



## What Will Arne Duncan Do?

By Ed Sterling of FLANC

World language classes could become available at all levels of education in the near future! There is strong support among the leaders at the United States Department of Education for extended school time for learning. President Obama's choice for Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, has an unprecedented amount of funds from the stimulus package, and several billion dollars are to be spent at his discretion. The initial stimulus investment will save jobs and pay for grants, as well as fund more Pell Grants. At [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov), you can find the outline for the spending and reforms in the press releases and announcements. The Joint National Committee on Languages is hopeful that new and additional funds will flow to our world language programs within several different funding streams in the Department of Education spending. Keep in mind that the importance of knowing English plus a second language is now affirmed at the highest levels of US educational policy. Despite the economic collapse, world languages are poised to get an infusion of support and resources.

The point of departure for the new administration in Washington is what will become known as the "End of the NCLB" era. The general trends of the underfunded No Child Left Behind years have been towards testing and certification. That led to the primacy of having to continuously improve test results in reading and math in order to avoid penalties. Doing more with less funding led to diminished interest in subject areas that do not figure into the NCLB statistics. It is widely recognized that time spent on teaching reading has squeezed out time for research-based spelling instruction and other writing skills; meanwhile, everything has squeezed out time for world language instruction! Some criticism of NCLB accuses it of motivating a race to the bottom, a lowering of expectations so school districts could "demonstrate more success." Arne Dun-

can engages the NCLB debate simply: do more of what works and stop doing what doesn't work.

Arne Duncan speaks in favor of extended hours in the school day and more days in the school year, but not with increased work load for individual teachers, rather with increased staffing. In a zero-sum game of time-on-task in a school day, the addition of more time on the clock expands the opportunity for balance and diversity in the curriculum. Time spent on reading and math test prep does not have to diminish the time for other content. The challenge will be to fill the time with worthwhile learning activities for our K-12 students, and that, dear friends, is the opening for world language curriculum!

Arne Duncan plays basketball with President Obama, and they share a Chicago background. Secretary Duncan was district superintendent of Chicago schools and honed his skills in the real world. He is passionate about children and their education—an attitude he inherits from his mother who started a tutoring center in 1961 for at-risk students in the inner-city schools of Chicago. He is eager to serve and the stimulus package includes billions of dollars for education that he can personally allocate. President Obama and Secretary Duncan know that improvement is overdue, and their initiatives will use more carrots than sticks, more funding incentives than penalties for poor performance. Get ready to have an opinion about national standards, charter schools, merit pay, higher salaries for math and science teachers, student monetary awards for good grades, more hours and days in the school year, a broader and deeper curriculum, and increased world language teaching. It is refreshing to note that Arne Duncan was a popular district superintendent (his title was CEO) with teachers and their unions despite demanding more results and compliance. He listened to teachers and implemented plans the teach-

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ers created! Secretary Duncan can be seen in a 54-minute interview with Charlie Rose at [www.charlierose.com](http://www.charlierose.com) that was originally broadcast on March 11, 2009.

Did anyone see the videotaped message—it was subtitled in Farsi—that President Obama sent to Iranians on the occasion of Nowruz? Did you see his bilingual greeting on Univision's hit program *Premio Lo Nuestro*? Do you recall his remark about American monolingualism being an embarrassing national trait when compared with European multilingualism, a remark he reiterated during the campaign? Search *YouTube* to view them. These are exciting indicators that things can change now in our world language field.

As educators, we need to respond quickly and creatively. It is urgent to get the ball rolling and stake out our share of the extended school days at the elementary and secondary school levels. There are successful FLES and FLEX programs to consider.

One lesson we have all learned is that one-size-fits-all programs do not work! Teachers are not all effective in the same methodologies, and students have multiple learning modes. Best practices include being flexible. There

will have to be creative solutions to staffing and curriculum because “highly-qualified” world language teachers are scarce. Obviously, the size of the challenge is daunting, but we only need to blink once or twice to realize that we are at a crossroads in America. Change is on the move. Our pipedreams about K-12 world language instruction could become realities.

This is not the time to hesitate. We already have local and national leaders in our field, now we need the grassroots mechanism to support them and to clamor for Arne Duncan's attention. Our professional associations like CFLP, CLTA, FLANC, FLAGS, LA STARS, and all the others have a role to play (join them and support them). Let's channel some of the economic anxiety we feel into volunteer work, and together we can advance the cause of teaching world languages at all levels of K-12. *¡Adelante, sí se puede!*

Note: Ed Stering teaches at City College of San Francisco, and he is the current president of FLANC, the Foreign Language Association of Northern California. He can be contacted at [edwardstering@yahoo.com](mailto:edwardstering@yahoo.com).

## JNCL, 2009

By Lorraine D'Ambruoso, Executive Director CLTA

Once again, CLTA's Executive Director traveled to Washington, DC, to participate in JNCL's Legislative Day and Delegate Assembly. For those of you to whom this might be a strange or new acronym, JNCL is the Joint National Committee on Languages, and it is our official representation at the national level. Since 1976, it has provided a forum for cooperation and discussion among language professionals. It is a non-profit organization representing virtually all areas of the language profession: major and less commonly-taught languages, bilingual education, the classics, linguistics, translation, interpretation, research, American Sign Language, and educational technology. It is of great importance to all language professionals, as it functions as a point of reference for the planning of national language policies and the identification of national needs in this area. JNCL's mission is to spread the belief that all Americans must have the opportunity to learn and use English and at least one other language. Its goals are:

- to unify the language profession,
- to promote policies that respect and develop the language abilities of Americans, and
- to increase language awareness by the public.

Each year, member organizations send representatives to the Legislative Day and Delegate Assembly. The Legislative Day begins with a briefing on Capitol Hill. Legislators or their representatives, usually their Education Aides, brief us on upcoming legislation and funding that might impact our discipline. We discuss what our needs are and the points that we should discuss during our afternoon visits to our senators' and representatives' offices. (JNCL arranges these appointments for us in advance, so we are expected.)

This year, we had the pleasure of hearing one of our greatest supporters, Daniel Akaka, US Senator (Dem) from Hawaii and the only member of Chinese descent in the Congress. His message was that NSLI (National Security Language Initiative) was a good first step in ensuring that Americans have the language and cultural competencies that our government, economy and society need. But we need to assure that the steps taken thus far continue. To this end, he announced plans to reintroduce his bill calling for the establishment of a National Foreign Language Coordination Council, with a National Language Director who would develop policies and programs, monitor the implementation of a national foreign language strategy, and engage public agencies with the private sector to

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achieve the goals of these policies and programs.

After Senator Akaka's address, we planned our presentations to our Congressmen and women. With the admonition that "Advocacy is not a monologue," JNCL asks us to follow the Three Ps of Public Relations: **Planning, Persistence, and Patience**. So we **planned** our talking points which involved:

- the need for more funding for language education,
- support for articulated and longer language-learning sequences and partnership programs (Part B of FLPA funding), and
- support for coordination and leadership (Akaka's bill).

We then spent the afternoon visiting them and pleading for our needs. **Patience** dictated that we answer questions and provide information to educate those that met with us. **Persistence** simply means that we repeated what we did last year and what we will most likely do again next year.

The Delegate Assembly on Friday was a veritable overload of information. First of all, we learned that NCLB has now reverted to ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act), but that changes will probably have to wait until next year. To quote my own legislator, this year's attention will be focused on universal health care, climate control and energy, and fiscal re-organization and stabilization. However, we did learn that Secretary of Education Arne Duncan is traveling around the country to hear input regarding ESEA's reauthorization.

FLAP (Foreign Language Assistance Program) has seen its funding increase from \$8 million in 2000 to \$24 million in 2009. At its onset, 80% of the programs were in Spanish and the remainder in traditionally taught languages. But since '06-'07, the majority of the programs have been in the critical languages. This last funding round is seeing absolute priority for critical languages.

To quote Rahm Emanuel, Obama's Chief of Staff, "Never waste a crisis." Obama's administration is doing just this, with

its stimulus package, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Dr. Zollie Stevenson, representing the U.S. Department of Education, gave us an in-depth review of ARRA. Its goals are saving and creating jobs and advancing educational reform. ARRA's guiding principles are:

- spend quickly to save and create jobs;
- ensure transparency and accountability;
- thoughtfully invest one-time funds;
- advance effective reforms.

Grants will be made to State and Local Education Associations (SEAs and LEAs) whose submissions show that they will:

- drive results for students, including students in poverty or with disabilities and English language learners,
- increase long-term capacity to improve results for students,
- accelerate reform,
- improve productivity and
- foster continuous improvement.

For further information on ARRA, access [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) or [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov).

During the Delegate Assembly, we had two breakout sessions where we brainstormed language policies and the economic education stimulus. The results of these discussions will be posted on the JNCL web site and we will continue to work on them over the next few months.

As you can see, the day was full and our brains were taxed. But it was a worthwhile activity, in that this was truly a most representative gathering of the profession. I would like to thank CLTA for giving me the opportunity to represent its constituents at this wonderful gathering. Should you wish more information, please access JNCL's web site: [www.languagepolicy.org](http://www.languagepolicy.org).

## CLTA Goes to the Fair!

Once again, thanks to the hard work of Discover Languages® Chair, Nicole Naditz, CLTA will host a booth at the California State Fair in Sacramento. Our date for this full-day activity will be Saturday, September 5.

Last year, Marty Abbott, ACTFL's Education Director, flew in from Washington, D.C. to participate, as did CLTA's Executive Director and many members of FLAGS and CapFLP. The day's activities included games from around the world and questions about languages and cultures, with lots of Discover Languages® prizes for the students. For parents, there were brochures on the importance and value of studying languages and cultures.

Nicole will once again recruit student and adult volunteers for the day. If you are interested in joining us, please let her know. Should you be interested in replicating this activity for your local county fair, please contact Nicole, [advocacy@flag-teacher.com](mailto:advocacy@flag-teacher.com). She has great ideas to share.

## Of Interest to the profession

This is a word definition game (it assesses your level and keeps the words at a challenging level for you).

For each correct answer, you will be donating 10 grains of rice to the United Nations World Food Bank. Warning: this game may make you smarter. It may improve your thinking, speaking, writing and more! <http://www.freerice.com/>

Many of our members have seen and been impressed by the CIA's World Fact Book. In fact, several of you have won this valuable and informative document as a prize at the annual CLTA Conference. For your information, the World Factbook is no longer available in a print edition. The CIA has made a decision to focus Factbook resources exclusively on the World Wide Web online edition, which is updated with new material every two weeks. Please look for the newly redesigned Factbook Web site coming in spring 2009. Go to <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

If you enjoyed the interactive map sites we gave you in the last wrap-around, here are several more which might be of interest to you and your students. This type of activity might work very well as sponge activities.

<http://www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/index.html>

<http://www.yourchildlearns.com/geography.htm>

<http://www.ilike2learn.com/ilike2learn/africa.html>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

[http://www.visiteurope.com/ccm/vacation/interactivemap/?nav\\_cat=128&lang=en\\_US](http://www.visiteurope.com/ccm/vacation/interactivemap/?nav_cat=128&lang=en_US)

<http://www.africaguide.com/afmap.htm>

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