

Jody Carr cautions Gallant government over French immersion entry point

Description

A former education minister is criticizing the Gallant government's plan to reintroduce a Grade 1 entry point for French immersion.

Jody Carr, who served as education minister in the Alward government, said the timeframe the government has enacted doesn't give parents enough time to make a choice.

"Parents right now [haven't] even had their first report card, haven't had an assessment of their children in kindergarten," said Carr on *Information Morning Fredericton*.

- [Public meetings scheduled for families affected by French immersion changes](#)
- [French immersion returns to Grade 1 early entry](#)
- [Early French immersion reform faces more delays](#)

Deadline not set in stone?

CBC News asked for a statement from the Department of Education and officials indicated the Dec. 20 deadline isn't firm.

"We have asked parents to enrol their children by Dec. 20, if possible, as it will help us to plan and insure that the proper resources are in place," the department said in an email.

"However, we will accommodate those who do not meet that deadline."

Carr said he's heard from high-ranking education officials who say the government needs to re-evaluate their position.

"It's really important when the districts, the teachers and even the opposition are saying, 'Don't do this right now,' that the government should listen," said Carr.

Hard to judge success

Carr said there hasn't been enough time to judge whether any of the entry points for French immersion have been successful, because schools have students from three different entry points still working their way through the system.

"So for the system to be able to sustain and support all of these different streams, it's a very large challenge," said Carr.

Carr said the Gallant government needs to explain a few things before going forward with its plan.

"What is the problem with the current Grade 3, why is the government making this change and what

was the original problem [that] the [Liberal] government changed this back in 2008,” said Carr.

When Carr was education minister he said held back on making changes to French immersion, even though he leaned toward a Grade 1 entry.

- [**Early French Immersion entry point remains, Carr says**](#)

“And as I got into being minister and learned from teachers and learned about how this is all structured ... what the teachers told me is, ‘Wait and see what the results are for [Grade 3 French immersion],’” said Carr.

Even though restoring a Grade 1 entry point was an election promise by the Liberals, Carr said the government should hold off, adding the government is being given a unique opportunity.

“Even the opposition is giving you permission to break your promise,” said Carr.

The Progressive Conservative MLA would not say whether the Tories would return the French immersion entry point to Grade 3 if they returned to government in the future.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/carr-french-immersion-1.3854907>

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