



January 29th, 2018

Honourable Rob Fleming  
Minister of Education  
Ministry of Education  
PO Box 9054, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

**Re: Request for operating funding to set up and operate Franc Départ (“StrongStart”) programs at a number of Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (“CSF”) schools, notably in Langley, Mission, Chilliwack and Rossland, starting in September 2018**

Dear Minister Fleming:

The CSF hereby requests the Ministry of Education’s support to set up and operate new StrongStart programs in four CSF schools with sufficient space for such programs. The CSF has identified that there is sufficient space at at least École élémentaire des Voyageurs in Langley, École élémentaire des Deux-rives in Mission, École élémentaire La Vérendrye in Chilliwack, and at École élémentaire des Sept-sommets in Rossland to operate these programs starting in the 2018-2019 school year.

This request is based on the conclusions of the Supreme Court of British Columbia that held that the Ministry of Education must provide operating funding sufficient to operate StrongStart programs where the CSF has space for such a program and desires to open one.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of *Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is to preserve and promote the two official languages of Canada, and their respective cultures, by ensuring that each language flourishes, as far as possible, in provinces where it is not spoken by the majority of the population. French-language schools cannot preserve and promote the French language and culture without being equipped with the proper tools to do so. These tools must protect the French-language minority and promote its ethnolinguistic vitality, especially in a province like British Columbia where the assimilation rate is very high. French-language early learning programs, such as StrongStart programs, support the French-language community’s ethnolinguistic vitality by facilitating language transmission, by aiding in the recruitment of eligible students, and also by helping acclimatize students to the school environment. Investing in French-language early learning programs, such as StrongStart programs, also contributes to reducing the costs of providing French-language education between kindergarten and grade 12 in British Columbia, notably by reducing the number of children who require francisation or by reducing the length of time that students need such a service.

The Ministry of Education has recognized the importance of early childhood learning programs for French-language education in British Columbia over the past twenty-five years. The last ten years have seen a new engagement by the Province in the early learning sector with a sustained and significant commitment to early childhood learning programs. As part of that commitment and based on the conclusions of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, the CSF request the required funds to set up four new StrongStart programs and to operate these new programs starting in 2018-2019.

We thank you for your attention to this matter. The CSF is available for all queries you may have concerning this letter, or to provide any additional information. Please communicate with the CSF’s Secretary-Treasurer, Sylvain Allison, with respect to any part of this letter. He can be reached at 604-214-2606, or by e-mail at [sallison@csf.bc.ca](mailto:sallison@csf.bc.ca).

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<sup>1</sup> *Conseil-scolaire francophone de la Colombie Britannique v British Columbia (Education)*, 2016 BCSC 1764 at para 1872.



We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Lapierre', is enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Marie-France Lapierre  
Chairperson

cc. Sylvain Allison, Secretary-Treasurer of the CSF