

## Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta



*Canadian Parents for French, Alberta Branch*



**For immediate release**

# Press Release

## **Government of Alberta announced funding for a project linking French community and French learners**

**Edmonton, September 8 2006** – The Minister of Education, Gene Zwozdesky announced today that the Government of Alberta will contribute to a project linking the French community and French learners. This project was proposed by the ACFA (French Canadian Association of Alberta) and Canadian Parents for French, Alberta Branch. It will give the opportunity to those who learn French as a second language to have a greater access to the French Culture and to the French community.

Last year saw the largest French immersion enrolment ever. 31,516 students registered in French immersion schools. Enrolment in Core French (French as one subject within the curriculum) was also strong, jumping by almost 7,000 to a total of 123,675.

The ACFA President, Jean Johnson, said French organizations in the province face a big challenge getting in touch with those who learn French as second language: “It’s a challenge not only for us, but for all French organizations across the country. We all want to have stronger ties with those who choose to learn French, but that challenge remains great. This project will allow us to better communicate it could serve as a model for other provinces to follow.

Thanks to this funding, the ACFA will hire a project coordinator to inventory all the French resources accessible to schools and parents. This person will be a front line contact person for both schools and community groups.

The President of Canadian Parents for French, Alberta Branch Bob O’Reilly said : “There is no greater medium for appreciating another’s culture than through first understanding another’s language. The collaborative effort of ACFA and Canadian Parents for French, Alberta Branch to improve the link between francophone artists and cultural groups and French Second Language learners can only benefit both communities.

CPF Alberta has long supported parents who are committed to assisting their children to learn a second language and, through extra-curricular and co-curricular supports, achieve some level of bilingualism in French. In many communities across Alberta students learning French as a second language have no direct link to francophone culture, activities or events. This project will assist parents and schools in identifying opportunities for learners and gaining access to a broader spectrum of language and cultural offerings.”

The funding covers a three year period. The estimated cost of the project is \$411,000. The Government of Alberta will contribute \$330,000. From that amount, \$180,000 will be provided by the Minister of Education and \$150,000 will be provided by the Francophone Secretariat in part from the Canada-Alberta agreement on French services.

Minister Zwozdesky said he was really pleased with the project :“Alberta Education is pleased to support this collaborative initiative between Francophone and French second language stakeholders. The intent of this project is to promote French cultural opportunities for students and that adds value to our education system”.

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