

14 July 2020

Marie-Pierre Lavoie, Présidente, Conseil Administrative du CSF

Roger Lagassé, Conseiller, Sunshine Coast Region

Marie-Andrée Asselin, Director General, Federation of Francophone Parents of BC

Ione Smith, President, Association de Parents (APÉ) de l'École du Pacifique and École Secondaire Chatelelech

Chères mesdames, messieur,

I am writing to you to express my disappointment with the Conseil d'Administration's decision to cancel the heterogeneous secondary program in Sechelt. I had the opportunity to watch the meeting on Vimeo after the fact and felt that this decision was rushed and there had been no attempt to consult the community, research the question or make any preparations to convert the program to an exclusively homogenous one within one academic year from now. I also noticed that there were no questions from the public at this meeting and I can only assume that the reason for this is that the public did not receive adequate notice about the meeting (on June 30th, after school dismissal for the summer) or that there would be a vote to cancel the heterogeneous secondary programs. This lack of transparency is compounded by the omission of all minutes from CA meetings for 2020 on the CSF website.

Your proposal to add Grade 8 to the existing L'École du Pacifique delivered via L'École Virtuelle is inferior to the current program at Chatelelech Secondary. A reduction in such services does not meet the mandate of substantive equivalence in education as confirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada in June 2020. Approximately three years ago, the CSF failed to recruit a teacher for the secondary program and the students were made to study online. During this year, many students withdrew from the francophone program and I think it is reasonable to assume a similar result in this case.

Furthermore, the francophone community in Sechelt has been waiting for four years for our new K-7 elementary school which was awarded in the 2016 court decision. There has not been a single brick laid for the new school.

How and where exactly do you plan to accommodate secondary students within this new, as yet unbuilt, elementary school?

My son, who would be the first cohort in the proposed homogeneous secondary, does not want to go to high school online and we support and understand his sentiments. He wants the opportunity to go to a fully resourced secondary school building with proper staffing and course selection such as band, art, Spanish, science labs, sports teams etc. It is important to note that many francophone students enjoy the increased social opportunities at the heterogeneous school where they can finally interact with the greater community and meet new friends.

I urge you to reinstate the heterogeneous secondary program at Chatelech and seek to improve it first by adding teachers and course selection in French beyond what is currently offered before adding a Grade 8 to the elementary school.

Sincerely,

Katherine Hume, M.Mus.
Sechelt, BC.