

## Message from the President

Dear parents, students, staff members and partners,

The 2019-2020 school year has been a memorable one for the CSFY thanks to the considerable progress that we have made for our students and for the future of the French First Language Program.

On March 12, 2020, after nearly five years of active negotiations, the CSFY was very pleased to finalize the signing of a settlement agreement with the Government of Yukon. This agreement clarifies the roles and responsibilities of managing French First Language education in the territory and respect for the requirements of the *Yukon Education Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* with regard to minority language education rights. This agreement begins a new era of collaboration with the Government of Yukon. Based on the respect of our linguistic rights and the recognition of the need to support our students by providing adequate resources and equivalent infrastructure, this agreement provides us with an optimistic outlook for the future of our French First Language Program.

I would like to congratulate those who have believed in the importance of this legal and political process for over a decade, and in particular the trustees and the negotiation team for their perseverance and determination throughout this past year.

After the agreement was signed, we were pleased to have been able to share the settlement agreement with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate in order to support their efforts towards a potential First Nations school board.

In spring 2020, the Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health made the decision to suspend face-to-face classes in all public schools, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, for the remainder of the school year. Teaching staff at École Émilie-Tremblay and Académie Parhélie adapted to this situation by using distance education tools to support their students at home. Together, they were able to continue essential learning assessments for the remainder of the school year. All the trustees and I congratulate the staff at our schools for their efforts to support our students!

On May 15, 2020, during Yukon Francophonie Day (Journée de la francophonie yukonnaise – JFY), the CSFY unveiled the name of the new Paul-Émile Mercier Secondary School Community Centre (Centre scolaire secondaire communautaire Paul-Émile-Mercier – CSSC Mercier). This major construction project will officially open during the 2020 autumn term. We are pleased that our high school students will be able to access learning spaces which are able to support them and help them to realize their full potential.

Throughout the year, six public meetings and numerous work sessions were held to manage the CSFY, to conclude the settlement agreement negotiations, to review admission requests, to update policies and guidelines and to advance projects related to our schools, our staff, our students, their parents and our partners.

The trustees and I met with the teaching staff and student council in order to gauge their perception and expectations with regard to our role and mandate. This community outreach work was also carried out through the Yukon Francophone Community Leaders Roundtable (Table des leaders de la francophonie du Yukon), in which the CSFY Executive Director and I actively participated. As a result of

this collaboration, we were able to create a document identifying the priorities of the Yukon Francophone community with regard to the 2019 federal election and the modernization of the *Official Languages Act*.

At the national level, the CSFY took part in the canvassing efforts of the National Federation of Francophone School Boards (Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones – FNCSF) for the renewal of the [Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction](#) (Protocole d’entente relatif à l’enseignement de la langue de la minorité et à l’enseignement de la langue seconde – PLOE). The signing of the PLOE on September 4, 2019, marks a new era of collaboration between the provinces and territories and provides numerous opportunities for minority language education. The renewal of this agreement includes \$1 billion in funding over four years, being an increase of \$60 million, to support French first language education in a minority context. For the CSFY, this represents an increase of \$291,934, bringing the total funding to \$1,307,734. Among other things, this allows us to increase the offer of programs and services for our students, to purchase audiovisual and theatre equipment for our schools, to create a digital library, to provide financial assistance to the Garderie du petit cheval blanc and the Franco Yukon Youth committee (Jeunesse Franco-Yukon – JeFY), to augment the CSFY French post-secondary education scholarship, to have a second cultural coordinator position for CSSC Mercier, etc.

The trustees and I have proudly represented the interests of the CSFY during various pan-Canadian gatherings, such as at the annual congress of the FNCSF and at the meetings of the Association of Western and Northern Education Presidents (Association des présidences en éducation de l’Ouest et du Nord – APÉON), which I chair. We have also participated in numerous phone meetings during the pandemic. I would like to highlight my appreciation for the confidence which the members of the FNCSF expressed at the 2019 AGM, such that I should take on the responsibilities of the FNCSF Vice President for the Western and Northern region.

We are delighted with the landmark ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada with regard to French first language education in British Columbia. We are also very glad to hear of Statistics Canada’s decision to add questions about the language of instruction to their census in order to adequately inventory rights-holders. For the past three years, the CSFY has been working with the FNCSF to raise awareness with the Canadian Government about this fundamental issue, given that the constitutional right to minority language education is subject to a numerical criterion, namely “where numbers warrant”. These two decisions in favour of Francophone school boards will allow the CSFY to better plan for the future of French language education in the Yukon.

In closing, I would like to congratulate my four colleagues who were elected as trustees during the general election held in November 2019. Following the election polls, I also had the pleasure of renewing my role as President for another term. I would further like to thank the executive director, our school principals, our teaching staff, as well as the members of our administrative team, for their contributions to our great achievements and their ability to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis.

Sincerely,



Jean-Sébastien Blais, President