

# SAHLA

## Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association

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### Greetings from Michael Embaie, President of SAHLA

On behalf of the board and staff of SAHLA, I wish all of our language schools, volunteers and friends warmest wishes this holiday season, and a happy, healthy new year ahead.

This year we have been proud to celebrate Calgary 2012, Calgary as a Cultural Capital of Canada. SAHLA and its schools play a very important role in the vibrant culture, multilingualism and multiculturalism within our great city, province and country. Language education promotes our unique Canadian identity, and strengthens our multicultural way of life. As we know, languages learning is an important part of the Alberta Education curriculum. Under the umbrella of SAHLA, there are 38 languages schools that teach to 6,000 students from kindergarten to the high school level.

*I'd also like to share with you the Benefits of Second Language Learning, which Alberta Education has referenced. -Intellectual Potential, Scholastic Achievement, Positive Effect on First Language, Citizenship, Cultural competency, Economic opportunity, Health & well-being.*

Over recent months, SAHLA has been working actively with MLA Jason Luan and other elected officials in Calgary and Edmonton to put together a strategy to enhance the Government of Alberta's recognition and sustainable support of community-based language schools as part of international languages. We are very thankful and honoured by Jason's leadership role in moving this strategy forward. On November 29, 16 representatives from SAHLA joined Jason in the Alberta Legislature in Edmonton for a historic day when he read his private member's statement in support of the international languages program. In closing, I wish to thank all language school principals, teachers, volunteers, parents and students for their strong commitment. I also wish to thank Alberta Education for its continued support to SAHLA and our essential and unduplicated work in languages education promotion, coordination and enhancement.

Thank you.

**Michael Embaie, President, SAHLA**



**SAHLA and school representatives visit Alberta Legislature with Jason Luan, MLA.**

# International Languages Education in Alberta

## *An Inspiring Investment for our Children's Future!*

Thursday November 29, 2012 was a historical day for SAHLA and international languages education in Alberta. 16 representatives from SAHLA and its schools travelled to Edmonton to the Alberta Legislature to join a session where Jason Luan MLA read a Private Member's Statement in support of the International Languages Program; Here is a copy of his statement:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Its an honour to rise again today to bring attention to the need for international languages in our communities. The international languages program assists children in learning languages further to English and French. They help promote cultural competency and enhance global citizenship. Due to the increasing globalized economy it is crucial for our children to learn additional languages to give them a competitive edge in the global market.

Mr. Speaker, this advantage should not be underestimated. Many jurisdictions around the world are developing their strategy to prepare their children. In the case of Australia they have explicitly supported an international languages program targeting emerging markets such as China and India. Unfortunately, Alberta is falling behind. Our programs in this area are offered inconsistently across the province, with fragmentation, poor financial support, and lack of standards. I hope that by bringing this matter to the House, we can collectively raise the awareness of this important issue and find ways to improve our current standing. On a more positive note, Mr. Speaker, I'm very delighted to be a member of a working group initiated by the Hon. Minister of Education, working with a number of MLA's and ministers to further explore ways to address this need. To conclude, I look forward to the time when we can proudly declare that Alberta has developed a comprehensive international languages strategy and that we as Albertans once again lead the nation in educating our children today for our continued prosperity tomorrow.





# ***“Languages Learning – Inspiring Education”***

## **SAHLA Languages Education Symposium**

November 3, 2012

SAHLA held its annual symposium in Calgary at the Greenwood Inn on Saturday November 3. The theme for 2012, “Languages Learning – Inspiring Education” was attended by 70 languages school principals, teachers and volunteers. The day was full of excellent and stimulating workshop and presentations. Sessions included:

-**“What’s your story? Narratives and Interactions in the Language Classroom”**, presented by Constantine Ioannou with the International Languages Educators Association, Ontario.

-**“Languages Teaching and Diversity in Schools: Asset or Obstacle for Teachers?”** presented by Khatoune Temisjian, co-founder and president, Association Quebecoise des Langues d’Origine (AQLO) Quebec Heritage Language Association.

-**“University of Calgary Teaching Second Languages (TSL) Professional Development Program”**

Ana Petrunic, Instructor, U of C Continuing Education; Ingrid Smith and Wendy Wei, both graduates of the U of C Certificate program levels 1 & 2.

-**“Teaching and Learning Resources for Language Schools”** -Bernard Bouska, Executive Director, Canadian Languages Association (CLA).

-Keynote speaker: Jason Luan MLA, Calgary Hawkwood **“The essential role of SAHLA and community-based language schools in international languages education in Alberta”** .





## Honourable Jeff Johnson, Minister of Education

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Dear Mr. Johnson,

### **International Languages Education in Alberta *An Inspiring Investment for our Children's Future!***

**International Languages** play a very important role in our Alberta students' education, career and life-long learning opportunities. Being bilingual helps promote global citizenship! It has a positive effect on intellectual growth enriching a child's mental development, and it gives a student a head start in language requirements for post-secondary studies

**An International Language Program** is a service which offers individuals, primarily children in elementary school, an opportunity to learn a language other than English or French outside of regular school hours. Such linguistic instruction typically occurs on weekends at schools which are rented out by various community language programs. Currently, thousands of parents across Alberta pay for private language instruction, representing a demand amongst many citizens. Therefore, it is important that these parents receive the maximum benefit for their child's language education in many cases achieving this can be difficult.

**The International Language Program is consistent with Inspiring Education,** the Government of Alberta's comprehensive community consultation on education. Specifically, it connects with the three key strategies:

- \* *Have the ability to respond or adapt to change quickly.*
- \* *Have the ability to work and live successfully in communities.*
- \* *The ability to have a global perspective.*

