



Joint National Committee for Languages
National Council for Languages and International Studies

MONTHLY UPDATE

January 31, 2017

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

The Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and Staff of the Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies are all hard at work preparing for next month's [Language Advocacy Days](#), February 16-17, at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill. So far, we've more than 115 registered participants - our biggest year by far - and we expect to hold more than 150 meetings on Capitol Hill. Your participation and your voices matter! With a new administration and no small degree of uncertainty on the budgets and policies of the Federal Government in the coming years, we all need to stand together and advocate for languages. There's still time to [register](#) for an exciting two days of advocacy and programming on languages in the US.

Our featured speaker is Ms. Marty Abbott, Executive Director of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, and a member of the [Commission on Language Learning](#) of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS). We have a town hall immediately after her talk, on the case for language, featuring leading experts in national security, business, research, and civil rights, who will provide us with key points to emphasize when we go to the Hill. On Friday morning, we have planned a "taking it back home" town hall, with leading state-level language organizations. I hope that you and your colleagues can attend, make noise for language on the Hill, and take lessons back home.

In the coming weeks, JNCL-NCLIS staff will be presenting at the [Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages](#), the [Globalization and Localization Association](#), the [Alabama World Languages Association](#), the [Southern Conference on Language Teaching](#), the [Southwest Conference on Language Teaching](#), and the [Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages](#). We have three key objectives for participating in our members' meetings: first, we can spread the word about our collective work to your members; second, we improve our ability to tell our story in Washington, DC by learning more about what YOU are doing; and third, we recruit additional members to JNCL-NCLIS, which enhances our ability to have a real and lasting impact on our nation's language policies and funding.

With respect to those policies, our work in the coming year focuses on funding, as always, and on other key areas of legislation:

- First, we are working with supporters on Capitol Hill to introduce new legislation to support language programming in the nation's primary and secondary schools. This effort builds on the support we had last year for the World Language Advancement Act. While we are in early stages, by the time language advocates arrive in Washington for the Language Advocacy Days, we will have more information and a concrete "ask" for to take to the Hill.
- Second, we are working with the Small Business Committees in both Chambers to improve the regulatory atmosphere for the language industry. I've reported on the specifics before - a clear path to compliance on worker classification, fairness in the use and auditing of the Service Contracting Act in Federal acquisitions, and appropriate use of Best Value contracts in federal procurements. The Trump Administration has promised to improve the conditions for small businesses, and we look forward to working on this issue.

- Third, we continue to develop our relationships with the Trump Administration, and we will have multiple meetings in the Executive Branch next month.

I would be remiss in my duty if this note did not include our initial analysis of President Trump's recent executive order concerning immigration. JNCL-NCLIS supports a [letter, led by the American Translators Association](#), protesting the ban and noting the deleterious effects it has had on Iraqi interpreters, who have been denied entry, despite having special visas awarded to them due to the dangers they face. JNCL-NCLIS advocated for the special visa program in the last Congress, and this reversal is devastating for the men and women of Iraq who have worked alongside our servicepeople over the last fifteen years. We will stay abreast of developments and relate them as they occur; please do follow us on twitter @JNCLinfo.

Finally, in its yearly schedule of officer elections, the organizational members of JNCL-NCLIS voted in 2016 to elect eight new officers to our Executive Committee and Board of Directors, whose terms began on January 1. Keith Cothrun, Executive Director of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), succeeded Marty Abbott as our President, and our new President-Elect is Rita Oleksak of the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL). We are thankful to Marty and to the outgoing members of our board for their guidance and support, and we look forward to working with all new officers in 2017 and beyond.

In closing, I look forward to seeing many of you next month,

With Best Wishes,

Bill Rivers

KEY POLICY UPDATES

Senate Education Committee Confirms Betsy DeVos

On a 12-11 party line vote, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee voted on Tuesday, January 31 to confirm Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education. The Committee voted twice; the second vote came after Democrats called for a procedural move to require a second vote, and postpone it another week. DeVos' nomination has been heavily debated by Republicans who support her background as a supporter of school choice, and Democrats who oppose her record of supporting school reform efforts that undermine public education. With the Senate HELP Committee having voted to confirm Mrs. DeVos, the vote now goes to the full Senate for a vote. Several Republicans on the HELP Committee have indicated that their favorable vote on the Committee does not guarantee a favorable vote on the Senate floor.

Department of Education Withdraws Proposed Title I Spending Rules

The Education Department on Wednesday, January 18 withdrew proposed regulations under the Every Student Succeeds Act meant to ensure that poor and minority students get their fair share of state and local education funding. The move to abandon the regulations, known as "supplement, not supplant," represents a blow to civil rights groups, who wanted to see a strong final rule from the Obama administration. And it's a win for Republicans like Senate HELP Chairman Lamar Alexander, who had raised concerns that the proposed rule amounted to federal overreach. GOP lawmakers had threatened to kill the rule if the department moved forward.

JNCL-NCLIS OFFICER ELECTIONS

JNCL-NCLIS congratulates the newly-elected members of its board and looks forward to working with its officers to formulate language policy and promote language advocacy in 2017 and beyond.

Newly Elected Members of JNCL-NCLIS Executive Committee

*Rita Oleksak, President-Elect
National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL)
Caitilin Walsh, At-Large Member
American Translators Association (ATA)*

Outgoing Members of JNCL-NCLIS Executive Committee

*Marty Abbott, Former President
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
Dan Davidson, Former At-Large Member
American Councils for International Education*

Outgoing Members of the JNCL-NCLIS Board of Directors

David Bong

Avant Assessment

David Ellis, Ph.D.

National Foreign Language Center (NFLC)

Joel Gomez, Ph.D.

GWU Institute for Education Studies

Janet Ikeda

American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ)

Mouna Mana, Ph.D.

Qatar Foundation International (QFI)

Gregg Roberts

Utah Dual Language Immersion

Carol Anne Costabile-Heming, Ph.D, Former Board Member

Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT)

Margaret Malone, Ph.D., Former Board Member

Council of Directors of National Language Resource Centers

Rita Oleksak, Former Board Member

National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL)

Terrence Wiley, Ph.D., Former Board Member

Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)

LANGUAGE NEWS: READERS' CHOICE

The top language news in January 2017, according to readers of our weekly NewsBrief.

Some People's Brains Are Wired for Languages

Babies' ability to soak up language makes them the envy of adult learners everywhere. Still, some grown-ups can acquire new tongues with surprising ease. Now some studies suggest it is possible to predict a person's language-learning abilities from his or her brain structure or activity—results that may eventually be used to help even the most linguistically challenged succeed. [Read more from Scientific American.](#)

Tongue-Tied: The Future of Mandarin Chinese as a Foreign Language in the Age of Trump

In the 21st century, the study of Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language has enjoyed a meteoric rise. As the official language of the world's most populous country, as well as the mother tongue of a large portion of an extensive Chinese diaspora, it is the world's most spoken language. The chief problem with many contemporary academic studies on Mandarin education is that they have not kept pace with the spurn of globalism evidenced by the second half of 2016. What will become of foreign language education now? How will Mandarin Chinese fit into the global foreign language marketplace in the new world order? [Read more from Nations & States.](#)

How to Increase the Number and Quality of Language-Immersion Programs

The national economy and the need for jobs have been key themes in recent political discourse. It is clear that the United States must enhance the multilingual and intercultural competency of its residents in order to be successful in global markets and political arenas. The need is particularly acute for students in grades pre-K-12. One type of language program that is receiving increased attention is dual language, in which students are fully immersed and taught in two languages—English and another language selected by program staff and the community. But how do individuals, schools, districts, and states establish and sustain effective dual language immersion programs? [Read more from EdWeek Blog.](#)

NEH on the Chopping Block?

Reports circulated Thursday, the day before the inauguration of Donald J. Trump as president of the United States, that his first budget would propose the elimination of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Hill reported that those agencies were slated for elimination, according to a blueprint being shared by Trump transition officials as part of budget planning. The blueprint also suggests that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting be privatized and that some U.S. Department of Energy science programs face deep cuts. [Read more from Inside Higher Ed.](#)

LANGUAGE ADVOCACY DAY & DELEGATE ASSEMBLY



JNCL-NCLIS' annual Language Advocacy Day and Delegate Assembly will take place on February 16-17, 2017 at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. Language advocates from around the country will convene in Washington to meet with their elected officials and make the case for support of and investment in world languages. This year's program will focus on making an impact at all levels--national, state, and local.

Sponsor Language Advocacy Day!

JNCL-NCLIS' Language Advocacy Day and Delegate Assembly brings together language advocates from all walks of the language profession - educators PreK-20 of the modern, less-commonly taught, and classic languages, researchers and social scientists, linguists and localizers, and business owners - all active in national, state, and local level organizations. The event helps build and strengthen a national network of language advocates, and is a great platform for sponsors to get involved, network within the language enterprise, and contribute to the JNCL-NCLIS mission.

There are only a few opportunities remaining to sponsor Language Advocacy Day! For sponsorship inquiries, please contact Maria Pulcini at mpulcini@languagepolicy.org.

UPCOMING MEMBER EVENTS

LSA Annual Meeting	January 5 - 8, 2017 JW Marriott Austin Austin, TX http://www.linguisticsociety.org/event/lsa-2017-annual-meeting
NECTFL Annual Conference	February 9 - 11, 2017 Hilton Midtown New York, NY http://www.nectfl.org/conference/
NABE Annual Conference	February 23 - 25, 2017 Hilton Anatole Dallas, TX http://www.nabe-conference.com/index.html
SWCOLT Annual Conference	March 2 - 4, 2017 Skirvin Hotel Oklahoma City, Oklahoma http://www.swcolt.org/conference
CSCTFL Annual Conference	March 9 - 11, 2017 The Palmer House Hilton Chicago, IL http://csctfl.org/conferences/2016conference.html
SCOLT Annual Conference	March 16-18, 2017 Orlando Airport Marriott Orlando, FL http://scolt.org/index.php/conferences/future-conferences

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