



Trustee News

CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

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French as a Second Language Programing

CDSBEO is committed to the goals set out by the Framework for French as a Second Language (FSL) in Ontario Schools K-12, 2013. These goals are to increase student confidence, proficiency, and achievement in FSL, to increase the percentage of students studying FSL until graduation, and to increase student, educator, parent, and community engagement in FSL.

The CDSBEO currently offers many FSL programs including Core/Intensive French, Extended French and French Immersion. What separates Core/Intensive French from Extended French and French Immersion is that subjects are taught in the Extended and Immersion programs.

The Approche neurolinguistique (the Neurolinguistic Approach in English), aligns with the first goal of the Ministry's vision for FSL: increase student confidence, proficiency, and achievement in FSL. Last fall, the CDSBEO trained 27 teachers on strategies of the Neurolinguistic Approach in all four competencies: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The Neurolinguistic Approach is based on research in neurolinguistics that has provided a better understanding of how people learn a second language. This approach creates the conditions necessary in the classroom in order for students to learn how to use a language instead of learning about the language.

An important influence at the CDSBEO has been the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This reference tool is recognized as a valuable asset for informing instruction and assessment practices in FSL education. CEFR informed instruction enhances learner autonomy and increases student motivation, while improving learner confidence and authentic use of the language in the classroom. The Diplôme d'études de langue française (DELFL), is an internationally recognized test of French proficiency which is based on the CEFR. The testing defines language proficiency by measuring listening, speaking, reading and writing. Candidates can attain a diploma from the French Ministry of National Education through one of the 175 international exam centres.

In the CDSBEO, all grade 12 students registered in French Immersion, Extended French, or Core French can write the DELFL exam to receive their certification. Since 2013, the number of CDSBEO students that have written the DELFL has risen from 15 to 137 in 2018. CDSBEO educators are also participating in the DELFL Examiner-Scorer accreditation, and to date, 41 teachers have been trained as DELFL Correcteurs.

"Being trained as a DELFL Correcteur changed how I approach oral communication in my classroom. For example, making corrections to what students would say became more about making sure their message was understood, rather than focusing on syntax and word order and verb tenses," noted FSL Consultant Sharon O'Brien.

Along their FSL educational journey, CDSBEO students also have the opportunity to participate in rich, authentic French

experiences beyond the classroom, including excursions to Quebec City, France, and École de neige, a French outdoor education camp in Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, Quebec. In addition, a new French summer cooperative education program has been introduced at the secondary level.

"I would like to comment that listening to the information on the Neurolinguistic Approach is very interesting, and a very ambitious approach," noted Trustee Laton. "Thank you for your presentation this evening."

Technology Enabled Learning and Teaching

Assistive technology allows all students the opportunity, regardless of their level of ability, to access the curriculum set out by the Ontario Ministry of Education, and reach their full potential. The more normative technology use becomes in the classroom, the less stigmatized students with special education needs feel when they access technology to support their learning.

"Technology has always been a very important part of education, and many of our students benefit from technology in the classroom. "As we continue to learn more and more about technologies, the more normative technology becomes in the classroom, the less stigmatized our students with special needs feel. This practice helps build an equitable and inclusive learning environment," noted Heather Gerber, Principal of Special Education.

Aidan Conners, a grade 12 student from St. Michael CHS who will be studying performing arts at Algonquin College in the fall, shared his story of how assistive technology helped to support his learning journey.

"I had a lot of challenges going into elementary school, which made learning very difficult for me. One of my challenges is described as dysgraphia, which means that I don't take verbal instructions very well. Writing is also a challenge, and at times I have a hard time reading my own writing. My challenges made school work very, very hard. Assistive Technology has been an important part of my success. I don't believe I would be going to college in the fall if it wasn't for these tools. I think the moment I entered high school, that's when my real education started. I was on the honour roll three times in a row. From a guy who didn't pay attention in class and, who didn't even want to go to school, who could imagine I could succeed?"

Aidan thanked his parents and the teachers and guidance staff who helped him on his learning journey.

Board Chair Todd Lalonde commended Aidan for his eloquence. "As you spoke, it is obvious that your confidence level is tremendous, and your thoughtfulness with regard to the people that have helped you along the way is astonishing for a young man. You are certainly a powerful advocate for all those who are finding success through technology."