

Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord is disappointed with New Horizons School's decision

Edmonton, July 30, 2015 - Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord (Conseil) is disappointed with the decision rendered by the New Horizons Charter School Society to deny a request to temporarily accommodate l'École francophone de Sherwood Park beginning in September 2015.

The decision was taken on July 29 at a public meeting attended by some 50 parents, including some from Sherwood Park's francophone community and representatives of the Alberta Federation of Francophone Parents (FPFA).

"St. Theresa School has the capacity to accommodate our francophone students as well as those from New Horizons. In fact, the building has 24 classrooms, not including a double gymnasium and a large library. All we were asking was for temporary space for about 5 to 7 months, thus providing us with more time to identify a longer term solution. This decision is unfortunate, but the Conseil will not end its efforts to acquire a French-language school in Sherwood Park for the 2015-2016 school year", said superintendent, Henri Lemire.

The president of the FPFA, Claudine Lajoie, was present at the New Horizons School meeting and did not hide her disappointment, "As a charter school which recently received the lease of their school, I would have liked a little more understanding and compassion from them, because we are really in the same boat."

In a June 1, 2015 letter to the Minister of Education, the Honourable David Eggen, the Conseil emphasized that the Minister has the legal authority to order a school board to allocate space in one of its schools if the Minister is of the opinion that such space is indeed available.

At a meeting held on July 16, 2015 between the Minister of Education and representatives from New Horizons, the Minister asked that they consider hosting École francophone de Sherwood Park in seven vacant portable classrooms for the first part of the school year until separate modular classrooms are added on school grounds.

The Conseil is still pursuing talks with Alberta Education to find a location for its students enrolled in Sherwood Park.

Currently, nearly 50 students are enrolled in the new elementary school. A principal and four teachers have been hired, and bus contracts have been signed. The Conseil has purchased all required materials and equipment to open in September 2015, as requested by francophone parents at a large public meeting held in March.

The Conseil estimates that more than 600 students with at least one parent having a constitutional right to educate his/her children in French live in the area of Sherwood Park / Ardrossan / Fort Saskatchewan.

-30-

Source : Henri Lemire
Superintendent
Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord
780 468-6440 / 1 800 248-6886
hlemire@centrenord.ab.ca