

OFLA Annual Report
Ryan Wertz, Kathy Shelton and Paula Sondej, ODE World Language Consultants
April 10, 2014

1. Clear Expectations for Students

Statewide implementation of *Ohio's New Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* is well underway. These world-class standards continue to be aligned with the ACTFL's national *Standards for Foreign Language in the 21st 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 required for success in college and career in today's global society. ODE consultants continue to provide focused customer service to schools and districts and professional development to teachers around the new learning standards. Follow the ODE homepage link marked [Academic Content Standards](#) to access the new learning standards.

The ODE continues to regularly update information about **credit flexibility** for world language learners on its Website. 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 measureable proficiency gained through a variety of experiences including service learning, internships, study abroad, heritage acquisition of language, etc. Credit earned in this manner must be recorded on students' transcripts just like any other credit. Currently the amount of credit that students 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 Website is also available at www.sharedwork.org. The site features networking and information-sharing around the topic of credit flexibility and is available to the general public.

2. Teacher Capacity

ODE is in the process of concluding its work on the **Model Curriculum for K-12 World Languages**, a tool that will help language teachers to implement the new learning standards. It is currently scheduled to be reviewed and adopted by the State Board of Education in June 2014. The model curriculum will consist of six broad categories of useful information and resources including 1) Introduction to the Standards; 2) Expectations for Learning; 3) Content Elaborations; 4) Instructional Strategies; 5) Instructional Resources; and 6) Career Connections. ODE worked with expert

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contractors and a representative stakeholder group in 2013 to develop the Model Curriculum and solicited resources and strategies from the K-12 world language teaching field at large for inclusion. In January and February of this year, the ODE posted the draft model curriculum for public review and comment. ODE consultants are now busy analyzing the feedback that was received and incorporating suggestions for improvement into a final draft. The ODE will reconvene the stakeholder group one more time in early May to conduct a final review of the draft prior to presenting the finished Model Curriculum to the State Board of Education the following month. It is important to note that the Model Curriculum will not be a static document; instead, it will be periodically reviewed and updated, with new resources and instructional strategies being added as they become available.

Much of the work of the ODE world language consultants over the past year has centered on supporting world language educators in relation to the implementation of the new **Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES)**. 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 were 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 continue to work with OFLA Professional Development Committee Chair, Martha Pero, develop resources and professional development offerings to assist educators with writing and implementing high-quality Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and appropriate Student Growth Measures (SGMs). Recommended growth measures include use of the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements in conjunction with the collection of supporting evidence and the use of Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs). ODE consultants continue to communicate to districts that measuring students' achievement on discrete elements of their target languages is not an acceptable way to determine the growth in students' overall language proficiency. Measures must be standards- and proficiency-based.

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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. 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 21st century. ODE consultants work with host institutions to support their visiting international teachers in all aspects of their work in Ohio.

3. Advocacy

Through **active participation in the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Language (NCSSFL) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)**, ODE consultants continue to remain abreast of - and pass on information about - world language issues at the national level that impact Ohio. For the next two years, ODE lead consultant, Ryan Wertz, will serve as the NCSSFL's executive president.

ODE consultants worked closely with the **OFLA Executive 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, 21st century skill development, early language learning, critical need languages, teacher evaluation, advocacy 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.

ODE world language consultants support a recent call by the OFLA to the State Board of Education's Graduation Requirements Committee to create a Seal of Biliteracy to recognize Ohio high school graduates with a high level of proficiency in English and at least one other language. The proposal

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was favorably received by the members of the committee and continues to be included in a range of recommendations around graduation that will be shared with the education committees of the Ohio House and Senate for future consideration. If you support such recognition for Ohio graduates, consider contacting your local representative or senator to voice that support. ODE consultants are poised to assist with the development of a Seal of Biliteracy Program should one end up being legislated.

4. Miscellaneous

In August, 2013, ODE welcomed fulltime consultant **Kathy Shelton** to the Office of Curriculum and Assessment. Kathy brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to bear in her work at the Department. She fills the position left vacant following the retirement of former ODE consultant Debbie Robinson. Kathy joins Ryan Wertz and Paula Sondej on the ODE World Language Team.

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 2014-15.
- Represented Ohio at the national ACTFL Convention and presented workshops and sessions;
- Went to China and Spain to interview prospective visiting teachers candidates;
- Provided an eighth 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 J-1 visa issuance, licensure support, professional development, and site visits;
- Provided focused professional development opportunities for educators and district decision-makers around a wide range of topics, often in coordination with the OFLA; and
- Hosted groups of visiting international educators during their visits to the Ohio Department of Education.

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5. 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 Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). (This goal is ongoing.)

Respectfully submitted,

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ODE World Language Consultants

Ohio Department of Education