



Fédération des
parents francophones
de Colombie-Britannique



La Fédération des
francophones de la
Colombie-Britannique

ANNEXE 4

October 20, 2017

The Honourable Rob Fleming
Minister
Ministry of Education
PO Box 9151, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9H1

Subject: **Soliciting your support for the implementation of the strategic agreement on education between the federal government (Canadian Heritage) and the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF – National federation of Francophone school boards), the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA – Federation of Francophone and Acadian communities) of Canada and the Commission nationale des parents francophones (CNPF – National commission of Francophone parents)**

This agreement focuses on the priorities of Francophone school boards, their communities, and parents, with regards to federal funding transfers in the area of minority language education

Dear Minister,

The Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie –Britannique (CSFCB) represents nearly 6,000 students enrolled in 40 schools throughout the province. The Fédération des parents francophones de la Colombie-Britannique (FPFCB) brings together 45 parents' associations from the school and pre-school sectors to support parents in their role as primary educators in a Francophone environment. The Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique (FFCB) is the official spokesperson for the province's francophone community. It works with close to 40 organizations across the province. As Francophone community partners, we firmly believe that as full and equal citizens of British Columbia, all children eligible to attend a French-language school, and their families, deserve to have access to a quality Francophone education to provide them with the best opportunities for success, including healthy, safe and equitable facilities.

On July 20 of this year, the national organizations representing Canadian minority Francophone school boards, communities and parents signed a historic agreement with the Ministry of Canadian Heritage.

This strategic agreement forms part of the Protocol for agreements for minority-language education and second-language instruction, which the Ministry of Canadian Heritage signs every

Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (SD93)

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five years with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. This Protocol governs the terms for transfers of federal funds to support minority language education.

Under this agreement, the federal government has agreed to propose to the provinces and territories, during negotiations, that the operation of federal-provincial agreements on the transfer of federal funds for French first-language education be modernized to better respect the rights of Francophones.

It should be noted that the Protocol has never been amended to reflect major changes in French first-language elementary and secondary education, such as the establishment of Francophone school boards, since section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was entrenched in the Constitution 35 years ago. The significant adjustments contained in the strategic agreement are aimed at addressing the shortcomings identified over the years that have undermined the effectiveness of the measures taken by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage to better respond to the needs of the country's French-language schools.

Thus, the strategic agreement gives a voice to the communities in the negotiation of the Protocol, the instrument that governs federal funding transfers to support French first-language education in minority schools from kindergarten through grade 12.

It puts the focus on the priorities of Francophone school boards, their communities, and parents, with regards to federal funding transfers in the area of minority language education. Under this agreement, the Ministry of Canadian Heritage has undertaken to discuss with the provinces and territories the inclusion of those priorities in the next Protocol.

Francophone school boards, their communities and parents have identified the following priorities: improving accountability, the addition of a definition of the concept of "additional expenditures," greater transparency in the management of federal funds, and the strengthening of the consultation clauses in the Protocol.

The vitality and sustainability of minority French language communities depends in large part on the funds allocated to Francophone school boards to ensure the implementation of section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that is, the right of minority Francophones to receive publicly funded instruction in French.

Although the province bears the primary responsibility for the funding of French-language education, funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage under the Protocol for agreements for minority-language education and second-language instruction is essential, particularly when it comes to instilling in students a pride in the language and culture. This federal funding is vital, since a minority French-language education that is substantively equivalent to that offered to students in the majority entails additional costs (a fact recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada).

Because of the importance of federal funding for French-language education, minority Francophones have a strong interest in the renewal of the Protocol, as does the Ministry of Education.

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Consequently, the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, the Fédération des parents francophones de Colombie-Britannique and the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique are asking for the support of the Ministry of Education in modernizing and dividing up the Protocol so that it meets the actual needs of the Francophone community, as described in the strategic agreement, and respects the community's rights. At a minimum, we hope the Government of British Columbia will not oppose the priorities of minority Francophone communities, as described in the strategic agreement, when they are discussed at the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC).

We thank you in advance for your attention to these matters and sincerely hope we can count on your invaluable collaboration.

Sincerely,



Marie-France Lapierre
President
Conseil scolaire francophone
de la C.-B. (CSFCB)



Marie-Pierre Lavoie
President
Fédération des parents
francophones de la C.-B.
(FPFCB)



Padminée Chundunsing
President
Fédération des francophones
de la C.-B. (FFCB)

Encl. Strategic agreement between the federal government, the FNCSF, the FCFA and the CNPF

Cc: Scott Macdonald, Deputy Minister, British Columbia Ministry of Education
The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage
Sean Casey, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage
Melinda Chartrand, President of the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones