

French Immersion Community Forum

Hunt Middle School

December 3, 2019

Notes from Small Group Protocol (* indicates multiple responses)

What do you see as the benefits and opportunities for students?

- Learning to think in a different way
- Intercultural competency***
- Job opportunities/salary
- Opportunity to connect diverse people*
- Life skill
- Pathway to additional languages (easier)
- Neurological benefits*
- Interdisciplinary pursuits
- CONFIDENCE
- Strengthens college resume
- First language boost
- It's a common 2nd language for navigating the world
- Helps native speakers (refugee or others) integrate more easily*
- Quebec is next door*
- Opens up access to cheaper colleges in Quebec/France*
- Good mental challenge for bored kids (gifted)
- It's a global norm to speak more than one language – awareness**
- Might lead to exchange students
- Increases empathy and understanding*
- Raises vocabulary scores on SAT verbal*
- Joie De Vivre (Joy of Living) – live it/learn it*
- Make them more respectful and curious travelers*
- Full knowledge of French – knowing math and science in French not just Lit/grammar
- Teachers flexibility/quick thinking – perseverance
- Helps 3rd/4th grade language

What do you see as concerns and potential obstacles for the district?

- Will funding be long term/sustainable? ****
- Will there be community pushback (how to market it/educate)*
- Charter School? “Dovetail* K,1,2 program
- Concerns about curriculum completion
- Equity in terms of access to program
- What happens with standardized testing?
- Finding teachers and space
- Zoning – out of District – homeschool*
- Competition for enrollment with other district programs
- Why French over other languages?
- Teacher supply / \$\$ incentives for immersion teachers
- Trainings (local university education programs)
- Potential for community to see it as extra or fancy
- How to allow to integrate if they arrive late
- Teachers may not stay
- Students with individual needs able to be accommodated? Inclusivity thrive
- Educate public and families to benefits of dual language/immersions

What suggestions do you have related to curriculum planning and development?

- Strengthen FLES or afterschool program at the same DI school to support LE of students too old for program
- Consider broadly integrating system-side programming that is culturally relevant to all grade levels (create greater understanding of opportunity/importance of program need)
- Form strategic community partnerships
- Start with BIG classes (lots of recruiting) to account for attrition
- 100% fully integrated with clear connection to the rest of the school**
- Choice to opt in or out (makes us nervous? Equity? People moving in and out constantly)**
- Immersion school as an elementary magnet school*
- Balance of skills taught in French/English
- Have immersion option in one of the schools; on the other hand, maybe only offer as an option in a fraction of elementary schools*
- Afterschool programming in French at very least!
- Multi age classroom
- Importance of recruiting skilled professionals to implement the programming
- Elementary trained teachers and middle/high school level teachers
- It's ok to take ????? and not focus on perfection (proficiency tested) (native vs non-native speaking teachers)
- Incorporating all cultural aspects of French speakers (sub saharan, France, Quebec, LA, etc.)*
- Integrate Francophone (French) high school students in developing content for programs (music/film)

What suggestions do you have related to program design and development?

- Consider historical, local models – Burlington – Winooksi
- Base on ACTFL standards**
- Tie in with (standards-based) proficiency-based learning* and grading*
- Early grade level start**
- Consider the French Minister of Education curriculum
- 100% immersion in Kindergarten, maybe!*
- Have a mid-level and later-level entry*
- What happens if student arrives late in year/program?*
- What happens after 5th grade?
- Start program in multiples grades right on first year
- Look into current programs in Canada (Ontario)
- Drawing information from local resources) (at UVM, SMC, Middlebury)
- Focused on all francophone cultures – integrating experience from all French cultures***
- Including local representative of the cultures – including parents volunteering in classroom*
- Who's going to be in charge of planning/implementing the programs?
- Administrative vs. teachers vs curriculum planning \$\$ how do these professionals get paid? Sustainable funding?
- Developing and using a curriculum that will stick! In lieu of switching every few years Giving it a chance to work.
- Draw from Spanish immersion program in Jericho VT
- Combine with a French immersion summer camp (there are some in QC – or start as test case

Parking Lot

- City Council has expressed support for this many times
- Would make Burlington (more) attractive to those who move here relative to competing local districts
- Attractive to business

Comments and Wishes

Comments

- 1) This is super exciting. Seems like the resources are here.
- 2) I would have moved to Burlington if there was an immersion school. This would be an advantage of the community. Not a drain of resources but could add to it.
- 3) Employers seeking a place to relocate are looking for this.
- 4) In terms of process---- we could have had introductions in helping us know who was in the room.
- 5) Connect with Jericho to learn from what they are doing.
- 6) Create an opt-in for people to be able to share/see the email list of interested parties.

Wish

- 1) Do a survey of staff in the district. Do we have elementary teachers here who are certified in French and who would be interested in this?
- 2) What is the next step? --
- 3) Is there funding to help support our current levels of language. I don't want all the bright lights to be shined on just this and then have deeper cuts to the other languages, so that only a few students get language.