

From: 'Gonzalo Peralta' [mailto:lauzins@languagescanada.ca]
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2015 3:48 PM
To: OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX
Cc: Linda Auzins (Languages Canada); 'Gonzalo Peralta'
Subject: Letter to Premier Christy Clark from Languages Canada

Dear Premier Clark:

Attached is a letter from Languages Canada . This was sent by Canada Post on September 14, 2015. Please confirm receipt of this communication.

Best regards,

Linda Auzins

Linda Auzins
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September 14, 2015

The Honourable Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia
Box 9041 Station PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Clark,

BC'S INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION SECTOR AT RISK

For decades, the more responsible language education programs in British Columbia have worked to build a sector that is respected in Canada and the world. In the absence of government policy and support, a number of concerned sector leaders gathered and created Languages Canada with the objective of protecting international students and advancing quality in language education. We are proud of our accomplishments. By working together, we have raised the bar for quality and not a single student attending member programs has lost their investment. The sector has grown, and our BC Chapter members receive an estimated 90% of the international students attending BC's language programs.

Once the Canadian leader in international language education, British Columbia is no longer in that position and risks losing much more due to government policy. In 2012, 60,488 students attended Languages Canada member programs in BC. One third of them went on to further post-secondary programs. In 2014, had BC simply maintained its 2012 policies and applying global growth rates of 7%, we should have welcomed 69,252 students. Instead, we received only 50,941 – a loss of 26%! This loss translates to nearly \$400 million in export revenues and over \$50 million in sales taxes over two years.

Since early 2013 the BC government has introduced and abandoned changes to policy affecting our sector, not once but three times, creating a context of uncertainty for educators, students, and our overseas partners.

Even more concerning is that in spite of numerous consultations held by the Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED), the legislation introduced in the spring of 2015 places students at more risk than in the past instead of protecting them and deters investment in growth and innovation in the sector. It is clear that there was "consultation" but no listening.

Government reassured BC's accredited language programs that the gap left in the legislation would be addressed through new regulations. AVED's assurances are not being followed through, and BC will soon have more international students at risk, standards inappropriate to the sector, unnecessary red tape, and an oversight system that hinders growth and innovation.

This from a government that campaigned on a position of reducing red tape and increasing the number of international students. The current approach achieves exactly the opposite. It is a sad state of affairs for the province that was once the innovator for the sector, where the national standards for the sector were born, and that until 2012 was the leader in quality assurance and number of students being brought into Canada. Now BC is the only province in Canada that has lost students for two consecutive years and is heading for an unthinkable third year of reduced numbers. All of this while other Canadian provinces and other countries

experience growth. BC continues to be a magnificent destination, and our quality of education has not diminished – the losses in numbers and quality are strictly a result of BC government policy.

The impact is not only to language programs, the teachers, and other staff that are employed, but also on the surrounding businesses, the thousands of BC families that are hosts to the students, the tourism sector, the BC Jobs Strategy, and the post-secondary institutions that receive these students once their language programs are completed.

Languages Canada members are accredited under a Quality Assurance Scheme that is respected globally and we want to continue our trajectory of responsible growth and innovation. Our system is so effective that not a single student has lost their tuition. Languages Canada members care about quality, about BC, and about students. In the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, we organized a scholarship program to help Japanese students from areas affected because our members wanted to give back to the country that launched international language education in BC.

It is difficult to write and send this letter, but we have no recourse. After years of repeatedly coming to the table in a spirit of collaboration, dozens of meetings with AVED officials and ministers, and time spent on research, analysis, and communication, we have recently received news that once again the stable and appropriate regulatory context the province needs will not only be postponed, but that our private sector members will be forced to comply by December to an accreditation scheme that is completely unsuitable to the province's international language education programs and that will surely change once the new regulations are implemented in the Spring of 2016.

Premier Clark, what we seek and are not getting from government is:

- Student protection
- Support for growth and innovation
- Elimination of costly and unnecessary red tape
- Government commitment to understanding and championing BC's language education sector.

We are not asking for funding. We are asking for government policy that is effective and that will allow BC's programs accredited under the Languages Canada Quality Assurance Scheme to continue its trajectory of quality, student protection, and growth and innovation.

We ask for your help in returning BC's language education sector to what it was and to allow us to contribute to the prosperity of the province.

Sincerely,



Gonzalo Peralta
Executive Director

From: Westcott, William PREM:EX
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2015 8:55 AM
To: Minister, AVED AVED:EX
Subject: Languages Canada letter

Hi Judy,

Would AVED be able to respond to the attached letter obo PCC?

Thanks,

Will Westcott

Correspondence Officer

Office of the Premier

From: Minister, AVED AVED:EX
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2015 9:58 AM
To: Westcott, William PREM:EX
Subject: RE: Languages Canada letter

Yes we will, no problem. Thanks

Judy Johnstone
Manager, Business Services & Ministerial Correspondence

and Research Unit
Office of the Deputy Minister
Ministry of Advanced Education

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From: OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX [<mailto:Premier@gov.bc.ca>]
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2015 11:38 AM
To: 'lauzins@languagescanada.ca'
Subject: FW: Letter to Premier Christy Clark from Languages Canada

Hello, Ms. Auzins, and thank you for your email. We can confirm we received your letter addressed to Premier Clark.

On your behalf, we have shared your correspondence with the Honourable Andrew Wilkinson, Minister of Advanced Education. The Minister will ensure you receive a reply at the earliest opportunity.

Again, thank you for writing.