



May 15th, 2019

Ms. Jordan Watters, Chair
Greater Victoria School District
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8

Via Email: jwatters@sd61.bc.ca

RE: Request for a Lease Extension to enable the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique's continued use of Ecole Beausoleil beyond 2020

Dear Ms. Watters,

I am writing on behalf of the Regional Board of Directors for the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CSF), and further to our meeting on May 8, 2019, wherein we discussed the Greater Victoria School District's (GVSD) catchment boundary review and potential implications for the CSF's continued use of Ecole Beausoleil, the former Sundance School.

As you are aware, the CSF is a provincially funded public French-first language school board that provides French-language elementary and secondary education throughout the province. The demand for French-first language programming has been increasing substantially throughout British Columbia. In fact, over the last five years the CSF has experienced enrolment growth of over 25% and, in the 2018-2019 school year, has over 6,100 students in 41 schools across the province. In the Greater Victoria region, there has been a significant increased demand for French-first language programming.

The CSF operates two schools in Victoria: Ecole Victor-Brodeur and Ecole Beausoleil. Ecole Victor Brodeur offers K-12 French-first language programming and has the second highest enrolment of any CSF school, with a student population of over 680 students. The CSF owns Ecole Victor-Brodeur; however, due to significant enrolment growth and overcrowding in this school, the CSF worked collaboratively with the GVSD to lease the former Lampson Street School located at 670 Lampson Street, which accommodates some of the overflow of the secondary school population at Ecole Victor-Brodeur. As enrolment at Ecole Victor-Brodeur continued to increase, four years ago the CSF again worked with the GVSD to enter into a short-term lease for Ecole Beausoleil, the former Sundance School located at 1623 Bank Street in Victoria. Today, Ecole Beausoleil offers K-3 French-first language programming, and has over 65 students, and over 80 registered for next year. As a consequence of significant enrolment growth in Victoria, all three facilities operated by Ecole Victor-Brodeur and Ecole Beausoleil are overcrowded and there is no additional space available to accommodate the CSF's current and growing student enrolment.

It is within this context that the CSF read the GVSD/SD61 Catchment Boundary Review, with great concern about the implication of the review for the CSF's continued use of Ecole Beausoleil. In

particular, the CSF has noted in the Overview of Proposed Changes set out in the GVSD/SD61 Catchment Boundary Review document, it states that “[t]he current Oaklands Elementary boundary would be reduced. The former portion is proposed to become the Bank St. School catchment” and that “[t]he facility on Bank St. would open up as an elementary school in 2020.” This proposal creates a significant problem for the CSF, as there are no alternative facilities currently identified from which to operate the K-3 French-first language programming and the GVSD’s proposed timeline to reopen the Bank Street school offers very little time for the CSF to work with the Ministry of Education to locate, secure and establish a new school.

The CSF greatly appreciates the opportunity to lease schools from the Greater Victoria School District; however, the primary objective of the CSF is to secure ownership or long-term tenure of its own school sites with purpose-built schools. For many years, the CSF has been searching for a school site to accommodate its current and future enrolment in the Greater Victoria region. To date, the CSF has been unsuccessful in securing a site and, as a result, the CSF has absolutely no alternative site or facility from which to operate Ecole Beausoleil should the GVSD decide to re-open the former Sundance School for September 2020.

The CSF’s Board of Regional Trustees is respectfully requesting that the CSF be granted at least one additional year, to lease and operate Ecole Beausoleil in its current facility, while we continue to work with the Ministry of Education and substantially increase our efforts to identify a site and facility to relocate our school.

On behalf of the CSF’s Board of Regional Trustees, I sincerely request that you give the matters set out in this correspondence serious consideration.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours truly,



Marie-Pierre Lavoie
Chairperson

cc: Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education
Joel Palmer, Executive Director, Capital Division, Ministry of Education
Ryan Spillett, Director, Capital Division, Ministry of Education
Sylvain Allison, Secretary-Treasurer, CSF
Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer, GVSD