

**Andrea Colling**

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**From:** Janice Aubry

**Sent:** January 16, 2003 12:12 AM

**To:** Andrea Colling

**Subject:** FW: questionnaire - staffing international lang programs - Nov 02

For your records

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Dan Clarke

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 15, 2003 12:06 PM

**To:** Janice Aubry

**Subject:** questionnaire - staffing international lang programs - Nov 02

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### Staffing International Language Programs in Basic Education

1. What is the nature of the shortage of international language teachers in your jurisdiction?

-Currently we are able to fill our staffing needs. However, it is difficult to find teachers who meet the language proficiency (including English) requirements, are knowledgeable in second language teaching methodologies, and who have experience in the Alberta schools. This difficulty does not exist when hiring to most other positions in our district. \_\_\_\_\_

-We need to have more applicants than positions and be in the position to hire the best. \_\_\_\_\_

-If enrollments were to increase in all language programs throughout the province and we maintained the same number of applicants, we would not come close to filling the positions that would be available.

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2. In which languages is there a shortage?

-It depends on the time of year that we need the teacher. For example, if we need a second language teacher in the fall we would be short in all languages. Generally speaking, we usually have a shortage in Cree, elementary Mandarin, elementary Spanish, elementary German, French Immersion math/science. By shortage, I mean that we might have appropriate second language speakers available but they are under-qualified in language proficiency, teaching skills, knowledge of Alberta schools, or in aptitude for teaching. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. At what level (elementary, junior high, senior high) is there a shortage?

See above. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. How many new international language teachers are needed each year for the next five years in your school jurisdiction?

-there are too many variables to consider and there is no concrete answer to this question. A rough guess is that in a normal year we would hire 20 or so second language teachers to various contract. In addition, we would interview another 50 - 60 and add many of them to our substitute list. \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How is your school jurisdiction currently addressing this shortage?

-well, depending on how you look at it, we don't have a shortage, at least right now. \_\_\_\_\_

-when we know we have a position to fill and no one to fill it we advertise - usually it local/neighbourhood/cultural newspapers. We also get on the phone and ask around, we let it be known that we have a need. Sometimes we have advertised nationally through newspapers such as the Globe and Mail. We have considered, but not used, the internet. We attend career fairs, do recruiting sessions at universities in Alberta and Saskatchewan, follow up on applications asap, and hire teachers at the earliest possible date. \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What have been issues in obtaining teacher certification for your international language teachers?

-most applicants have received Alberta certification prior to applying with our board. \_\_\_\_\_  
-some applicants from other countries have told me that they had difficulty providing transcripts from their universities "back home" \_\_\_\_\_  
-In terms of our own application process, applicants often cannot produce evaluations of teaching performance or verification of years of teaching experience.  
-when teachers from other countries can produce proper documentation, it is still difficult for us to evaluate it. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What are possible solutions to any shortage of international language teachers in your school jurisdiction?

-If the province makes second language learning mandatory then we would need financial support and access to the expertise necessary to provide a variety of up-grading opportunities that teachers could access while they are teaching such as mentorship programs, internships, teacher assistantships, courses (offered at various times and locations)

-we would need flexible system of contracts so that we didn't have to issue continuing contracts after a probationary year. Maybe there could be a variety of contracts, depending on a teacher's qualifications, experience, and ability to fill a variety of positions in the district.

-Maybe teachers could work under something like a letter of authority rather than a contract.  
-It would also be useful for teachers who have been trained in second language teaching at the secondary level to be able to access elementary methods courses and receive graduate course credits.

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8. What types of policies would effectively address the shortage?

-If we are talking about the province making second language learning mandatory then it would be very helpful if the province moves slowly. AL show keep boards up-to-date on their intentions as they develop, they should set targets and let district have responsibility for figuring out a way to meet them.

- The province could help with recruitment through news releases about the second language initiative, promoting second language teaching and second language teaching courses at universities, colleges, and in the private sector. It could also help with news releases about the initiative in other countries through ongoing contacts. It should not get involved in hiring or in making agreements with foreign teachers which will put school districts in hiring binds. \_\_\_\_\_

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9. How can we best prepare international language teachers for the future?

- If we are talking about the province's interest in making second language learning mandatory then there should be opportunities for boards to recruit native language speakers from other occupations with the stipulation that these recruits be successful in up-grading courses offer in a variety of institutions, including private sector, and at a variety of times.
- Province could require and sponsor a practicum experience in Alberta schools or and internship, etc.
- Province could sponsor ESL classes for teachers whose first language is not English and who need to improve grammar and writing skills.
- Province could set up opportunities for schools district personnel to dialogue with AL personnel prior to decisions being finalized. School districts are supportive and have expertise that AL needs. AL should not concentrate only on curriculum expertise but also on other important players such as, teacher certification, TQS, universities, Human Resources officers in school district, ATA (specialist councils, too), etc. \_\_\_\_\_

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