



April 8, 2013

update | French Immersion and Spanish Bilingual Programs at Westgate School

The growth of the French Immersion and Spanish Bilingual programs at Westgate and Bishop Pinkham schools has led to significant parent engagement regarding possible solutions for current and future space issues. After a review of all parent input and other relevant factors, a recommendation for Spanish Bilingual and French Immersion in Area IV has been approved by Superintendents.

This is a complex and challenging accommodation issue. Our current situation reflects the pressure on Area IV schools and this pressure is repeated across the entire system. We are not planning to close any schools and we approach accommodation issues from the perspective of the system as a whole. Our city is growing at a significant rate and our schools and programs will continue to move toward capacity. Finding accommodation solutions in the future will require flexibility.

Decisions for 2013-2014

- For the 2013-14 year only, as an interim solution, all French Immersion and Spanish Bilingual programming for students in kindergarten to grade 4 will be located at Westgate School.
- For the 2013-14 year only, as an interim solution, French Immersion and Spanish Bilingual programming for students in grades 5 to 9 will be located at Bishop Pinkham School.
- All students enrolled at Bishop Pinkham for 2013-2014 will be allowed to finish through to June of 2015. Programming and grade locations beyond the 2014-2015 school year will be dependent on future decisions.
- Westgate and Bishop Pinkham schools will work together to develop a transition plan for current grade 4 and grade 5 students.

These decisions address the space problem for the short term, although Westgate School will continue to be at capacity. Responding to parent feedback, the Spanish bilingual program will grow to grade 9 at Bishop Pinkham School, at a minimum until September 2015. Moving forward, we will continue exploring opportunities for a kindergarten to grade 6 Spanish Bilingual program as requested through feedback from parents.

Over the next 12 months, CBE Administration, including the Area IV Office and the Planning Department, will work to find a longer term solution for our students enrolled in Spanish Bilingual in both Area IV and Area V. Parents will be kept informed along the way through their school principal and school council, and will have an opportunity to meet to learn more once the final plan is in place.

Information from this engagement process is available on the website at http://www.cbe.ab.ca/Schools/ceop/pp12-13/westgate_french_immersion_spanish.asp

Yours truly,



Calvin Davies
Director, Area IV



Dr. Donna Crawford
Acting Director, Planning, Transportation &
Environmental Services

