



CPF BC Yukon Branch

Dr. Nancy Walt- Executive Director, Ministry of Education, nancy.Walt@gov.bc.ca

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Linda Beddouche - Director, Ministry of Education, French Education, linda.Beddouche@gov.bc.ca

June 22, 2017

Attention: Nancy Walt, Jan Unwin, and Linda Beddouche

RE: Canadian Parents for French BC-Yukon, Graduation requirement for Language 11 course credit

It has been brought to our attention that the BC Ministry of Education is currently examining its Graduation Requirements. On behalf of Canadian Parents for French BC & Yukon, I would like to take this opportunity to urge the inclusion of a language 11 course as part of the BC Graduation Requirements.

In a time of globalization, knowledge of a second language is an essential skill that needs to be in every graduate's toolkit. Knowing another language expands one's horizons, encourages understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Languages open doors to more job opportunities, facilitating future economic and social success for our province. Canadians who speak both Official Languages earn, on average, 10% more and have a 3% lower unemployment rate. It is noteworthy that in many countries in the world, secondary students study two additional languages with resounding success in the development of multilingual citizens employable in the world market.

Since the Official Languages Act was passed in 1969, students across Canada have benefited from enlightened policy and Federal funding encouraging French second language education. This has made Canada stronger and has also enriched the lives of millions of Canadian youth, financially, culturally and socially.

As you may be aware, on May 31st, 2017, the Senate Standing Committee of Official Languages released the report, [*Horizon 2018: Toward Stronger Support of French-language Learning in British Columbia*](#). This report includes 17 recommendations on which the federal government should act in order to live up to its obligations under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and under the Official Languages Act. The report recommends the BC government, with federal government support, should work with French-language education stakeholders to implement the report's recommendations. The committee's recommendations apply to Core French and French Immersion programs, francophone schools and B.C.'s French-speaking community, including francophones and francophiles, and the support to which they are entitled. Of particular interest, the report focuses on the need to address the barriers to accessing French programs in the province and the need for improvements.



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Furthermore, in 2018, the federal government will renegotiate the Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction with the provinces and territories. This will be the golden opportunity for the BC government to demonstrate its commitment to addressing the inadequacies in accessing quality French language education and services in BC. An expansion of opportunities for language study through to a minimum of Grade 11 would be one of many steps that our provincial government could make to respond to the Senate's urgent request to improve access and quality of French language learning in the secondary school system in BC. In so doing, we would equip our graduates with useful global skills and be one step closer to meeting the federal government's goal of increasing the number of bilingual graduates.

Our country has made great strides in encouraging the study of minority and official languages across the country. Canadian Parents for French is committed to expanding language programs and to engaging with government to support measures that will encourage the recruitment and retention of language teachers, provide the resources districts need to expand their French programs, and serve Canadian parents and students wishing to learn French as a second language.

We know that the knowledge of a second language has been foundational to some amazing possibilities for countless Canadians. Therefore, we strongly urge you to empower our students and include languages as part of the Graduation Requirements.

We thank you for your time and consideration of our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Diane Tijman, President
Canadian Parents for French, BC Yukon Branch

cc: Glyn Lewis, Executive Director, CPF BC & YK Branch, gLewis@cpf.bc.ca

cc: Rome Lavrencic, President, BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages, rlavrencic@sd40.bc.ca

cc: Karen Lynch, President, Canadian Parents for French, karen.lynch@shaw.ca

Canadian Parents for French is a nationwide, research-informed, volunteer organization that champions the opportunity to learn and use French for all those who call Canada home.