

December 17, 2024

Dear Trustees of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District,

On behalf of Canadian Parents for French BC & Yukon, I am writing to express our concern regarding the upcoming vote to discontinue the Late French Immersion (LFI) program in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District.

Late French Immersion provides a critical opportunity for students to access French language education, contributing to bilingualism and expanded future opportunities. We strongly urge the Board to carefully evaluate the long-term impacts of this decision on individual students, their families, and the Nanaimo-Ladysmith community, and to engage in meaningful dialogue with the community before moving forward.

The BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's French Immersion policy clearly states that *"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."* This directive underscores the importance of actively promoting programs like Late French Immersion, engaging with parents to address challenges, and ensuring transparency and fairness when changes are considered. We are concerned that these essential steps may not have been fully undertaken in this case.

To ensure transparency and informed decision-making, we respectfully pose the following questions:

- 1. What efforts has the School District undertaken in recent years to promote Late French Immersion and recruit students?**
  - Late French Immersion often requires proactive promotion to ensure families are aware of this valuable opportunity. Have marketing campaigns, school information sessions, or other recruitment efforts been implemented to encourage enrolment?
- 2. Has the School District consulted parents, teachers, and stakeholders about this proposal in recent years?**
  - If consultations have occurred, what were the outcomes? If not, what steps will the Board take to ensure families and students are included in discussions impacting the program's future?

**3. What specific resources have been allocated to support Late French Immersion programs in recent years?**

- Beyond staffing, additional resources such as classroom materials, teacher training, and extracurricular opportunities are essential for the program's success. What investments have been made to strengthen the LFI program in Nanaimo-Ladysmith?

**4. Has the District taken advantage of funding opportunities from external partners, such as Canadian Parents for French, to enhance the program?**

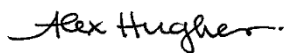
- For example, Canadian Parents for French offers funding to bring French cultural experiences to students, helping to enrich their learning and engagement. Have these opportunities been explored?

Late French Immersion plays an integral role in providing equitable access to French language education for families who may not have been able to enroll their children in Early French Immersion. Eliminating this program would limit pathways to bilingualism, contradicting the district's commitment to providing inclusive and diverse educational opportunities.

Canadian Parents for French BC & Yukon is committed to supporting school districts in promoting and sustaining French Immersion programs, and we are available to discuss possible pathways forward in Nanaimo-Ladysmith.

We kindly request that the Board delay any decision on this matter until meaningful consultations have taken place with stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and students. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Alex Hughes  
President, Canadian Parents for French, BC & Yukon Branch