

Stakeholders Consulted on Federal Action Plan for Official Languages

How can Saskatchewan ensure that by May 15th, 2011 there will be close to 14,000 bilingual 15 to 19 year olds in this province when current enrolment and retention rates in francophone minority, French immersion and Core French programs would predict that we will have less than 6,000?

Finding answers to this question was the underlying preoccupation for a group of more than 40 individuals who met on March 25th, 2004 in Saskatoon to take part in a “stakeholder” consultation on the educational aspects of the Government of Canada’s *Action Plan for Official Languages*. They represented six different Federal and Provincial government departments and agencies, 13 school divisions, the Saskatchewan School Boards’ Association, the province’s two universities, four Fransaskois organizations, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Canadian Parents for French. As such they were able to bring to the consultation process a broad mix of opinions and experience.

Broad representation from across the province was particularly important because the consultation was one of series of such events taking place in all of the provinces and territories where CPF has branch offices. All of these regional events are themselves part of a larger process that began in November 2003 when the Commissioner of Official Languages invited a group of prominent researchers to present papers at a small conference in Ottawa. Those papers provided input for a larger symposium entitled *Visions and Challenges for the 21st Century* that was held in Toronto at the beginning of March (see www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/symposium/). At the symposium, the Honourable Pierre Pettigrew, Minister of Health, Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages for the Government of Canada announced that his government was fully supportive of the *Action Plan* that his predecessor, the Honourable Stéphane Dion had launched in March of 2003. In addition, M. Pettigrew told the audience that his government would work with Canadian Parents for French to undertake a cross-Canada consultation process that would make recommendations about the strategies needed if the *Action Plan* objectives are to be achieved.

Like the participants in the *Visions and Challenges for the 21st Century* Symposium, the stakeholders’ involved in the Saskatchewan consultation focused their discussions on a series of questions that dealt with the promotion of bilingualism, the marketing of bilingual education, the training of French teachers and the program and policy changes needed to ensure that French education would be more effective and accessible. Ways in which educators could cooperate with business, the arts, culture and sport sectors to enhance French language instruction were also considered.

While many of the ideas that arose from the *Visions and Challenges for the 21st Century* Symposium were rearticulated at the Saskatchewan consultation, the participants here were concerned that our demographic situation needed to be given special consideration. Mutual support between the francophone minority community and French second language educators was highlighted. So too was the development of educational programs that enable aboriginal students to develop a functional knowledge of the two official languages without neglecting the special linguistic, cultural and social needs of the First Nations. Participants recognized the need for better distance education that could service small communities. They also noted that provisions should be made for more points of entry to French Immersion programs and for greater access to Intensive Core French programs.

Rendez-vous 2004

Students from all across the province meet in Regina

On February 13th & 14th, thirty-nine students from Lloydminster, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina, North Battleford, Estevan and Gravelbourg came to Regina for a fun filled Rendez-vous 2004. Not only did students have the chance to use their French outside of school, but they also made friends with other students from all over the province. The weekend began at St. Mary School with icebreakers and a pizza supper followed by a fantastic concert by Les Bûcherons from Edmonton. The students had the opportunity to dance, sing, use wooden dancing dolls and play the spoons along with the band. The workshops, which began bright and early Saturday morning, included cooking, song writing, competing in an improv match and discovering some of the fascinating aspects of biology. For the afternoon, the activities and workshops



continued at the Language Institute at the University of Regina. Thanks to good weather, a treasure hunt organized by the Scouts francophone de Regina led students all over the campus while a winter survival activity taught students how to dress for the elements, quinsy making and outdoor cooking. The workshops ended with students practicing interviewing techniques with a reporter from Radio Canada and learning how to paint with watercolours. Rendez-vous drew to a close early Saturday evening with a draw for student prizes and supper from the Café de Lys. CPF-

Saskatchewan would like to thank all of the chaperones, monitors, and presenters who helped make Rendez-vous 2004 a positive and memorable experience for the students!



Moving??

**Please forward your
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Suite 310
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Or call: (306) 244-6151,
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1-800-561-6151

Chapter Updates

Prince Albert

Prince Albert City Council proclaimed February 8 – February 14 as French Immersion/Core French week. French cultural activities were held in the schools and a luncheon for teachers and administrators at Amy's on Second was well attended. A Mini Rendez-vous was offered at the end of February with 70 students in attendance. Ten Assistant Monitors volunteered their time to ensure a well-run event. Information sessions for parents about Kindergarten and on the topic "How Can I Help My Child in French?" were held during the day. La ceinture fléchée Sash Workshop began Tuesday March 23, 2004, 3 noon hours per week for 12 weeks at L'école Holy Cross School. This is a pilot project for CPF – PA with other workshops planned depending on feedback.

Melville

A Mini Rendez-vous was held in November with a total of 25 children attending. The chapter provided support for the grades 6-9 students to attend a French play in Yorkton. The chapter is concerned about the need to find a full-time French Immersion teacher for grades 6-9.

Regina

Rendez-vous 2004 was held in Regina on February 13-14. The local chapter brought a display to that event. They also helped organize Concours d'art oratoire for both Regina school divisions, and set up a display in celebration of La semaine de la francophonie. CPF material was made available at the provincial legislature for one week and at the Institut français at the University of Regina for another week. The chapter also attended Kindergarten information nights and sent out its own newsletter.

Moose Jaw

CPF Moose Jaw is busy beginning to advertise for the fall at their pre-school Bonjour House. As an organization they are also looking at activities such as fundraising, as well as volunteer recruitment. New ideas are being considered as they try to make the chapter more inclusive for the whole family.

Battlefords

Battlefords Chapter is ready for spring! A Mini Rendez-vous is scheduled for Saturday, May 8. Fun activities for the day include painting pots, making and flying kites, outdoor games and a BBQ. Contact Doris Robert 445-4627 for more information.

Estevan

The Estevan Chapter is planning a French cooking night for grades 6-9 students. French recipes will be used and participants will be assisted by cooking students from Estevan Comprehensive School.

New Research Confirms Positive Results of French Immersion

“French immersion pupils get higher reading marks, Statscan study finds”

The Globe and Mail, March 23, 2004

The Statistics Canada report¹ that received coverage in newspapers across Canada at the end of March provides one more piece of evidence that students currently enrolled in French Immersion programs are doing as well if not better than their peers in English language programs in all areas of the curriculum. This comes as no surprise to Canadian Parents for French since the results simply confirm what researchers have been telling us since the late 1960s when French Immersion programs were first introduced into Canadian schools. However, it is information that some educators and parents have been questioning in the last few years.

The French immersion “doubters” have suggested that demographic and life-style changes in Canada over the past 25 years have been so great that we can no longer assume that the results of the many large scale research studies done in the 1970s and 1980s to assess the effectiveness of French Immersion programs are still valid. They have made broad, negative generalizations about the program based on stories they have heard about individual children who have not done well in immersion. Obviously they have been wrong.

In provinces where students are tested at regular intervals on system-wide tests, immersion students have been shown to perform as well as non-immersion students in English literacy skills and mathematics by the end of Grade 3. This is despite the fact that they may have only begun to receive instruction in English reading at Grade 3. By Grade 6 they generally outperform their English program peers in all subjects.² However, because system-wide tests do not control for differences in family background, some educators have been prepared to dismiss the results.

In the case of Statistics Canada report, data came from an international study of student achievement conducted in 2000 in 31 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In Canada, 30,000 15-year old students from more than 1000 schools were assessed for their reading, mathematics and science skills. The students, their school principals and their parents also responded to questionnaires designed to collect background information about the students.

This background information demonstrated that in most provinces the average family socio-economic status of French-immersion students was significantly higher than that of their counterparts in non-immersion programs. The parents of French-immersion students in all provinces except Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia were also much more likely to have a postsecondary education. However, these differences did not explain the differences in reading performance of the students. In fact, the authors of the study were not able to isolate a single factor that would account for the differences in reading skill between the immersion and non-immersion students that was found in almost all of the provinces. Nor could they explain why the immersion students in Manitoba and Quebec did not show a significant advantage over their non-immersion peers. As a result, they conclude their report by suggesting that future research needs to be undertaken to explain the immersion success story. You can be sure that Canadian Parents for French will be watching carefully and passing on the results of such research when they appear.

¹ see www.statscan.ca/Daily/English/040322/d040322a.htm

² see for example www.utpjournals.com/jour.ihtml?lp=/cmlr/581/581-Turnbull.html

Immersion Students Speak at Local Event



In celebration of French Immersion/Core French Week this year, a luncheon was held at Amy's on 2nd in Prince Albert for local teachers and administrators. Jessica Harris and Cameron Jelinski both gave speeches to showcase their achievements. Cameron's speech is printed below.

Le 20 mars, je vais partir pour Washington, D.C. pour une semaine ou je vais participer au *Future World Leaders Summit*. C'est un programme organisé par *Presidential Classroom*, une organisation américaine qui introduit le système politique aux jeunes étudiants.

Peut-être vous vous demandez, "comment est ce que j'étais choisi pour visiter Washington?" L'année dernière, je suis allé à Ottawa avec le Forum pour jeunes canadiens. Comme un ancien élève du Forum, j'étais invité d'aller à Washington.

Qu'est ce que je vais faire là? Je vais rejoindre environ 400 étudiants, âgés de 16 à 19 ans, venant de 50 pays. One of the highlights of the trip to Washington in March will be learning about such a wide array of cultures. Together, we will explore international relations, diplomacy, and the world economy. In an era of increased security, we will have the special privilege of visiting many prestigious landmarks and government buildings. These include a special tour of the White House by invitation, a session on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Department of State, and the World Bank. The keynote speakers have not yet been disclosed, but past speakers include Vice-President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Ce voyage inclue plus que la politique. On va voir des présentations culturelles de chaque pays. En plus, on va visiter le musée Smithsonian, le plus grand musée au monde, et le musée du Holocaust.

The Future World Leaders Summit is an amazing opportunity for me. I am very interested in international affairs and politics. In fact, I intend to study international relations next year at university. This trip will certainly enhance my understanding of not only the American political system, but also how this powerful country interacts with Canada and the rest of the world.

Ma connaissance d'une deuxième langue me donne un avantage énorme. L'année dernière à Ottawa, j'étais dans un groupe bilingue. J'ai compris chaque présentateur, français ou anglais. J'ai même joué le rôle d'interprète pour certains amis anglais. C'est vrai que les Etats-Unis n'est pas un pays bilingue, mais avec plus de 50 pays, je suis certain que je vais utiliser le français. Je vais avoir l'occasion de rencontrer non seulement les autres jeunes anglophones, mais aussi les jeunes qui viennent de pays où le français est parlé.

New Staff

Christiane DeVink Guérette

Effective April 12th, 2004, CPF-SK's new Executive Director is Christiane DeVink Guérette. Christiane joins CPF-SK after working as Executive Director with the Fédération des aînés francsaskois in Saskatoon. Christiane has a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in political sciences and history from St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick. She is fluently bilingual in French and English.

Both through paid employment and volunteer work, Christiane has experience working with community-based non-profit organizations. She is currently the chair of the committee organizing *French for the Future/Le français pour l'avenir* in Saskatoon. Through a variety of projects she has developed skills in dealing with government officials, clients, partners, the media and volunteers - including volunteer boards. She has also received specific work-based instruction in the results based management procedures that the Government of Canada expects all the organizations it funds to use.



Christiane has had previous experience working with the United Nations Association in Canada in Ottawa and with the Premier's Advisory Council on Youth in New Brunswick. She has been a French language monitor and has facilitated French conversation classes. She also worked as a coach in a university transition program for students with limited English skills. She currently volunteers with the Community Access Program and is a member of the executive committee of *La fédération des francophones de Saskatoon..* Christiane's passion for cultural and linguistic diversity, awareness and understanding will be a valuable asset to CPF-SK. Welcome!

Melissa McLeod

As a way to continue to support the French second language education of children in the province, CPF – SK with the assistance of Le conseil de coopération francsaskois and Young Canada Works has begun a six month long initiative that we hope will enable us to develop closer working relationships with francophones and francophone cultural



organizations, FSL administrators and teachers across the province. To accomplish this, Melissa McLeod has been hired as Cultural Program Publicist and Development Officer. Our hope is to increase the number of children involved in French cultural events and other extracurricular activities here in Saskatchewan as well as raise the profile of French language programs offered by CPF alone or in conjunction with francophone organizations.

Melissa is well suited to this position. She grew up on a farm in southern Saskatchewan and studied Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan. A graduate of the Core French program, she has completed her Bachelor of Arts in French and participated in the French Summer Language Bursary Program in Trois-Pistoles, Quebec after which she worked as an English Monitor in Quebec. CPF members may have met Melissa when she worked as Coordinator for Rendez-vous 2004 in Regina.

Calendar of Events

April

20 French for the Future in Saskatoon

24 Provincial final of Concours d'art oratoire

May

1 Mini Rendez-vous in Regina

8 Mini Rendez-vous in North Battleford

29 National Concours d'art oratoire in Edmonton

July

12 - 16 Fête du soleil in Regina

19 - 23 Fête du soleil in Lloydminster and Nipawin

26 - 30 Fête du soleil in Saskatoon

August

8 CPF – Saskatchewan Annual General Meeting

2-7 and 8-14 Residential summer camps

16 – 20 Fête du soleil in Estevan and Prince Albert

23 - 27 Fête du soleil in North Battleford

November 12, 13 National AGM in Quebec City

La Troupe du Jour is pleased to
host the French play

ZAZIE DANS LE MÉTRO

produced by Le Théâtre des Fonds de tiroirs

(from Québec City)

TWO PERFORMANCES ONLY :

MAY 7 and 8, 2004 at 8 p.m.

at The Refinery, 609 Dufferin Avenue, Saskatoon.

SYNOPSIS

For the first time, ten-year old Zazie visits her uncle in Paris, with a mission in mind : to see the famous subway (the *métro!*). Unfortunately, it is on strike on that week-end. So she decides to explore the big city and meets all sorts of colourful characters...

Hilarious situations, black humour and saucy repartees abound in this classic of the French literature!

For reservations, call Catherine at 244-1040.

Tickets : \$12.00, \$14.00, \$17.00.

Enquire about group rates!

Organizations Can Also Receive Our Newsletters

Any organization - be it a school staff, school board, French Club or university class - may become an Associate Member Organisation (AMO) of Canadian Parents for French in order to endorse the goals and activities of CPF. On paying an annual fee of \$60.00, the AMO is entitled to receive, at a single address, up to 10 copies of newsletters and other designated reports or mailings. While AMO status confers no right to vote at any level of Canadian Parents for French, AMO's **do qualify** for some special programs of CPF - Saskatchewan: for example, the Multi-Media Kit, and the **Grade 6-9 Grant** program. Call CPF - SK to learn more!!

Please send _____ (up to 10) copies of each CPF newsletter to:

Organization/Group _____

School Board/Division _____

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Battlefords
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Lloydminster
Melville
Moose Jaw
Nipawin
Prince Albert
Regina
Yorkton

Chapter Updates for Website

Please forward your Chapter updates for publication on our website to:
lindsaymatheson@sasktel.net

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Membership Application Form

CPF allows one or two adults (over 18) per family as voting members.

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Membership: One Year (\$25) _____
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Occasionally the CPF membership list will be made available to other groups/agencies to offer members benefits or education-related information. Use of the list will be carefully regulated and only permitted under a contract specifying confidentiality and one-time authorization. **If you do not wish to receive mailings other than directly from CPF, please check this box.**