



ASSOCIATION FRANÇAIS LANGUE ÉTRANGÈRE HONG KONG
The Hong Kong Association of French Teachers
25/F., Tower 2, Admiralty Centre, 18 Harcourt Road, Central, Hong Kong
e-mail : info@afle.rectoverso.org

To : Mr Michael SUEN, Secretary for Education
8/F, West Wing
Central Government Offices
11 Ice House Street
Central
Hong Kong

CC : Dr Peter HILL, Secretary-General, HKEAA
12/F, Southorn Centre
130 Hennessy Road
Wan Chai
Hong Kong

Date : September 18, 2007

Dear Mr Suen,

We are a group of dedicated teachers of French language from different local secondary schools offering French as a school subject. Regarding the future public examination for French candidates after the implementation of the NSS curriculum, we have the following questions that call for specific answers as we not only need to plan our teaching of the subject according to the relevant new syllabus, but also have to provide parents and students with the most reliable and up-dated information upon enquiry. This letter is also the result of a broad consultation process involving various teachers, principals and other stake holders. Therefore the concerns and questions expressed below represent the widest possible view of the current situation.

- 1) Regarding the future public exam for French, our understanding is that there is a plan to adopt the Cambridge International AS-Level (Code 8286) instead of the IGCSE (Cambridge) paper (Code 0520) at AS level, which will be new to HK secondary students. **Has the plan for this been finalized? Has a comparison of the proposed English & Chinese Syllabi to this syllabus been undertaken?**
- 2) We have formerly communicated with a HKEAA representative and expressed to him that we did not like the idea of making all secondary school French candidates take the November paper instead of the June paper, as we do not think that such candidates will be given enough time to prepare for the proposed French exam because instead of having a full school year to prepare for it, they will be given a mere 3 months (Sept, Oct. & Nov.) during their final secondary year. We don't think it would be fair to these candidates. In fact, by depriving them of a full school year to complete their syllabus and improve their language

skills to be well prepared for the targeted exam, both the EDB & the HKEAA would be considered most irresponsible and unethical. Furthermore, any comparison between Chinese, English and French syllabi would show how unfair the new system would be. **Will the EDB & the HKEAA reconsider the timing of the new French exam to be adopted?**

- 3) Actually, we French teachers have agreed among ourselves that a fairer deal to all parties would be to retain the current IGCSE French exam (Code 0520) which is more suitable to local students because of its communicative & comprehensive nature (4 papers altogether). Since the HKEAA has been using it for over a decade now and the results of local candidates' performance have been generally satisfactory, we trust it is reliable for assessment purposes and worth retaining under the NSS curriculum. A better arrangement would be to adopt the November paper (instead of the June paper) and include the subsequent results in the new HK Diploma of Secondary Education. Please remember that all French students would in fact be studying three languages at HKDSE level, as they must also study Chinese as well. **Will the EDB & the HKEAA consider the feasibility of this proposal of ours? Would a fair and transparent comparison between various language syllabi not be the most appropriate step to make?**

- 4) For students who undertake the study of French in SS1, it would be inappropriate for them to sit the same exit examination as students who have taken French for at least three more years. One option would be the inclusion of a suitable DELF exam, such as A2 or B1 depending on the number of hours of study, as these exams contain components in all four macro-skills. **Would the HKEAA and the EDB consider the use of DELF for the assessment of these students?**

- 5) Finally, if a decision could be made promptly, why not allow schools to begin S.6 classes in French from the next academic year and allow these students to finalize their second language studies to Secondary 7?

To sum up, with a view to making things less complicated and more practical, we would like the EDB to advise the HKEAA to liaise with overseas examination authorities such as UCLES and CIEP to administer related international examinations such as the IGCSE and the DELF to meet the needs of our local French students in such a way that one of the following options will preferably be adopted:

- a) AS level (Code 8286) but **not** the November paper (negotiate a time which is not only convenient to the HKEAA in running the new local HKDSE exam, but also, more importantly, to the French candidates);
- b) IGCSE (Code 0520), the one currently adopted for F.5 students, adopt the November paper but **not** the June one for the SS3 French candidates

and:

- c) A suitable DELF exam for those students who begin their French studies as an additional language in SS1.

We would appreciate it very much if the EDB could collaborate more closely and efficiently with the HKEAA in this regard and subsequently make all your decisions more transparent to all of us and our school principals so that we could plan our future French programmes and schedules more effectively for the benefits of our students. Finally, by ensuring the involvement of stakeholders, you will be assured of having more support for your education reforms, particularly with groups who work with minority students.

Thanks in advance for your consideration and we look forward to a prompt reply to our queries!

Sincerely,

ADAMES Anthony (St Margaret's Co-ed Secondary & Primary School)

CHAN Hoi Shan (Delia Memorial School)

CHUNG Josephine (Sir Ellis Kadoorie School)

DEMENEIX Marion (St Joseph's College)

FLETCHER L Y (Wah Yan College-Kowloon)

IP Paul (La Salle College)

LAU Bonnie (Marymount Secondary School)

LAU Astor (Sir Ellis Kadoorie School)

LE GOFF Katell (HKMA David Li Kwok po College)

PHAM Thi Thuba (St Mary's Canossian College)

POON Winnie (Good Hope School)

SOURD Jean-Michel (Diocesan Boys' School)

YEUNG Clara (St Paul's Convent School)