

**Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund  
October, 2009**

**Francophone Home and School Council**

**President: Reina Lamothe**

**Principals:**

1. L'ecole Evangeline, Abram Village: Gilles Arsenault
2. L'ecole Francois-Buote, Charlottetown: Sylvain Gagne
3. L'ecole Pierre-Chiasson, DeBlois: Ghislain Bernard
4. L'ecole Saint-Augustin, Rustico: Rachelle Gauthier
5. L'ecole-sur-Mer, Summerside: Rita Bissessur
6. L'ecole La-Belle-Cloche, Souris: Nellie Bertrand

**Name of Project:** Conference with Lise Paiement

**Goal:**

- To support parents of students attending La commission scolaire de langue francaise's six schools (La CSLF) in their efforts to encourage their children to value their francophone and Acadian identities.

**Description**

We held a day-long conference and workshop on Saturday, October 17th, 2009 with Ms. Lise Paiement, an expert from Ontario in the building of the francophone identity. All parents from the six schools of the CSLF were invited to attend. Ms. Paiement was already in PEI for the annual PEITF meeting and we were able to take advantage of this opportunity to have her meet with our parents.

**Did you achieve your goal?**

As this will be an on-going project, we can't state how far we have progressed with achieving our goals. Our goal was to equip our parents of children in the French first-language schools with strategies to help them encourage their children to appreciate their French language and culture, ultimately improving their skills with language and learning. As a result of the conference, which included lectures and discussion groups, the attendees have come up with a list of "problems" that we would like to address and potential "solutions".

All of these problems/ solutions will aim to expose our children to more French language and culture or involve more parents in school activities. One example is to offer our Francophone parents a course called, "survival French for parents". This course, which could be offered by senior students, would equip all parents with the basic language needed to serve food in the cafeteria or help with an arts and crafts project, as examples. A committee has been formed at

Ecole Francois-Buote to implement some of these recommendations. These projects and initiatives will be shared with all other schools in the CSLF.

### **Who did the project benefit?**

All schools, parents and children in the 6 French schools have benefited from this project. The parents will be more involved with their children's school and language development. The kids will be exposed to more situations where French is in use, become more confident in their skills and believe that the French language is valued in our society. The schools will benefit by having more parents involved in school activities and kids who are more competent in French.

All of this will mean that our students will perform better academically.

### **What challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?**

Despite the fact that the full day of activities, including daycare and lunch, was free, only some 40 families from PEI took part. Finding a role in a French school is challenging for some Anglophone parents. It is hoped that by implementing some language development projects for parents, they will eventually find their place in their child's school.

### **Thoughts about the project topic (provided by project partners)**

The approach taken by the French schools is a bold venture. To implement an Island-wide process to involve all parents is both imaginative and challenging. Viewing the project as an ongoing initiative is appropriate for a project of this magnitude.

The measurement of success goes far beyond the number of parents who took part in the initial event. There is now a system in place to expand and refine an island-wide parent engagement strategy. The fact that a school has agreed to implement some of the recommendations is a great way to evaluate and expand what has begun.

Having schools work together and share resources to engage parents is a powerful way to enhance the parent engagement movement. The Home and School associations and schools involved are to be congratulated!