

**From:** [Karen Matthews](#)  
**To:** [Karen Matthews](#)  
**Subject:** R West Quarterway Late French Immersion - support for the program  
**Date:** December 17, 2024 12:55:18 PM

---

**From:** Rob West <>

**Sent:** Monday, December 16, 2024 8:26:02 PM

**To:** Greg Keller <[Greg.Keller@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Greg.Keller@sd68.bc.ca)>; Naomi Bailey <[Naomi.Bailey@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Naomi.Bailey@sd68.bc.ca)>; Tania Brzovic <[Tania.Brzovic@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Tania.Brzovic@sd68.bc.ca)>; Tim Harris <[Tim.Harris@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Tim.Harris@sd68.bc.ca)>; Leanne Lee <[leanne.lee@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:leanne.lee@sd68.bc.ca)>; Chantelle Morvay <[Chantelle.Morvay@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Chantelle.Morvay@sd68.bc.ca)>; Leana Pellegrin <[Leana.Pellegrin@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Leana.Pellegrin@sd68.bc.ca)>; Mark Robinson <[Mark.Robinson@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Mark.Robinson@sd68.bc.ca)>; Tom Rokeby <[Tom.Rokeby@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Tom.Rokeby@sd68.bc.ca)>

**Cc:** Theora Brandner <[Theora.Brandner@sd68.bc.ca](mailto:Theora.Brandner@sd68.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** Re: Quarterway Late French Immersion - support for the program

Some people who received this message don't often get email from

**CAUTION:** External Message

Resending with Mr. Walsh's document

On Mon, Dec 16, 2024 at 8:23 PM Rob West <[rwestinlondon@googlemail.com](mailto:rwestinlondon@googlemail.com)> wrote:

Dear SD68 Trustees,

I have recently learned that SD68 is entertaining the closure of the Late French Immersion Program at Quarterway. I strongly urge members of the board to reject Mr. Walsh's call for the closure of the program and to continue to offer it to all students in the district.

Having Read Mr. Walsh's rationale in the attached document I can't help but think that closure is a wrong headed, and mean spirited recommendation. In the document, Mr. Wash repeatedly indicates as a rationale that the late immersion program is suffering from declining demand. However the figures he presents at the top of page 2 of the document explicitly contradict this claim. The enrollment of 51 students in 2023 is the highest enrollment recorded, equal to 2017, and 45 students in 2024, which is very much the average for prior years. It's as if repeating the claim of dropping enrollment will somehow make it true despite the evidence. I think we have had enough of alternative narratives that fly in the face of evidence.

An additional rationale that Mr. Walsh has built upon the falsehood of declining demand is as follows:

"Notably, the drop in early French Immersion demand and attrition of students from the program also indicates there is a subsidy for this program."

Besides the evidence to the contrary of declining demand, Mr. Walsh also suggests that students in the program are being subsidized. It's a curious word to use for a proponent of public education

and perhaps one better suited to the halls of business. Depending on your politics, in a public education system either all students and programs are subsidized, or none are subsidized. However never is it the case that some students and programs are singled out and tarred with the brush of being subsidized and others not. If we were to entertain that critique then I suggest we start to talk about the 'subsidies' in place for say the beach volleyball academy at NDSS, or any number of other programs with no discernable 'market value.' It's the thin edge of a wedge and I suggest you don't want to go there.

My daughter, a Gabriola Island resident, attended the late French immersion program at Quarterway and is now in French immersion in grade 8 at NDSS. Were the late immersion program to be cancelled then it unfairly penalizes the students of Gabriola who would otherwise be required to start French immersion in Kindergarten. This would mean an entire school career from Kindergarten onward without ever attending GES. Such students would be divorced and disconnected from friends and peers and the community. Further, attending French immersion from K onwards would require parents to take their children to Nanaimo every single day and pick them up from school until such time as they are old enough to travel on public transport unaccompanied, something that the late immersion students are able to do. The cost in money and time would be enormous, amounting to many hundreds of dollars per month in ferry costs, plus 4 hours of commuting per day and two complete ferry round trips. It's simply not possible for working families. Is this something that you could imagine yourself doing?

It feels once again, as was the case during the [failed] attempt to move Gabriola students to Cedar Secondary, that Gabriolans are an afterthought, if ever a thought, of the district and Mr. Walsh. To deny Gabriolan students access to French immersion, which would effectively be the case with the closure of the late immersion program and the impossibility of children attending K-7 French immersion in Nanaimo, amounts to outright discrimination against the students and families of Gabriola.

I'd ask the members of the Board to think long and hard about inclusion, equity, and discrimination that comes with denial of access and I respectfully request that you maintain the late immersion program at Quarterway to give all students of SD68 equal access to programs.

Yours truly,

Rob West