



NEWS RELEASE

Francophone school to open in Fernie in September 2009

February 24, 2009 (Richmond, B.C.) The board of trustees of the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (BC's Francophone School Board – SD No 93) (CSF) took great pride in approving on February 21, 2009 the opening of a Francophone school in the city of Fernie. This school, which will serve students from kindergarten to grade 2 in September 2009, will offer access to French public education in the East Kootenays close to the Alberta border. About a dozen students will study in the Francophone school in Fernie when it opens its doors in September 2009. This number is expected to increase each year with the addition of a new school grade. The CSF has identified several potential sites for the regional school and expects to confirm the preferred location shortly.

In creating a French language school in Fernie, the CSF has responded to the request from the people in the Fernie community who initiated this project about a year ago. The presence of several motivated parents convinced of the importance of French language education will help this new school to establish solid roots in the area, and contribute to the cultural and linguistic vitality of Francophone students.

"The creation of a Francophone school in Fernie has finally become a reality for the Francophone community in the South-East area of BC. This community is well known for its energy and determination to live its culture and transmit its language to their children. Considering the sustained growth of Francophones in the East Kootenays, we are convinced that this school will benefit from the support of its community partners and see its numbers rise," stated Ms. Marie Bourgeois, President of the CSF Board of Trustees.

"Francophone families living in the south-eastern portion of BC truly want to see their children benefit from French public education. The Francophone School District's recent success in launching new programs in Rossland (École des Sept-Sommets) and in Nelson (École des Sentiers-Alpins) is proof that the Francophone community is thriving in all parts of our province," stated Mr. Guy Bourbeau, CSF school trustee for South-East BC.

"The CSF is proud to add a new school to its province-wide network and to make Francophone education available to a greater number of citizens in BC," stated Mr. Mario Cyr, CSF Superintendent. "We are pleased to support local parents in their quest to gain access to primary level education in French, and to contribute to the enhancement of the Francophone language and culture."

"While making learning in French possible, the arrival of a Francophone school will facilitate the transfer of our Francophone language and culture to our children. We are very motivated by the addition of this important service since the school will promote the growth of the Francophone community and will encourage a greater number of Francophone families to establish themselves in the area," explained Ms. Véronique Roy, member of the parents group promoting a Francophone school in Fernie. "We are convinced that the Francophone School District will prove the value of its educational programs in very little time and we will see a consistent increase in enrolment numbers at our school."

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Eligible parents wishing to register their children (born between 2002 and 2004) in Fernie's Francophone school can communicate with the CSF at 1-888-715-2200 or at info@csf.bc.ca.

Since its creation in 1995, the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique offers educational programs and services geared towards the growth and cultural promotion of the province's Francophone learners. An active partner in the development of British Columbia's francophone community, the Conseil has presently in its system, and distributed across 78 communities in the province, over 4,200 students and 40 schools, which includes 23 stand-alone schools.

Reference:

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