

Parents Lineup Outside School

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By Pete McIntyre

PARENTS LINEUP

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Dozens of parents braved the cold weather and lined up outside Vernon's Beairsto Elementary for several hours early this morning.

Some were using tents and sleeping bags to keep warm.

It marked the start of registration for the 2019-20 school year in the Vernon School District.

Photo courtesy of Megan Turcato/Twitter

Martiza Reilly, Communications Coordinator with School District 22, says about 91 parents were lined up outside the school, hoping to get the 80 available kindergarten spots, and eight for grade 1.

"Our French Immersion program has always been a very popular choice with families in Vernon and the outlying communities. So right now we're just finding out which of these families — some of them may be outside of our district so they will automatically be wait listed — but we're fairly confident that we'll be able to accept all the students registered," Reilly tells Beach Radio News.

Reilly says the lineups have happened for a number of years, but this process is felt to be the fairest way to determine the registration.

“Our board has had many discussions about this. Our options are online, but then the question is, someone may have a faster computer, or the system may crash. Or there is the lottery system, which happens quite a bit in the Lower Mainland, where people have no control over what happens. So this is a decision our board feels is the most fair way to get children registered,” adds Reilly.

Reilly doesn't think the lineups necessarily mean the need for more French Immersion classes, saying the 91 registrations has been fairly constant year after year.

“We've been able to accommodate most, if not all, of the students. We have 8 more spots that will open in grade 1, so if someone doesn't get in kindergarten, there is always the option to register again in grade 1.”

Reilly says the District also offers a late French Immersion program based at Harwood Elementary.

“That's a two year program starting in grade 6, and as of this morning, we had 24 register, leaving six spots remaining for that program,” says Reilly.

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