



### The CSF takes legal action for the recognition of its rights and obligations

**(Richmond, March 5, 2010)** The *Conseil scolaire francophone de la C.-B.* is launching a legal challenge on constitutional grounds against the government of the Province of British Columbia.

The aim of this litigation is to compel the provincial government and the Ministry of Education to recognize the constitutional obligations of the CSF and to provide it with the means of fulfilling these obligations towards the francophone population of British Columbia, as guaranteed under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This is an unprecedented measure for the CSF, which was created in 1995 under provincial legislation. In the past, a number of actions have been taken in BC to protect minority language rights to an education in French, but these actions have always been taken by representatives of parental groups.

Marie Bourgeois, President of the *Conseil scolaire francophone*, comments: "The CSF is sufficiently mature as an institution to take legal action to ensure that the rights of the parents it serves and its own obligations towards them are recognized. Parents no longer have to assume a personal financial liability to take on this responsibility."

"We have tried everything to convince the government to give us adequate means to ensure our development," Mrs. Bourgeois adds. "Our schools are operating beyond capacity. Enrolments have gone up more than 50% over the past 10 years. We need to respond to pressures from parents who demand quality education and an acceptable and safe class environment. The lack of adequate facilities has a direct impact on enrolment, on withdrawals, and ultimately, it presents a threat to the sustainability of the official language minority community due to linguistic and cultural assimilation. We will no longer accept the government's response that it does not have the means to fulfill these obligations," the President concludes.

Based on the documents in hand, the CSF's legal counsel considers it feasible to demonstrate an unwarranted breach of Section 23 as interpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada, with regard to the whole CSF territory.

Over the coming weeks, the *Conseil scolaire* will instruct its legal counsel to prepare the submission and to initiate legal action. The initial procedural steps could take several months and it may be a year before the case is heard.

For more information, please contact:

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