

Vancouver, December 17th, 2024

Subject: Request to Delay Decision on Late French Immersion

Dear Trustees of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Board of Education,

The *Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique* (FFCB) is writing to express our outmost concern regarding the motion to eliminate the Late French Immersion (LFI) program in SD68. We respectfully urge you to delay this decision to allow for proper consultation with parents, educators, and community partners, as well as to provide appropriate notice as outlined in the BC Ministry of Education's French Immersion policy.

The Ministry's policy states:

"Having established a program, school districts should promote the program and recruit students. Should the enrollment become insufficient, school districts should consult parents to find solutions. If there is no resolution to the problem, the district should give at least one year's notice to parents of any changes contemplated to permit full discussion and to allow parents time to consider alternatives for their children."

Ending this program without such consultation is not only contrary to provincial policy but also denies families a meaningful opportunity to contribute to solutions. Late French Immersion serves as a vital second entry point into French-language education, providing equitable access to bilingualism for students who may not have had the chance to enroll in Early French Immersion. Removing this option risks limiting opportunities for students to gain the lifelong benefits of bilingualism—benefits that include cognitive development, greater cultural understanding, and enhanced employment opportunities.

As a provincial organization that advocates for the vitality of Francophones in British Columbia, we strongly believe that bilingual education strengthens not only our youth but our communities. It is essential that SD68 fulfill its responsibility to protect and promote French Immersion programs, which are critical in supporting Canada's bilingual identity.

We ask that the Board delay its decision and engage in a full consultation process with all the stakeholders to explore solutions that sustain and strengthen Late French Immersion.

Sincerely,



Marie-Nicole Dubois
President

