

THE WORLD LANGUAGES CREDENTIAL

The Criterion: *The school reflects a commitment to facilitating students' acquisition of languages and the understanding of and respect for other cultures. This commitment is accepted and understood by the governance, staff, parents, students, and broader educational community. The school shows its dedication to language education through a well articulated, learner appropriate program including options designed for native and heritage learners. Through the school's educational and co-curricular programs, students have the opportunity to learn second and additional languages for use in a range of contexts and for different purposes, and to understand the practices, perspectives and products of the cultures associated with the target language(s). Intercultural awareness is integrated into educational and co-curricular programs to develop appreciation and respect for all cultures, as well as the skills and qualities essential to functioning beyond the survival needs of a tourist. Assessment practices focus on measuring the development of proficiency and cultural competencies over an extended sequence of language study.*

THE INDICATORS OF QUALITY

Vision of the World Languages Program

WL1.) The school reflects a commitment to the development of language proficiency and acknowledges the importance of variables such as program model, duration, frequency and instructional practices to develop competency beyond novice levels.

WL2.) The school reveals an understanding of culture as the core of language teaching and the development of intercultural awareness as a means to increase international and cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.

WL3.) The school ensures that the value and benefits of the study of world languages are generally understood and accepted by the governance, staff, parents, and broader educational community.

Organizational Design and Staff

WL4.) The school recruits and hires appropriately qualified teachers of world languages including native and heritage speakers. Language proficiency of world languages teachers is documented by nationally or internationally recognized rating systems. For example, a rating of Advanced-Low or higher on the American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines is considered the minimum level of proficiency necessary to conduct business in a language and is a standard for licensing in New Jersey.

WL5.) The school provides professional development opportunities that enable teachers of world languages to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to provide instruction that ensures the development of language proficiency and cultural competencies. Support for effective use of research-based instructional and assessment practices is provided to teachers.

Curriculum

WL6.) Attainable targets for student proficiency are established as the goals for the world languages program using standardized, nationally or internationally recognized rating systems. [e.g., ACTFL Proficiency and K-12 Performance Guidelines, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate (IB) assessments]

WL7.) International, national, or state content area standards provide the basis for determining the basic concepts, skills and knowledge required of all students to fulfill the stated goals of the world languages program.

WL8.) The curriculum addresses all key areas of internationally recognized standards for world languages. For example in the United States, the five key areas of the National Standards for Foreign Language Education are Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities. Additionally, the ACTFL modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational, may serve as the structure for organizing instruction and assessment.

WL9.) The essential elements of culture, i.e., the products, practices and perspectives of the people who speak the target languages, are imbedded throughout the curriculum.

WL10.) Interdisciplinary connections are included in the curriculum, thus furthering and reinforcing learning in other content areas. The target language becomes a vehicle for acquiring information and recognizing distinctive viewpoints.

WL11.) The selection of languages to be included in the program is based on the needs of the school's local community and interest. National priorities, e.g., the United States' focus on critical languages such as Mandarin and Arabic, are considered for expanded programs.

WL12.) The needs of native and heritage student populations in the school are addressed in program strands that meet their particular academic and linguistic needs.

WL13.) Multiple entry points in long sequence programs are available for students who wish to change languages or begin a third or fourth language.

WL14.) Best practices in language education, including support of literacy skills guide the selection of teaching strategies, learning activities, resources and assessment.

WL15.) The curriculum includes thematic units that feature authentic materials, i.e., materials produced by the native speaker for the native speaker that are learner-appropriate. The text book serves as an additional resource for the course.

WL16.) Topics selected for units and themes are learner and language development appropriate and have application in real life.

WL17.) Technology is a key component of the program that provides access to authentic materials as well as opportunities for real life communication and cooperative projects with students in other schools and countries.

WL18.) The development of the curriculum has established priorities, objectives, and goals for all courses and units within the program that are based on clearly defined expectations for all students. The curriculum is designed to ensure the alignment of teaching strategies, learning activities, instructional support, instructional resources, and assessment of learning.

WL19.) The program includes experiences that promote critical thinking, reasoning, problem solving, decision-making, and study skills.

WL20.) The learning expectations of the curriculum address the diverse learning needs of the students without compromising the common concepts, essential knowledge and skills students are expected to learn.

WL21.) The curriculum is designed to promote active involvement of students in the learning process.

WL22.) The curriculum offers culminating courses that address a range of student abilities and interests including career-based options.

WL23.) The skills and knowledge of the curriculum are well-articulated and coordinated between all teachers at each grade/course level and by teachers across grade /course levels.

WL24.) Written course guides are utilized as the basis for instructional activities and assessment tasks.

WL25.) The curriculum, objectives, and expectations for learning are understood and supported by the school community stakeholders.

WL26.) The process used to develop the curriculum is designed to assure appropriate staff member, parental, and student input.

WL27.) Decisions made in the curriculum are based on data about student performance, knowledge about organizational development, and research about best practices in curriculum, instruction and assessment.

WL28.) Administrative leadership and support are provided in the coordination and articulation of the program.

WL29.) There is an ongoing process in place to evaluate the curriculum. The curriculum review process includes safeguards to ensure that the written curriculum is up to date and taught. The review process focuses on what is to be deleted from the curriculum as well as what is to be added.

WL30.) The program is clearly defined, approved by the governing body, and is consistent with the philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives of the school.

Instruction

WL31.) Instruction is guided by knowledge of second language acquisition theory. World languages teachers are skilled in providing input and employing strategies to promote student output, which includes multiple opportunities for meaningful interactions.

WL32.) The target language is used almost exclusively in class and is supported by visual and kinesthetic cues to ensure that teacher input is comprehensible to students.

WL33.) Student use of the target language is almost exclusive and supported by learner-centered strategies including the use of scaffolding.

WL34.) The scope and pacing of lessons engage student interest and provide learning opportunities that challenge but do not tax students' abilities. The affective filter is appropriately low in world languages classrooms.

WL35.) Risk taking in language learning is promoted by the teacher. Correction is achieved indirectly through modeling as well as by direct means.

WL36.) Instructional strategies are selected to integrate the learning of culture with the language content. Products and practices are related to the perspectives of the cultures.

WL37.) Class sizes in world languages classes promote and allow for the development of proficiency in communication.

WL38.) Learner-appropriate materials are selected and/or developed.

WL39.) Technology is used as appropriate and available to enhance teaching and learning.

WL40.) Individual needs are addressed through differentiation, flexible grouping, and additional assistance when needed.

WL41.) Students and teachers demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences by maintaining respect for each other in class.

WL42.) Teachers maintain safe, positive and supportive classroom environments.

WL43.) Information on student progress is used to improve teaching and student learning.

Assessment of Student Learning

WL44.) Multiple measures featuring assessment tasks set in real life contexts are used to assess student performance in communicating. Assessments mirror communicative instructional tasks as well as evaluate student knowledge and application of structures and vocabulary.

WL45.) ACTFL guidelines or other proficiency rating scale(s) are used to assess student performance of determined criterion, e.g., vocabulary use, language control, comprehension, comprehensibility, cultural awareness, communication strategies, text type, language function and audience impact.

WL46.) Standards-based assessment models are adopted and administered, e.g., ACTFL Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA), Modified Oral Proficiency Interview (MOPI –for secondary language learners), Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA – for young language learners), and online assessments, such as the CASLS (University of Oregon) STAMP Test, to benchmark individual and/or cohort achievement along the continuum of proficiency.

WL47.) Assessment is ongoing. Students are assessed informally and formally on their attainment of lesson, unit, course, and program goals.

WL48.) Teachers review collaboratively and discuss evidence of student learning to develop clearer understanding of the quality and rating of student work. This information is used to improve teaching and learning.

WL49.) Common assessments are administered at the end of units, quarters, semesters, and/or school year to obtain evidence of student progress through out the levels and courses of the program.

WL50.) Students are informed in advance of expected criteria and given samples or models typical of targeted levels of performance. Students may participate in the identification of criteria and building of rubrics.

WL51.) Feedback of results to students is timely, meaningful and for the purpose of improving future performance.

Resources

WL52.) The school shows its commitment to world languages education through the dedication of resources (financial, human, physical, time, etc.) that promote language acquisition and cultural understanding.

Student Life and Student Activities

WL53.) The culture of the school demonstrates respect for cultural and religious differences in the backgrounds of students and staff.

WL54.) The school takes into account the cultural and religious diversity of the student population when planning and implementing its school calendar and its student activities program.

WL55.) The school takes advantage of local resources and culture to educate its students. For those institutions in non-English speaking areas, the world languages curriculum provides opportunities for education and immersion in the local language.

WL56.) Opportunities for international travel, international experiences, and student exchange programs exist, allowing students to experience other cultures firsthand.

