

**Presentation to the Kootenay Lake
School Board (#08)
The Case for an Early Immersion Program in
Kootenay Lake**



Prepared for / Préparé pour:
School District No. 8
(Kootenay Lake) Nelson Office
R.R. #1, 570 Johnstone Road
Nelson, BC
V1L 6J2

Prepared by / Préparé par:
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December 13, 2005



We welcome your input and will do our best to ensure that issues of interest and concern are addressed at our meetings.
Please support our efforts to ensure quality FSL programs in the public education system by attending our meetings!

December 13, 2005

School District No. 8
(Kootenay Lake) Nelson Office
R.R. #1, 570 Johnstone Road
Nelson, BC
V1L 6J2

Attn: School Board of Trustees
Superintendent Bill Reid,

Re: Early French Immersion in School District No. 8

This proposal is submitted to the School District No.8 and the School Board regarding the possibility of expanding the current French Immersion Program to include an early entry program beginning in Kindergarten/ Grade 1. Surveys conducted within the Nelson population clearly indicate a strong support for such a program.

The Early French Immersion Parent Group in Nelson was formed in the fall of 2005 and would like to thank the Board of Trustees for allowing us to make a presentation to you on December 13, 2005.

We look forward to working with you in the creation of this new program and enhance the quality of education our children deserve.

Respectfully Submitted / Respectueusement Vôtre,

Sylvie Masse
EFIPG

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1 Overview

The EFIPG would like to thank the Board of Trustees for allowing us to make this presentation to you today.

The Kootenay School District has outstanding French Second Language education programs. The success of this program is a tribute to the efforts of SD8 - teachers, administrators, board members and students - and the work of the Nelson chapter of Canadian Parents for French - BC.

In this brief, we ask the School District to continue to work with us to build on the District's extraordinary achievements.

In addition, as parents in the Nelson area of Kootenay Lake School District, and with the support of Canadian Parents for French – Nelson Chapter, we are proposing that School District 8 establish a new Early French Immersion program starting at Kindergarten and Grade 1 in September 2006 so that students in Kootenay Lake can realize their educational and bilingual dreams.

French Second Language education is a BC and Canadian success story. 2004-05 is a record year for French Immersion in BC with some 35,519 students across our province. This represents an increase of more than 2000 students over last year (also a record year), and an increase of 5,096 students, or 8.0% over 4 years. Locally for the 2004/05 school year **289 students enrolled** in French Immersion in this District. In 2001, FI students numbered 222. That means a 30% increase at the local level. These increases in French Immersion enrolment have taken place while the overall student population in BC has declined. Most significantly, the number of French Immersion students in Kindergarten and Grade 1, the most important entry points for FI programs, have increased by 14.1% over 4 years from 5,962 to 7,988. Across the province attrition rates are dropping at all levels and here in Kootenay Lake attrition dropped by 6.6% closely matching that to provincial level of 6.8%. This indicates that the French Immersion program is growing in popularity and has a bright future in our community.

There are also 2164 students enrolled in Core French across the district. This is down slightly over the past few years, reflecting the overall decline in enrolment in the student population. Nevertheless, these programs continue to be a very important element of our school curriculum.

Canadian Parents for French - BC & Yukon and its chapters have been working hard to expand access to these remarkable and successful programs in every part of British Columbia. French Immersion is a leading "choice" option in our public school system. It is truly a remarkable educational opportunity for young Canadians.

French Immersion continues to be an "optional" program. It was not super-imposed on communities from Ottawa or Victoria. It has been established in 47 communities and 44 school districts in BC because trustees, administrators, parents, teachers and students worked together to make it happen. It is, in fact, a model for "choice" in public education, open to all, reflective of the whole community, cost-efficient and educationally sound.

Like all parents, we are concerned about the increase in class size, the reduction in our investment in library resources, the layoff of staff and the reduction in teaching assistants. On balance, given the constraints facing the district, we believe the district has done a remarkable job in attempting to meet the educational needs of our students while paying off a debt and balancing the budget.

In this brief, we wish to emphasize that French Immersion programs in particular contribute to the educational and financial well being of our district. At a time when enrolment is of increased importance in determining funding levels, these programs keep students in Kootenay Lake. They bring in Federal Funds in support of French programs. Moreover, they give our students access to an outstanding public education program.

French Immersion has proven over the past 30 years to be an educationally sound and cost-efficient way to offer program choice within the public school system. The proposal to start an Early French Immersion program in SD8 makes financial sense.

1. Federal Funding for French Second Language education for our District will increase if we start an Early French Immersion program in Nelson. It is the only program of choice with access to such funding.
2. French Immersion classrooms are no more expensive than regular classrooms. The only difference is the language of instruction. Given the extent of interest and support, and the size of school community, Early French Immersion is a cost-efficient way of extending choice in the public school system.
3. French Immersion will keep students in our School District and in the public school system. With the last provincial formula change, this will benefit everyone in our District, not just those in the program.
4. The Honourable Stephane Dion, Minister of Interprovincial Affairs, recently announced the federal government will be allocating \$137 million for French Second language education programs such as French Immersion. The new plan will boost Federal support for such programs by some 50% over the next five years and we understand that the "Dion" money has been released at long last.

It has already been well proven that French Immersion offers:

- A greater range of career options.
- A lifelong ability to communicate with French-speaking people, here in Canada and around the world.
- A facility for learning other languages.
- Access to French-language books, films and other media.
- A deeper understanding of their own and other languages and cultures.
- Enriched travel experiences, especially to the 45 countries where French is spoken.

At present:

- Over sixty parents have interest in bringing the program to Nelson this fall.
- A preliminary survey of Nelson residents shows 107 children are eligible for the French Immersion program.
- There is much community support for having the program in Nelson.
- There is room in the Hume School to begin such a program for the school year beginning fall of 2006.

Kootenay Lake School District is a geographically large district in BC with over 5,300 students enrolled in its schools. The existing Late French Immersion program only partially addresses the needs of the Kootenay Lake population and there is a need to expand the program to Early Immersion. Not only will this give parents in the Nelson area another entry to the French Immersion for their children, but it could also attract parents and students from the District next door.

In short, the time has come to bring Early French Immersion to Kootenay Lake School District. We look forward to working cooperatively with the Board of Trustees and District staff to make this dream a reality for September 2006. Together, we can help our students pursue their dreams.

2 Who is CPF-BC and Yukon?

Founded in 1977, Canadian Parents for French is the national network of volunteers dedicated to the promotion and creation of French second language learning opportunities for young Canadians. BC has more CPF members than any other province in Canada - 6876 members from Sooke to Fort. St. John - organized in 47 Chapters across British Columbia. Nationally, there are 150 Chapters representing 21,539 members from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland.

In the 2004-05 school year, CPF-BC and Yukon parents and volunteers organized or helped organize 118 socio-cultural events, 8 summer camps and 51 information sessions for parents, made 35 presentations to school districts, offered 36 post-secondary scholarships to French Second Language students, held over 280 Chapter and Branch regular meetings across 47 chapters and signed 5 major new partnerships with Francophone organizations. Our 6876 members contributed some 59,000 volunteer hours to this effort.

In October, Canadian Parents for French released "[The State of French Second Language Education in Canada, 2002](#)" which has been provided to the school district and forms the research basis for our brief.

3 French Second Language Education in British Columbia

[*The State of French Second Language Education in Canada, 2002*](#), the third in an annual series of publications, is a cross-country check-up into French second language education, identifying areas of strength and areas for action at the federal, provincial and district level.

The report shows that British Columbia is the only province in Canada where the number of students studying the French language increased in the 1990's. Today, there are 35,519 students in French immersion programs in 47 districts across British Columbia. 43 School Districts have Early French Immersion programs starting in Kindergarten/Grade 1. 29 districts have Late Immersion programs starting at Grade 6. 22 districts have both. A further 223,066 students study core French in elementary and high schools.

As noted in our introduction, French Immersion enrolment has grown in the last three years, in spite of an overall decline in enrolment province-wide.

In the last several years, School Districts, with the support of a strong advocacy effort from CPF chapters, have been able to remove "caps" or limits on FI enrolment in ten school districts. Also, in the past two years, parents with the support of CPF-BC & Yukon have been successful in bringing early or late French Immersion to Ladysmith, Chetwynd, Penticton, Whistler, Duncan and Victoria as well as a new Intensive Core French program to Surrey. Advocacy efforts to expand programs continue in Saanich, Vanderhoof, Vancouver, Richmond, Castlegar, Terrace and many other jurisdictions across the province.

This reflects the substantial grassroots support for French language education in British Columbia. The French immersion program provides an excellent, high quality education opportunity for students in BC. In addition, the volunteer parents of Canadian Parents for French organize festivals, public speaking opportunities, cultural activities and summer camps to give students of French as a second language the chance to practice outside of the classroom. Such activities are critical to the success of immersion programs in particular, given the dominance of the English language in the life of our province.

The report also highlights a number of challenges facing French language programs in BC and in Canada. In particular, there is the need to remove capping of entry to immersion programs caused by limited space. While considerable progress has been made in the last year, many School Districts control the growth of French immersion by restricting the number of students who can enter the program. As a result, too many children are denied an opportunity to choose to learn French. Clearly, the challenge of creating sufficient spaces to meet the demand for French immersion is more challenging in smaller districts than it is in Vancouver or in Burnaby. Canadian Parents for French is committed to working with smaller districts to ensure that parents and children in Nelson, or Ladysmith or Hazelton or Dawson Creek have the same choice to enter French immersion as they do in the Lower Mainland.

The French Immersion program has succeeded over the years in maintaining a high standard of educational achievement.

The benefits of French Immersion education include:

- Lifelong ability to communicate with French-speaking people in Canada and around the globe;
- Facility for learning other languages;
- Greater range of career options;
- Enhanced creativity and problem-solving ability;
- Deeper understanding of their own and other languages and cultures;
- Access to French-language books, films and other media.

Learning a second language has been shown to have a positive impact on intellectual growth. Cognitive development is enriched and enhanced.

Roughly, 80% of immersion students in Canada are enrolled in Early French Immersion (EFI) starting in Kindergarten or Grade 1. Simply put the more exposure to French, the better the chances of becoming bilingual. However, Late French Immersion has shown itself to be an extremely successful and dynamic program for students.

French Immersion students reflect the broader provincial community. According to a recent survey, 1 in 4 parents of French Immersion students do not have English or French as their first language. A significant percentage of French Immersion students are learning French as their "third" or "fourth" language. French Immersion students represent a cross-section of economic and social groups.

A recent national poll confirmed that Canadians consider learning both our official languages to be important and valuable. For example, eighty-seven per cent of English speaking Canadians surveyed believe that the ability to speak more than one language is very important in this period of growing international trade.

In his Foreword to our report, His Excellency John Ralston Saul writes: "If doors are to be opened to the world, then we're all going to need new skills. Language is one of them. It is the key to taking advantage of the world's complexities, particularly when you come from a medium sized country like Canada."

4 Early French Immersion - Educational and School Issues

Early French Immersion is a successful school program starting in Kindergarten (or Grade 1) and continuing through to Grade 12. As noted, most School Districts in British Columbia offer an EFI program. Over 80% of French Immersion students in BC and in Canada are enrolled in Early French Immersion. The language of instruction is entirely in French from Kindergarten to Grade 3. In Grade 4, English Language Arts are introduced.

It is recognized by educators that young children have an enormous capacity to learn languages. In addition, Early French Immersion students tend to develop their capacity to concentrate and learn. This has been demonstrated in numerous studies over the years (See, for example, [*The State of French Second Language Education in Canada*](#) or "Early and

Middle French Immersion Programs: French Language Outcomes," Lapkin, Hart and Swain in Canadian Modern Language Review, 48(1)).

One of the main concerns of parents in selecting French Immersion is its possible effect on the English-language skills of students. Research has consistently shown that the English-language skills of French Immersion students meet or exceed those of their peers in English-language programs. This view is confirmed by Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) here in BC. At all levels, across BC, the English skills of FI student were equal or higher than their counterparts. In Grades 4 and 7 and past 10 assessments, FI students ranked significantly higher in English skills. It is important not to overstate the importance of such assessments or to draw too many conclusions about student performance. However, the FSA does show that students do not lose in English while they gain in French.

Table 1. Grade 7 Performance

Reading Comprehension	Province				
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	20004/05
All students	76	76	77	80	77
French Immersion	90	89	90	93	91
KL FI	96	87	92	96	92

Writing	Province				
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	20004/05
All students	81	84	79	90	90
French Immersion	88	91	88	96	96
KL FI	96	74	94	85	97

Numeracy	Province				
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	20004/05
All students	81	82	84	83	83
French Immersion	90	90	92	92	91
KL FI	98	93	94	97	88

Table 2. Grade 4 Performance

Reading Comprehension	Province				
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	20004/05
All students	78	80	77	80	79
French Immersion	86	85	85	86	87

Writing	Province				
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	20004/05
All students	91	94	94	91	93
French Immersion	91	94	94	91	93

Numeracy	Province				
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	20004/05
All students	84	85	87	88	87
French Immersion	90	91	92	92	90

The FSA confirms in part, the results of other research that shows learning a second language such as French also opens up the imagination and creativity of students and may in itself have a positive impact on performance in English and other languages.

The Foundation Skills Assessment assesses the performance level of students in (English) reading comprehension, writing and numeracy. It is most effectively used when comparing results in the same School District or population group over a period of years.

It is also important to recognize that Early and Late French Immersion programs serve somewhat overlapping but distinct clienteles. EFI serves a more heterogeneous cross-section of the population because placement is made without information on school performance. LFI students are themselves involved in the decision to enter the program and tend to be more academically oriented. (See, for example, Dube and MacFarlene, "Middle Immersion, is it a better option than Early or Late", CMLR, (1991). The article concludes: "If only one entry point to Immersion is feasible, Early Immersion would seem to meet the needs of the widest range of students."

5 Parent Issues or "I don't know French myself, can I still help my child"

There is no expectation or need for parents of French Immersion students to understand or speak French. Less than 15% of French Immersion parents actually speak French. A comprehensive survey conducted with Grade 9-12 French Immersion students across BC showed that less than 10% of French Immersion parents are French-speakers (most French First-language parents enroll their children in BC's Francophone Education Authority and are not involved in French Immersion.). There are many things parents can do however to ensure that their child's second-language experience is both positive and lasting.

Encouragement is the key. Research shows that students whose parents have a positive attitude towards French do better in French Second language programs. Parents can also turn the tables and let their children teach them French. This does wonders for a child's self-esteem.

And CPF-BC and Yukon, in partnership with Educacentre, offers low-cost Adult French classes for parents whose children are enrolled in French Second Language programs that mirror the work their children do in the classroom. In some 20 communities across BC in January, this program is allowing parents to learn French as their children are doing the same.

6 Community Issues

The creation of an Early French Immersion program in our district will strengthen public education and the broader community. Parents increasingly are seeking greater choices for their children in the public school system. The Provincial Office of CPF-BC & Yukon as well as the Nelson Chapter fields calls from prospective homebuyers and renters about the availability of French Immersion in our community. And a strong, viable EFI program will keep some students in the public school system, protecting and enhancing the viability of public education for all students.

Increasing the opportunities for young people to learn a second language promotes community understanding. The Kootenay School District should be justifiably proud of its current Late French Immersion students and their remarkable progress. A new EFI program will broaden access and build on the proud tradition of the program and the important role FI students play in our community life.

7 Policy 462 – Schools And Programs Of Choice

7.1 Mission Statement Accompanied by the Goals and Objectives of the Program.

Mission Statement: Ensure access to French education for all learners at the earliest possible developmental level.

Philosophy Statement: We believe that all French Immersion students will become confident, responsible, capable learners when an atmosphere rich in culture, motivating activities, creativity and organization is provided. We believe that an inviting learning environment, offered through the French language, will be conducive to students developing independent thinking skills, acquiring knowledge, becoming productive citizens, and realizing their full potentials.

7.2 Educational soundness of the program including how the proposal is distinct from existing educational programs or fills a particular educational need not currently offered in the District.

French Second Language education is a BC and Canadian success story. 2004-05 is a record year for French Immersion in BC with some 35,519 students across our province. This represents an increase of more than 2000 students over last year (also a record year), and an increase of 5,096 students, or 8.0% over 4 years.

French Immersion continues to be an "optional" program. It was not super-imposed on communities from Ottawa or Victoria. It has been established in 47 communities and 44 school districts in BC because trustees, administrators, parents, teachers and students worked together to make it happen. It is, in fact, a model for "choice" in public education, open to all, reflective of the whole community, cost-efficient and educationally sound.

French Immersion programs in particular contribute to the educational and financial well being of our district. At a time when enrolment is of increased importance in determining funding levels, these programs keep students in Kootenay Lake. They bring in Federal Funds in support of French programs. Moreover, they give our students access to an outstanding public education program.

It has already been well proven that French Immersion offers:

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- A lifelong ability to communicate with French-speaking people, here in Canada and around the world.
- A facility for learning other languages.
- Access to French-language books, films and other media.
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- Enriched travel experiences, especially to the 45 countries where French is spoken.

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Roughly, 80% of immersion students in Canada are enrolled in Early French Immersion (EFI) starting in Kindergarten or Grade 1. Simply put the more exposure to French, the better the chances of becoming bilingual. However, Late French Immersion has shown itself to be an extremely successful and dynamic program for students.

A recent national poll confirmed that Canadians consider learning both our official languages to be important and valuable. For example, eighty-seven per cent of English speaking Canadians surveyed believe that the ability to speak more than one language is very important in this period of growing international trade.

7.3 A clear identification of the intended school population to be served including age, grade levels, learner characteristics and the number of students to be served including the neighborhood communities.

This is a program open to all learners. We believe that this program should be public to ensure equal access to all. In addition we believe that it will also attract students from outside the public system, which may otherwise go to schools such as Waldorf, St-Joseph, the Christian School, Rossland French School and School District 20 Kootenay Columbia. The intended population for the 2006-2007 school year includes students entering Kindergarten and Grade One in School District #8. The number of students to be served will be determined by the number of students who register, with preference given to those who register first. It is understood that a class or classes of twenty students will be required to operate the program. Please refer to the preliminary list compiled by Sylvie Masse. Nineteen students are ready to enroll in Kindergarten and 18 in Grade 1. This survey was cursory in nature and we strongly believe that numbers will be even higher once the Early French Immersion program becomes implemented. There are 25, 25 and 14 students provided on our list in subsequent years demonstrating a strong interest over the longer term.

7.4 A Clear understanding of the qualifications and nature of professional staff and support staff required to offer the program, and;

7.5 A clear understanding of the requirements of the collective agreements with CUPE and the KLTF. Note: Since the qualifications of staff are addressed in the collective agreements.

We have chosen to address these issues together

It is clear in the contract language of both unions that the fate of this proposal lies in the Board's hands.

In the KLTF Collective Agreement it states:

"Article 3.00 Management Rights 3.01 The parties agree, except as specifically limited by this Agreement or by applicable legislation, that the right and responsibility to manage all of its operations fairly and reasonable is the exclusive responsibility of the Board. 4.03 Notification of newly created positions will be submitted to the Association before such vacancies are advertised."

This statement is echoed in Article 2- The Board's Rights Re Employees of the CUPE Agreement.

Hiring

This proposal will entail the creation of one or several new position(s). A qualified Early French Immersion teacher will be necessary. However, a French language teaching assistant may or may not be required, depending on the needs of the students.

Therefore, the following articles in the KLTF agreement have been considered:

Article 10.00 Posting and Filling of Vacancies
Article 29.00 Teacher's Assistants

In the CUPE agreement, language pertaining to French Language Teaching Assistants already exists in Schedule "A". This schedule refers to a position called "TA French Languages". Furthermore, in Appendix "E", Note 3 refers to a Federally Funded French Monitor who may be able to participate in Early French Immersion classes..

Qualifications

It is clear that personnel within the district who have the appropriate qualifications and seniority will be given preference in hiring as per the collective agreements of both unions. These qualifications are described in Article 11.04 of the KLTF's Definition of Qualifications, and in CUPE's and Article 17- Job Descriptions Including Pay Equity Maintenance Plan of the CUPE Agreement

Beyond the contract language, the successful teaching candidate will possess a clear understanding of the Early French Immersion program and its methodology. S/He will also have experience and/or training at the primary level. Furthermore, strong leadership skills will be necessary to start and maintain the program. The candidate will demonstrate high levels of French fluency. A posting of Early French Immersion is attached for your reference.

Interviewing process

It is clear that interviewing is the sole responsibility of the administration. It must follow the contract language specified in the qualifications section above. The school district is fortunate to have an administrative officer that is part of the French Advisor Council who has a supervisory role. In this way, the current administration is able to assess both job qualifications and French language fluency.

7.6 A clear understanding of the facilities required to offer the program, both immediate and long term.

The implementation of an Early French Immersion program in September 2006 with both Kindergarten and Grade 1 level entry would require the availability of two rooms. The preference would be to have the Early French Immersion program at Hume School where there is already French Immersion classes that would provide support for the two new classes. We understand that there is currently one room available at Hume and that there is the possibility of more in subsequent years depending on enrollment. For the next five years, one additional room will be required each year as the first year classes move up the grades. It would be preferential to have these classes in the same school, however, we also are aware that this may not be possible and that other locations would have to be considered. **We remain open to suggestions.** If the classes have to be split into two locations it would be preferable to have grades K to 3 and then grades 4 to 6 together. Below we have provided a list of current availability at local schools.

ROOM AVAILABILITY FOR SEPT. '06

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) A.I. Collinson
John Roos
825-4428 | Two rooms could be made available. |
| 2) Blewett School
Nancy Jones
352-5314 | Nothing available. |
| 3) Brent Kennedy
Doug Garland
359-7292 | Already has Grade 6 French and Russian.
Portable available, more depending on enrollment. |
| 4) Central Education Centre
used for
Blair Dandrea
354-4311 | One room now empty but will probably be
another Wildflower class in Sept. |
| 5) Hume Elementary
Vic Manson
352-3186 | One classroom available, possibility of more
in subsequent years depending on enrollment |
| 6) Redfish Elementary
but Lorri Fehr
kindergarten 229-4224 | Possibility of one room (presently has preschool in it,
Lorri said F. I. has priority), plus sharing the
room which is only used half time. |
| 7) Rosemont Elementary
352-3182 | Nothing Available. |

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 8) South Nelson Elementary
Wayne Prentice
354-4139 | Nothing Available. |
| 9) Gordon Sargent Primary
352-5340 | Nothing Available. |

7.7 Costs involved in putting the program in place and the source of funding.

Financial considerations are foremost on the minds of School Districts in these difficult budgetary times.

French Immersion is not a costly option for school districts. A French Immersion classroom is not inherently more expensive than any other. There are some additional resource costs in providing materials in French; however, Federal funding for French Immersion and Core French programs at least in part, covers these. French Immersion programs are only expensive if classrooms are not full.

Further, it should be noted that some of the Federal Funding for French Programs managed by the Province, are linked to the number of FTEs in Core French and French Immersion. By increasing the number of French Immersion classrooms, Federal French Second Language funding will increase for our school district.

In terms of incremental Federal monies, here is what the District could expect to receive as a direct result of starting an Early French Immersion School District 8 next year assuming the program starts at Kindergarten and Grade 1 next year based on roughly 20 students in each class and 2 classes per grade. (This number would grow through the years as more students and grades join the program. Also note that Kindergarten students count for .5 FTE student):

7.7.1 Federal Grants that Districts Receive Automatically

In 2004/05, SDS8 received \$78,301 in regular Official Languages in Educational Programs (OLEP) funding plus additional funds totaling \$26,467 for program growth. Out of these funds, approximately \$10,000 was dedicated to Core French programs with the balance of approximately \$94,000 to be applied to French Immersion maintenance and growth.

7.7.1.1 Learning Assistance Grants to small districts/small programs

- if the total district enrollment of French Immersion is less than 250 Full Time Equivalent (FTE's) the District will receive \$10,500 to assist students experiencing significant learning difficulties in one or more areas.
(Received by SD8)

7.7.1.2 Library Grants

- designed to provide library purchases of French language materials for schools with French Immersion programs. (Approximately \$4400 received by SD8)

7.7.1.3 Revitalization Grant

- specifically for French Immersion issues. The decision of how these funds will be applied is District's decision in consultation with teachers and parents. This grant is targeted to help districts with small enrolment in French Immersion.

Table 3. Revitalization grant funding.

300 FTEs or less	\$14,000	601-900 FTEs	\$7,000
301-400 FTEs	\$12,000	901-1,000 FTEs	\$6,000
401-500 FTEs	\$10,000	1,001 or more FTEs	\$5,000
501-600 FTEs	\$8,000		

\$14,00 received by SD8

7.7.1.4 Learning Resources Grant

- assist districts in the higher cost of buying French resources for students in French Immersion programs.

Table 4. Learning resources grant funding.

Regular	K-7	\$11.85 per FTE
	8-12	\$23.60 per FTE
Growth (based on FTE enrollment increases as compared with previous year): approximately \$2700 received by SD8		
	K-7	\$25.00 per FTE
	8-12	\$50.00 per FTE

7.7.1.5 Teacher in Service Grants

- supports teacher in-service and program implementation for Core French and French Immersion programs.
 \$2,699 for more than 10 FTEs in the district \$2,699
 \$0.8925 additional per FTE for more than 2570 FTEs
approximately \$2900 received by SD8

7.7.1.6 Supply Grants

- funds paid to districts for maintenance of French programs based on actual enrollments (FTEs) in the various French programs. (see chart below)
approximately \$10,000 received by SD8

7.7.1.7 Growth Grant

- funding for growth is based on the French programs FTE enrollment increases in the district compared with the previous year.
approximately \$15,000 + 27,000 top-up received by SD8

Table 5. Growth grant funding.

	SUPPLY GRANT	SUPPLY GRANT
Immersion		
Primary	\$48.30	\$394.80
Grades 4 - 7	\$67.20	\$394.80
Grades 8 - 10	\$94.50	\$1,436.40
Grades 11 - 12	\$94.50	\$1,795.50
Core French		
K - Grade 12	\$3.15	

approximately \$2000 received by SD8 for sociocultural activities

7.7.2 Provincial Grant

In addition of course, every French Immersion student receives the provincial per student grant. In other words, a French Immersion classroom is not inherently more expensive than any other before Federal Funding is considered. For the district and the school, we would expect a French Immersion program to bring students back to the public school system for the benefit - in funding terms - of the whole school.

Growth

Clearly, to be sustainable, the main issue is whether there is sufficient demand for the program. The increases in French Immersion enrolment province-wide indicate growing interest and support for French Second Language education. The response to our initiative

has been excellent so far and we believe it will only grow as we provide information across our community.

7.8 Evidence of community support for the program which indicates the parents have an understanding of the proposal and have or will have children who will enroll in the program.

A preliminary survey of Nelson residents shows 107 children are eligible for the French Immersion program. They are as follows:

Table 6. Summary of children that could enroll in an early French immersion program.

Year born	Number of children	School year
2000	18	2006 Grade 1
2001	19	2006 Kindergarten
2002	25	2007 Kindergarten
2003	25	2008 Kindergarten
2004	14	2009 Kindergarten
2005	5	2010 Kindergarten
2006	1	2011 Kindergarten

We have received numerous letters of support from parents that have children that would attend the program as well as local groups and clubs. Included are: Association Francophone des Kootenay Ouest and members of the community. These letters are provided in Appendix 2 of this document.

7.9 How students register for the program.

The intended population for the 2006-2007 school year includes students entering Kindergarten and Grade One in School District #8. The number of students to be served will be determined by the number of students who register, with preference given to those who register first. It is understood that a class or classes of twenty students will be required to operate the program. Registration can take place following District registration deadlines set out in the existing policy (461 School Choice and Catchments).

7.10 Evidence of such program’s success if they are operating in other school districts

[*The State of French Second Language Education in Canada, 2002*](#), the third in an annual series of publications, is a cross-country check-up into French second language education, identifying areas of strength and areas for action at the federal, provincial and district level.

French Second Language education is a BC and Canadian success story. 2004-05 is a record year for French Immersion in BC with some 35,519 students across our province. This represents an increase of more than 2000 students over last year (also a record year), and an increase of 5,096 students, or 8.0% over 4 years. Most significantly, the number of French Immersion students in Kindergarten and Grade 1, the most important entry points for FI

programs, have increased by 14.1% over 4 years from 5,962 to 7,988. Across the province attrition rates are dropping at all levels and here in Kootenay Lake attrition dropped by 6.6% closely matching that to provincial level of 6.8%. This indicates that the French Immersion program is growing in popularity and has a bright future in our community.

French immersion programs are offered in 47 districts across British Columbia: 43 School Districts have Early French Immersion programs starting in Kindergarten/Grade 1; 29 districts have Late Immersion programs starting at Grade 6; and 22 districts have both. A further 223,066 students study core French in elementary and high schools.

All indicators predict that the implementation of Early French Immersion in SD8 Kootenay Lake will also be a success story.

As noted in our introduction, French Immersion enrolment has grown in the last three years, in spite of an overall decline in enrolment province-wide.

Table 7. French Immersion - Enrolment Statistics 1998-2005 - BC Public Schools

	FI Enrolment	Elementary FI Enrolment	K-2 FI Enrolment	Secondary FI Enrolment	Total School Enrolment
2004-05	35,519	25,780	10,942	9,739	606,401
2003-04	33,407	24,244	10,384	9,163	614,668
2002-03	31,990	22,911	9,745	9,079	623,344
2001-02	31,136	21,991	9,365	9,145	632,024
2000-01	30,423	21,099	8,913	9,324	634,555
1999-00	29,979	20,522	8,473	9,457	637,724
1998-99	29,434	19,702	8,053	9,732	631,612

The decline in Secondary French Immersion enrolment reflects a slight decline in French Immersion enrolment in the first five years of the 1990's. With increasing enrolment at the elementary level, secondary enrolment is starting to rise significantly. (The slight decline in Core French numbers reflects the establishment of new Core language programs in BC.) Over the last 28 years, French Immersion programs have grown from 1,301 in 1977 to today's 35,519 and Core French programs have increased from 159,809 to more than 223,066.

French Immersion students are spread throughout British Columbia. The smaller proportion of French Immersion students in the Interior and North and in the Kootenays reflects a number of districts that have a program in one community, but have no French Immersion students in another community within the district. For example, there is a program in Cranbrook but not in Fernie/Sparwood/Elkford, there is a program in Prince George but not in Mackenzie, a program in Golden but not in Kimberley, a program in Castlegar but not in Trail/Fruitvale/Roseland and finally a program in Nelson but not in Creston.

The following tables reflect the evolution of French Immersion regional enrolment over 7 years from 1999 to 2004. They show that in every region, the proportion of FI students is on the rise. The 2004 numbers show the strongest growth in French Immersion programs since the 1980s when the program was in its infancy.

Table 8. French Immersion Enrolment 1998-2004 BC Public Schools

Year	French Immersion Enrolment	Total School Enrolment
2004-05	35,519	606,401
2003-04	33,407	616,472
2002-03	31,990	623,344
2001-02	31,136	632,024
2000-01	30,423	634,555
1999-00	29,979	637,724
1998-99	29,434	631,612

Table 9. Projected French Immersion Enrolment 2005-10

Year	French Immersion Enrolment	Elementary French Immersion Enrolment	Secondary French Immersion Enrolment
2005-06	36,775	26,989	9,786
2006-07	38,020	27,650	10,370
2007-08	39,045	28,351	10,694
2008-09	40,205	28,899	11,306
2009-10	40,905	29,288	11,617

Table 10. French Immersion Enrolment - Selected Districts

Total French Immersion Enrollment	2004/2005	2003/2004	2002/2003	2001/2002	2000/2001
Abbotsford	1,127	1,077	1,016	964	895
Burnaby	1,317	1,204	1,046	957	916
Delta	1,557	1,419	1,398	1,396	1,357
Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows	1,378	1,341	1,295	1,299	1,329
North Vancouver	1,853	1,784	1,712	1,609	1,562
Richmond	2,094	1,969	1,842	1,761	1,641
Surrey	2,394	2,191	2,052	1,928	1,871

Total French Immersion Enrollment	2004/2005	2003/2004	2002/2003	2001/2002	2000/2001
TriCities	2,221	2,124	2,156	2,064	2,140
Vancouver	3,440	3,207	3,099	3,052	2,969
West Vancouver	626	570	505	465	484
Central Okanagan	1,590	1,505	1,472	1,525	1,510
Cranbrook-Fernie	250	173	191	178	210
Nelson	289	280	233	224	222
Quesnel	255	260	200	172	136
Saanich	790	768	733	695	664
Vernon	825	737	696	681	671
Victoria	2,184	1,944	1,813	1,793	1,738

In the last several years, School Districts, with the support of a strong advocacy effort from CPF chapters, have been able to remove "caps" or limits on FI enrolment in ten school districts.

In the past two years, parents with the support of CPF-BC & Yukon have been successful in bringing early or late French Immersion to Ladysmith, Chetwynd, Penticton, Whistler, Duncan and Victoria as well as a new Intensive Core French program to Surrey. Advocacy efforts to expand programs continue in Saanich, Vanderhoof, Vancouver, Richmond, Castlegar, Terrace and many other jurisdictions across the province.

8 How do we proceed?

It is our recommendation that the Board of Trustees of School District 08 support in principle our proposal to create a new Early French Immersion program at a location in Nelson, possibly at HUME Elementary. Once registration numbers prove that parents are committed, we are hoping to see our first classes in September 2006. Registration can take place following District registration deadlines set out in the existing policy.

9 Conclusion

We are asking the School District 08 Board of Trustees to support the establishment of Early French Immersion in our community and to take over the leadership role in making it happen. As parents, we are prepared to do whatever it takes to support this effort. What we need now is your help and support.

The BC Government is moving to expand choice within the public education system. Early French Immersion is a proven program with an outstanding record of success. Starting a new Early Immersion program will allow School District 08 to respond to this change in provincial policy in a cost-efficient and effective manner. It will ensure that Kootenay Lake-area parents and students benefit from expanding school choice just as they are in other parts of the province.

Let's do it together!

Appendix 1. Letters of Support



Association des Francophones des Kootenays Ouest
C.P. 210, Nelson (C.-B.) V1L 5P9
Téléphone : 250-352-3516, télécopieur : 250-352-3586
Courriel : afko@telus.net
Site Web : <http://afkofranco.org>

Nelson, November 30th 2005

School Board of Trustees
Superintendent Bill Reid
School District No. 8
(Kootenay Lake) Nelson Office
R.R. #1, 570 Johnstone Rd., Nelson, B.C. V1L 6J2

Dear,

We would like by the present to address our support to the Early French Immersion program promoted by Canadian Parents for French.

The Association des Francophones des Kootenays Ouest is a non-profit organization created in 1986 and represents over 500 members divided on a 700 km² territory. The AFKO offers services and facilities to help the living, learning and developing skills in French for Nelson citizens and throughout the West Kootenays.

Being the Executive Director of the AFKO I can confirm that many of our members, who are exogamous families, wish to register the children in the Early French Immersion classes at School District 8.

Not only do we encourage Francophile parents to register their young children (2 to 6 years) in our Mini Franco Fun activities, we firmly believe in learning a second language, or even a third language in the early years of a child enhances the development of cognitive skills, stimulates curiosity and contributes to a greater awareness of the world.

The Association des Francophones des Kootenays Ouest is aware of existing Early French Immersion programs in many regions of British Columbia therefore we strongly recommend it to be available for Nelson residents. We would like to congratulate Mrs. Victoria Vaseleniuck, the former president of the Nelson Chapter of Canadian Parents for French, and all of her team for their initiative and dedication in this matter.

We are confident to witness the early phases as entry at Kindergarten and/or Grade One of the project implemented as soon as September 2006, for it will certainly provide growth of bilingualism in the community.

In this matter, I remain,
Yours truly,

Marie-Claude Rivard
Executive Director

Original Message-----

From: Susan Noppe [mailto:noppe@alumni.uwaterloo.ca]

Sent: November 2, 2005 10:07 PM

To: BReid@sd8.bc.ca

Cc: bobchenderson@telus.net; norm@netidea.com; jjwilson01@shaw.ca; ewashen@uniserve.com; pandacat@direct.ca; halstead@shaw.ca; aejfield@telus.net; penny@netidea.com; ahambler@sd8.bc.ca; cpf-nelson@shaw.ca

Subject: Early French Immersion

Dear Mr. Reid,

I am writing to express my enthusiasm for the option of early French immersion in School District #8. My husband, two young sons and I live in Nelson and are currently researching the education options in our community. At this point, the public school system is not at the top of our list. However, were there an early French immersion programme available for our children (born in 2001 and 2004), we would be very interested.

As a Canadian parent passionate about education, I want the best for my children. I feel their education should include becoming fluent in both of our country's official languages. Although late French immersion is currently available, I feel the optimal time to learn a second language is when very young. The brain is far more open to learning in the early years and the brain has a higher ability to differentiate foreign phonemes. As young adults, most can no longer hear some phonemes of their non-native languages. Successfully mastering a language also includes mastering its accent. Those who have entered early French immersion programmes tend to have a more natural ability in French and better accents than those who have started with late immersion.

I urge that you and the school board trustees discuss the possibilities for such a programme. The BC Ministry of Education website states, "It is the policy of the Ministry to support the establishment of French Immersion programs within the public school system...School districts are encouraged to offer French Immersion programs. Once a French Immersion program has been established, districts should develop policy that will serve to maintain and strengthen the program." (See http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/french_immersion.htm for the full text.)

A significant number of Nelson-area families have signed a petition in favour of early French immersion. I would suspect that many of the parents in this group will also be considering non-public education options for their children if an early French immersion programme is not available.

I ask that you commit to meeting with the Canadian Parent for French group to discuss the possibilities for this programme.

Sincerely,

Susan Noppe

906 Ninth Street, Nelson, BC

From: Gabriele Sinclair [mailto:gabriele.sinclair@gmail.com]
Sent: October 24, 2005 2:18 PM
To: BReid@sd8.bc.ca
Cc: bobhenderson@telus.net; norm@netidea.com; jjwilson01@shaw.ca;
ewashen@uniserve.com; pandacat@direct.ca; halstead@shaw.ca;
aejfield@telus.net; penny@netidea.com; ahambler@sd8.bc.ca; smasse@telus.net;
Victoria Vaseleniuk
Subject: Early French Immersion

Dear Mr. Reid,

I am the parent of 2 students, one in grade 12 and the other in 8th Grade, and the vice-president of the Nelson Chapter of Canadian Parents for French. I am writing this letter to you in support of an Early French Immersion Programme in Nelson.

Both of my daughters began Kindergarten in a single track French Immersion school in the lower mainland. When we moved to Nelson we were disappointed to find that there was no Early Immersion available for our children. Our older daughter entering Grade 8 at the time found that she was quite far ahead of her peers and felt that she was actually losing her ability to speak French. We chose to send our younger daughter to the Nelson Waldorf School, because we wanted a richer programme for her, if not French Immersion then Waldorf. A number of Waldorf parents have indicated in conversation that they would have chosen Early French Immersion for their children had it been available. For grade 9 we also sent our older daughter to Waldorf, and she reentered French Immersion in Grade 10, still ahead of her peers.

I believe that it should be the right of every student in the public school system to pursue their education in the official language of their choice. Several provinces in Canada have already adopted this right into law. We are a bilingual country and bridges between the two language and cultural groups are being built by our children as they embrace each other's language and culture. Both of my children value their education in French Immersion, and their ability to speak French.

Early French Immersion has consistently been shown to be the most effective means of teaching French as a second language. Early Immersion students are more fully bilingual when they graduate.

Clearly there are the numbers of students in our school district interested in Early French Immersion to support the introduction of this programme. We have a strong Francophone community in our school district, many of whom choose to home school their children because they want their children to have the benefit of both languages. As already mentioned, a number of parents who choose to send their children to private schools such as the Nelson Waldorf School, or St. Joseph's for the benefits of a richer programme would consider Early French Immersion.

The introduction of an Early French Immersion programme would bring additional funding into the district from the Federal government as well as from students who would otherwise be schooled outside of the public school system.

Late French Immersion is an excellent programme in districts where there is already an Early Immersion programme in place. Students who begin Late Immersion in 6th grade and study the language intensely for 2 years are ready to stream in with the Early Immersion students and are usually motivated by their peers to be caught up by the end of 8th grade. After 8th grade the gradual decrease of subjects in French makes it very difficult to maintain the rapid rate of language acquisition achieved in early grades where most or all subjects are taught in French. Our teachers in French Immersion do a commendable job in teaching our children in Late French Immersion, but from personal experience and in looking at the ministries statistics on achievement it is clear that students in Early French Immersion have greater success rates.

For the benefit of the children and of the district, I strongly urge you to consider beginning an Early French Immersion programme in SD 8. I believe that if Early French Immersion were advertised as an option for September 2006 there would be enough students to fill at least one class with a wait list.

Thank-you for your attention in this matter, I look forward to hearing from you. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Gabriele Sinclair
gabriele.sinclair@gmail.com
250-505-1717

Original Message-----

From: Sylvie Masse [mailto:smasse@telus.net]

Sent: October 2, 2005 11:54 AM

To: BReid@sd8.bc.ca

Cc: bobchenderson@telus.net; norm@netidea.com; Canadian Parents for French - Nelson Chapter (E-mail)

Subject: Early French Immersion

Dear Mr. Reid,

I am representing a group of parents that are extremely interested in exploring the options of an early french immersion program in Nelson. I have amalgamated an extensive list of children, some of which will be of school age next year, that would fill a class of french immersion for the next three years and this without doing much advertisement. I understand that you have this list in your possession. Parents were very keen on the idea of exposing their children to a second language early on in age and were very hopeful that the school board would at least consider our request. French immersion programs have gained more and more popularity in recent years. I am sure you are aware of the benefits of early french immersion and won't go into any details about this. I think that your district would also gain benefits to start an early french immersion program as I am sure some parents would consider sending their children here.

Victoria Vaselniuk has kindly offered to bring our request forward to the school board in hopes of setting up a meeting between the board and interested parents. I am extremely disappointed to hear that we were not granted such an opportunity.

I hope that you will reconsider your position and will allow us to meet with you.

Sincerely,

Sylvie Masse,

Nelson resident and parent

Subject: Early French Immersion in Nelson B.C.

To Whom It May Concern:

It is important for my family and the community of Nelson, that the school board allow the creation of an early French immersion program here in Nelson. It was to my surprise to learn that Nelson area only had French immersion for the older children. Many other small towns all around BC and Alberta have already started full French Immersion programs.

There are several reasons why it is time for the Nelson School Board to hear our demands for an Early French Immersion.

To begin with, there is a significant and steady raise in the French speaking individuals living in Nelson. French is an important language to acquire if one lives in Canada. It is also an internationally spoken language including forty nine countries around the world where French is the national language. It is a well known asset to be able to communicate in two different languages.

Secondly, our young children would benefits from starting earlier rather than later with their French immersion. It is proven that the younger a child is when he or she learns a second language the easier it is to learn. When I child learns a language at a young enough age, their brain can assimilate the second language without the need to be constantly translating between the first and second language. In addition, learning more than one language from birth on can also help stimulate and develop the area of the brain dedicated to learning language the can be used in later years. Unfortunately, if the child cannot practice, meaning (converse, read, write, and listen) they will eventually forget. Furthermore they might feel laughable and ineffective at languages and already relinquish learning by grade 6.

Lastly, it is time that the Nelson citizen has the opportunity to chose to be part of a full French Immersion Program rather than to have to move away to obtain that service. To be able to chose to take a full French immersion program that would benefice many families in our community.

Consequently, it is crucial that the Nelson school board gives us the parents a chance to voice our wants trough meetings. Our community must start an early French immersion program as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time in this mater,

Chantal and David Oosthuizen

Original Message-----

From: genna lintz [mailto:gennarosel@hotmail.com]

Sent: November 5, 2005 8:30 PM

To: BReid@sd8.bc.ca

Cc: bobchenderson@telus.net; norm@netidea.com

Subject: early french immersion

Hello Bill Reid

I understand that you have received a list of parents interested in the creation of an early french immersion program for school district 8 in Nelson. My name was on the list on behalf of my two children and I hope to see this program emerge for the upcoming Sept. 2006 school year.

It would be one of the greatest gifts I could offer to my children, learning a second language in an early immersion program. I think fluency in french would open many opportunities for them in the future as well as enrich their academic and cultural life. From what I understand about childhood brain development, it is very beneficial to begin the learning of a second language at the youngest age possible.

My daughter will be starting kindergarten Sept 2006 and my son will be starting 2008. If there is an Early French Immersion program in place I will enroll both my children.

I truly hope that you and the board of trustees consider starting this school program and begin the process soon so as to have a french immersion kindergarten for Sept. 2006 or Grade One for 2007.

Sincerely,

Genna Lintz

Original Message-----

From: wanda cameron [mailto:wandajcam@yahoo.ca]

Sent: November 9, 2005 8:02 PM

To: breid@sd8.bc.ca

Cc: cpf-nelson@shaw.ca; bhenderson@sd8.bc.ca; nmcarvell@sd8.bc.ca

Subject: Early immersion

Dear Bill,

I am writing you to request consideration of an Early Immersion programme here in Nelson. As a past Late Immersion graduate myself, I can attest to the value of the immersion programme in general. When I entered Late Immersion, ours was the first class through the system and hence, I didn't have a choice to enter Early Immersion. My younger brother, however, enjoyed the programme and I feel was able to have a much deeper experience with the language. It is my wish that our district be able to provide the richest possible experience for the students here.

As well, as a parent, I am now starting to think about the future for my children. I want them to have the chance to enter this invaluable programme. I realize there may be obstacles, but I also feel that we may even be able to draw some new students into the district from homeschooling and the local private schools if we were able to provide another option.

I appreciate the vision for achievement and excellence you have always shown in our District. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Wanda Machado

School Board of Trustees
Dr. Bill Reid
Superintendent, School District No. 8
(Kootenay Lake) Nelson Office
R.R. #1, 570 Johnstone Rd., Nelson, B.C. V1L 6J2
breid@sd8.bc.ca, Ph: 250-352-6681 Fax: 250-352-6686

December 13, 2005

Dear Board of Trustees;

I am new to the area and am very interested in working toward the establishment of an early French immersion program in the Nelson area. It is abundantly clear to me (and everyone) that the benefits of this kind of program to young children are many and easily quantified. I can't see how there would be any debate as to whether or not this is a good idea if the objective is to provide the best education possible for young children. Claiming that this is not a good idea, is simply not defensible.

We have moved from Montreal and all three of our children (aged 5, 10 and 11) are bilingual. They have been taught in French but we speak English at home. Our daughter is five, and because she has attended day care in French, she speaks as well as many students in the Trafalgar Grade nine level immersion (albeit their subject matter is different). She can speak this well simply because she started early and we all know that our kids are sponges at that age.

I realize that establishing this kind of a program will not be without its challenges and hurdles. I imagine it will call for a fundamental change in some of the schools and effecting this change will not necessarily be an easy or pleasant task. I think that it is critical to remember the objective to provide students with the best education possible, and let *that* concept be the guide moving forward.

I see that the sd8's first belief statement is: "We believe that students should be the focus of all our endeavours." I also see that: "We believe that public education must reflect and utilize the strengths and diversity of its communities and individuals." I have been amazed at the number of francophones in Nelson! Perhaps I am more able to pick up the accents than some people, but I hear French spoken at least once a day. Francophones are a part of life here in Nelson, and French is a part of Canada.

Literally everyone I have asked is interested in early French immersion for their kids. There is a strong interest, clear benefits to the child and the community as a whole. I have to ask myself what is stopping Nelson from offering early French Immersion to children? My conclusion is that whatever the hurdles are, they shouldn't block delivering on the stated objectives: 1) focus on the kids, 2) provide the kids with the best education possible. I believe that, as parents and educators, *not* offering French to our kids at an early age is a disservice.

If Early French immersion were offered in September of 2006, I would enroll my daughter in a Grade 1 class. No question. I am keen to address some of the hurdles—either with members of the sd8 Board, or with other interested parents. Through my experience in Nelson over the last few months, I have been very impressed with how positive change can be effected in schools. I am optimistic that we can all work together to seize this opportunity and provide the best for our kids and students. I look forward to taking an active role in making this happen.

Sincerely,

Andrew Creighton (250 551 0305)

cc Bill Reid
DPAC
CPF Nelson Chapter

Dear Mr Reid;

Are you aware that learning a second language such as French at an early age enriches a child's cognitive and social development and enhances language, listening and problem-solving skills? As well, Early French Immersion strengthens English literacy, enhances self-esteem and opens the door to other cultures as well as the student's own Canadian heritage. Early language learning also enhances post-secondary education and career opportunities for these children in the future.

The Early French Immersion Parent Group would like to build on the success of the Late French Immersion and core French programs in school district 8, by expanding the French Immersion program to include program entry in Kindergarten and/or Grade One. . By offering early entry as well as the current entry point at Grade six, French language programming will be accessible to students of all interests and grades. A solid foundation in French, attained by Early French Immersion, will benefit those students that chose either to continue with the Late French Immersion program or with other class subjects that conflict in schedule.

There is strong parental interest for Early French Immersion to be offered in School District 8. A cursory survey of Nelson alone has produced a list of close to 60 children who could be enrolled in French Immersion Kindergarten in September 2006 (17), 2007 (17) and 2008 (23). Awareness continues to grow and it is expected that the number of interested parents far exceeds this preliminary survey.

Count me as one of the parents that are keen to register my children in an Early French Immersion program. I believe that my children will benefit tremendously from such a program. As Canadians, it is my children's right to have access to an Immersion program that provides the best opportunity for fluency in both official languages.

Sincerely,

Anik Larivière
Parent of 3 French-speaking children loosing their mother tongue

Eric & Shannon Miller
414 Howe St.,
Nelson, B.C.
V1L 5Y1
eamiller@telus.net Ph: 250-352-9480 Fax: 250-352-6686

December 12, 2005

Dear Mr Reid;

As expecting parents, we are very interested in having our child enrolled in an early French immersion program, if it was offered in the Nelson area. We are well aware of the benefits of learning a second language such as French at an early age, which can enriches a child's cognitive and social development plus enhance language, listening and problem-solving skills. Shannon is a practicing audiologist located here in Nelson. A significant portion of her seven years of undergraduate and post-graduate studies in the United States were focused on speech therapy. We feel this program would provide a very important benefit to the education system in the school district.

We are aware there is strong parental interest for Early French Immersion to be offered in School District 8. Count us as two of the parents that are keen to register our child in an Early French Immersion program. We believe that our child will benefit tremendously from such a program. As Canadians, it is my child right to have access to an Immersion program that provides the best opportunity for fluency in both official national languages.

Sincerely,

Eric Miller, R.P.F., R.P.Bio.
Shannon Miller, M.Aud.

To Whom It May Concern,

December 12, 2005

I am writing this letter in support of Early French Immersion. I attended French Immersion in Nelson from Grade 6 through to Grade 12 and had a wonderful experience. I have since been required to speak French for my current position working for the Sierra Youth Coalition, a branch of the Sierra Club of Canada. Although my level of French is useful, it is not sufficient to engage in extended conversations with Francophones.

The French Immersion program in Nelson is strong, yet I believe it has a great potential to expand into the earlier years of elementary education. This would not only allow students to graduate with a much higher level of French oratory and comprehension skills, but it would also give a substantial boost to the reputation of the program. In addition to expanding into the earlier years, I see it as important to also increase the number of spaces available for students. The way in which the program currently operates is not a just system as it blocks participation.

This need for an expanded French Immersion Program is becoming increasingly clear to me. I recently returned from the United Nations Climate Change Convention and Kyoto Protocol negotiations in Montreal and I was rightly challenged, not only on the streets of Montreal, but also when speaking to the many delegates from countries within Africa. I wish that I had been given the opportunity to learn French at an earlier age, especially since language is better learned at a younger age.

I applaud the School Board for continuing to run the French Immersion Program in Nelson and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of it. I would be pleased to see the Board take a strong leadership stance with elementary education as I feel as though there is great potential for the program to grow and increase in integrity. This is a chance to change the lives of future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Zoë Caron

Nelson Chapter
Canadian Federation of University Women

Box 41
Nelson, BC, V1L 1P7

December 12, 2005

Early French Immersion Group

Attn: Victoria Vaseleniuck

Dear Victoria

Please excuse the delay in answering your letter of the fifth instant as our monthly meeting did not take place until December 10th. We require a vote from members for something of this nature.

We are pleased to inform you that, unanimously, the vote was in favor of supporting your endeavor. It has been the experience of many of our members that children absorb a second language easily when it begins in grade one.

Good luck in your quest.

Sincerely

Joan Lang, Corresponding Secretary

Marilyn Steacy, co-president
e-mail masteacy@telus.net

Appendix 2. Survey

Appendix 3. Example of FTE Qualifications

BCPSEA Employment Directory

1.0 FTE French Immersion Teachers:

Temporary and Continuing

School District No. 34 (Abbotsford)

Posting Date: May 7, 2005

Closing Date: Open

Our growing district invites applications for the following teaching positions to commence September 1st, 2005:

FRENCH IMMERSION - Several 1.0 FTE Temporary and Continuing positions in Elementary, Middle School and Secondary grades.

Qualifications:

Bachelor of Education with a major in French and coursework in second language methodology

Native like fluency in French necessary

Training at the appropriate grade level.

Individuals applying for these positions must be eligible for B.C. Certification. Full time temporary position September 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006. □ 100 Mile House Elementary School, 100 Mile House, BC.

Training and experience teaching French Immersion at the primary level

Fluency in oral and written French and English

Please forward a comprehensive resume with references to:

BCPSEA Employment Directory

0.5 FTE French Immersion Kindergarten Teacher: Temporary, Part-time

School District No. 57 (Prince George)

Austin Road Elementary School (French Immersion)

Posting Date: November 28, 2005

Closing Date: December 2, 2005

School District 57 is now accepting applications for a temporary part-time French Immersion Teacher.

This is a Limited Duration Position commencing January 3, 2006 and not to exceed June 30, 2006.

Qualified applicants should submit a letter of application by fax or email.

Email: mlyall@sd57.bc.ca □ Fax: (250) 561-6837 □ Mary Ann Lyall □ School District 57 (Prince George) □ 2100 Ferry Avenue □ Prince George □ BC V2L 4R5 □ Phone: (250) 561-6800 Loc. 231