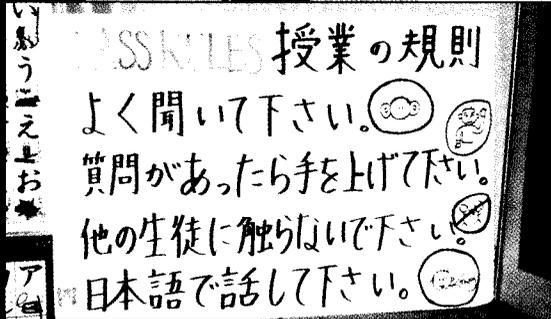


World Languages

Connections



Connections



A Guide to K-12 Program Development

State of Connecticut
State Board of Education 1999

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**A GUIDE TO K-12
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
IN WORLD LANGUAGES**

Photos inside this guide were taken by Mark Gaier at

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Photos on cover (except center photo) were taken by Mary Ann M. Hansen at

- State Latin Day (students from Enfield's Enrico Fermi High School);
- Spring Glen School in Hamden; and
- Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School in Waterbury.

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PREFACE

This *Guide to K-12 Program Development in World Languages* represents a new vision. It represents the latest research in the field and the best thinking of Connecticut teachers. It pushes us all to refocus what we do and how we do it. It underscores our beliefs, grounded in research, that world languages are for all children, and the earlier they start learning another language, the better.

Many Connecticut districts recently have made tremendous strides in starting programs earlier. In 1993, only about 30 districts offered ongoing and systematic programs of instruction in world languages before Grade 7, six of which started before Grade 4; in 1995, 60 districts offered a program before Grade 7, with nine districts starting before Grade 4; in 1997, there were 70 programs before Grade 7, including 21 starting before Grade 4. The trend to start world languages programs earlier continues in 1999. The length of sequences and the number of languages taught in a district remain related to district wealth.

The State Board of Education has supported world languages instruction in several of its major documents. In its October 1996 "Position Statement on the Education of Students Acquiring English as a Second Language," the Board wrote that "the acquisition of more than one language by all students is in the best interest of the State of Connecticut." In *Nurturing the Genius of Connecticut's Students: Connecticut's Comprehensive Plan for Education 1996-2000*, under Goal 1 (High Expectations for Students), the Board states, "All students will have access to and will complete a rigorous curriculum in core areas of study, including . . . foreign language . . ." Most recently, the Board underscored the importance of language instruction as part of its discussion of *Connecticut's Common Core of Learning*, and Commissioner Theodore S. Sergi, in his 1997-98 back-to-school message, encouraged districts to offer a world language beginning in kindergarten.

Implementing a K-12 world languages curriculum is a process that takes time and planning. While the guide is written with a K-12 vision, it can be adapted for any grade configuration. Most of all, this guide offers practical assistance to districts as they improve current programs and move toward including longer sequences and more languages in the curriculum.

Mary Ann M. Hansen
Consultant in World Languages

ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGES BY ALL STUDENTS

The State Board of Education maintains that the acquisition of more than one language by all students is in the best interest of the State of Connecticut. Therefore, it is the belief of the State Board of Education that:

- (1) every student should attain writing and speaking competency in at least two languages;
- (2) individuals who are competent in more than one language and are knowledgeable about more than one culture are an essential asset to the state's schools, communities and work force, and to the national and international marketplace; and
- (3) individuals who are competent in more than one language will be among those best suited to assume leadership and other important positions in the national and international marketplace.

The Board strongly believes that this position statement appropriately addresses the education of students acquiring English as a second language and helps establish a new vision of the strength multilingualism holds for all students in the State of Connecticut.

Excerpt from "Position Statement on the
Education of Students Acquiring English
as a Second Language"
Connecticut State Board of Education
Adopted October 2, 1996

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Members of the World Languages Curriculum Committee met diligently over three years to produce this guide. The work presented here is a truly collaborative effort. While the 30 or so members of the committee at large represented a broad range of constituencies in the education and business communities, a team of approximately 11 people was principally responsible for writing the guide. It is difficult to say who of this team wrote which sentence, and this speaks clearly of the collaboration and commitment of all involved.

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