

# Embracing Early Language Learning in Victoria

Parents for Early Language  
Education



# *Who are we and why are we interested?*

- Parents, caregivers, educators
- Believe language learning at an early age is good for kids, our district and society
- Not focused on one language or model - value diversity
- Want to work constructively with district and parents
- Survey to learn more about parents' interests



# ***What are we asking?***

- Identify opportunities to expand language learning in K-5 / K-8
- Embrace language learning that supports bilingualism, multiculturalism *and* world citizenship
- There are challenges – *so lets seek solutions!*
- What does the board need from us?



# *About us*



# *Why early language learning?*

It benefits development

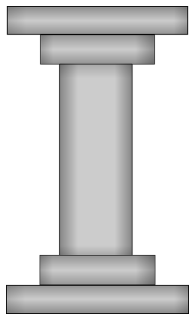
- For second (and third) language learners *and* English Language Learners
- Language learning shown to benefit cognitive development, creativity and empathy *when started at an early age*
- Early learners can pick up languages more easily in later years



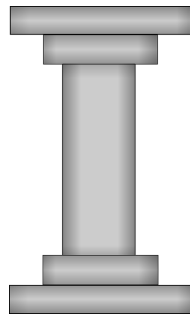
# Why early language learning?

We are an officially bilingual and multicultural nation

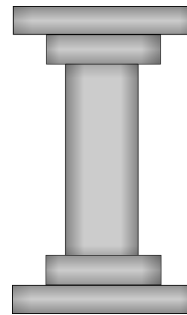
- The multiculturalism act supports the retention, use & learning of Canada's *heritage languages*
- 3 pillars



First Nations



Bilingualism



Multiculturalism



# *Why early language learning?*

We are (and have been!) a diverse community & aspire to be a welcoming community

- The homeland of the Lekwungen speaking people
- Victorians have many heritage languages (which are also world languages!)
- Victorians have an interest in the world
- We are growing through immigration
- ELLs have something to offer, not just a need



# ***Why early language learning?***

To support Canadian world citizenship and build cultural bridges

To enhance BC's economic opportunities

- Canada has not been keeping up in language learning
- BC is missing opportunities
- The world needs more bridges, not walls

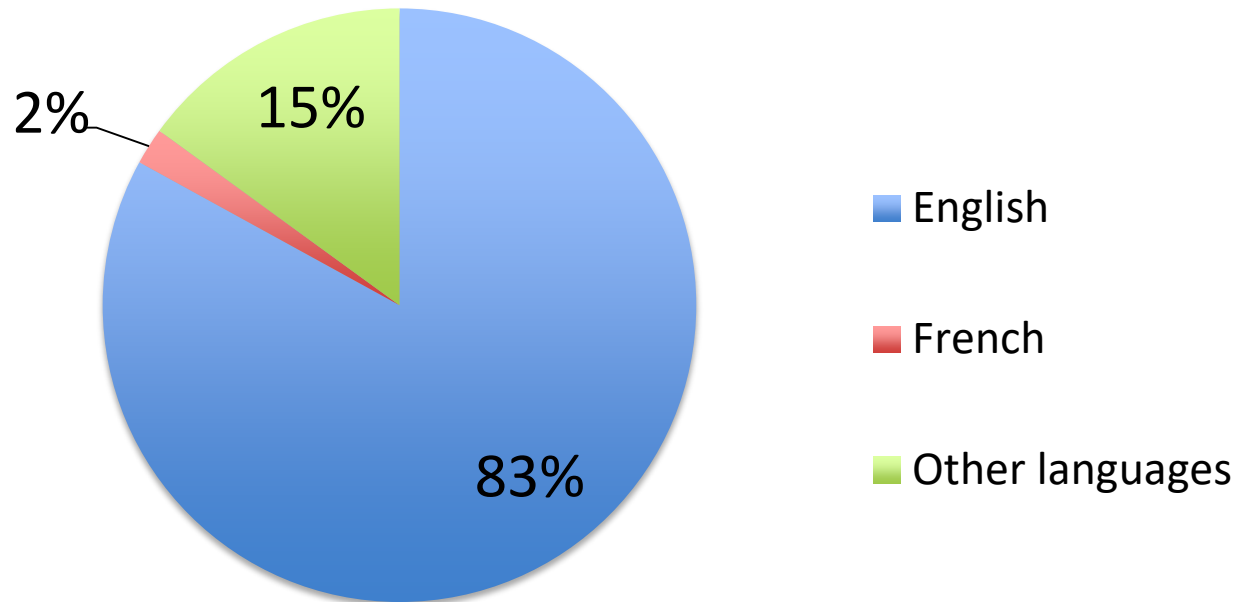


# Most spoken world languages



Rank ◆	Language ◆	L1 speakers ◆	L1 Rank ◆	L2 speakers ◆	L2 Rank ◆	Total ◆
1	English	379.0 million	3	753.3 million	1	1.132 billion <sup>[5]</sup>
2	Mandarin Chinese (incl. Standard Chinese)	917.8 million	1	198.7 million	5	1.116 billion <sup>[6]</sup>
3	Hindi (incl. all Central Zone languages)	341.2 million	4	274.2 million	2	615.4 million <sup>[7]</sup>
4	Spanish	460.1 million	2	74.2 million	10	534.3 million <sup>[8]</sup>
5	French	77.2 million	14	202.6 million	4	279.8 million <sup>[9]</sup>
6	Standard Arabic	—	—	273.9 million	3	273.9 million <sup>[10]</sup>
7	Bengali	228.3 million	5	36.7 million	14	265.0 million <sup>[11]</sup>
8	Russian	153.7 million	7	104.4 million	7	258.2 million <sup>[12]</sup>
9	Portuguese	220.7 million	6	13.4 million	16	234.1 million <sup>[13]</sup>
10	Indonesian	43.3 million	29	155.3 million	6	198.7 million <sup>[14]</sup>
11	Urdu	68.6 million	20	101.6 million	8	170.2 million <sup>[15]</sup>
12	German	76.0 million	16	56.0 million	11	132.1 million <sup>[16]</sup>
13	Japanese	128.2 million	8	121,500	26	128.3 million <sup>[17]</sup>
14	Swahili	16.0 million	31	82.3 million	9	98.3 million <sup>[18]</sup>
15	Marathi	83.1 million	10	12.2 million	17	95.3 million <sup>[19]</sup>

# *Victorians' First Mother Tongue (2016)*



- Top eleven: French, Mandarin, Cantonese, German, Punjabi, Tagalog, Spanish, Dutch, Korean, Japanese, Portuguese (2016)
- ~ 1,500 immigrants settle annually

# *Examples from Western Canada: British Columbia*

- French Immersion
- Mandarin Bilingual (several communities)
- Russian Bilingual & 5-12 (Kootenays)
- Independent Schools
- Provincial curriculum: 10 languages from Grade 5-12
- Agreement with Spain
- Language policy: *students should have access to education in languages relevant to their community*



# *Examples from Western Canada:*

## *Alberta*

- Edmonton:
  - 7 immersion languages; Cree language
  - Centre for Innovation in 2<sup>nd</sup> Language Teaching
- Calgary: 4 immersion languages
- Red Deer, Lethbridge: French & Spanish immersion
- Vegreville: French & Ukrainian immersion



# *And south of the border*

- Portland Public Schools
  - 7 immersion/bilingual languages
- Eugene Public Schools (pop: 150,000)
  - 4 immersion programs: French, Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin
- Vancouver, WA (pop. 150,000)
  - Spanish, Mandarin immersion



# What about Victoria?

- GVSD
  - French Immersion in some schools (21% of students)
  - Core French from grade 4 (once/week)
  - Spanish from Grade 9-12
  - Japanese at some high schools
  - *That's it!*
- Francophone District
- Independent Schools



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- Francophone District
- Independent Schools
- Daycares - at least 26 offer unofficial languages!
- Cultural and ethnic organizations



# *We are not focused on one language learning model*

- In-school classes
- Partial immersion or Bilingual
- Full immersion
- After-school
- Others?



# ***What we're hearing***

## **Many people are interested in languages**

- One-language households
  - Interest in variety of languages regardless of background
- French/English families
  - Many interested in a third language
- Other mixed language families
  - Some want an unofficial language; others want French
  - Concern about maintaining language
- Immigrant families
  - Interested in English, French, mother tongue, other language(s)
  - Want inclusion

# *What we're hearing*

- Start as early as possible: K/Grade 1
- Highest support for daily, in-school classtime; also partial immersion
- Less preference for full immersion or after-school programs
- Willing to travel outside catchment?
- We're reaching those interested in French, Spanish, Mandarin
- Openness to diversity and multiculturalism

# *What we're asking*

1. Consult with parents & future parents / survey
2. Open schools to after-school programming (pilot)
3. Pilot in-school programs in world languages
4. Update the strategic plan objectives:
  - A. Opportunities for all students to learn second languages in K- 5
  - B. Reflect First Nations, world & heritage languages, community
5. Create a position for multiculturalism & modern languages
6. Seek solutions – work with Province, Teachers Federation
  1. Teacher certification
  2. Agreements with other nations
  3. Seed funding?

há'ysx<sup>w</sup> qə!

شكراً جداً

Dank je wel

ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ

Grazie!

Спасибо!  
(Spasibo)

*Thank you!*

*Merci!*

Danke!

감사합니다

Obrigado

ありがとう !

(Arigatou)

¡Gracias!

תודה רבה

谢谢

(Xièxiè)

# *What are we hearing?*

*“To encourage a love of second language learning, to embrace new sounds and pronunciation, and to broaden awareness for different cultures and countries.”*

*“The world is getting bigger with many diverse cultures. It would be great way to teach children languages they don't already have the options of learning (English/French).”*

*“China is growing rapidly and lots of opportunities for my next generation.”*

*“My children attend a Spanish language day care and have picked up the language very quickly. I am disappointed to think that they will lose their Spanish once they move into elementary school. It would be wonderful if there was some sort of after school program or elementary program option that would enable them to grow their abilities.”*

# *What are we hearing?*

*“Opportunity to learn a third language, from early years, that is part of our heritage and future travel plans, and useful on the west coast.”*

*“Family, culture, travel, future opportunities.”*

*“Being able to communicate with family who don’t speak English; more opportunities when they grow up”*

# Federal & Provincial Policies

- Canada is officially bilingual and multicultural
- Canada Multiculturalism Act
  - Encourages the retention, teaching and use of heritage languages as part of Canada's past and future
- BC Curriculum
  - Curriculum for 10+ languages Grade 5-12
  - Encourages languages of relevance to community
  - Agreement with Spain for bilingual education



# ***Relationship to Bilingualism***

- Canada is bilingual and multicultural
- Biculturalism was rejected
- Multicultural Act encourages retention, use and teaching of heritage languages
- Learning one language can serve as a “gateway” into learning others
- Many people learn more than one language!
- We live with and accept diversity
- Canadian world citizenship makes us a stronger country

