

## **Speech by Mr. Ron MacNeil, Assistant Superintendent of PESB at the Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Concordia University of Edmonton and Edmonton Public Schools**

Good afternoon to our honored guests and to everyone who has joined us today for this wonderful gathering.

I am very pleased to be here on behalf of Superintendent Robertson to bring greetings from Edmonton Public Schools, and to celebrate this important event. This is an historic occasion. We are very excited to be partnering with the Centre for Chinese Studies at Concordia University of Edmonton. EPSB places a high value on second language learning and the teaching and learning of Chinese is very important in our District, and in the world. EPSB has a long and proud history of teaching Chinese - we have successfully provided Chinese language programming to thousands of students, for over 35 years! This year, we are providing Chinese Bilingual instruction to approximately 2061 students in 12 schools, and Chinese Language and Culture instruction to 758 students in ten schools. Edmonton Public Schools is a leader in Chinese language education, and a leader in second language education.

We are very proud to have the Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education to promote and develop excellence in all aspects of second language education, and to provide services and expertise to support second language teaching and learning in the District, across Canada, and around the world.

We very much look forward to collaborating with the Centre for Chinese Studies at Concordia University of Edmonton in many areas of Chinese language and culture education, such as:

- Chinese language and culture teaching & learning;
- The delivery of professional development;
- The promotion of Chinese language, culture and education opportunities
- And much more!

We are so very happy with the new opportunities for collaboration that this Memorandum of Understanding brings between our two institutions. This will truly be fantastic for our teachers and students!

Again, on behalf of our Superintendent, I thank Concordia University of Edmonton for this opportunity, and we look forward to many fruitful and successful collaborative activities in the near future.

Many thanks!

**Speech by Dr. Manfred Zeuch, Vice President External Affairs and International Relations at Concordia University of Edmonton at the Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Concordia University of Edmonton and Edmonton Public Schools**

Good afternoon dear guests, partners, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

7 years ago Concordia University of Edmonton made a first trip to China searching to establish linkages. I was well received and we got four partnerships with universities in Southern China and Hong Kong. This was the beginning of our institutional outreach to China. Then I met Dr. Xinxin Fang and was connected to the Confucius Institute in Edmonton with whom we partnered too for cultural exchanges. Three and a half years ago, Xinxin had already been hired to join our team, we established the unique Centre for Chinese Studies at Concordia, in a partnership with Hanban directly and the CIE. We naturally nominated Dr. Fang for the directorship. In September 2018 the CCS moved in to our new building. In the meanwhile, the Centre had been growing and bringing initiatives in areas of teacher development, Chinese language and culture and society.

Also in the meanwhile we have 9 university partners from Beijing to Shandong, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangdong and Hong Kong, and one first, prestigious Dual Degrees program in Beijing in Management.

It is a great pleasure and honour to see this day today and what we are doing here: a significant partnership between our CCS and the Edmonton Public Schools. Edmonton Public Schools offers the most variety of language arts programs, and language and culture programs in north America. The MOU we are signing today with the Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education at Edmonton Public Schools fits in not only with our Centre's vision and activities but also with the interdisciplinary Research Cluster on linguistics and Language education, that Dr. Fang also chairs at Concordia.

With this agreement yet another new era opens for Concordia and Edmonton in terms of fostering innovation in language education and from our part, especially from my vice presidency's areas, we will do all efforts necessary and possible to have this project flourish. Last but not least, we are very proud of our friendship with China and the Chinese people. We look forward to working with IISLE at EPSB closely to support language and culture projects.

Thank you.

Photo Album

