

**OFLA Annual Report**  
**Ryan Wertz and Paula Sondej, ODE World Language Consultants**  
**March 15, 2013**

**1. Clear Expectations for Students**

ODE concluded **the revision of the world language academic content standards** in June, 2012, with the unanimous adoption of *Ohio's New Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* by members of the State Board of Education. These world class standards continue to be aligned with the ACTFL's national *Standards for Foreign Language in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* and require districts to implement communicative language-learning programs that are both standards- and proficiency-based. The new learning standards articulate rigorous proficiency goals which will ensure that more K-12 language learners are obtaining the higher levels of language proficiency that are becoming requisite for success in college and career in today's global society. Follow the ODE homepage link marked *Academic Content Standards* to access the new learning standards.

ODE recently began work on a **model curriculum**, which is a tool that will help language teachers to implement the new learning standards. It is currently scheduled to be reviewed and approved by the State Board of Education in June 2014. The model curriculum will consist of four broad categories of useful information and resources including 1.) Content Elaborations; 2.) Expectations for Learning; 3.) Instructional Strategies; and 4.) Instructional Resources. Currently the ODE is soliciting contributions to the content of the model curriculum and volunteers to serve on a model curriculum development and vetting committee.

The ODE continues to regularly update information about **credit flexibility** for world language learners on its Web site. Type "credit flexibility guidance documents" in the search box on the ODE homepage to access the guidance link. Scan down towards the bottom of the page to find the world language information. By law (Am. Senate Bill 311), local districts must have a working plan in place to award credit in all subjects and communicate that plan to stakeholders. Learners may earn credit for a variety of experiences including service learning, internships, study abroad, demonstrations of proficiency, etc. Credit earned in this manner must be recorded on students' transcripts just like any other credit. Currently the amount of credit that student are awarded based on their demonstrations of proficiency is determined at the local level based on ODE recommendations and local input. A community of practice Web site is also available at [www.sharedwork.org](http://www.sharedwork.org). The site features networking and information-sharing around the topic of credit flexibility and is available to the general public.

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## **2. Teacher Capacity**

The ODE continues to **advise world language educators in the field**. Currently, ODE consultants are finishing information that will introduce and provide an explanation of the new standards to a wide audience of stakeholders. This information will be found on the world language learning standards page of the ODE Website once it is finished. Consultants are also working with the field to facilitate the full implementation of the new standards in time for the 2014-2015 school year. Over the past year, ODE has held numerous regional workshops to introduce the standards to the field and make recommendations for their implementation. Additionally, an online Webinar was offered to stakeholders who were not able to travel to a regional workshop. A final workshop is being offered at the Central State Conference for the Teaching of Foreign Languages for those who would benefit from one last opportunity to receive this information firsthand. Other topics on which ODE is frequently consulted include program design and sustainability, differentiated instruction, performance-based assessment, technology-based language learning, educator licensure, world language enrollment in Ohio, resources and the new Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). ODE consultants continue to provide periodic workshops on LinguaFolio, the nationally-recognized student self-assessment tool developed by the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages ([www.ncssfl.org](http://www.ncssfl.org)).

Amended Substitute House Bill 153 mandates that the board of education of each school district, in consultation with its teachers, adopt a standards-based **teacher effectiveness** evaluation policy that conforms to the framework for the evaluation of teachers developed by the ODE. Ohio's new system for evaluating teachers will provide educators with a richer and more detailed view of their performance with a focus on specific strengths and opportunities for improvement. The new system relies on two key evaluation components, each weighted at 50 percent: a rating of teacher performance (based on classroom observations and other factors), and a rating of student academic growth. ODE world language consultants have been integral members of the team tasked with determining how to best measure the academic growth of world language students. In the world language content area, what should be measured is the growth of students' overall language proficiency during the evaluative period. ODE consultants worked with OFLA Professional Development Committee Chair, Martha Pero, to help develop a series of OFLA-sponsored regional workshops to assist educators with writing high-quality Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and developing appropriate Student Growth

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Measures (SGMs). ODE consultants are working hard to communicate to districts that measuring students' achievement on discreet elements of their target languages is not an acceptable way to determine the growth in students' overall language proficiency.

The ODE continues to help heritage speakers seeking **alternative licensure** to become world language teachers. For information, click on the "Educator Licensure Applications" link on the ODE homepage and then find and click on application #14 titled *Alternative Resident Educator License*.

ODE continues to facilitate a number of **international teacher exchanges** with Ohio's official partners: mainland China, France, Spain and Taiwan. Cross-cultural sharing, teacher shortages, immersion programming needs, sister school program development, teacher training and two-way exchanges are just some of the many reasons school districts elect to participate in Ohio's visiting international teacher programs. During the current school year, ODE forged into new territory by supporting a first-ever two-way mathematics teacher exchange between Australia and Ohio. All of the ODE's efforts in this area are designed to provide students with diverse learning experiences that will better prepare them for academic and professional success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **3. Advocacy**

Through **active participation in the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Language (NCSSFL)**, ODE consultants continued to remain abreast of - and pass on information about - world language issues at the national level that impact Ohio. ODE consultants worked closely with the OFLA board and its committees in an *ex officio* capacity to provide and transmit information on all facets of world language teaching and learning, including policy considerations, research-based best practices, 21<sup>st</sup> century skill development, early language learning, critical need languages and program design.

ODE continues to **advocate strongly for ALL languages** with an emphasis on maintaining Ohio's heritage language programs in French and German while also encouraging schools and districts to consider offering students the option of learning at least one less commonly taught language. A call for long, articulated sequences of communicative language learning beginning in the earliest grades and continuing through graduation (and beyond!) figures into every conversation we have with district and building administrators, curriculum directors, school board members, parents and other stakeholders.

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**4. Miscellaneous**

In June 2012, the ODE welcomed part-time consultant Paula Sondej to its world languages curriculum team. A second, full-time position left vacant in January, 2012, following the retirement of former ODE consultant Debbie Robinson remains unfilled at the time of this report. ODE is currently in negotiations with a prospective candidate for the position, and we hope to have the position filled by summer 2013 at the latest.

During the past year ODE consultants:

- Attended OFLA meetings and reported to the Executive Board;
- Submitted articles to *The Cardinal*;
- Advertised Camp OFLA and other travel, study, professional development, staffing, and funding opportunities over the OFLA's listserv and also in the *Ides of ODE*, *Tools for Teachers* and *EdConnection* e-newsletters;
- Held informational webinars for districts on the visiting international teacher programs in 2013-14.
- Represented Ohio at the national ACTFL Convention and presented workshops and sessions;
- Went to China and Spain to interview prospective visiting teachers candidates;
- Provided a seventh cohort of visiting teachers from Spain and China with orientation on schooling, standards, classroom management, and grading and assessment, among other topics;
- Supported Ohio's visiting international educators with licensure support, professional development workshops, and site visits; and
- Hosted groups of visiting international educators during their visits to the Ohio Department of Education.
- Additionally, Ryan represented Ohio on the executive board of the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) as Interim Secretary and currently is serving the organization's President-Elect.

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**5. International Education**

The ODE regrets to announce the continued absence of a fulltime International Education Coordinator position as a result of ongoing budgetary limitations and departmental reorganization. At this time, all formal international education initiatives are suspended, and we have no knowledge of any plans to resurrect the position anytime soon.

Although it is not currently being updated, the *Think Global Ohio* Web site continues to be the primary repository for information and resources related to K-12 international education in Ohio. To visit the site, go to <http://thinkglobalohio.org>. Many resources are available to Ohio K-12 educators. Of particular interest are two documents that are available via the Text Resources link: the *Strategic Plan for International Education in Ohio* and the *International Education Rubric for Ohio Schools*.

**6. Goals Related to the ODE Consultants' Interactions with the OFLA Board**

1. Share relevant information about state and national education policy as it relates to world language learning in a timely manner to promote continuing innovation in Ohio's K-12 language programs. (This goal is ongoing.)
2. Collaborate with the OFLA on initiatives that will result in high-quality language teaching on the part of Ohio's world language educators and higher levels of language proficiency on the part of our state's world language learners. (This goal is ongoing.)
3. Advocate for long, articulated sequences of communicative language learning in a wide variety of languages beginning in the earliest grades and continuing through graduation and beyond. (This goal is ongoing.)
4. Work with the OFLA to support teachers' efforts to quantify their students' overall language proficiency growth for the new Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). (This goal is ongoing.)

Respectfully submitted,  
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Ohio Department of Education