



The Executive Board of the Michigan World Language Association adopted the following ***Statement of Policy on World Language Education*** at its meeting of December 5, 2009.

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## MICHIGAN WORLD LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

### STATEMENT OF POLICY ON WORLD LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**December 5, 2009**

With the passage of the Michigan Merit Curriculum and its world language graduation requirement for all students, the State of Michigan recognized the importance of world language education in today's society. Because of the increasingly global nature of the economy and the technological advancements of global interconnection, it is imperative that students graduate from high school with the world language and culture skills necessary to compete for jobs and successful careers.

For these reasons the Michigan World Language Association (MIWLA) endorses the following strategies in order to advance world language proficiency for all Michigan students.

- Maintain and strengthen the world language component of the Michigan Merit Curriculum;
- Promote the study of world languages beginning in elementary school and continuing through the undergraduate or professional level, including immersion experiences;
- Provide for sequenced and articulated language programs, beginning in elementary school and continuing progressively through middle school, high school, and post-secondary education;
- Increase and stabilize the funding available for articulated foreign language programs;

- Increase grant funding opportunities to assist schools with the startup costs associated with beginning new, innovative, and/or significantly improved language programs;
- Encourage communicative-based teaching that emphasizes the use of authentic language and authentic tasks;
- Align curriculum to the Michigan Standards and Benchmarks for World Languages;
- Utilize authentic, performance-based assessments to measure language proficiency;
- Provide for the incorporation of current technology into the teaching and learning of languages with on-going training and support;
- Encourage content-related language instruction based on the maximum use of the target language in all language programs;
- Provide opportunities for teachers to come together to discuss teaching-related issues and collaborate on projects;
- Ensure the hiring of certified and highly qualified world language teachers with advanced or superior proficiency levels in the teaching language and with appropriate training in second language acquisition;
- Recognize the importance and benefits of early instruction in world languages as a foundation for students to acquire language learning skills and gain proficiency in one world language and also provide later opportunities for the study of other world languages;
- Create a position and office for a supervisor of world languages within the Michigan Department of Education who would oversee and direct world language and international programs within MDE and also work in cooperation with other state supervisors to fulfill national language objectives;
- Increase funding and incentives for teacher professional development opportunities, including study abroad and language immersion experiences, to increase the number of highly qualified language teachers at all levels;
- Address and correct the current foreign language teacher shortage by providing scholarship funding, study-abroad opportunities, and other incentives to world language students and professionally competent graduates with language proficiency to pursue credentials for language teaching careers.

If we are able to achieve these goals through legislation and policies, the future workforce of Michigan will be better equipped with the necessary communication and cultural skills to become active participants in a global society. Students will have the language resources they need to compete with their peers around the United States and the world for job opportunities and will also provide Michigan with a cadre of individuals prepared to provide effective diplomacy and address economic and other critical issues of the 21st century.