



**Canadian Languages Association (CLA)**  
**L'Association canadienne des langues (ACL)**



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## **Metropolis 2013 – Ottawa**

***Presentation on the  
Canadian Languages Strategy***

# What is the CLA?



## CLA's primary objectives include:

1. Raising awareness of the value and benefits of language learning for all Canadians.
2. Recognizing Canada's ethnocultural communities and their historical and ongoing contributions to language education.
3. Promoting the development of programs in international/heritage languages and other related areas for the creation of positive educational outcomes for learners.
4. Strengthening communication and cooperation among providers and supporters of international/heritage languages organizations across Canada.
5. Coordinating and participating in the sharing of information and resources pertinent to language education.
6. Enabling the teaching of international/heritage languages within educational systems.
7. Enhancing teaching skills and resource development for language classrooms.
8. Supporting the efforts of educators in international/heritage languages programs.

# CLA Affiliates...

- Society for the Advancement of International Languages (SAIL – BC) (Vancouver)



- International Heritage Languages Association - IHLA (Edmonton)



- Southern Alberta Heritage Languages Association - SAHLA (Calgary)



- Language Alliance(Ottawa)

- International Centre, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (Ottawa)



- International Language Educator's Association – Individual's Forum (ILEA (Ontario))



- International Language Educator's Association – Institutional Forum (ILEA (Ontario))

- Association Québécoise des Langues d'Origine (AQLO) / Québec Heritage Language Association (QHLA), (Québec)





## *Status of languages education across Canada...*

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- **It is undeniable that federal support for official languages has created a favourable atmosphere for language learning in general.**
- **The unfortunate reality is that language education across Canada is marginalized and its marginalized status does little to encourage students to enroll and complete courses in additional languages.**
- **As a result, language learning does not attract the same public and political interest and support as studies such as math and science.**

## *Is languages education important for Canada?*

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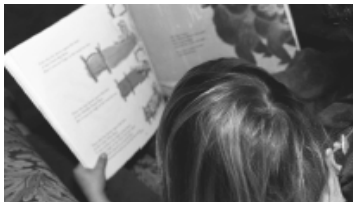
- **The CLA strongly believes in the importance languages education can and will play in Canada's future with the necessary assistance of a federal commitment. Through the creative and collaborative work of its affiliates, the CLA has identified four key pillars that support the study of languages...**



# Pillar 1: *Identity*

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- **Knowledge of a second and/or additional language strengthens first-language skills. It also helps students understand the role of language and culture in society and to appreciate the value of other languages and cultures.**
- **Since language and culture are inextricably linked, learning languages can contribute to cultural enrichment and intercultural understanding between people in several ways.**



## Pillar 2: *Personal Growth*

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- **The ability to communicate in additional languages provides unique opportunities to gain access to other peoples and other cultures.**

**In the interest of peace in an increasingly interdependent world, it is important for every person to acquire skills for cross-cultural communication and understanding.**



## Pillar 3: *Career Enhancement*

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- We live in a shrinking world where international trade, communication, and mutual understanding require openness to other people's experiences and points of view. Canadians who have access to the languages and cultures of the world not only increase their own job opportunities, but can also play an important role in promoting Canada's future economic development.
- Canadians who lose their language skills over time reflect the potential loss for Canada's economic possibilities.







## **Pillar 4: *ESL / EAL / FSL Support***

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- **First-language literacy is important to second-language learning. It helps students grasp key concepts more easily and influences general academic achievement.**
- **Moreover, research has consistently demonstrated that when children can access and use their mother tongues proudly in educational environments, there is a significant increase in student achievement. Although this is supported in research literature, Canada, as an immigrant-welcoming nation, continues to be complacent in promoting international/heritage languages.**



## *Promoting the importance of language education across the country...*

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- ✓ **There are 85 living languages spoken across Canada.**
- ✓ **Over 6,000 languages are spoken around the world.**
- ✓ **Language learning promotes cognitive, social and academic development.**
- ✓ **Language learning creates career opportunities and great economic capacity for Canada.**

**So what can be done to afford Canadians more opportunities to learn languages?**



# The Vision:

## *A Canadian Languages Strategy*

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- **A Canadian Languages Strategy is an imperative against a background of profound national and international change. We envision this Strategy as vital in fostering public acceptance of language competence and intercultural understanding as essential components in the make up of an informed international citizen.**
- **While we fully support Canada's Official Languages Act, it is also important to formally recognize and support linguistic plurality.**
- **What is the Canadian Languages Strategy?**

**The Canadian Languages Strategy would clearly communicate the Federal Government's commitment to increasing Canada's languages capability, and a vision of languages as "a life long skill – to be used in business and for pleasure, to open up avenues of communication and exploration, and to promote, encourage and instill a broader cultural understanding."**



# *Canadian Languages Strategy: Objectives*

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This proposed Strategy must address the four language components that make us truly Canadian:

English; French; Aboriginal languages; and,  
International/Heritage languages.

## *Objectives...*

1. *To promote and improve the teaching and learning of languages by encouraging provinces to draw upon experience of other educational systems around the world where multilingual education is provided in a core schooling system.*



# *Canadian Languages Strategy: Objectives*

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2. **To increase the number of people studying languages through the development and implementation of a strong and coherent national public education and awareness campaign creating a partnership between education, business, government.**
3. **To work with the provinces to provide effective and equitable funding for language programming at the school board and community levels. This could include: increasing the number and types of languages offered at primary and secondary schools; supporting after school programs; encouraging school boards to designate key schools as “language learning centres;” and, explore bilingual programs where feasible.**
4. **To raise an awareness of the importance of multilingualism to all Canadians for individual and collective well-being.**



## *Working towards the future...*

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- The CLA believes in the economic, cultural, and social benefits of multilingualism. We need to recognize that our much-celebrated cultural diversity can indeed be a wellspring for the new ideas and knowledge that will generate innovation, both develop and attract high-technology industries, and spur economic growth and prosperity.
- It is our hope that a **Canadian Languages Strategy** will be the key component in recognizing the value of maintaining one's own languages as well as developing others. We want to build world class leaders and a comprehensive commitment to second language education is an essential key to that goal.



## Contact Us...

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