



April 20, 2021

Ref: 241046

Patrick Gatien, Chair
Board of Regional Trustees
School District No. 93 (Conseil scolaire francophone)
Email: patrick_gatien@csf.bc.ca

Dear Mr. Gatien:

Thank you for your letter of October 27, 2020, to my predecessor Rob Fleming regarding suggested amendments to the *School Act* permitting the transfer of surplus or underutilized school sites and facilities owned by majority boards of education to the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CSF). Thank you as well for raising the issue directly during our meeting on February 23, 2021. I can assure you the Ministry of Education will give due consideration to the potential for making such statutory changes.

The Ministry continues to actively work with majority boards of education to identify underutilized or closed schools through the five-year capital planning process. As you are aware, we have achieved some recent successes in acquiring permanent accommodations for francophone students with the purchase of schools in Kamloops and Penticton. The Ministry is also working with the CSF to develop a business case for the funding approval of a new school on a site recently acquired in Pemberton.

I understand that Capital Management Branch staff have been collaborating with CSF staff on other similar opportunities with majority districts, including a permanent location for École Beausoleil in Victoria.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that the constitutional guarantees enshrined in s. 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms are fully respected and meaningfully realized for francophone minority language rightsholders in British Columbia.

If you have any questions or require further information regarding the ways the Ministry continues to address s. 23 language rights for francophone students, please contact Reg Bawa, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management Division by email at Reg.Bawa@gov.bc.ca or by phone at (250) 888-0658.

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Thank you for your dedication to the students of Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Whiteside". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Jennifer Whiteside
Minister

pc: Reg Bawa, Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Management Division
Francois Bertrand, Acting Executive Director, Capital Management Branch
Dave Duerksen, Executive Director, Governance and Analytics Division
Mora Cunningham, Regional Director, Capital Management Branch