

**From:** Alissa Mitchell  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 6, 2017  
**Subject:** Keep FI & IB at CSS site!

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Dear Trustees,

As an advocate for French Immersion in North Bay for the past 11 years, I would like to let you know that I am strongly opposed to the proposed scenario whereby the French Immersion and International Baccalaureate students are moved to West Ferris Secondary School in order to keep that high school open.

The French Immersion program has been bumped around by this board since its inception in 1974. This group of children has served as the stop gap for whatever current issue the board has had. Parents have protested this second class placement within the board and after many years, it appeared as if the board was finally listening; as a result, Alliance FIPS grew to become the largest elementary school in the NNDSB and French Immersion funding increased for the board based on increasing enrolment within this program. The success of the Alliance story is the foundation for the success of FI at CSS.

When word went out that the board is proposing to move FI and IB students to WFSS, the response was overwhelming: many parents say their children will drop FI and the IB program. These programs have cracks in them already and moving the students to the “old school” with inferior infrastructure; severing the partnership with Alliance (the feeder school for most in these programs-presenting both a practical problem as younger siblings attend the elementary school and a transition and programming problem where students can no longer walk between facilities); and using FI students to fix your enrolment problems again is simply unacceptable. Parents have also mentioned that they would be

committed to keeping their children in the north end of the city and would entertain the idea of moving their children to Algonquin or Scollard.

I am very disappointed that the school board is considering sacrificing the best interests of the French Immersion students in order to solve the latest funding problem between the board and the ministry. Again.

The irony that the FI program has allowed the board its recent successes is not lost on those parents who have been around long enough to see previous ARCs and previous mistakes made by the board.

Please don't ruin the FI program for the students of North Bay by sending them to WFSS in the event that a second high school is considered.

Please do everything you can to keep French Immersion and International Baccalaureate students at the Chippewa site. They deserve a new school, excellent resources, and continued partnership with Alliance.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss, please be in touch.

Thank you,  
Alissa

Alissa Mitchell  
Alliance & Chippewa parent

P.S. If unfamiliar, here is a brief history of the FI program in North Bay, as presented to Trustees in January 2011:

### **Some History**

**“French Immersion gives our children the opportunity to develop a skill that opens many academic, cultural and career options for children living in a global economy. French immersion is one of the most effective ways for children to become bilingual with no detriment to the development of their English language skills (website: [www.cpfont.on.ca](http://www.cpfont.on.ca) , February 12, 2008).”**

**Brief History of French Immersion in North Bay**

- Early Immersion, in North Bay, began at O'Brien Public School in the fall of 1974
- O'Brien Public School is now home to the Comfort Inn
- Within the first five years of its existence French Immersion moved to Dr. Carruthers Public School. It should be noted that at this time, all NNDSB immersion students attended the one school.
- Late Immersion began for grade 6 students in North Bay in the fall of 1979 at Dr. Carruthers and as we progressed in grades Dr. Carruthers became the only FI and EF JK-8 facility.
- All grade 7 & 8 students from Carruthers walked to Centennial for music, shop and home-economics classes as Dr. Carruthers did not have the appropriate facilities.
- While the following dates may not be exact, they are close enough to outline the various changes to venues within the FI/EF programs. Due to an increased demand for the program and overcrowding at Dr. Carruthers, Immersion programs branched out to include JK-6 programs at Pinewood around 1978, JK-6 at Laurentian in 1982 and JK-6 at Sunset in 1989. All 7/8 programming remained at Dr. Carruthers. The extended French program expanded to Silver Birches in 1988. EF programs closed at Dr. Carruthers and Silver Birches and moved to Fricker in the fall of 1991.
- In 2002 Dr. Carruthers closed and its students were split primarily between Pinewood and Laurentian, with Pinewood being the home to all grade 7 & 8 immersion students in the North Bay area of the NNDSB (Fricker has maintained the Extended French program) at which point promises were made to provide appropriate intermediate facilities
- NNSSB 2006 Capital Plan: stated Pinewood would become the French Immersion Centre by 2010 with appropriate intermediate facilities: never came to fruition.
- ARC Decision May, 2009: Closure of Pinewood P. S. and Laurentian P. S.: amalgamation at Alliance French Immersion Public School, formerly known as Centennial
- Until the amalgamation of Pinewood and Laurentian in 2009, the Immersion program never had appropriate intermediate facilities. With the closure of Dr. Carruthers in 2002 our students had NO technology (shop) experiences until the recent move to Alliance.
- January 19, 2010 Kim and Alissa met with the Trustees Al Bottomley, Colleen Goupil, Jay Aspin, Linda-Anne E. Thompson; Director of Education Heli Vail, and Alliance administrators Nicole McKinnon and Sarah Spence, to voice safety and accommodation concerns regarding Alliance (issues that were clearly expressed during the ARC process).

- 2010: Alliance, after only one year in existence is challenged by over capacity and ultimately program accommodation concerns yet again (portable already installed).
- As you can see, immersion families have had to face many changes throughout the program's existence and yet this program continues to survive because it is a program of excellence within the NNDSB.

In 2009, Alliance opened its doors. The school was overflowing before it even started its second year. The On The Ground (OTG) capacity of the building is 438 students. The ARC Board projections for 2014 were 465 students. The 2010-2011 school year started and there were 481 students enrolled at Alliance French Immersion Public School, making it the largest elementary school in the Near North District School Board.

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