

Frequently Asked Questions  
Grade One Program Assignment  
October 2012

1. *Why is the Superintendent recommending to Cap French Immersion?*  
The plan for a “Lottery/Capping” of the French Immersion program recommended by the Superintendent will drive the enrollment numbers towards optimal learning environments for all students.
  - a. The plan will increase enrollment numbers in the English program and will:
    - i. Eliminate single strands in English
    - ii. Increase options for inclusion programs
    - iii. Increase the pool of role models for co-taught programs
    - iv. Increase the flexibility of classroom assignment
  - b. The plan will contribute to more balanced student demographics between the English and French Immersion programs
  - c. The plan will result in increased organizational stability
  
2. *What is the proposed number of French Immersion sections and class size maximums?*
  - a. Collicot – 2 sections of French Immersion (up to 26 students per class)
  - b. Cunningham – 1 section of French Immersion (up to 26 students per class)
    - i. Possibly 2 sections if necessary for 2013-14 only, due to extra Kindergarten class in 2012-13
  - c. Glover – 2 sections of French Immersion (up to 26 students per class)
  - d. Tucker – 1 section of French Immersion (up to 26 students per class)
  
3. *How many students will be able to access the French Immersion if the program is capped as compared to recent years?*

There will be 2 sections of French Immersion at Collicot and Glover, 1 French Immersion section at Cunningham and Tucker. Each of these sections will have a class size maximum of up to 26 students. This is a total of 156 grade one students in the French Immersion program. For the 2013-14 school year only, due to the extra kindergarten class at Cunningham, if enough students select French Immersion, there may be 2 sections of French Immersion at Cunningham. This would increase the possible total to 182 grade one students.

**Only twice in the past ten years has the French Immersion enrollment exceeded 182 students. In these two years the number of students who would not have been able to access the program was 16 and 18 students.**
  
4. *What is the impact of having only one strand of English at a school?*

The Milton Public Schools system is committed to offering a first class education in both its traditional English program and the French Immersion program. Single strands of English do not allow for: sufficient options for inclusion programs (students on IEP's); a sufficient pool of role models for co-taught programs; and optimal flexibility of classroom assignments.

5. *Will siblings of French Immersion students be given preference for assignment to the program?*

Preference for siblings has long been an aspect of the Elementary School Assignment policy in order to provide the opportunity to keep families together in the same building during their K-5 careers. It is important to note that the sibling priority for **Elementary School Assignment** will remain intact.

Students with current siblings in French Immersion will not be given preference for **program assignment** because the district wishes to give an equal opportunity for all students to access the French Immersion program within a school.

6. *How does a non-Milton Public School Kindergartener access the French Immersion program in grade one?*

The number of Kindergarten sections and students drives the number of sections of English and French Immersion at each school. Due to the fact that the French Immersion lottery process is school based, students new to the Milton Public Schools in grade one will have access to any remaining seats in the school to which they are assigned. The grade one school assignment process for new students takes place during the summer in order to provide the district the ability to balance class size. After receiving their school assignment, the new students will be able to enter a lottery for any remaining seats in French Immersion at their school.

Frequently Asked Questions  
Elementary Program Assignment  
School Committee July 25, 2012 Presentation

1. Can the presentation be posted to the website?

*Yes, it is now available at:*

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/ElemProgramAssignmentSCPresentationJuly252012.pdf>

2. What is the current student assignment policy and is it accessible on the web?

*The current policy for assignment to schools is available at:*

[http://www.miltonps.org/documents/Elementary Student Assignment Policy.pdf](http://www.miltonps.org/documents/Elementary_Student_Assignment_Policy.pdf)

3. Does the district have similar data for grade 3 as presented for the years prior to 2011?

*At present time no. This advanced data analysis was done pro bono by Dr. Laura O'Dwyer and would require additional funding/staffing for continued analysis as such. This increase in funding and/or staffing will be explored by the School Administration for the future.*

4. What are the schools/school systems with Immersion and what is their capping status?

*This answer is currently being researched by our World Languages Director, Dr. Martine Fisher.*

5. Does the district compile and analyze data for grades 8 and 12 the way the grade 5 data was analyzed?

*At present time no. This advanced data analysis was done pro bono by Dr. Laura O'Dwyer and would require additional funding/staffing for continued analysis as such. This increase in funding and/or staffing will be explored by the School Administration for the future.*

6. Do we analyze SAT, AP and college acceptance for all MHS seniors by program?

*At present time no.*

7. Is there a scatter plot available for the regression analysis done by Dr. Laura O'Dwyer?

*Scatter plots cannot be used when the data are binary (e.g., minority v. non-minority, IEP v. no IEP, etc.). Instead, bivariate, point biserial correlation between students' background characteristics and students' 5<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS scores was used. Since these correlations provide the same information as scatter plots, it should satisfy the answer ([go to this link to see the analysis output](#))*

8. Will the district consider adding an International Baccalaureate Program to its program options for students?

*Superintendent Mary Gormley has communicated with Dr. Beverly Ross Denny on the subject and are setting up an informational session for Administrators and School Committee members. SC member Becky Padera volunteered to serve.*

9. Are there exit interviews when students leave FI?

*World Language Director Dr. Martine Fisher will survey each of the Elementary schools when they reopen this Fall in order to gather this information.*

10. Will the district post the enrollment numbers by student demographics for the 2011-12 grade 1 enrollment and the 2012-13 grade 1 enrollment?  
*This information is available [by clicking this link](#). Please note that the 2012-13 grade 1 enrollment numbers are as of June 30, 2012 and do not include students registered new to the district after that date.*
11. What is the official timeline for this process?  
*The school committee will be setting the timeline for this process and will discuss at its upcoming school committee meetings.*
12. How will the district communicate the information from this meeting?  
*The Superintendent of Schools will continue to post information to the district website ([www.miltonps.org](http://www.miltonps.org)) as well as communicate information through the Superintendent's Eblast. The eblast that covered the July 25<sup>th</sup> meeting/presentation can be found at <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/eblast080212.PDF>*
13. Has the district communicated to the grade 1 English families at the Collicot and Cunningham regarding the combined classes between the two schools?  
*Yes, an email and hard copy letter was sent by Principals Sheehan and Redden to all of the grade 1 English families.*
14. With respect to the proposed cap on French Immersion enrollment, could you please provide the proposed cap percentage (i.e., will French immersion be capped at 75%, 50%, 30%). I think it is vital to the discussion to understand the details around the cap.  
*The school committee will continue to discuss "capping" French Immersion and the percentage limit at future meetings. No final decision has been made at this time.*
15. How many children have moved from the French program to the English program within the past 3 years? How about 7 years? Isn't it true that more students have moved out of the French program in recent years when the class sizes began to grow?  
*World Language Director Dr. Martine Fisher will survey each of the Elementary schools when they reopen this Fall in order to gather this information.*
16. Is the program the same as it was even 6 or 7 years ago? According to many, French is not being spoken throughout the day in grades 1 and 2. Again, a reflection of large class sizes.  
*The French Immersion program is the same as it was 6 or 7 years ago.*
17. Why is the Town of Milton using a parent volunteer to do the statistical analysis on such a critical issue? Regardless of the credentials, due to the

volunteer nature of the towns relationship with the researcher, critically effects the perceived validity and reliability of the results.

*Dr. Laura O'Dwyer's resume speaks to her credibility and qualifications. The budget does not have funding available for such analysis at that level. This was a creative solution to a school committee directive and request for further analysis on the grade 1 student assignment issue. The Milton Public Schools are proud to "tap" the talent, expertise and time of talented parents/residents such as Dr. Laura O'Dwyer. Link to Dr. O'Dwyer's bio and CV*  
<http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/facultystaff/faculty/odwyer.htm>  
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18. Why was the research question designed by the researcher and not the town?

*The research question was designed by the leadership team in collaboration with Dr. Laura O'Dwyer over several meetings. Many members of the school leadership team from several disciplines/levels were integrally involved.*

19. What was the make up of the "World Language Committee" headed up by Mr. P, that ultimately made the current recommendations on this matter? Was anyone from the PAC a member?

*The WLC was made up of School Committee, Admin, teachers, and parents. No one from the PAC leadership group volunteered to be a member on the committee.*

20. Why is six years of 5 th grade MCAS scores the only measure being used to assess the effectiveness of the English/French programs? Is it a valid measure? Ie: does it measure what it is supposed to measure?

*At the request of a school committee member one year of grade 3 data was also analyzed for the presentation. We believe it was a valid measurement. MCAS is the official data measurement source used by every public school in Massachusetts.*

21. Dr. O'Dwyer seemed to suggest that if she corrected for race (non-white), low income and IEP students, the significant difference in achievement between the French and English programs becomes statically not significant. If that is the case, one might ask what is the town of Milton's obligation to correct the significant discrepancy in achievement in these communities? Also, why are the numbers of Disabled Students, persons of color and those self identifying as requireing lunch assistance barely represented in the

French Program? Is the school doing it's due diligence in investigating such inequities.

*The achievement gap identified for the sub groups are identical to those identified in the district, town, and nation. It is the district's responsibility to raise achievement for all students. The programs are choice programs. Therefore student demographics are not controlled by the school district. The school district analyzes this information each year.*

22. The "over enrollment" in the French Program is significantly impacted by the lack of criteria established by the town as a predictor of success in the French program. Parents must choose when their children are very young, w/o sufficient knowledge to guide them. Then the Superintendent insists on a 5 year commitment, forcing those who find the program Incompatible w/ their child's intelligences. As well, why would the Superintendent insist people remain in the program if they desire to switch, particularly as the program is over enrolled?

*The Milton Public School system hosts an informational meeting for parents/guardians of kindergarten students regarding our two first grade programs. Kindergarten teachers and principals are always available for individual parent/guardian appointments to further discuss parent choice in relation to their child's first grade program selection. When examining immersion programs in other districts across the country, one of the common criteria is a commitment on the part of the parents/guardians to an elementary grade level program. Children/students have different learning styles and learn at different rates/pace. Milton's English and French Immersion teachers are experienced at meeting children/students at different levels and differentiating their instruction. Parents/guardians transferring their children from one program to another is not an answer to enrollment issues.*