



Board of Education of Mission Public Schools
33046 4th Avenue, Mission BC, V2V 1S5

January 31, 2025

Dear Board Chair Loffler,

On January 20th, 2025 DPAC unanimously voted in favour of advocating for Punjabi Course/Classes within the school district.

At the Public Meeting of the Board of Education on June 18, 2024 it was decided that full Punjabi courses in elementary schools was not feasible at the time, but that staff will look into bringing some future language exposure programs similar to Halq'emeylem teaching. DPAC is asking for the following:

- 1) Number of students with expressed interest students required at an individual school.
- 2) Timeline for staff reporting for future language exposure programs, as per the June 18, 2024 Public Meeting of the Board of Education.

We look forward to moving together in providing learning opportunities to help meet the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn Wickham
Chair- DPAC SD75

Enclosed: The motion and information presented at the January, 25, 2025 DPAC Meeting

CC: Vice Chair Hamel; Trustee Bains; Trustee Cairns; Trustee Carter; Superintendent Wilson



Motion: To advocate to the school district for Punjabi language course/instruction.

We wanted to make sure the district will follow and move forward with some Punjabi language instruction for Mission School district. The possibility of offering a program more similar to Halq'eméylem could also set a foundation for more long term continued interest in Punjabi.

Language instruction by the age of 10 is most likely to provide a student the ability to speak a language at the proficiency level of a native language speaker, particularly with respect to understanding grammar. (Smith, Dana G., "At What Age Does our Ability to Learn a New Language like a Native Speaker Disappear?" in SA Mind Vol. 29 No. 4 (July 2018).

"Punjabi is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. However, Punjabi, the native language of millions in Pakistan [and India], is experiencing a gradual decline, particularly among younger generations." Recommendations for promoting Punjabi may include:

- **Curriculum Development:** Integrating Punjabi language instruction into school curricula to ensure its presence in formal education. (Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL)

In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, embracing linguistic and cultural diversity is more important than ever. Introducing Punjabi as an optional language in schools not only enriches the curriculum but also fosters inclusivity and understanding in multicultural communities.

The incorporation of Punjabi language classes in elementary schools presents numerous cognitive and cultural benefits that significantly enhance a child's educational experience. This cultural connection is crucial for personal development and social integration, as it encourages students to embrace diversity while fostering mutual respect among peers. This would be a step toward building a more inclusive and globally aware education system. By embracing linguistic diversity, schools not only prepare students for the world but also honor the cultural mosaic that defines our shared humanity.