



CPF *Canadian Parents for French*

British Columbia & Yukon | Colombie-Britannique et Yukon

Ministry of Education
PO BOX 9045 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, British Columbia
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February 6th, 2014

Deputy Minister of Education, Rob Wood

It has come to our attention that the Manager of French Programs Department at the British Columbia Ministry of Education, Nicole Couture, was recently re-assigned to another position in a different department. We respectfully request clarification as to why someone as effective and as well respected as Mrs. Couture would be transferred to another part of your Ministry. This does not seem to be in the best interest of the French Programs Department nor for French language education in British Columbia.

As you may know, in 2012 / 2013 the British Columbia Provincial Government received \$10,067,846 from the Federal Government under the *Official Languages In Education Bilateral Agreement* for the support and provision of French second language educational programs. In addition, the Provincial Government received \$6,036,572 for the support and provision of French first language education. Together, the BC Ministry of Education receives over \$16 million per year from the Federal Government to support French language education.

This is a considerable and targeted investment to help students in our province learn and use our two Official Languages.

It is little secret that BC families have been flocking to participate in French language educational programs over the past 15 years. As of the 2012/2013 school year there were 47,000 students in French immersion, 180,000 in Core French, and over 5,000 in Francophone programs.

One third of all students in our public school system are learning French.

The Federal French Funds, which are matched by the BC Provincial Government, are earmarked to support the quality of instruction, the experiences, and the opportunities for all these students.

Nicole Couture has demonstrated exceptional leadership and skill in ensuring the funds targeted for French programs achieve the greatest impact. Mrs. Couture has developed strong partnerships with school districts, parent groups, and outside stakeholders. She is greatly respected within the community because she has challenged the system to deliver better results with considerable success.



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We are seriously concerned and respectfully request an explanation for the following:

- *Why was Mrs. Couture re-assigned from her French Programs Manager position, and
- *How is this in the best interest of the French Programs Department, and
- *How will your Ministry ensure there is a continuity of strong and proactive leadership within the French Programs Department given Mrs. Couture's interim replacement, Gilbert Verrier, is also retiring in the near future?

Canadian Parents for French BC & Yukon recently celebrated its 35th year anniversary as a parent-lead group working with families in British Columbia to help improve the accessibility and quality of French second language learning for all young students. Our 7,100 active members and 370 parent volunteers - organized into 44 local organizing committees - support this work.

We hope to work with your Ministry to better understand why this decision was made and how to best ensure the considerable funds earmarked for French language education in our province continue to be strategically invested and managed for the greatest benefit to our students.

I look forward to your clarification of these issues.

Bien à vous,

Patti Holm
President, Canadian Parents for French BC & Yukon

cc:

Minister of Education, Hon. Peter Fassbender
Education Critic, Hon. Rob Fleming
Member of the Legislature, Hon. Marc Dalton
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, Hon. Shelly Glover
Member of Parliament, Hon. John Weston
Member of Parliament, Hon. Hedy Fry
President, *Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique*, Roger Hebert
President, *Fédération des Francophones de la Colombie-Britannique*, Dr. Réal Roy
President, Canadian Parents for French – National, Lisa-Marie Perkins
Chief Superintendent, BC Ministry of Education - Learning Services Department, Rod Allen