

November 30, 2010

James Gorman
Deputy Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
PO Box 9179, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC, V8W 9H8

Dear Mr. Gorman:

We write to you on behalf of the Greater Vancouver Language Educators' Consortium composed of lower mainland language coordinators, teachers, principals, vice principals and representatives from UBC and SFU. The group meets on a monthly basis to discuss items related to language education. The territory covered by the consortium represents more than half of BC's student population attending French second language programs.

We are concerned about the new Additional Languages curriculum that is proposed to BC educators. The use of the term "additional language" in relation to French, one of Canada's two official languages, could threaten Core French programs through diminished valuing and possible elimination. While the intent stated in the preface of the proposed curriculum is to promote a multilingual society, with all the advantages that entails, there is a very real potential to undermine and undervalue the importance of one of Canada's official languages and an element of Canadian identity. French and its unique historical context is recognized in our country's constitution and entrenched in its democratic system. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Official Languages Act guarantee the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society.

As language educators, we strongly believe that the status of French as a second official language must continue to be singularly identified. There is no provision for strengthening the role of French in the new curriculum, and we are concerned that certain school boards may not offer French at all. We suggest, therefore, that learning additional languages be considered as an option "in addition to" Canada's official languages.

It is clear from a number of recent Canadian and BC-based research studies, as well as the popularity of French Immersion programs attended in increasing numbers by learners who speak languages other than English and French, that developing proficiency in both of Canada's official languages is important to many of BC's newest citizens. For these and many other learners, speaking both of Canada's official languages is important. As such, we believe we have a responsibility to ensure that our students learn and attain a certain level of proficiency in both languages.

We propose the maintenance of a separate and specific curriculum for Core French education, and this should include a focus on the history of our country and the cultural background that has shaped Canada's two official languages. We would welcome the opportunity to make other recommendations about how to implement a new curriculum with the goal of improving language teaching and learning in BC classrooms.

Sincerely,

The Greater Vancouver Language Educators' Consortium

- Sophie Bergeron, President of French Immersion teachers (APPIPC)
- Sandi Kostur, President of BC Association of Modern Language Teachers
- Daniel Bélanger, Modern Languages Consultant, Vancouver School District
- Moh Chelali, French Programs and Services, BCTF
- Luba Banuke, Inservice Faculty Associate, SFU
- Alicia Logie, French Coordinator, Surrey School District SD36
- Lyse Guay, French Programs Support, North Vancouver School District SD44
- Wendy Carr, Acting Director, Modern Language Education, UBC
- Catherine Hamel, French Programs Facilitator, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows School District SD42
- Ghislain Michaud, French coordinator, Mission School District SD75
- Keri Roberts, Learning Facilitator/ Coordonnatrice des programmes français SD40 Learning Services
- Lori Thomsen, District Teacher, Modern Languages, Langley School District SD35
- Diane Jubinville, French coordinator, Richmond School District SD38

CC-

- Honourable Margaret MacDiarmid, Minister of Education, BC
- L'honorable James Moore, Ministre du Patrimoine canadien et des Langues officielles
- Robert Rothon, Directeur Général, Canadian Parents for French –Colombie-Britannique et Yukon
- James Shea, Directeur Général, Canadian Parents for French –National
- Ted Whiteland, Executive Director, BC Principals' and Vice Principals' Association
- Juleen McElgunn, Executive Director, BC School Superintendents Association
- Stephen Hansen, Executive Director, BC School Trustees Association
- Graham Fraser, Commissaire aux Langues Officielles
- Mme Christine Sotteau, Directrice Générale de la Fédération des Francophones de Colombie-Britannique
- Mme Claire Trépanier, Directrice Générale du Bureau des Affaires Francophones et Francophiles
- Mr Guy Leclair, Directeur Général de l'Association Canadienne des Professeurs de Langues Secondes

By fax: 250-356-2011