

# The IHLA Newsletter

Volume 17 Issue 1 Editor: Trudie Aberdeen

## President's Message

Dear Esteemed Member Schools and Friends of IHLA,

I hope this newsletter and address finds you all and your schools progressing well as we approach Winter Solstice. We have much to be thankful for with the year that has passed and the new IHLA 2019/2020 year already underway.

In October, IHLA's Professional Development (PD) Sessions for Teachers and First Principals Meeting took place with great response! Please do not forget to check the IHLA website and email for all PD Sessions information for 2019/2020. PLEASE do not forget the IHLA Annual Mother Language Day (MLD) Celebration is Saturday, February 22nd, 2020 at the Polish Hall (across from the Royal Alex Hospital). The MLD Form to fill out regarding display table, performance, and volunteer participation is on the IHLA website: [www.ihla.ca](http://www.ihla.ca).

I look forward to us, together, continuing the good work that IHLA does via new and informative workshops for Teachers and Administrators, developing opportunities for schools, and celebrating the incredible work done by IHLA Schools, among other events during our 2019/2020 Year.

It goes without saying that activities IHLA undertakes with its Member Schools would not be possible without Member School Volunteers for its Casino Fundraising Event. A SINCERE THANK YOU beyond words to all who participated on October 16-17, 2019 for the IHLA Casino. The funds will permit PDLs, funding for the Mentorship Program, provide Funding to Schools, and support MLD expenses.

My hope is that we continue to strengthen relationships amongst our HL Schools and our government liaisons, recognizing the importance and necessity of supporting Heritage Languages Education in Alberta.

As a means of keeping abreast of happenings at all our IHLA Schools, I sincerely encourage everyone to send in notices about events/happenings, or projects your schools are doing so that we may include them on the IHLA website ([www.ihla.ca](http://www.ihla.ca)), Facebook and within this quarterly newsletter.

Looking forward to seeing you all and wishing you a very good IHLA School Year!

Antonella Cortese

IHLA President



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## The IHLA Casino

IHLA is a not-for-profit organization that has been in operation for almost 45 years! Over its existence, its funding structures have changed. However, its commitment to its membership has never waived.

Currently IHLA operates from 4 main sources of revenue: funding from Alberta Education, the Alberta Liquor & Gaming Commission (AGLC), the Alberta Association for Multicultural Education, and membership fees. These funding sources allow us to provide services such as our Annual Mother Language Day, our MLD Book, our PD sessions, and rent our office.

In Alberta, licensed charities are eligible to receive funding from gaming events such as casinos, bingos, or pull-ticket events. Organizations can apply for this funding by registering for a gaming license. Funds are then administered through AGLC. Not only IHLA, but also many IHLA schools benefit from this funding.

Every 18 months to 2 years IHLA sponsors a casino so that it can offer services to its members. This year our casino was held on October 16-17, at Argyll Casino. It is with great appreciation to IHLA members that we were able to secure all of the volunteers needed to make this event possible.

## IHLA Professional Development

One of IHLA's main goals is to provide professional development for teachers. Below are the PD sessions IHLA has held so far this year.

### Principals' Meeting and PD Reports

**O**n September 26, 2019 IHLA held its first principals' meeting of the year at The Polish Hall. Principals were treated to light snacks, great company, and a wealth of information. They learned of the upcoming PD sessions, IHLA's financial situation, and they completed a workshop.

Principals looked at creating job ads for teachers for their schools and how they could use these towards writing contracts for teachers. Although there is great difference among the schools and their employment needs, all principals felt the session provided important information. A sample contract and job ad are available at the end of this newsletter.

### Back-to-School for Teachers

**O**n October 6, 2019 IHLA held its first PD session of the year for teachers. The topic was Establishing Positive Classroom Routines. Many topics were explored which help teachers prepare for the school year. Some of these topics included examining what teachers need to do in order to prepare for the upcoming year and looking at curriculum documents and how they are organized. Other subjects included examining what teachers need to be provided for their students. Teachers looked at BICS, CALP, and the CUP (see an article in this newsletter). They used these constructs to help them design classroom tasks which would support children in their community membership. These included ways to build oral language, the language experience approach, and an assessment of reading and writing tasks that students would be most likely to encounter.

## FOIP and PIPA

On November 7, 2019 IHLA held a PD session for principals on the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) and the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA). This informative session was led by Maryann Hammermeister. She helped us to understand the guiding principles of these pieces of legislation and how we can be compliant with the law. Both of these laws cover people's right to access information that is taken about them as well as govern how we protect the information that they share with us. This governs things such as email lists, photos, teachers

contracts, student enrollment forms, and Facebook. She covered essential information for teachers and school administrators including topics like The Ethics of Knowing and how to politely refuse to answer personal questions about others.

Some take-aways from the session include that teachers personal information is needed to be kept for 5 years, schools should have a plan for dealing with student information such as enrollment forms, and each school should have someone appointed who is responsible for data management and questions concerning FOIP/ PIPA.

## What's new at IHLA?

### Three new member schools

IHLA would like to welcome its three latest member schools: The Czech School in Edmonton, St. Philip's Italian Language and Culture Program, and the Mandarin School at Terwillegar. We are so excited to work with these schools! We look forward to sharing our expertise through professional development, the mentorship program, the IHLA newsletter, International Mother Language Day, and the much, much more!

Children's Ministry or Mandarin Language Maintenance? We do both!

### Jun Deng, Mandarin Classes at Terwillegar

Our minister was wondering how our church could attract people. Some churches provide a free meal before bible study. Others offer free ESL lessons. What could we do? The pastor was thinking hard for a solution. He eventually got the answer, that is, running a non-profit Mandarin school for children. Our church is located at the Terwillegar Town Center, a young and beautiful community with a big Chinese population with many families with children between 5-10 years old. We were confident that some families in our community would be willing to send their children to church for free Mandarin classes. We started two classes, one for children aged from 5 to 7, and the other for 8-10. We also recruited eight volunteers who are willing to spend Sunday afternoons with the kids and enjoy teaching and helping them.

It turned out to be a big success! Over 10 families registered their children with us within two weeks. Some parents told us they were so excited that a Mandarin school near their home was opening soon. They had tried to teach their kids Mandarin literacy at home, but it did not work. Their kids had no desire for learning. They believe that kids would be more motivated to learn their heritage language in a community.

The school started in September, the first day was a bit chaotic. Some kids were yelling and running around. A little girl cried and was reluctant to stay, and a boy kept interrupting the teaching over and over again. However, we soon established a strong teaching routine thanks to the great advice we received from IHLA. Each session comprises two periods. In the first period, the children sing songs together, listen to a bible story, and read a bible

verse; in the second period, our young heritage language learners develop reading and writing skills in Mandarin. Meanwhile, the parents were invited to attend a parenting course in the church. While two parents have chosen to leave their children with us for classes; however, six more signed up. Our student

number has risen to 36! More parents hope to register their kids with this program, unfortunately the capacity is full, and we have to put them on a waiting list. All people involved in the program are happy: the pastor, parents, kids and volunteers. Thanks to the Lord!

Meeting with Dr. Anne-Marie Morgan

Nina Paulovicova (Member-at-large) and Josephine Pallard (Member Emeritus)

**W**e had a lovely and very informative meeting with Professor Anne-Marie Morgan (University of England, Australia). Professor Morgan has been collecting information about international and heritage languages schools in Canada for two projects which concern various aspects of the multilingual community in Australia.

We discussed the organization of IHLA, funding as well as the concerns that IHLA faces due to the change of the government in the province of Alberta. We discussed the issues related to the certification of teachers at our international and heritage schools in Edmonton and suggested solutions to how these problems might be solved in the future. We compared different models of organizations of international and heritage schools in Canada and Australia and reflected on the responsiveness of international and heritage schools to the needs of their communities.

We also discussed the issues related to language, multilingualism, and identity. We concluded that

IHLA has an important role in challenging ethnonational narratives (ethnonationalism excludes other ethnics and minorities and is often hostile to the "other.") and agreed that its work is essential at times when the radical right is on the rise. IHLA is a key player in the process of strengthening our multicultural and multilingual

communities as it facilitates collaboration between communities and offers a platform for the better understanding of other cultures and languages (see for example IHLA's Mentorship program and Mother Language Day)

Our discussion also addressed the issues of terminology: multilingualism, plurilingualism, and the rather problematic term of ESL (English as a Second Language) as opposed to EAL (English as Additional Language). Professor

Morgan was impressed by Canada's model of funding of non-profit organizations based on the volunteering in Casinos. Overall, this meeting was inspiring for all of us as we saw the commonalities between our multilingual communities.



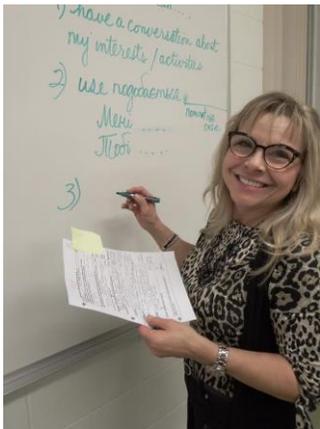
*(From left to right) Dr. Josephine Pallard, Dr. Anne-Marie Morgan, & Dr. Nina Paulovicova*

# What is happening at IHLA Member Schools?

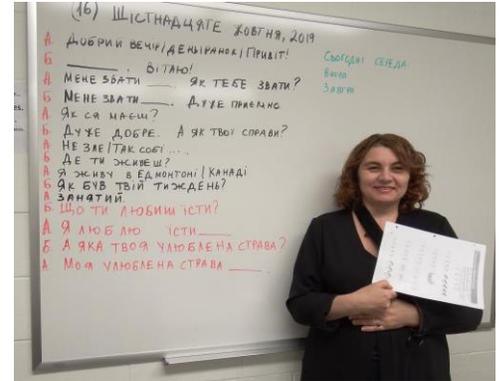
From the Ukrainian Language Classes for Adults

*Lesia Perritt, Coordinator/Principal*

Ukrainian Language Classes for Adults are well underway for the 30th consecutive year! Classes are held from mid-September to mid-March on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. For this 2019-20 term, our enrolment is at an all-time high with 77 students from all over Edmonton and surrounding communities.



*Ukrainian Language Classes for Adults  
St. Andrew's Cultural Centre  
9831-75 Street, Edmonton, AB T6A 2Y8*



We are especially grateful to IHLA for having paired our school in the spring of 2019 with the Polish Saturday School in a Mentorship Program. The IHLA grant we received, with funding from Alberta Education, was used to purchase five (5) wall-mount, magnetic whiteboards for use in our Ukrainian Language classes. Maintaining heritage languages in our multicultural society enriches individual lives as well as the mosaic and intellectual fabric of our province and country. Thank you to IHLA and Alberta Education for ongoing leadership and support!

From the Slovak Heritage Language School in Edmonton

*Nina Paulovicova, Principal*

Slovak Heritage School in Edmonton is pleased to see that the hard work of our teachers have been regularly featured in the international online magazine designed for Slovak heritage schools all around the world titled "Ceruzky vo svete"

("Pencils around the world") This online magazine edited by Jarmila Buchova (Slovak school in Munich, Germany) features not only major news and celebrations of Slovak heritage schools from all continents, but also offers teachers ideas and pedagogic materials that are shared across teachers in Slovak heritage language schools.

<http://ceruzkyvosvete.iseia.eu/>

Many of our projects have been featured in "Ceruzky vo svete" and for us, it means encouragement to go on and pursue our goal to nurture heritage language and culture in our community.

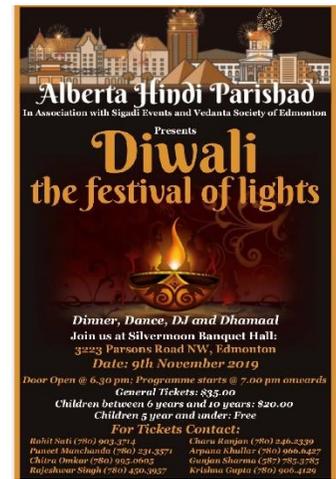


Alberta Hindi Parishad Celebrates Diwali

Diwali is a very important festival for Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs. It is the festival of lights. It is a celebration of good over evil.

The Alberta Hindi Parishad works hard to create a welcoming community for its members. Each year the community and its school prepare and celebrate Diwali! The community hosts an annual dinner with speakers, performers, activities for children, dancing, and an amazing dinner. This year was certainly no exception. It was a great night of joy and celebration. IHLA was honoured to be able to share in this celebration and share a few words about the importance of language learning in Canada. We were able to sit and discuss with members of the Alberta Legislature.

IHLA congratulates the Alberta Hindi Parishad for all of its hard and important work in creating a language community for children. We cannot wait for the next event!



Diwali Festival Hosted with the Assistance of the Indian Bangla Community in Edmonton

On November 24, 2019 IHLA representatives attended a Diwali Celebration at Campus St. Jean, University of Alberta. While Bangla is a language of Bangladesh, there are also a large population of Bangla speakers in India. It is one of India’s 23 official languages.

The festival was a huge success for the Bangla community and IHLA wishes them continued success in developing, promoting, and continuing their community’s projects here in Edmonton. The event showcased world class talent and was broadcast live.

## Making a case for Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

*Trudie Aberdeen, Truong Lac Hong School Teacher*

Jim Cummins proposed that English as a second language students develop two main kinds of language proficiency. The first category of language development he named Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). Students who have developed BICS are able to engage in social activities with peers. In fact, BICS is often referred to as “playground language”. Students who have developed BICS can converse about many different topics and often appear to be fluent speakers of the second language. For students who are language learners in the country where it is spoken in the environment it takes about 2 years to develop.

In addition to socializing, students often need to develop language that is related to school success. The students need to develop literacy and formal language. They need subject specific vocabulary and to know uncommon words. They need to know how to structure an argument or a task. Cummins named this kind of language Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). He found that it took students five to seven years to learn enough language to approach the language development norms of their English-only speaking peers.

In the context of a heritage language school, our students come from a wide range of experiences. In the same class we can have students who only speak their mother tongue at home alongside of students who only hear the language spoken when their parents are talking on the phone. However, for every group of students regardless of their proficiency in the heritage language, there is a need to develop both BICS and CALP. This is different from their regular school where they have more exposure to language in both BICS interacting with friends and CALP in the classroom. Our students come to heritage language school to learn how to interact with peers in the heritage language as well as learn literacy and academic skills.

Our heritage language students need to learn the basics of communication that is required for socializing and community membership. In order for our students to be active community members they need to be able to complete tasks such as:

- take phone messages in the heritage language,
- make small talk,
- talk about the weather
- introduce people,
- learning how to describe something,
- playing guessing games such as “I spy”,
- say a common prayer or sing a national anthem,
- and play common board games or card games.

Each of the tasks listed above are essential for students to participate in social events, maintain friendships and have the basic knowledge required to belong to their communities. Parents and students alike value these kinds of learning opportunities. Yet for some, these kinds of activities might seem “unscholarly” because they are often not specifically “taught” in elementary school and students learn this language on their own. However, heritage language learning children, especially those who do not frequently travel to their heritage countries, do not have the opportunity to learn this kind of language outside of school. This makes these activities essential for students’ linguistic development and community participation.

## Mother Language Day

For the past 16 years IHLA has been celebrating Mother Language Day. It is an event in which we “to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world”. For many of our schools it is a time to rejoice and take pride in the work that we accomplish in our schools. Each year, IHLA promotes this special event by hosting a Mother Language Day event and by publishing the annual Mother Language Day book.

This year’s theme for the event is Trees and Roots. IHLA students have been learning about what trees mean to their communities by studying folk tales, botany, and art. They are looking forward to sharing their work with you.

This year, we will celebrate our event on February 22, 2020 at the Polish Hall (10960-104 Street NW). The event runs from 10 AM to 2 PM and there are performances, snacks, events for children, and even PRIZES! You can now register your school to participate at <http://www.ihla.ca/mld.html>.

## The way we were... about language groups!

*Trudie Aberdeen, IHLA Coordinator*

**B**eing bilingual in French and English seems like one of the characteristics of being a good Canadian citizen. However, being a bilingual country is a relatively recent development. Canada only became an officially bilingual country in 1969 when Pierre Trudeau signed the Official Languages Act of Canada!

Many of IHLA's first members were of schools that now belong to different language associations. The then Alberta Ethnic Language Teachers' Association used to fund a French heritage language school. It is hard to imagine the need for one now with so many French Immersion programs. AELTA also used to sponsor groups for Blackfoot, Cree, and Tsut Ina K'Osa!

## IHLA at Conferences

2019 Community-based Heritage Languages School Conference in Washington, DC-  
Antonella Cortese and Trudie Aberdeen

**O**n October 12, 2019 IHLA representatives were in Washington, DC as keynote speakers at the 2019 Community-based Heritage Languages School Conference. We shared our insights about language learning in Alberta and told of how our organization has survived and thrived for over the past 40 years!

IHLA attended many interesting talks on a variety of topics that were applicable to the Canadian context as well. These included information about setting up email servers for promotion of schools using services such as Mailchimp, the Global Seal of Biliteracy, and differentiated instruction in heritage language schools.

The global seal of biliteracy is an area which may be of interest to heritage language schools in Alberta. Students are able to sign up for specific administered tests which can then be used to prove biliteracy in English and another language. Students can examine their literacy skills in over 100 different languages. More information can be found at <https://theglobalseal.com>.

Other topics included a workshop by Maria Carreira about how to make classes more responsive to students' needs. She said that student work could be differentiated according to the content, the process, the pacing, or the product that students are expected to do. With the diversity that students are expected to achieve in a heritage language school,

she also listed instructional methods which could support teachers in ensuring that students get the information that they need in a lesson. These methods included exit cards, checks for understanding, agendas, flexible grouping, and centres. Understanding how to use these teaching methods in the classroom supports students in learning the material that they need.

The Second Languages and Intercultural Council-Trudie Aberdeen

**M**embers of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) are encouraged to join a special council as part of their ATA membership. The Second Languages and Intercultural Council (SLIC) is one of the councils of the Alberta Teachers Association. Each year the SLIC hosts a 1-day conference for its members. This year it was held on October 26, 2019 at the University of Alberta in the Lister Conference Centre.

Those who attended were treated to a CASLT Chez-Vous workshop by Michelle De Abreu based on the book *Supporting Additional Language Learners in the Second Language Classroom*. Ms. De Abreu had many take-aways from her workshop. These included modeling best practices for encouraging talk, examining modern research on the benefits of learning French as an additional language for students who are already learning English as a second language, and providing suggestions for how to include ALLs and to help them flourish.

Transatlantic Dreams-Nina Paulovicova

On October 27 – 31, the Wirth Institute organized an international conference titled “Transatlantic dreams” at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax Nova Scotia. Nina Paulovicova (IHLA’s board member and the principal of Slovak Heritage School) presented a paper titled “Bridging Identities. Heritage Schools as mediators of Central European Heritage and cultural integration in Canada.” The goal of this presentation was to explore a topic within a newly emerging field of heritage schools and heritage languages. In particular, this study targets heritage schools established by the Central European immigrants in Canada and raises questions about identity building and the ways heritage schools negotiate ethnic nationalism and multiculturalism. Some scholars made provocative arguments that “heritage

language advocacy might be vulnerable to accusations of nation undermining” (Lo Bianco). The author of this article argues that heritage schools represent key mediators between cultural heritage and identity of Central European immigrants and cultural integration in Canada. What is the place of heritage schools in the nation-building process? How do immigrants in Canada benefit from heritage schools? These were the questions addressed in the study. I was fortunate to meet not only historians but also some sociolinguists whose research was focused on the languages of the immigrants in Canada. We discussed bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism of immigrants in Canada and IHLA’s work. The audience had many questions about IHLA, and its activities and MLD books were in high demand.

### Being a member in good standing

To be an IHLA member in good standing your school needs to a) complete a registration form, b) pay IHLA membership fees, c) participate at MLD through a table (and a book or presentation), d) volunteer at IHLA fundraising events, and e) participate in at least 3 IHLA sponsored professional development sessions.