



November 28, 2019

Mayor Kennedy Stewart
City of Vancouver
3rd Floor, City Hall
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Via Email: kennedy.stewart@vancouver.ca

Dear Mayor Stewart:

Re: Meeting request regarding publicly funded French-first language education in Vancouver

I write on behalf of the Board of Regional Trustees of the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, School District 93 ("CSF"), to request a meeting with you to discuss French-first language (francophone) education in Vancouver, some of the contributions of the French-speaking community to Vancouver's vibrant cultural fabric, as well as potential areas for collaboration.

As you may be aware, the CSF is a publicly (provincially) funded school board, created in 1996 to fulfill the province's obligations under section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The CSF provides "French-first" elementary and secondary education throughout the province: the CSF's schools teach French as a first language, and in so doing provide an educational experience that differs greatly from immersion and "core French" taught by other school districts. In other words, the CSF is unique from other school districts as one of its key mandates, in addition to the basic educational purpose shared by all school districts (including the Vancouver School Board), is to transmit the French language and culture to future generations and to protect against assimilation in an environment that is predominantly English speaking.

The CSF's schools also provide dedicated community space to support a rich and sustainable linguistic and cultural environment for the growing and vibrant French-speaking community. These spaces are used for early childhood education programming and services, as well as a variety of community and cultural programs and events, including celebratory events, public meetings, social gatherings, and French-language clubs and activities. To be sure, the CSF's cultural mandate is well aligned with the City of Vancouver's *Culture Plan* for Vancouver and provides opportunities for collaboration to achieve the goals and objectives of both organizations.

The demand for French-first language education has been increasing substantially throughout British Columbia. Over the last five years alone, the CSF's enrolment has grown over 25%. Demand is particularly acute in Vancouver and is attributable in part to the growing number of French speakers who move to this wonderful city, not only from other parts of Canada but from throughout the world. This growth has placed significant pressures on the CSF's facilities. At

Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique

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present, the CSF owns two school sites, from which it operates three schools: **(1)** École élémentaire Rose-des-vents (K-6), **(2)** École secondaire Jules-Verne (7-12), and **(3)** École élémentaire Anne-Hébert (K-6). The CSF also operates three primary programs in former VSB facilities, leased to the CSF: **(4)** Chief Maquinna Annex (K-2), **(5)** Henderson Annex (K-1), and **(6)** Laurier Annex (K-5). The locations of each of these schools are referenced on the enclosed map. The CSF requires additional school facilities, particularly on the west side of Vancouver.

For many years, the CSF has been working with the BC Ministry of Education, federal agencies, the Vancouver School Board, realtors and developers to identify suitable sites for its schools. In this regard, the CSF greatly appreciates your comments to the Vancouver School Board regarding the Board of Trustees' consideration of the closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex in order to provide an additional school site for the CSF. The CSF would appreciate an opportunity to explore potential opportunities to collaborate with the City of Vancouver with respect to its urgent need for school sites in Vancouver.

In summary, there are many areas in which the CSF and the City of Vancouver could work together to enhance the vibrant francophone culture in Vancouver, and I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss these opportunities with you and your officials.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marie-Pierre Lavoie', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marie-Pierre Lavoie
Chairperson

Copy: Michel St-Amant, Superintendent
Sylvain Allison, Secretary-Treasurer

Enclosure: Map of CSF schools in Vancouver