



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

The Supreme Court of Canada corrects the situation: the CSFTNO was right!

Yellowknife, December 8, 2023 – Unanimously, under the pen of Justice Côté, the Supreme Court of Canada could not be clearer: “the decisions taken by provincial and territorial governments in relation to the admission of children of non-rights-holder parents to schools of the minority, even when they do not directly infringe the right guaranteed by art. 23, can nevertheless have significant effects on the maintenance and development of minority linguistic communities”, which therefore means, “that these values **are always** relevant when the government exercises such discretionary power, and that they must therefore be taken into account”. The highest court in the country also recognizes “the expertise that organizations such as school boards have to assess the educational needs of the linguistic minority.” This is therefore a pan-Canadian victory that should be celebrated loud and clear.

Since the Court found in favor of the appellants, it held that it was not necessary to address the question of the right to be heard by judges capable of understanding French without the assistance of an interpreter.

We are delighted and relieved by this decision which confirms what we believe: it is the French-speaking school board which has the expertise to decide on who should attend its schools,” said Jean de Dieu Tuyishime, president. “The Court confirms that governments and ministers of education must take article 23 into account in **all** their decisions affecting our rights and our schools. Of course, we are disappointed that we have once again had to turn to the courts to resolve this issue, but we hope that the clear message from the highest court in the land will lead to a new relationship between the school board and the Government of the Northwest Territories.”

For more details;

Yvonne Careen, Superintendant
Commission scolaire francophone des T-N-O
yvonne.careen@csftno.com 867-873-6555

