

From: [Karen Matthews](#)
To: [Karen Matthews](#)
Subject: FW: Urge to Reconsider Cancelling Late French Immersion Program
Date: December 16, 2024 2:22:41 PM

From: Diana Ruffell <>
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2024 12:49:51 PM
To: Trustees BoardChair <TrusteesBoardChair@sd68.bc.ca>; Naomi Bailey <Naomi.Bailey@sd68.bc.ca>; Greg Keller <Greg.Keller@sd68.bc.ca>; Tania Brzovic <Tania.Brzovic@sd68.bc.ca>; Leanne Lee <leanne.lee@sd68.bc.ca>; Chantelle Morvay <Chantelle.Morvay@sd68.bc.ca>; Leana Pellegrin <Leana.Pellegrin@sd68.bc.ca>; Mark Robinson <Mark.Robinson@sd68.bc.ca>; Tom Rokeby <Tom.Rokeby@sd68.bc.ca>; Tim Harris <Tim.Harris@sd68.bc.ca>; Superintendent <Superintendent@sd68.bc.ca>; Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Programs <AsstSupSecondary@sd68.bc.ca>; Secretary-Treasurer <SecretaryTreasurer@sd68.bc.ca>
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Diana Ruffell
Nanaimo, BC, V9R 7B 6

December 16, 2024
School Board SD68

Dear School Board Members,

I am writing to you as a concerned parent regarding the proposed cancellation of the Late French Immersion program offered in our school district, which begins in Grade 6. This program is invaluable for students currently learning in English, providing them with a critical opportunity to develop bilingual skills in our bilingual country.

My daughter attended the Late French Immersion program from 2022 to 2024, and I am proud to say that she is now thriving in high school. She enjoys her classes and continues to challenge herself, demonstrating the profound impact that this program has had on her academic success and confidence. I have two more daughters who were looking forward to joining this program, one in 2025 and the other in 2027. Their anticipation of entering French immersion is directly influenced by the success of their older sister. When they heard this weekend that the Late French Immersion program is most likely to close they became upset and disappointed. Their anticipation of entering French immersion was directly influenced by the success of their older sister, and they were hoping to follow in her foot steps.

It is essential to recognize that this program is aimed at goal-oriented, motivated and hard working students who are eager to take on the challenge of learning in a second language. By canceling the Late French Immersion program, we would be unfairly taking away opportunities for these students to excel and reach their full potential. High-achieving students benefit immensely from rigorous programs that encourage intellectual growth and foster a spirit of achievement.

The ability to communicate in multiple languages offers significant cognitive, educational, and social benefits. Research consistently shows that bilingual individuals have enhanced problem-solving skills, better critical thinking abilities, and superior multitasking capabilities. By eliminating the Late French Immersion program, we risk limiting our students' future opportunities and their capacity to participate fully in a bilingual society.

One of the reasons that was raised by the School Board at the last meeting was the savings that cancelling this program can bring to the School District. However, let's not underestimate the benefits of this program that cannot be described by a monetary value. Excellent education of our children creating the leaders of tomorrow will in turn enhance our future society in many ways, tangible and non-tangible.

The monetary concerns that were brought up by the Board members came largely from "under-enrollment" concerns. It was said that Late French Immersion classes often comprise of 20-25 student and full cohort being 29 students. When my daughter was in Late French Immersion from 2022 to 2024 there were 28 student in her class in 2022-2023, and 27 students in 2023-2024 (one student moved to a different city). This is not a significant under-enrolment. In fact, it is considered a success when all students applying are guaranteed a spot. It would be considered a failure if this program could not accommodate all interested students, as this would indicate that community needs were not being met.

I urge the school board to reconsider the decision to cancel this program. Instead, let's explore ways to strengthen and support it while addressing any concerns that have been raised. Working together, we can ensure that all students, have access to high-quality language education that prepares them for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I would be glad to discuss this further and contribute to finding solutions that benefit our students and community as a whole.

Sincerely,

Diana Ruffell
