



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Vancouver celebrates the official opening of the city's first Francophone secondary school**

**Richmond, B.C. (April 3, 2009)** After years of waiting, Francophone students and members of the community celebrated the official opening of the École secondaire Jules-Verne. The ceremony was attended by the Honourable Joan McIntyre, Minister of State for Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs; the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages; Ms. Marie Bourgeois, Chair of the Conseil scolaire francophone de la C.-B. (BC's Francophone School District) (CSF); and Mr. Mario Cyr, Superintendent of CSF, thus promoting for some 160 Jules-Verne students in attendance an appreciation for the advancement of Francophone education in British Columbia.

With the construction of Jules-Verne, located at 5445 Baillie St., Vancouver's Francophone community can benefit from its first "stand-alone" and homogeneous French-language secondary school. This is a significant step in the history of Francophones in the city of Vancouver. This school is one of 40 managed by the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (SD No 93) across the province.

The construction of the École secondaire Jules-Verne was made possible as a result of support from the province and the federal government. The total cost of the project is \$21.6 million, with \$17.1 million coming from the province. The federal government provided \$4.5 million for Francophone community enhancements.

"École Jules-Verne is the culmination of a long-held dream of the Conseil scolaire francophone and the francophone community," said Ms. Joan McIntyre, Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations and Minister responsible for francophone affairs. "There is a real appetite for francophone educational opportunities, and this state-of-the-art school is an example of how the Province is responding."

"Conseil scolaire francophone and the Vancouver school district have once again been able to work together successfully," said Education Minister Shirley Bond. "This much-anticipated school will benefit the Vancouver francophone community by offering them the opportunity to complete their schooling at the secondary school level in an entirely francophone environment."

"Our Government's contribution to École Jules-Verne's community facilities is a significant step forward in equipping this institution with the resources it needs to be more than just a place of instruction," said Mr. James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages. "The school will become an exciting Francophone living environment that will foster the development of young people in both sport and the performing arts. Like the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, support for this project reiterates the Government of Canada's commitment to linguistic duality and the vitality of official-language minority communities."

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**LA FIERTÉ FRANCOPHONE S'APPREND AUSSI À L'ÉCOLE**

"This state-of-the-art school provides a motivating and friendly learning environment for students and staff," said CSF chair Marie Bourgeois. "The addition of a homogeneous Francophone school in Vancouver is very important for Francophone parents and the community. With the constant growth of the Francophone elementary schools and the arrival of new Francophones to the area, the school will become a key addition to our school district and will become a valuable community resource."

"We are pleased to support our Francophone community by enabling our students to complete their schooling at the high school level in French. Our learners and staff are pleased with the new facilities," stated CSF Superintendent Mario Cyr. Offering our students a motivating learning environment will favour their success and promote their cultural identity and their sense of belonging to the Francophone community."

The Principal of École secondaire Jules-Verne, Ms. Annie Bédard, sees the establishment of a Francophone secondary school as an important milestone in Vancouver's history. "Francophone students have never before been able to complete their high school in French or study in a facility expressly built for their needs."

École secondaire Jules-Verne offers a complete program in French for grades 7 to 12. The school has the capacity to one day accommodate some 350 students from Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, and New Westminster. In addition to teaching space and facilities, the school houses a large theatre and a full-size gymnasium. The surrounding landscaped grounds will be open to the public. The school also benefits from leading-edge technology.

*Created in 1995, the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique offers educational programs and services aimed at fostering the growth and cultural identity 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, of which 23 are homogeneous schools.*

**Reference:**

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