



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

MONTHLY UPDATE

March 31, 2017

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

The past month has been a busy one for the Language Enterprise! On February 28th, the Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) released its report, [America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century](#). That same day, the [World Language Advancement and Readiness Act](#) (WLARA) was introduced in the House of Representatives. Then, on March 1st, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages launched the [Lead with Languages](#) campaign. All of these are tremendously positive developments, long anticipated, and the fruit of years of hard work by all of us.

The rollout of America's Languages took place on the morning of February 28th in Washington, DC, at the National Press Club. A packed room listened to the President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Jonathan Fanton, introduce the Commission on Language Learning and the report. The report was presented by Commission Chair Dr. Paul LeClerc, along with our own Marty Abbott (ACTFL), as well as Amb. Nancy McEldowney, Jessie Little Doe Baird, and Dr. Rubén Rumbaut. Following a working lunch with Commission members and partner organizations, a briefing on Capitol Hill was held in the afternoon, with Dr. Fanton, our own Dr. Dan Davidson, as well as Dr. LeClerc, Ms. Baird, and Amb. McEldowney.

Rep. Price (D-NC-4), a signatory of the letters to AAAS that requested the Commission, attended the Capitol Hill briefing and gave welcoming remarks during which he announced introduction of WLARA as the bill's lead sponsor. WLARA would create a grant program in the Department of Defense for high-quality K-12 language programming, with emphases on the integration of STEM into language curricula. Moreover, the Act allows any natural language to be taught, including the classics and American Sign Language, with a requirement that 75% of the funds for the Act be spent on languages critical to the Department. The bill now has 10 co-sponsors, and we will be asking you in the coming weeks to request that your Members of Congress support the bill.

The additional materials published by the Commission, including the data report [The State of Languages in the United States: A Statistical Portrait](#), and the five briefing papers, provide a comprehensive, data-driven basis for the recommendations made by the Commission, and will be invaluable resources for advocacy and policy for years to come. JNCL-NCLIS and its members are well represented on the Commission and in the background work for the briefing papers. JNCL-NCLIS will be working closely with the Academy on the implementation of the recommendations made in America's Languages; stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks. There will be ample and significant opportunities for organizations and individuals to engage meaningfully in the implementation of the report's recommendations over the next two years.

On March 1st, ACTFL launched [Lead with Languages](#), a major campaign to change public perceptions about language learning. The first follow-up activity for the Commission, Lead with Languages is a comprehensive resource for advocacy, with materials developed specifically for parents and local political leaders.

Unfortunately, not all of this month's developments were positive. President Trump's [preliminary](#)

[budget](#), released March 16th, calls for the elimination of **Title VI/Fulbright-Hays** and the **National Endowment for the Humanities**, as well as substantial (but as yet unspecified) cuts to the **State Department's exchange programs**. The budget does not mention **Title IV or Title VI of the Every Student Succeeds Act**, but as these have not yet been funded by Congress, they are at risk as well. Our colleagues on Capitol Hill have indicated that the President's budget will not be accepted as is, or in total; at the same time, staff and members have made it very clear to us that we must continue fighting for our programs. You have already seen two policy alerts; additional alerts, targeted outreach to key Members, op-eds by prominent supporters, and Capitol Hill briefings are all being planned. We will keep you all updated as this effort continues.

On the industry front, the lack of political staffing in key agencies, and in particular in the US Department of Labor, has delayed our efforts to address the regulatory and business climate for the language industry. We are working with the Small Business Committees on Capitol Hill to raise awareness, and will be holding a briefing later in the year to educate staffers on the industry, and the challenges posed by the inappropriate and uneven use of the Service Contracting Act, the methodological deficiencies in the Department of Labor's determination of prevailing wages, and the deleterious effects on agencies' missions of improper federal bidding procedures for language services, such as reverse auctions and lowest price, technically acceptable bids. Our industry - vital to national security and to the provision of social services - is still seen as a commodity, rather than a professional service. Our work with Congress and the Executive Branch on these issues aims to change that perception.

Finally, let me thank all of you for your continued work on behalf of the Language Enterprise. Whether you came to Language Advocacy Days, wrote to your Members of Congress, participated in our tweetstorms (#JNCL17, #LangReport for the AAAS rollout, #SWCOLT17, #CSCTFL17, and #SCOLT17 all trended, with the AAAS rollout trending #1 for a good part of the day), your voices are being heard, and we are making a real difference for languages in the US.

With Best Regards,

Bill Rivers
Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE POLICY ANALYST

Dear colleagues,

In addition to the national-level attention world languages have gotten in the last month through the roll-out of the AAAS report and the launch of Lead With Languages, we've also seen a great deal of activity at the state-level. While not all of this attention has been positive, there have been modest successes. You may recall a movement that is just gaining steam in state legislatures of introducing legislation that would allow the substitution of coursework in computer coding to satisfy high school foreign language credit requirements.

Proponents of the movement tout the argument that computer languages are in high demand in the workforce, and that such legislation helps prepare students with 21st century skills. Clearly, they haven't gotten the message that [Forbes](#), [Quartz](#), the [Boston Globe](#), the [Financial Times](#), [NBC](#), and others have reported on in *the last month alone*: **businesses seek employees with language skills**. JNCL-NCLIS has worked extensively on raising awareness of this through our work on Global Talent with Michigan State University's Collegiate Employment Research Institute and with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

Since January, legislation to substitute coding for human languages has appeared in Maryland and Virginia, and reappeared in Florida and Michigan after defeat or non-activity in the last legislative session. The Maryland and Virginia bills have both been stalled this legislative session. In Michigan and Florida, the bills have passed various Committee hearings in different form than the original bills, after pushback from JNCL-NCLIS and our members and partners on the ground in those states, notably FFLA, NOBLE, and LULAC in Florida and MIWLA in Michigan. In Michigan, lawmakers created a new category of credit requirements, "21st Century Skills," and lumped computer sciences in with world languages. In Florida, the legislature formed an "articulation committee" that will determine where in Florida's curriculum computer sciences most logically fall, and which courses could be substituted. Neither bills have been enacted, so we encourage our advocates in those states to stay tuned for localized action alerts.

While we're on the subject of action alerts, please take a moment to contact your Members of Congress to voice support for [Title VI/Fulbright-Hays and the National Endowment for the Humanities](#), if you haven't already. Both have been targeted for elimination by the Administration. That authority belongs to Congress, and **your officials need to hear from you**. Stay tuned for more of these important action alerts! In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact us for information or resources relating to these efforts, or local and state-level advocacy efforts.

Sincerely,
Maria Pulcini

KEY POLICY UPDATES

[World Language Advancement and Readiness Act](#)

The bill was introduced in the House on February 28, 2017 and would establish a competitive grant program to support world language education in K-12 schools. The program would be administered by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the Secretary of Education and the Director of National Intelligence, and would provide three-year grants to LEAs to establish, expand, or improve world language programs. Current bill cosponsors include: Rep. Price, David [D-NC-4], Rep. Lance, Leonard [R-NJ-7], Rep. Crowley, Joseph [D-NY-14], Rep. Young, Don [R-AK-At Large], Rep. Jackson Lee, Sheila [D-TX-18], Rep. Moulton, Seth [D-MA-6], Rep. Cole, Tom [R-OK-4], Rep. Titus, Dina [D-NV-1], Rep. Shea-Porter, Carol [D-NH-1], Rep. Serrano, Jose E. [D-NY-15], Rep. Himes, James A. [D-CT-4], Rep. Kind, Ron [D-WI-3]. The bill has been referred to the House Armed Services Committee and the House Education and Workforce Committee. [Track the bill](#).

[Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act](#)

The bill was introduced in the Senate on February 1, 2017 and in the House on February 16, 2017 and would reauthorize through FY2022 both Esther Martinez grant programs administered by the Administration for Native Americans at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) - the Native American Languages Preservation and Maintenance (P&M) grant program and the Esther Martinez Initiative (EMI) grant program. It also decreases the required minimum number of enrollees in Native American language nests funded by the grant program from 10 to 5 enrollees, and in the Native American language survival schools from 15 to 10 enrollees. Finally, the bill increases the maximum possible duration of all Esther Martinez grants from three years to five. The bill was reported favorably out of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee and awaits a floor vote in the Senate. In the House, the bill was referred to the House Education and Workforce Committee. [View current cosponsors and track the bills](#).

[Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act](#)

The bill was introduced in the Senate on March 9, 2017 and would establish a competitive grant program in the Department of Education, for institutions of higher education to encourage the sustainable expansion of study abroad opportunities for undergraduate students in the United States. It is named after the late Illinois Senator, Paul Simon, who encouraged Congress to come together to prepare the next generation of Americans with the global knowledge and skills needed for success in an increasingly interconnected world. Current cosponsors include: Sen. Durbin, Richard [D-IL], Sen. Wicker, Roger F. [R-MS], Sen. Reed, Jack [D-RI], Sen. Cochran, Thad [R-MS], Sen. Merkley, Jeff [D-OR], Sen. Brown, Sherrod [D-OH]. The bill has been referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. [Track the bill](#).

KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

[Competition Announcement: USED National Professional Development Awards to Support Educators of ELLs](#)

The National Professional Development (NPD) program awards grants on a competitive basis, for a period of not more than five years, to institutions of higher education (IHEs) or public or private entities with relevant experience and capacity, in consortia with State educational agencies (SEAs) or local educational agencies (LEAs). The purpose of these grants is to provide professional development activities that will improve classroom instruction for English learners (ELs) and assist educational personnel working with such children to meet high professional standards, including standards for certification and licensure as teachers who work in language instruction educational programs or serve ELs.

The Department is also interested in supporting dual language acquisition approaches that are effective in developing biliteracy skills. Evidence suggests that students who are biliterate have certain cognitive and social benefits compared to their monolingual peers. Further, recent research suggests that despite initial lags, students

*in well-implemented dual language programs eventually perform equal to or better than their counterparts in English-only programs. **Deadline to apply is April 24, 2017. Letters of Intent to Apply are "strongly recommended", but not required.***

Request for Comments: USED Native American Language Program (Title VI, Part A of ESSA)

The Office of Indian Education (OIE) of the Department of Education (ED) requests clearance for the Native American Language (NAL@ED) Program Grant Application authorized under Title VI, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); included among those amendments was the addition of the new NAL@ED program in section 6133 of the ESSA. It is a competitive discretionary grant program. The grant applications submitted for these programs are evaluated on the basis of how well an applicant addresses the selection criteria, and are used to determine applicant eligibility and amount of award for projects selected for funding. **Deadline to provide comments is May 9, 2017 .**

Request for Comments: International Research and Studies (IRS) Program

The Instructions for the International Research and Studies (IRS) program provides grants to institutions, public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals to conduct research and studies to improve and strengthen instruction in modern foreign languages, area studies, and other international fields. The information will be used as a basis for project monitoring and performance reporting, among other grant administration activities.

Deadline to provide comments is April 10, 2017. Visit the [Federal Register](#) for additional information.

International Early Learning Study (IELS) 2018 Field Test Recruitment

The IELS focuses on young children and their cognitive and non-cognitive skills and competencies as they transition to primary school. The IELS is designed to examine: children's early learning and development in a broad range of domains, including social emotional skills as well as cognitive skills; the relationship between children's early learning and children's participation in early childhood education and care (ECEC); the role of contextual factors, including children's individual characteristics and their home backgrounds and experiences, in promoting young children's growth and development; and how early learning varies across and within countries prior to beginning primary school. To prepare for the main study that will take place in September-November 2018, the IELS countries will conduct a field test in the fall of 2017 to evaluate newly developed assessment instruments and questionnaires and to test the study operations. **This request is to conduct recruitment activities for the 2017 IELS field test. Deadline to apply is April 3, 2017. Visit the [Federal Register](#) for additional information.**

LANGUAGE LEARNING CHALLENGE

Would you wager on your language learning abilities?

David Bong, CEO of our member organization Avant Assessment, and Mike Biglan, the CEO of Analytic Spot have placed a bet. After 30 minutes of self-study in Spanish per day for three months, who would show the most growth? The loser would donate \$1,000 to JNCL-NCLIS! Follow David and Mike as they chronicle their Spanish-learning journeys via [blog](#) and [tweet](#)!

You're invited to join the challenge!

Avant Assessment is offering pre- and post-challenge STAMP or WorldSpeak assessments to those willing to undertake a similar challenge! The assessments are available in a range of languages:

STAMP (Four skill online assessment)

Arabic
English
French
German

WorldSpeak

Filipino (Tagalog)
Somali Maay Maay
Somali Maxaa
Vietnamese

Hebrew
Hindi
Italian
Japanese
Mandarin
(Simplified and Traditional)
Russian
Spanish

Yup'ik

Contact Maria Pulcini for more details: mpulcini@languagepolicy.org

READER'S CHOICE

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

[The mysterious ways being bilingual changes your brain](#)

(03/28/2017)

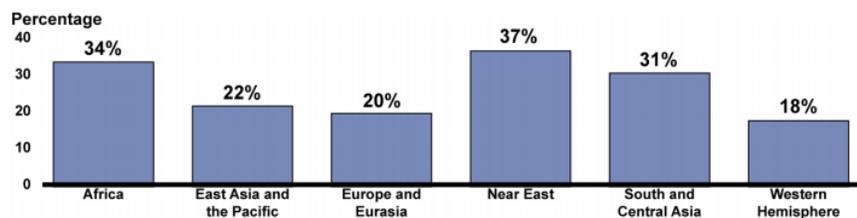
Over the past few years, you might have noticed a surfeit of articles covering current research on bilingualism. The pendulum swing of the news cycle reflects a real debate in the cognitive science literature, wherein some groups have observed effects of bilingualism on non-linguistic skills, abilities, and function, and others have been unable to replicate these findings. Despite all the fuss that has been made about the "bilingual advantage," most researchers have moved on from the simplistic "is there an advantage or not" debate. Rather than asking whether bilingualism per se confers a cognitive advantage, researchers are now taking a more nuanced approach by exploring the various aspects of bilingualism to better understand their individual effects. [Read more.](#)

[GAO releases new report documenting shortage of foreign language skills](#)

(03/22/2017)

Foreign language proficiency is a key skill for U.S. diplomats. Yet, the Government Accountability Office found that State has persistent shortfalls in this area-23% of its overseas positions that required foreign language proficiency were filled by staff that didn't meet the requirements (as of September 2016). [Read more.](#)

Percentages of Overseas Language-Designated Positions Filled by Officers Who Did Not Meet Proficiency Requirements as of September 2016, by Region

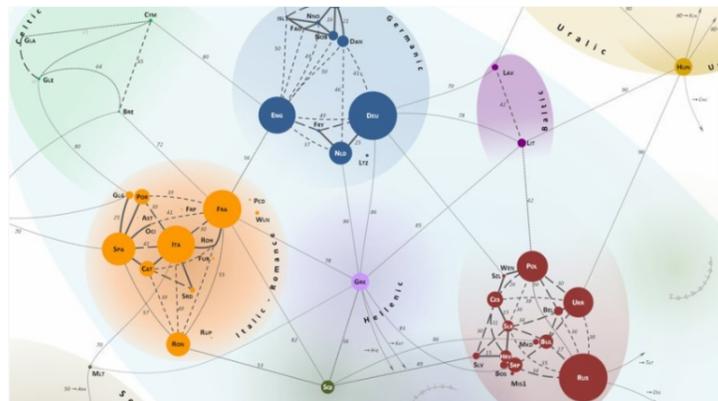


Source: GAO analysis of Department of State language-designated positions/language preferred positions as of September 30, 2016. | GAO-17-318

[A map of lexical distances between Europe's languages](#)

(03/07/2017)

A Finn and a Spaniard walk into a bar. How do they strike up a conversation? It would be exceptional for either to speak each other's language. Europeans don't have to travel far to immerse themselves in a different culture. And if each only spoke their own language, they wouldn't even be able to make heads or tails of it. Or would they? [Read more.](#)



[People who speak multiple languages make the best employees for one big reason](#)

(03/09/2017)

Speaking a different language-whether it's your grandparents' tongue or high-school Spanish-fundamentally changes the structure of your brain. Put a bunch of these malleable minds together in a company, and you create the potential for some truly original thinking. We already know that businesses thrive on the diversity of ideas created by a multicultural workforce. But the languages these diverse teams speak might be just as significant as

their cultural offerings: [Read more.](#)

SAVE THE DATE: 2018 LANGUAGE ADVOCACY DAY

Language Advocacy Day
&
JNCL-NCLIS Delegate Assembly

February 15-16, 2017
Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill

Registration will open in September.

UPCOMING MEMBER EVENTS

2017 MIIS Monterey Forum	April 1-2, 2017 Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey Monterey, CA http://www.miis.edu/academics/programs/gstile/montereyforum/welcome
NCOLCTL 2017 Conference	April 21-23, 2017 Holiday Inn - Schaumburg Area Rolling Meadows, IL http://www.conference.ncolctl.org/
ASLTA 2017 Conference	June 28-July 1, 2017 Salt Lake Marriott Downtown at City Creek Salt Lake City, UT https://aslta.org/aslta-9th-biennial-conference/
AATK 2017 Conference	June 29-July 1, 2017 University of Southern California Los Angeles, CA http://dornsife.usc.edu/eascenter/aatk/
LSA Linguistic Institute	July 5-August 1, 2017 University of Kentucky Lexington, KY https://lsa2017.uky.edu/
NNELL Summer Institute	July 7-9, 2017 The Grand Summit Hotel Summit, NJ http://nnell.org/summer-institute-2017/

If your organization/ company is a member of JNCL-NCLIS and you'd like to share events in our Monthly Updates, please contact [Maria Pulcini](#).

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