

FRANCOPHONE REGIONAL SCHOOL

**THE FFTNL AND THE ACFSJ SUPPORT THE CSFP'S REQUEST FOR
A SCHOOL IN THE SOUTH END OF THE CITY OF ST. JOHN'S**

St. John's, November 16, 2020: The Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador (FFTNL) and the Association communautaire francophone de Saint-Jean (ACFSJ) once again fully support the project to build a new francophone regional school in the south end of the city of St. John's, as requested by the Conseil scolaire francophone provincial (CSFP). Both organizations encourage/urge the provincial government to respond positively to the CSFP's request and to take action without further delay, for the good of all, for our students, for the development of our community, and for the proper use of the finances of our province.

The FFTNL and the ACFSJ are encouraged in their opinion by the expert report of the Stantec company commissioned by the provincial government, and which highlights that renovating either of the two old buildings currently proposed would cost almost as much as a new construction, without meeting the needs. In the mid-term, these proposals would be even more expensive, since neither of them would allow future expansion. This would be to repeat the mistake already made many times in Canada of building too small and without the possibility of expansion. This was the case, right here, for the École des Grands-Vents, which was already running out of space after only 5 years of operation!

In addition to the fact that these old schools do not meet the geographic needs of our community, the report also highlights safety issues, as well as legal problems. Indeed, these proposals do not respect the constitutional principle of equal access to education. The FFTNL and the ACFSJ, defending the rights of francophones in the region, cannot accept either of these two proposals. The Supreme Court of Canada ruling of June 12 was very clear on the provincial government's obligations in terms of education for linguistic minorities, and it applies perfectly to this situation.

Our organizations point out that, regardless of the project selected, its funding also depends heavily on the federal contribution for community and shared spaces and that it is not conceivable that Canadian Heritage would fund a project that does not meet our needs.

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The Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador (FFTNL) works to defend and promote the rights and interests of the Francophone and Acadian community of Newfoundland and Labrador. The mission of the Association communautaire francophone de Saint-Jean is to support the development and action of the Francophone community in the St. John's region.

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