



ASSOCIATION FRANÇAIS LANGUE ETRANGERE HONG KONG
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Permanent Secretary for Education & Manpower
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Secretary for Education and Manpower
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Dear Mrs. Law & Professor Li,

On behalf of the members of our Association and all the French language teachers in Hong Kong, I would like to thank both you and the Education and Manpower Bureau for kindly meeting us on December 9, 2004.

During our meeting, we learnt from Dr. George S. K. Kwan, Principal Education Officer, that the current language teaching arrangements in secondary school for students taking French would not change after the proposed Secondary Education reform is in place in 2008, meaning that schools which currently offer French as an alternative to Chinese would be allowed to continue doing so.

While this promise certainly allayed some of our worst fears, a few crucial uncertainties need to be urgently addressed. As you know, students currently studying in Primary 6 will be the first batch of students affected by the proposed reform. They and their parents have to choose at this very moment what language to study in September, 2005, when they enter Junior Secondary 1. They

need to be reassured about the future of the French option, and more specifically, about the following points:

1. Will French still be offered as an alternative to Chinese (Core Subject) in Senior Secondary 1 ? Unless parents get an official and widely publicized written confirmation of this particular point from EMB, they will understandably be very hesitant to choose French language as an alternative to Chinese. Similarly, the principals of the affected schools, the 4 aided schools in particular (La Salle College, Marymount Secondary School, St. Joseph College & St. Mary Canossian's School), will also need a confirmation in black and white that they can safely plan French language classes in their schools for September 2005 and beyond.
2. What will this alternative be labeled ? We strongly suggest calling it "Core subject (French alternative)". This labeling issue is indeed an important issue, because if French language is not labeled as "core subject", students taking this alternative will have only 3 core subjects instead of 4 on their future HK Diploma of Secondary Education, which would undoubtedly diminish the value and attraction of their diploma in the eyes of parents, universities and potential employers.
3. Will there be an examination organized and/or endorsed by the HKEAA for students who take the French option at the end of SS3 ? We discussed with Dr Kwan the possibility of using, for example, one of the French Government's examinations for students of French as a Foreign Language. One examination that seems particularly well adapted to the local situation is the "DELFL Scolaire", which has already been adopted in several countries such as Italy. You can find information about DELFL Scolaire on this website : <http://www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/> . We can also explore together the possibility of using another well established examination organized by an English institute (University of Cambridge, University of London, etc.) which is available for and popular among French learners world-wide, especially in Anglophone countries. We will be more than happy to discuss what French examination to adopt in the future with you and the HKEAA.

4. Will the results of this examination appear on the students' future Diploma of Secondary Education ? This is a very important point for parents and students alike, since one of the current requirements for entry into local universities is to have 2 languages (in this case English and French) on one's HKCEE report and certificate.

We hope you will agree with us that these issues need to be addressed very urgently and at any rate before the end of the consultation period. Thank you in advance for your kind attention and thorough consideration!

We are well aware the "French stream" represents a very particular case in HK secondary schools. We do not however forget the "normal" secondary school students, and as we mentioned during our meeting with Dr Kwan, we are very much in favor of introducing Foreign Languages in secondary schools. We will very soon put forward constructive proposals to move in that direction, which we hope you will support. Meanwhile, Mrs. Law and Professor Li, may we wish you both and all your colleagues a very successful new year!

Yours sincerely,

Jean-Luc Rey

Chairman