



Memorandum

vancouver school board



December 31, 2015

Item 3

TO: Management Committee I

FROM: Julie Pearce, Associate Superintendent

RE: International Mother Language Day

INTRODUCTION:

At the **WEDNESDAY, December 2, 2015 meeting of Committee I**, M. A. Islam, President of the Mother Language Lovers of the World Society of BC, presented on the Society's request to include International Mother Language Day (February 21st) as part of the district's school calendar each year to allow students to celebrate their mother languages. He reviewed the integration and implementation of IMLD in BC. Mr. Islam also reviewed an action plan for implementation of IMLD in district schools.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to refer this item to staff:

- to further research on the processes and practices for declaring days of special significance; and
- to report back to the Committee, at an appropriate time, with a recommendation.

BACKGROUND:

Processes for Days of Significance

From legal holidays like Victoria Day and Canada Day, to days recognizing specific individuals or groups, to religious and cultural occasions, the Canadian calendar is replete with celebrations and commemorations.

There is no central authority in Canada responsible for the proclamation of national days. Days declared special by any public body, including municipal, provincial or federal governments or even international bodies such as the United Nations, as well as any private association, cultural group or religious institution, can be recognized in Canada.

Methods of designating special observances include:

- parliamentary initiatives, such as legislation and parliamentary resolutions;

- government initiatives, such as orders in council and proclamations; and
- non-government initiatives, such as declarations by an organization or a religious or cultural group.

International Mother Language Day has been introduced to the Canadian Parliament in form of a Private Member's Bill, Bill C-573, the International Mother Language Day Act, on February 5, 2014.

In 2015 two Canadian provinces, the Province of British Columbia and the Province of Manitoba have passed proclamations to officially observe International Mother Language Day on February 21.

VBE Days of Acknowledgement

The VBE follows the federal and provincial government calendars of recognized days for formal statutory holidays such as New Year's Day and Family Day. These days are part of our formal school calendar, in accordance with school calendar legislation.

Outside of the formal school calendar, the VBE promotes nationally recognized days such as Heritage Day (February 16) and National Aboriginal Day (June 21). National Aboriginal Day was acknowledged with a web story that invited students, staff and parents to participate in the many National Aboriginal Day events that would be taking place from coast to coast to coast. National Aboriginal Day was acknowledged on the VBE web as a special day to celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding achievements of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada. <http://www.vsb.bc.ca/district-news/vsb-invites-you-celebrate-national-aboriginal-day>

Further, the VBE acknowledges purposeful days as celebrations or social causes, such as Pink Day where school staff and students are encouraged to wear pink clothes and celebrate the diversity of VSB school communities. Pink Day is supported through VBE web articles, and the sharing of opportunities for involvement in the Principal/Vice Principal and Teacher Communiqués' sent out by Learning Services.

Staff Recommendation

It is the recommendation of district staff that the VBE promote International Mother Language day in alignment with the models of neighbouring Districts, such as the Surrey School District, and in accordance with our practices for acknowledging recognized days.

International Mother Language Day will be added to our web based district calendar of events and educational resources for schools may be shared through the District Communiqués.

This is provided for information.