

December 15, 2024

Dear Nanaimo Ladysmith School District Trustees,

I am writing to you as a concerned parent, deeply invested in the future of the Late French Immersion (LFI) program. I understand that the decision to cancel LFI is not an easy one and that some of you may still be questioning if this is the correct path forward. I urge you to reconsider and vote to preserve this vital program for the sake of our children and community.

For years, families like mine have been planning and waiting for the opportunity to enroll our children in LFI. This program offers much more than language instruction—it provides students with cultural awareness, cognitive benefits, and skills that will open doors in an increasingly bilingual and global world. For my family, this decision is especially painful as one of my children is already thriving in LFI, and another was looking forward to following the same path in September 2025. Canceling the program would deny children like mine the opportunity that has long been promised to them.

Please take note that many trustees currently on the board were not in office in 2018 or 2019, (when my children accessed kindergarten) when high demand for Early French Immersion led to a lottery system that left many students unable to enroll. Families affected by the lottery were encouraged to wait for Late French Immersion as an alternative, and we did so in good faith. Canceling the program now is a broken promise to these families, who have been waiting patiently and planning for years for their children to access French Immersion.

The decision to cancel LFI also sends a troubling message: that specialized programs requiring community investment can be eliminated without adequate consultation or consideration of their value. This decision feels rushed, happening right before the holidays, at a time when families are less able to engage in dialogue with the board. There has been little opportunity for parents, students, or educators to provide input or explore creative solutions to address any challenges with the program.

By voting to preserve LFI, you have the opportunity to leave a legacy of supporting equitable, enriching education for all students in our community. **As trustees, you hold an extraordinary power in this moment—your decision will profoundly shape the lives of the children and families impacted by this program.** Choosing to cancel LFI could have devastating consequences for the many children who have been waiting for this opportunity, crushing their hopes and dreams. On the other hand, voting to save the program could be a transformative, positive decision that upholds the promises made to these families and ensures that future generations have access to the benefits of bilingual education. Please, I urge you to reconsider this decision—our families, our children, and our community are counting on you to make the right choice.

I know my children matter just as much as any children in this district. I hope you will consider them as you make your decision. They are counting on it.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Margaret Bodie