



**Speech by Mrs. Susanne Penner,  
British Columbia Ministry of Education's Offshore School Representative,  
at the Canada-France Chambre of Commerce reception, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

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*Animus Credo Erudio*

It's an honor for me to be here tonight, but I must apologize - I don't speak French. I am bilingual – but unfortunately it's German and English. My husband learned French when working for the Canadian federal government and my daughter took it in school. My only exposure was when we travelled as a family and my husband and daughter would continuously recite some little French poem - I can only recall how it started - “Je pleur...”

I'm here on behalf of the founder and director, Dr. Hélène Leone, who unfortunately couldn't be tonight. I am the BC government liaison for this offshore school project in Paris.

For 11 years, I worked in the BC Ministry of Education as Inspector of Independent Schools and the Director of the Offshore Programs. In initiating and developing the offshore program, it was very important to us as government to ensure that students attending an offshore school offering the BC program anywhere in the world would receive the same education as though they were sitting in a desk in a BC school. The PISA (Programme of International Student Assessment) results of 15-year-old students in OECD countries rank British Columbia/Canadian education in the top 5 countries in the world.

In order to receive government approval to start a school in Paris, the founder and director, Helene Leone had to go through a rigorous application process. As the British Columbia government liaison for this project and the former director of the program, I am proud to say that seldom has there been a more complete and comprehensive application presented for opening an offshore school. She provided government with all the necessary documentation from France, and also the complete business plan for the project. Her application was readily accepted and permission granted in November 2014, to open a Canadian Bilingual School in Paris offering the British Columbia education program.

After dreaming and working on this vision for the past 5 years, Helene Leone wants to assure you that she is thrilled to be this close to seeing her dream finally come true. The opening of the first ever-bilingual Canadian school - as Hélène likes to say, a piece of Canada right in the heart of Paris.

A huge thank you to the Canadian Embassy who has played such a pivotal role in helping turn that dream into reality – to open the first bilingual Canadian school in Paris offering the British Columbia curriculum.

We're proud and excited. I know everyone at the Canadian Bilingual School of Paris is ready and eager to go!

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