

French Immersion Transition from Holy Name to Alexander Kuska Information Session

Holy Name Catholic Elementary School

Monday, October 15, 2018

6:00 p.m.

Notes

1. Questions were raised about space at Alexander Kuska to house the French Immersion program; is there enough room at Alexander Kuska; will portables be needed; if so, will they be a short term or long term solution; will there be more playground equipment at the school; are there concerns about the school; why isn't a lot of students there.

Kathy Levinski spoke to 5 to 6 classrooms are needed at this time; portables may not necessarily be required to house program; may require portables when program reaches Grade 8; as part of the Planning Principles approved by the Board for use with the Long Term Accommodation Plan 2016-2021, we try to minimize the use of portables.

Kathy Levinski stated that all Niagara Catholic schools are excellent; Alexander Kuska was very full at one time but demographics have changed and there are lower numbers of students; region experiencing low birth rates; there are pockets of growth.

2. A question was raised whether there will be more split grades.

Yolanda Baldasaro spoke to the process that class organization at schools is dependent on student enrolment and Ministry of Education class size criteria; combined grades do exist; currently, there is a 4/5 combined grades class at Holy Name Catholic; decisions on future class organization will be determined once registrations/enrolment is confirmed and reviewed.

3. Questions were raised about bus times; students on the bus for 30 minutes now; will it now be an hour; will bus times increase.

Lori Powell spoke to how NSTS determines bus routes according to where students live or have made daycare arrangements; ride times may be very similar given the proximity of Holy Name to Alexander Kuska; the policy stipulates ride times shall not exceed one hour.

4. Questions/comments were raised about students with out of boundary status at Holy Name. Examples that were raised included: FI student will be leaving friends at Holy Name – can student stay as an out of boundary student? Parent has one child in FI program, one child in English track – can student in English track be brought to Alexander Kuska?

Yolanda Baldasaro spoke to the process that families interested in pursuing out of boundary permission for their children would be required to follow the Board policy regarding submitting a request for admission for out of boundary.

5. Questions/comments were raised about siblings of students in the French Immersion program; the siblings are not yet enrolled in the French Immersion program and would be out of boundary to Alexander Kuska; requests were made whether the sibling would receive transportation to Alexander Kuska; comments were expressed that exceptions to Board policy should be considered for the families and students currently enrolled in the program; question was raised if younger child was going into Kindergarten whether out of boundary application was required.

Yolanda Baldasaro spoke to the process that families interested in pursuing out of boundary permission for their children would be required to follow the Board policy regarding submitting a request for admission for out of boundary status; students with approved out of boundary permission are not eligible for transportation as per Board Student Transportation policy; transportation is provided for eligible students enrolled in the French Immersion program within family of schools boundary.

6. Comments were expressed as to why there was no consultation earlier to this meeting; families lives will be changing; reference made to 2016 letter; information about transition should be posted on Board website for transparency; parents require data and information in a timely manner to make informed decisions.

Yolanda Baldasaro spoke to the process that information sessions were beginning early this year for transition from Holy Name to Alexander Kuska; there is lots of development in the Holy Name area.

Kathy Levinski spoke to the fact that the long term accommodation plan has been on Board's website since 2016 – it was provided to Catholic School Councils, Principals and municipalities.

Yolanda Baldasaro spoke to gathering concerns expressed with further discussion with Senior Administration.

7. A question was raised regarding transition plans to get to know Alexander Kuska. Comments were expressed that transition would have been easier for students if done two years ago; difficult for students that wish to graduate and be with friends at Holy Name.

Yolanda Baldasaro spoke to the successful transition plan followed with the relocation of French Immersion program from St. Mark to St. John; transition activities have occurred in other school communities; transition activities between Holy Name and Alexander Kuska will be planned and communicated.

8. Questions were raised about whether all current French Immersion teachers will be going to Alexander Kuska. Comments were expressed about how amazing the French Immersion teachers are at Holy Name. A question was raised as to whether there be a Vice-principal at Kuska that will speak French.

Yolanda Baldasaro spoke to the process that decisions regarding staffing must take into account Collective Bargaining Agreements and proper process for staffing; student enrolment and class organization; not sure at this time which teachers may be at Alexander Kuska; staffing regarding Vice-Principal will be reviewed with Senior Administration.

9. Questions were raised about where French Immersion students will be going for grade 9; commitment of French Immersion program at Notre Dame College.

Yolanda Baldasaro spoke to the French Immersion policy that provides information about secondary French Immersion program; that this family of schools naturally transitions to Notre Dame College; that the French as a Second Language consultant is planning for the secondary French Immersion program; that course offerings at secondary schools, no matter the course, are reviewed by school Principals to determine whether a course may run based on factors such as student enrolment and viability.

Mary Vetere spoke to working on the transition plan for the secondary French Immersion program with secondary teachers at Notre Dame College; discussing course options, resources, staffing.

Mary Vetere spoke to information regarding the DELF exam; opportunity for Grade 12 students to obtain certification as to their proficiency level in French; this certification is recognized world-wide.

10. A question was raised about changing school start times.

Lori Powell spoke to process of possible changes to school start times to support shorter ride times for students.

11. A question was raised regarding child care and wait time for child care.

Kathy Levinski spoke to her contact with YMCA childcare; YMCA have indicated that students in the French Immersion program with childcare at Holy Name will receive child care at Alexander Kuska; the YMCA has been through this type of process before.

12. A question was raised whether there was a guarantee that the French Immersion students can stay at Alexander Kuska until Grade 8.

Kathy Levinski spoke to the process of projecting 15 years for enrolment and do our best with planning; yes, this is the only move in this plan; will need to look at plan again in 2021.

13. A question was raised whether the school boundaries can be changed; about the number of out of boundary students at Holy Name in the English track; comment expressed to keep French Immersion students at Holy Name and remove these out of boundary students.

Kathy Levinski spoke to the process of school boundary changes and that they are not being considered at this time.

14. Questions were raised regarding transportation; individual situations expressed.

Lori Powell spoke to role of NSTS providing service to both school boards; review of individual situations and sometimes exceptions are granted; knowledge of bus schedules and ride times; following board policy regarding transportation eligibility for service; school boundaries are located on NSTS website as well as an eligibility finder based on address; French Immersion family of schools boundary to Alexander Kuska will be available in the next few weeks; school Principals may be contacted for additional information; NSTS has a hazard policy that is applied if the walking route to school is deemed hazardous, i.e. portions of Quaker Road for Alexander Kuska.

Yolanda Baldasaro spoke to gathering information from tonight's session and discussing it with Senior Administration and to arrange with a follow up meeting; invited participants to stay and speak with any members of the team regarding individual concerns.