



BUREAU DES AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES ET FRANCOPHILES (BAFF)
OFFICE OF FRANCOPHONE AND FRANCOPHILE AFFAIRS (OFFA)

December 1, 2010

The Honourable Margaret MacDiarmid
Minister of Education
Minister of Tourism, Trade and Investment
Minister Responsible for the Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat
PO Box 9061, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2

Dear Minister,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Office of Francophone and Francophiles Affairs (OFFA) at Simon Fraser University. OFFA's mission is to develop, coordinate and promote post-secondary programs and courses taught in French at Simon Fraser University. Our goal is to meet the post-secondary education needs of Francophone and Francophile communities in British Columbia.

It is with a mixture of enthusiasm and concern that we respond to the Draft Additional languages curriculum.

Our enthusiasm stems from the fact that the new IRP is solidly anchored in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and that plurilingualism is recognized and supported with the development of this curriculum. We think that it is important that students in BC elementary and secondary schools have the opportunity to develop literacy and fluency in their home language, and/or in the languages representing the plurality of BC's demography. We applaud this broadening of horizons and are quite eager to support in any way possible the implementation of a French Language curriculum involving the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Our concern however is that the introduction of this curriculum places French on an equal footing with other languages, regardless of its statute as an official language in Canada, and gives school districts wide options in choosing which languages they offer. This could seriously erode the presence of French in the BC school system.

As representatives of a post-secondary institution that has made a priority of increasing the number of Core French teachers it qualifies yearly, and supporting quality French language programming in two faculties and several departments, including a strong Department of French, we hold the view that, as an official language in Canada, French must have a privileged place in the BC curriculum.



Presenting additional language options is a great idea as long as Core French is protected. We believe that all BC high school graduates should have the opportunity to achieve high levels of proficiency in both official languages. This enables them to access, among other options, bilingual positions in the Federal government, and to compete fairly with bilingual students from everywhere else in Canada.

We therefore recommend that the Ministry considers implementing two separate curricula, one for Core French, and one for additional languages, or else makes clearer provisions for the support of Core French at all levels.

Respectfully yours,

Claire Trépanier
Director Pro tem

Danielle Arcand
Associate Director

cc: James Gorman, Deputy Minister of Education
cc: Elizabeth McAuley, International languages coordinator
cc: Nicole Couture, Director, French Programs Branch