

Late French Immersion at Cedar Hill Middle School

Equitable Access to Our Second Official Language

Education Policy and Directions Committee
Monday, January 9, 2023
Amy and Andy Teucher

My name is Andy/Amy Teucher

Parent of a current late french middle school student at Cedar Hill, and a student in Grade 5 who wants to do French next year

For three years (intake years 2019-2021), CHMS has offered a strong LFI program with dedicated, talented teachers providing a strong and integrated program that was well known and appreciated in the community.

The decision to cancel the Grade 6 Late French Immersion class at Cedar Hill Middle School does not put the kids first. The Late French Immersion video on the district website states that learning French is for every child - and parents in the (former) Cedar Hill Catchment want this opportunity for our children. The closure of the program at Cedar Hill removes this opportunity for many children in the district.

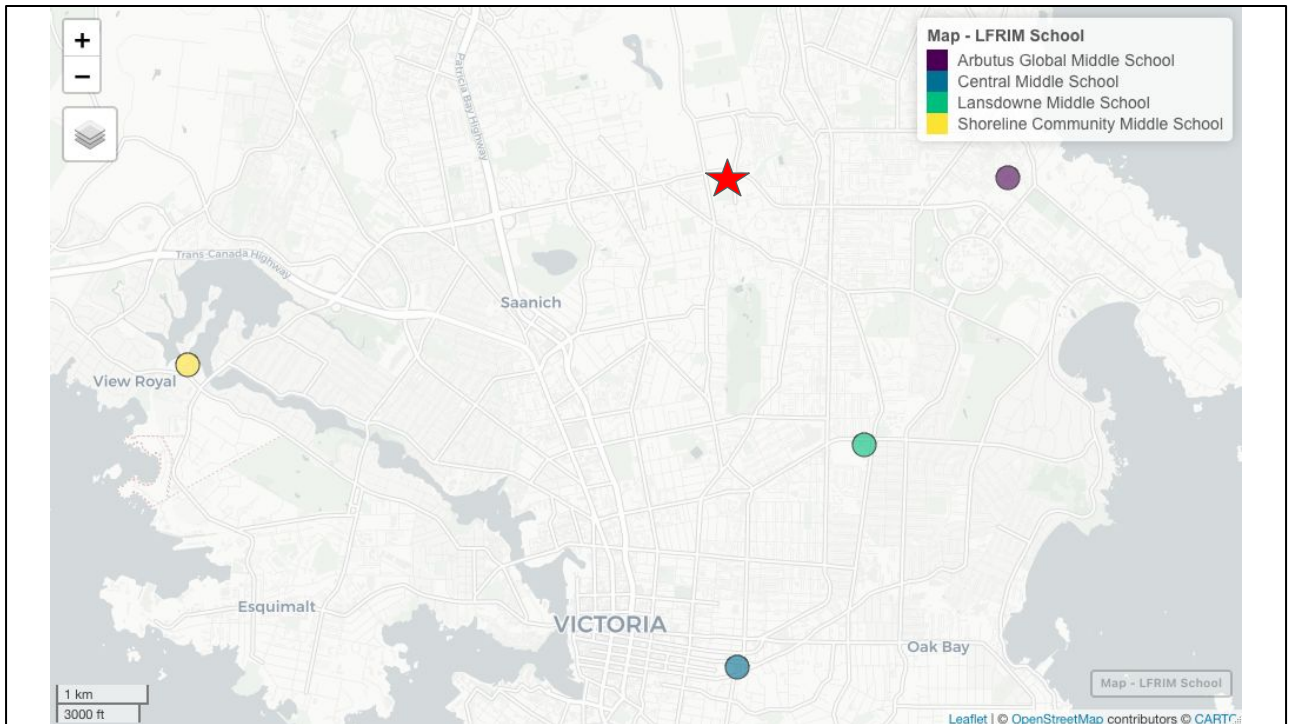
Key Requests

1. SD61 reopen the Late French Immersion program at Cedar Hill Middle School in order to provide equal opportunity for students across the District to attend Late French Immersion.
2. Include Cedar Hill Middle school as an option during the January 23-27 Registration Week.

Thank you for having these opportunities to provide input into district processes and allowing us to speak today

We're here today to request that:

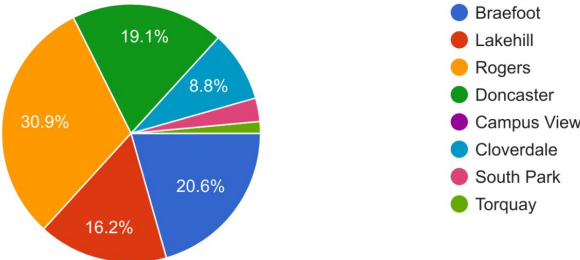
1. SD61 reopen the Late French Immersion program at Cedar Hill Middle School in order to provide equitable access to Late French Immersion.
2. Include Cedar Hill Middle school as an option during the January 23-27 Registration Week so that interest can be properly evaluated.



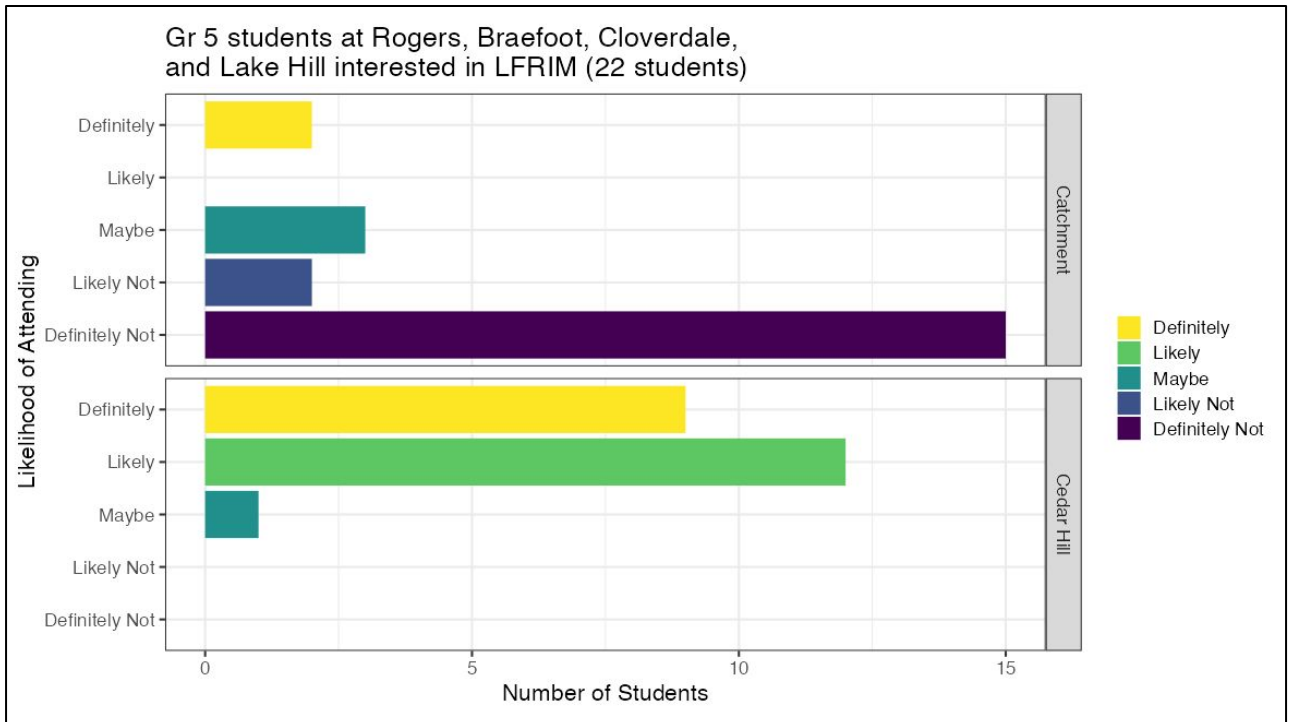
Cedar Hill Middle School fills a critical gap in the distribution of Late French schools - without it a huge proportion of people in the centre of the district does not have reasonable access to Late French Immersion.

Survey of Parents

- 69 responses
- 96% said they are interested in Late French Immersion
- 22 children in Grade 5 interested in LFRIM in 2023/2024
- 38 parents expressed interest in advocating for LFRIM at Cedar Hill



We've done a small survey of parents in Cedar Hill catchment schools. The survey has been open for less than a week, and mostly spread through word-of-mouth, so the results are likely an underrepresentation



Aside from the strong overall support for Late French Immersion, the most striking result was the desire for LFRIM at Cedar Hill, and the high number of children that would miss out on Late French if it is not offered at Cedar Hill.

Of 22 Grade 5 students at Braefoot, Cloverdale, Rogers, and Lake Hill interested in Late French next year:

An overwhelming majority said they will not send their children to their current catchment LFRIM school (17 out of 22)

Conversely, at least 21 would likely or definitely attend LFRIM if it is offered at Cedar Hill next year

This shows clearly that by not offering Late French at Cedar Hill you will be driving down enrolment in the district by denying students a feasible option. We don't believe this is in the best interest of the students, the community, or the district.

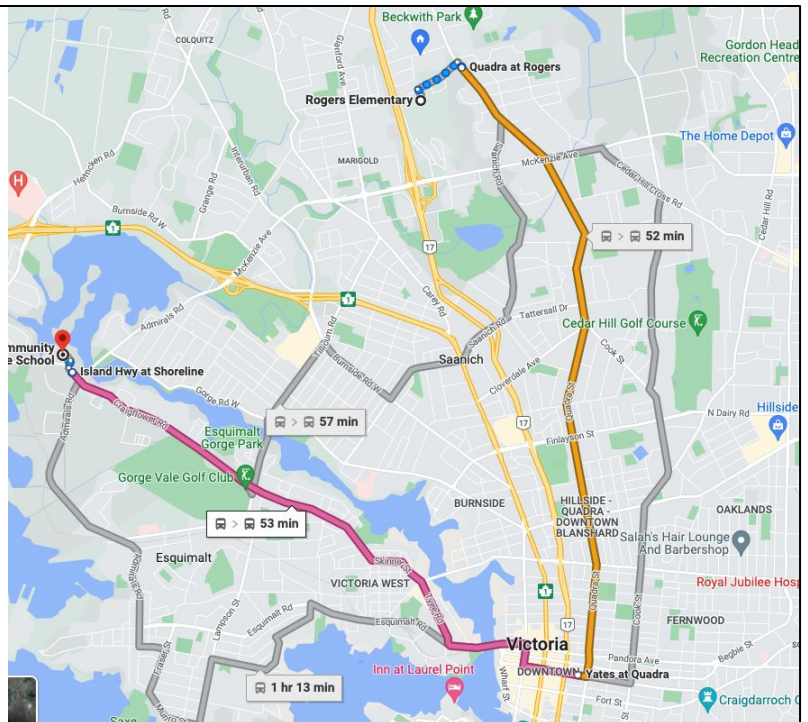
Closing LFI at Cedar Hill Middle School takes children out of their communities and pathway schools

- They will not be within walking or biking distance of their school
- They will not be with their cohort from their elementary school
- They will not be with their older siblings

Closing LFI at Cedar Hill Middle School takes children out of their communities and pathway schools. They will not be within walking distance of their school, they will not be with their cohort from their elementary school, and they will not be with their older siblings. Driving our children out of our neighbourhoods to more distant schools increases our community's carbon footprint.

Safe and Sustainable Routes to School

Public Transit from Rogers to Shoreline



Closing the Late French Immersion class at Cedar Hill Middle School results in unsafe and unsustainable transportation options to get to school. Our kids are far from the new catchment schools and there are no reasonable public transportation routes or safe bike routes to the new catchment schools. Practically, attending Shoreline from our community requires a 10 year old to take two buses with a downtown transfer to get to their Late French Immersion catchment school, or bike 7km on unsafe roads. The other option, where a family drives their student to the new catchment school, creates significant greenhouse gas emissions and pressure on families.

The decision to close LFRIM at Cedar Hill is not equitable

- Many families do not have the budgets or flexibility in their schedules to have children in schools across the city
- Only those privileged families with the means will be able to send their kids to Late French Immersion
- This only furthers the equity gap we have in our society

Finally, The decision to close Cedar Hill is not equitable. For many families, their budgets and schedules do not allow the option to have their children register at a school that is so far outside their neighbourhood. Children who would have walked or biked to school would now need to be driven. This decision does not allow for many families to take part in Late French Immersion, thus furthering their inequality.

SD61 Policy on Consultation and Communication

- In 2022, SD61 cancelled the LFI program despite strong advocacy and enrolment with no consultation
- It was indicated at that time that was a decision for 1 year only, and it would be reconsidered the following year
- For 2023/24 school year, the closure of the program continues with no consultation
- Budget decisions made by the board in previous years should not drive program delivery priorities going forward.

We believe the School District is violating its own policy on consultation and communication. Policy 1163 on the school district website states, “the Board expects district, school and program level decisions will be made using appropriate consultation processes.” SD61 did not consult with the parents and children affected by the closure of LFI at CHMS, and they should have. The French Parent Advisory Board, VPAC, SD 61 teachers/administrators, and parents were not consulted prior to cuts to LFI. This does not fulfill the requirements in the SD61 communications policy (policy 1150)

Key Requests

1. SD61 reopen the Late French Immersion program at Cedar Hill Middle School in order to provide an opportunity for students to attend their community school to learn French.
2. Include Cedar Hill Middle school as an option during the January 23-27 Registration Week.

We understand that budget and future space constraints at Cedar Hill Middle School may have influenced the closure of the program. However, we believe that there are creative and innovative ways to reinstate the program in a stable and successful way so that Late French Immersion is equitably available across the district.