Major School Change
A Consultation for
Sustaining and Enhancing Services

2016-2017

Response Cover Sheet

Orchard Elementary School
Name of Responding School/Centre or Individual

Major School Change Committee
Name of Consultative Group

Signature

Whole Child Approach
Title

☐ I have read the documentation, but have chosen not to submit a response

☐ I would like to be heard at the Public Hearings in November 2015

☐ I do not wish to be heard at the Public Hearings in November 2015
Orchard Elementary School  
Major School Change Response 2015-2016

In response to the invitation to submit a brief regarding the Major School Change for 2015-2016, we respectfully submit the following.

Focus
Demographic trends, economic shifts, restrictive legislation, severe budgetary cuts and other political realities have all impacted the Lester B. Pearson School Board. These realities have prompted the School Board to ask each school to offer input.

The focus at Orchard Elementary is to evolve in a manner that enriches students’ educational experiences, while promoting authentic learning situations. These learning situations are not implemented in a financially difficult way, as our families come from a diverse socio-economic background.

Program Delivery
Orchard Elementary is currently an Early French Immersion Program. The school strives to develop strong early literacy and numeracy skills by putting in place many early intervention programs as well as various initiatives in the upper cycles, to maintain and grow these skills. For example, Orchard teachers have developed “Littératie en action”, a movement based literacy initiative. It is an extension of their lessons that starts in the classroom. All cycle 1 students are brought into a common area (such as the gym or school yard) after lunch. Students develop literacy skills with a kinesthetic approach. This grouping of the classes allows one teacher to take a small group of students to participate in a six week guided reading activity to improve their reading skills. The groups alternate every six weeks. This was a solution our teachers developed to provide support due to cuts made in the Resource Department. In all cycles, an emphasis is placed on learning literacy through a scientific lense, using different monthly themes that are threaded throughout the different subjects taught.

After discussion with our parent body, and taking into account the needs of our students, we would like to indicate our support for the following endeavors:

1) Continue our dynamic French Immersion Program, but add a Dual Track for new families who wish to have the option of French Immersion or a bilingual delivery.
2) Orchard teachers will continue with their holistic, Whole Child Approach to teaching with an emphasis on learning through movement/athleticism, creativity, and academics.
As a school community, our educators would like to continue threading a variety of activities that were initially offered as extracurricular options; upon seeing the engagement and benefits to students, these activities were incorporated into the daily routine in a cross curricular manner.

**Magnet School “Educating the Whole Child Approach”**

Orchard Elementary is a community school in Lasalle, with a diverse population from varying economic realities. Educators and staff are committed to continually evolving their best practices and providing a dynamic and positive learning environment, despite family and school budgetary constraints.

With the commitment to educating the whole child, teachers and support staff ensure that each child at Orchard Elementary is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged. Educating the whole child focuses on the wholeness of body, socio-emotional intelligence, intellectual intelligence, strong memory and problem solving skills. Teachers at Orchard strive to plan cross-curricular activities that are appropriate for the developmental stage of the students.

**What does Educating the Whole Child look like?**

Students are engaged in a variety of hands-on movement-based activities. For example, our students participate in a variety of sports tournaments, baking and cooking are threaded into math and science, students are brought outside for Language Arts lessons under the willow tree, and with the help of the community organization *Table de Developpement Lasalle*, students planted and maintained a variety of trees in our school yard. Students also help maintain the school garden and learn about plant life cycles.

As well, many classrooms have stationary bicycle pedals to place under student’s desks to engage their body physically while they participate in academics. Arts are an important aspect of all the curriculum and weaved throughout. Research has shown that a whole child approach that engages all aspects of the brain is the key to student development and lifelong success.

It is important to note that these initiatives are low cost and require a very minimal amount of the school’s operating budget. **Our goals for the future**
Orchard Elementary will continue to strengthen the *Whole Child Approach*. The John Killingbeck Scholarship was granted to the school to visit a Rudolf Steiner Waldorf School in Vermont. Observations of this methodology (which emphasizes imagination, movement, intelligence, practical and artistic development) reinforced that Orchard is on the right path to greater success, and teachers returned with a variety of low cost, new and exciting ideas to implement in the school.

**Surveys and conclusions**
During the previous school year, surveys were given to Orchard parents to fill out. The results indicated that:

- Parents would like more emphasis on science, math, enrichment classes (like cooking, leadership), field trips, arts and physical education.
- Overall, they were satisfied with the French Delivery Program.

The results of the surveys show that Orchard Elementary is on the right path in the development of a variety of educational programs focused on the holistic *Educating the Whole Child* approach. The combination of athletics, creative stimulation, and a variety of academically focused programs intended to improve our students' overall success, resonates well with our community. With the assistance of our dedicated teaching staff, administration, and support staff, Orchard looks forward to being an integral part of Lasalle children's lives for years to come.

Sincerely,

Malene Bodington, Parent and Major School Change Committee Member