

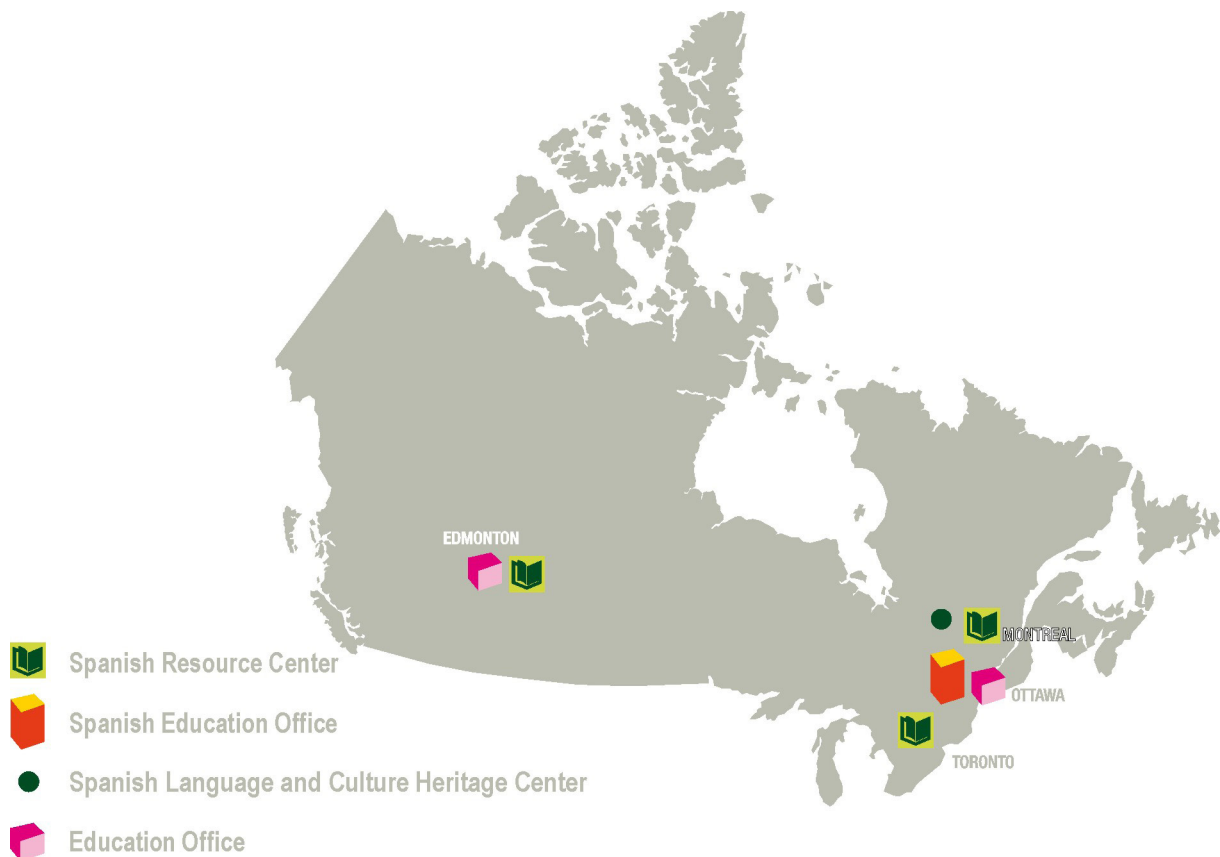
# THE WORLD LEARNS SPANISH



CANADA

2020





## Introduction

There is a growing interest for learning Spanish in Canada, especially in Alberta, where there are more than 30 Spanish-English bilingual schools, most of them belonging to the International Spanish Academies (ISA) network of the Education Office of Spain in Canada. Besides the ISA, the Education Office of Spain has implemented other programs in Canada to respond to this growing demand. The Visiting Teachers program provides high qualified native teachers from Spain to bilingual schools in Canada. With the Canadian language assistant program, Canadian university students and young graduates have the opportunity to spend a whole year assisting teachers in a school in Spain and improve their Spanish and cultural awareness about Spain. On the other hand, the Spanish language assistant program offers the same opportunity for Spanish university students but in Canadian schools. These programs undoubtedly strengthen cultural relationships between both countries and serve to greatly facilitate learning Spanish in Canada.

## Spanish Teaching in Canada

In Canada, bilingual programs in Spanish can only be implemented in provinces where legislation allows immersion programs other than the French-English model. Those provinces are Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Alberta has by far the greatest number and most successful Spanish-English bilingual programs in Canada. Manitoba has been progressively implementing a Spanish-English bilingual program in a school in Winnipeg since the 2016-17 academic year. The Memorandum of Understanding with British Columbia, which was signed in

2016, has laid the foundations for the increase in the offer of programs that include the Spanish language, although it has not yet translated into the implementation of any bilingual program. There is great interest in Spanish in Saskatchewan, but the low demographic density negatively impacts the creation of bilingual programs.

Alberta and Manitoba are the only provinces with Spanish-English bilingual programs

## British Columbia

The students of this province can start learning Spanish from grade 5 through grade 12, but most of them start taking Spanish in grade 9.

After the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Spanish Ministry of Education and the Department of Education of this province in December 2016, Spain's efforts have focused on collaborating with the provincial authorities to implement a Spanish-English program, since Spanish is in great demand in the province.



Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding

## Yukon

Yukon, a territory located in the northwest of Canada, uses the British Columbia curriculum, but with certain adjustments to adapt it to its own reality, in which the culture of indigenous peoples is particularly important. Spanish, like the rest of foreign languages, is taught on an optional basis and generally in higher courses. Most students learn French or Aboriginal languages, so Spanish is not a priority in the curriculum.

## Alberta

The province of Alberta has more than thirty schools where Spanish Language Arts is taught, but also other areas are taught in Spanish through the integrated learning method of content-based instruction.

These schools began their bilingual programs in the 2001-02 academic year under the umbrella of a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the province of Alberta and the Ministry of Education of Spain. Most of them have been integrated into the network of International Spanish Academies (ISA), a program of the Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

In addition to bilingual programs, Alberta offers the possibility of studying Spanish Language and Culture or SLC in nine-year programs (4th to 12th grades), six-year programs (6th to 12th grades) and three-year programs (10th to 12<sup>th</sup> grades). These last two are the most widespread.



Spanish Visiting Teachers Orientation Day (Calgary, 2019)

## Saskatchewan

Generally speaking, Spanish is taught outside of school hours, through cultural associations of the various community-based and language schools. These courses may be recognized by the provincial government and, therefore, students receive credits if they meet the legal requirements.

In a very small number of public schools, high school students can take a three-year program in one of the languages included in the provincial curriculum, one of which is Spanish.

## Manitoba

Spanish is an elective subject in Manitoba and is taught from the grade 7 in both educational systems, English and French. Although there is an official curriculum from that level, most schools only offer it from the grade 9.



In 2014, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education of Spain and the Government of Manitoba was renewed, in order to respond to the growing interest in the Spanish language through the programs managed by the Office of Education in Ottawa. Since the 2016-17 academic year, a bilingual program in English and Spanish has been progressively being implemented in the city of Winnipeg.

## Ontario

Besides French and English, Ontario offers an interesting number of foreign languages on an elective basis. The International Languages program is run by the school districts and funded by the provincial Ministry of Education. But International Languages curriculum is only available for grades 9-12.

Likewise, in the large cities of Ontario there is a wide offer of after-school programs in foreign languages and Spanish is also offered in this modality. These programs, organized by the school districts, are designed so that immigrant students can remain in contact with their native language. Classes are usually held on Saturday mornings and the cost for families is symbolic, since students usually only have to pay a small amount for registration for an entire school year.

## Quebec

Considering that in this province French is the official language and that learning English is compulsory in Primary and Secondary school, the number of Spanish students is especially significant. Since 2007 there is an official Spanish curriculum for grades 9-11. It is the first approved curriculum for a language other than French or English and responds to the growing interest in Spanish. As in Ontario, Spanish courses are also offered outside of school hours in the Primary and Intermediate Education stages.

## The Maritimes (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) and Newfoundland and Labrador

All these provinces and territories have something in common: the very low population density and the importance of a second and even a third language. In the case of the Maritimes, all the weight of non-English-speaking education is concentrated in French. New Brunswick is officially bilingual in French and English. As for Newfoundland and Labrador, alongside French, indigenous languages have a fundamental place in the educational system. In this context, there are no official Spanish programs and, in most cases, the only possibility to learn this language is through virtual learning.

## Post-secondary studies

The demand for Spanish in this educational stage is constantly increasing and in the main universities it is possible to study a major in Spanish. If not, there is usually the possibility of doing a minor in Spanish. Similarly, many colleges also offer regulated courses in continuing education programs for adults.

However, in recent times, many universities have suffered budget cuts as a result of economic adjustments in the provinces. In some cases, this has had a negative impact on Spanish programs and has resulted in the suppression of some specialization programs in this language.

# Spanish International Education Programmes in Canada

The presence of the Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Canada dates back to 1993 and has been increasing in recent years. The work carried out has had an important impact, both due to the many years of activity and the growing interest generated by the Spanish language and culture. Although most of the efforts are concentrated at the Primary and Secondary levels, our Ministry offers programs to all educational stages of this immense country: kindergarten and primary schools, secondary schools, and universities.

Spanish is now the third language in educational programs, after English and French. Interest in this language and its cultures does not stop growing.

More than 200 Spanish teachers have participated in the Alberta Visiting Teachers program since 2001

## Offices

International Outreach Initiatives in Canada are promoted and directed by the Education Office of Spain in the US and Canada, based in Washington, D.C. (USA). In Canada, the Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has an Education Office located at the Embassy of Spain in Ottawa, with an Education Attaché along with two Education Advisors in the cities of Ottawa and Edmonton. Relations between the Education Office of Spain and the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Manitoba are managed from the Ottawa Office, while Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan are managed from the office in Edmonton, located on the premises of Alberta Education.



Embassy of Spain in Ottawa

## Schools

In Montreal, there is an “*Aula de Lengua y Cultura Españolas*” (ALCE). This program started in the academic year 2008-09 as a pilot project. The classes take place at the “*Instituto Español de Montreal*”, but pedagogically it follows the instructions of ALCE New York. The aula is fully consolidated and catered for 54 students in the 2019-20 academic year. These students were enrolled in the five levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages included in the ALCE curriculum.

## Programs

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has signed Memoranda of Understanding with the University of Montreal (1997), the Province of Alberta (1998, renewed in 2013), the Province of Manitoba (2008, renewed in 2014), the University of York (2008), Edmonton Public Schools and the University of Alberta (2009), and the province of British Columbia (2016). These Memoranda specify the scope of collaboration between the Ministry and the different Canadian institutions and establish the terms and conditions of such cooperation.

These agreements serve as legal support for the implementation of programs such as the following: Spanish Visiting Teachers, International Spanish Academies (ISA), Spanish Language and Culture Assistants, North American Language and Culture Assistants (NALCAP) and Spanish Resource Centers.

## International Spanish Academies

The International Spanish Academy (ISA) program is an educational outreach initiative of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of Spain where high performing schools in the United States and Canada implement a Spanish-English dual language immersion curriculum with the support, consultancy, and recognition of the Spanish government. The program design includes a content-based instructional curriculum for different subjects, in which the Spanish language, and the culture and history of Spain and of other Spanish speaking countries are present, within the K-12 framework.

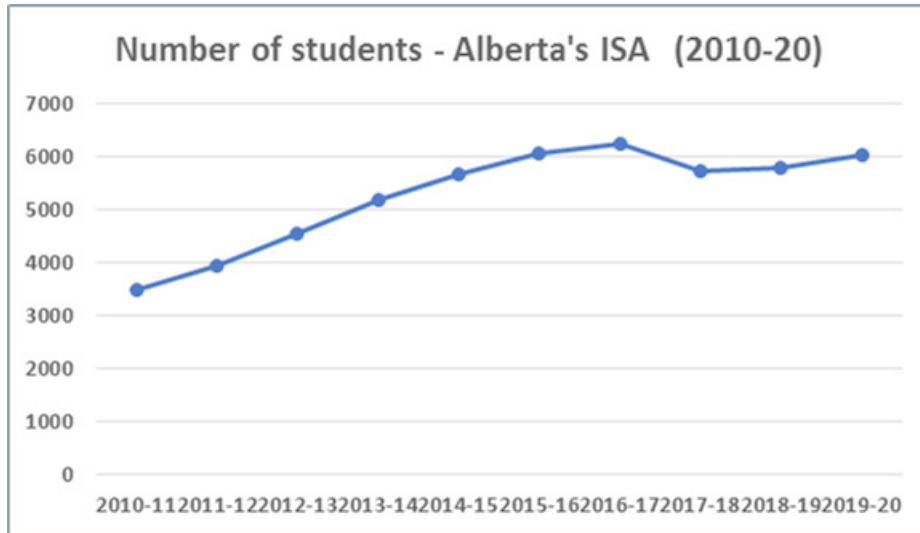
Membership in the ISA network provides schools with a gold standard seal and brings a heightened value to their educational and dual language immersion programs, along with the prestige granted by the official recognition of Spain. In addition, the Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training collaborates with the ISAs by providing them with consultancy, resources, along with offering special opportunities and activities to those who excel, including diplomas to students who fulfill the objectives of the ISA program. In the 2018-19, 1,032 diplomas were issued in Canada.

The 2019-2020 academic year marked a turning point in the success of the program's objectives. As a result of the comprehensive review and analysis carried out, the Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training was pleased to offer its partners, members of the ISA program (schools, school districts, administrators, teachers, students, families, and educational communities) a new Handbook for Admission and Membership, which will serve as a reference for the admission of new schools into the program and for the continuity of those which are already a part of the network.

In the province of Alberta, there are 25 schools incorporated into the ISA network through individual agreements between the Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and the corresponding districts. Alberta was a pioneer in the adoption of this program in its early

days and is the only province in Canada where it exists, specifically in the cities of Calgary (15), Edmonton (9) and Red Deer (1).

Alberta's ISA began in 2001-02 with just a few students and in the 2019-20 school year there was a total of 6,046 students enrolled. The following graph shows the evolution of enrollment:



Most ISA are located in Elementary Schools, as shown in the following table:

Types of Schools					
	Elementary Schools	Junior High Schools	High Schools	Others	Total
<b>Canada</b>	12	7	5	1 (K-9)	25

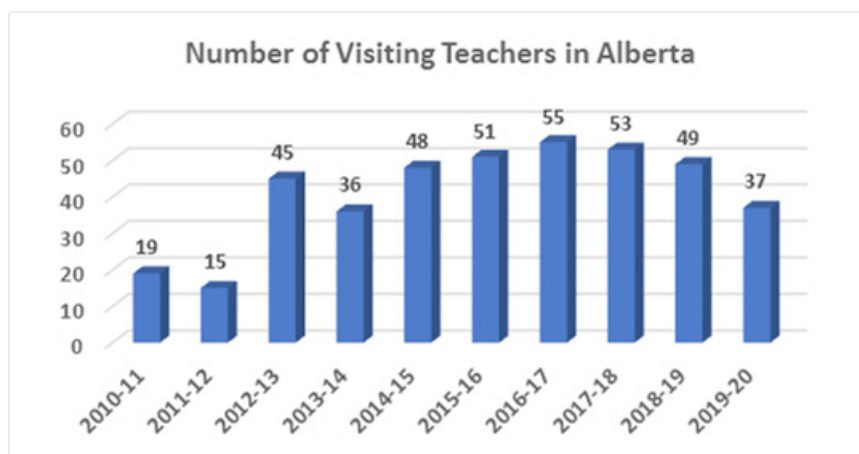
## Visiting Teachers

The Visiting Teachers in the USA and Canada Program is an international cooperation program supported by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training/the Embassy of Spain and several Departments of Education and school districts across the United States and Canada.

This program offers U.S. and Canadian school districts the opportunity to recruit highly qualified bilingual teachers from Spain to teach at elementary, middle, and high school levels. At the same time, it provides students, parents, and educators with the opportunity to work with professionals who are native speakers of the target language, bringing a valuable international perspective to American or Canadian classrooms.

In the case of Canada, this program is currently only implemented in the province of Alberta, where it began in 2001. During the 2019-20 school year, there were 37 Spanish visiting teachers in Canada. In total, 203 Spanish visiting teachers have worked in Alberta's classrooms throughout the years (see chart below). More than 90% of these professionals work in English-Spanish bilingual schools.





### Canadian Language and Culture Assistants (NALCAP)

This program is very popular with the Canadian university community. In the 2019-20 academic year, there were more than 160 Canadian language and culture assistants in primary schools, secondary schools, and official language schools throughout Spain. They come from all the provinces and territories of Canada and the number of participants increases gradually from year to year. They work under the guidance of English and French teachers in the Spanish schools. The Education Advisors organize informative sessions at universities to promote this program.

### Spanish Language and Culture Assistants

The Spanish Language and Culture Assistants support the activities carried out by the Spanish Resource Centers. They also collaborate with the Spanish teachers in the schools and universities where they are posted. For the 2019-20 academic year, there were three Spanish language and culture assistants in Canada: two in Edmonton, (Alberta), and one in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

### Spanish Resource Centers

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has three Spanish Resource Centers in order to promote the Spanish language and culture in Canada. They are located at the University of Montreal (Quebec), the University of York in Toronto (Ontario) and the Language Center at Woodcroft in Edmonton (Alberta), the latter in collaboration with Edmonton Public Schools and the University of Alberta. All three are led by the Education Advisors; the one in Edmonton also has the assistance of the Spanish language and culture assistants.

The three centers are equipped with educational materials for teaching Spanish as a foreign language, collections of contemporary Spanish literature, children's literature, films, etc. All of these materials are available to the public. There are also activities such as film cycles, conferences, professional development sessions or conversation clubs.



Spanish Resource Center in Edmonton

## Professional development for educators of Spanish

The Education Office of Spain in Canada organizes annual training courses and workshops, addressed to both Canadian Spanish teachers and Spanish visiting teachers. They are coordinated by the Education advisors. Thus, in the 2018-19 school year, different seminars and conferences were held in cities such as Montreal, Ottawa, and Winnipeg. These meetings were extremely well received and widely attended by teachers from the different school districts. Likewise, every year in May the “*Encuentro de profesores de español de Alberta*” is held in Edmonton or Calgary. Several teachers from all over the province attend this meeting, and topics such as content-based instruction in a foreign language or the use of technology in the Spanish classroom are covered.

Given the great geographic extension and dispersion of the population in Canada, in the 2019-20 academic year the Education Office of Spain in Canada decided to offer an online course for teachers of Spanish for the first time in Alberta. It was organized along with the National Institute of Educational Technologies and Teacher Training of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (INTEF).



IX Encuentro de profesores de español de Alberta

## Other programs

The Education Office organizes professional development opportunities in collaboration with the universities of Alberta, Ottawa, York, Montreal, UQAM and Saint-Boniface, among others. In the 2018-19 academic year there were 22 events, attended by 463 people. The Education Office also maintains frequent contact with teachers' associations in various provinces. They collaborate in the organization of events for Spanish teachers, the granting of scholarships and communication tasks in general.

## Other institutions in Canada

Since 2006 the University of Calgary (Alberta) has an *Aula Cervantes*, dependent on the Cervantes Institute of Chicago. Its work consists fundamentally in the promotion of the Spanish culture and language, as well as the management and administration of the DELE exams. The Aula and the Education Office maintain a close relationship and work together on a regular basis.

The Spanish Embassy in Ottawa and the Spanish General Consulates in Toronto and Montreal offer unconditional support to all the activities and programs of the Education Office in Canada.



Aula Cervantes in Calgary



