

Senior high school students focus on bilingualism

Special by:
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High school students enrolled in the English public school system speak excellent French. The immersion programs that were introduced many years ago have resulted in many bilingual graduates going on to enjoy successful careers right here in Quebec.

It is at conference's like French for the Future, which took place last week at The Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec, where the degree of this bilingualism is brought to the forefront. More than 250 students from four different school boards in the province took part. This included John F. Kennedy High School in St. Michel, Westmount High, Lauren Hill Academy in St. Laurent and Royal Vale in N.D.G. From the Lester B. Pearson School Board there was Beurling Academy, Lakeside Academy and St. Thomas High School while also represented were senior secondary level students from Howard S. Billings High School in Chateauguay of the New Frontiers School

Board and Philemon Wright High School in Gatineau.

The aim of the 2008 French for the Future Montreal Conference, coordinated by the organization Canadian Parents for French, is to promote bilingualism amongst Canadian youth. This year's theme was Respect, Culture and Integration into Québécois society. The opening speaker was Michel Godbout, the very bilingual anchor of the CBC Television News at Six. He told the audience about how he began his broadcasting career in French on the CBC in Moncton and while he never planned to move to the English side of things, it all worked out nicely in the end.

Born in Montreal, Godbout left the city in 1987 to study journalism in New Brunswick. In 1996, after working in community and private radio, he joined Radio-Canada Television in Moncton. From there he went to Manitoba and finally returned to Montreal in 1999 to work for CBC Television. Outside the newsroom, Michel is an avid



CBC News at Six anchor Michel Godbout meets Westmount High School students.

hockey enthusiast and during his stay in Moncton, he tended goal with Les Aigles Bleus of l'Université de Moncton.

In 2006, after seven years of working for CBC Television as an award-winning journalist, he succeeded Dennis Trudeau as the anchor of CBC News at Six.

After Godbout's address, stu-

dents took part in a game show based on Canadian and Québécois culture. It was moderated by noted French television personality Malik Shaheed, a graduate of Westmount High School. John F. Kennedy students helped in the planning for the game show which served as an excellent ice breaker.

This was followed by a half hour debate between the French for the Future Ambassadors - two from Halifax and two from John F. Kennedy. Filmmaker Nadine Valcin then discussed her documentary called A School Without Borders, which delves into her questions about the education system and the process of integrating cultural minorities. Later La Ligue D'improvisation de Montréal took over and allowed the students to engage in some more interaction.