his education. That means 3 new schools in 4 years at a time in his life when puberty is well underway etc. This does not provide for any type of feeling of comfort, community, school appreciation etc.
 - Currently as proposed when Pine Grove is closed, I will in all likelihood be taking my child out of the program, as the school that is our home school does not offer the same program as Pine Grove has. It is an English school and the French program is secondary in many ways. I do not fault the teachers, it is the structure of the system. French Immersion students will not be allowed the same opportunity to learn the language as it is currently done. In addition, they are the minority in numbers vs. the English stream. It ends up being a “watered” down version. My theory is that the second language has to be integrated throughout the entire school and spoken in order to be effective and long lasting. This entire change is completely a political strategy with no concern for the children and their needs. It comes down to being a bean counter program instead of a valued education program for the future of our children. These are the future leaders of our society and country. It's a pretty sad story for us to leave for our children.