

The Supreme Court of Canada rules in favour of Francophone education

Richmond, April 24, 2015 – This morning, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) of École élémentaire Rose-des-vents, Mr. Joseph Pagé and the Conseil scolaire francophone (CSF) in the first phase of their action against the province of British Columbia. Launched in 2010, the first phase of the petition filed by parents of students at École élémentaire Rose-des-vents sought a declaration that the building accommodating École élémentaire Rose-des-vents is not equivalent to those of English-language schools and that its catchment area is disproportionately large.

In today's ruling, the judges of the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously recognized that students educated at École élémentaire Rose-des-vents do not have the benefit of facilities that meet the standards established by section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in Vancouver (west of Main Street).

The Supreme Court's decision establishes in a clear and unambiguous manner the right of the francophone community in British Columbia to schools that are truly equivalent to those found in Vancouver, west of Main street. This decision is a major development that will impact the case brought by the CSF, the Fédération des parents francophones de Colombie-Britannique (FPFCB) and co-plaintiff parents in that it means that schools of the CSF must be compared to other schools in their own catchment area and not to schools outside this area.

"We hope the verdict in the case brought by the CSF and the FPFCB will be just as positive as the one in the Rose-des-vents PAC case," said Roger Hébert, President of the CSF. "The ruling handed down today will contribute to the case brought by the CSF, the FPFCB and co-applicant parents against the province of British Columbia which relates to equivalency in education in fifteen communities and which is drawing to a close before the Supreme Court of British Columbia" concluded Mr. Hébert.

"This is excellent news for the community of Francophone parents, and it only strengthens the arguments we have been presenting since the beginning of the case, to obtain equivalent schools in around fifteen British Columbia communities," said Marie-Pierre Lavoie, President of the Fédération des parents francophones de la Colombie-Britannique (FPFCB).

Since the petition was filed in 2010, the CSF and the FPFCB have worked closely with the Rose-des-vents PAC to develop solid evidence leading to a favourable ruling in this case, one that will ultimately benefit Francophones throughout British Columbia.

This judgment will help the CSF, the FPFCB and co-applicant parents who have been demanding parity in Francophone education throughout the province since 2010. A number of points in today's decision will set legal precedents.

Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique

Since it was established in 1995, the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique has been providing educational programs and services promoting the comprehensive development and cultural identity of the province's Francophone students. A partner in the advancement of the Francophone community in British Columbia, the CSF now has more than 5,300 students attending 37 schools – including 24 homogeneous French-language schools – and serves around one hundred communities throughout the province.

Fédération des parents francophones de C.-B.

The mission of the Fédération des parents francophones de C.-B. is to bring together, represent, support and equip parents in their role as first educators, and to promote their engagement and participation in creating a vital, exemplary Francophone environment.

For more information:

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