

Just the Facts!

The Elementary School Foreign Languages (ESFL) Model Program January 2007

Since 1992, competitively selected schools have provided 30 minutes instruction per day in French, German, Japanese, or Spanish to all students, K-5. Trained foreign language teachers provide instruction based on the foreign language curriculum. These classes both mirrored and reinforced the broader QCC and do the same with the new Georgia Performance Standards-GPS.

Rationale

- To compete in the 21st century global economy, American schools should begin foreign language in the younger grades like other industrialized nations worldwide.
- Foreign language raises global awareness and appreciation of different cultures and plays a critical role in our national security in post 9-11-2001 America.
- Start early, when children's brains are naturally 'wired' to learn language and speak with native proficiency.
- Elementary foreign language builds thinking skills, math ability, and **increases** overall scores on standardized tests. It enhances problem solving as well as cognitive development.

Equity and State Support

- Open Competitive Grant Program--On 4 separate occasions, the D.O.E. has held open applications--any elementary could apply. ESFL schools range from high socio-economic to Title I schools across Georgia. During the 3rd open enrollment, every school that applied was accepted, save one with compliance issues. Access to all- EQUITY!
- Educational Equity for Lower Tax Base Systems--Without State support, many systems can't afford to staff, much less develop and administer this kind of program. State Funding provides schools in 180 systems access to exemplary foreign language demonstration sites. Additionally, ESFL staff development is open to ALL schools, not just ESFL schools.
- Business for Georgia--Corporate relocations and operational expansions often hinge on state educational quality, both in the workforce and in schools. Providing well prepared, globally competitive employees and programs can make or break Georgia's economy, short and long term. Additionally, by the time today's children enter the job market, predictions are that 4 of 5 new jobs in the U.S. will be the result of foreign trade. Georgia ranked 15th in the U.S. and exported over \$16 Billion in 2003.

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Program Evaluations

Two Georgia educators published a book evaluating the model program. In addition, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) has assessed Georgia's model four different times. In their June 2001 study, they noted that "These results are higher than any known average ... in other foreign language elementary programs in the United States." They have also described the program as "excellent by any measure." Moreover CAL said "*The ESFL Model Program is a true model program, not just for Georgia, but also for the country.*"

The Washington D.C. based Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) is one of the most respected organizations in second language learning. Founded in 1959 by a professor emeritus of linguistics at Stanford University, original funding was provided by the Ford Foundation. The website <http://www.cal.org/> holds a wealth of information related to foreign language instruction and language testing and assessment. The organization is the 'gold standard' in its field.

Funding Facts

When initially implemented, the state paid approximately 50% of the cost for instructors at participating schools. Funding levels have been as follows:

	<u>Total Funding</u>	<u>Change from Prior Year</u>
2002-2003	\$2,197,510	
2003-2004	\$1,832,510	- \$365,000 (16.6% decrease reflects cutting Kindergarten)
2004-2005	\$1,590,857	- \$241,653 (15.8% decrease reflects cutting 1 st grade)
2005-2006	\$1,590,857	no change
2006-2007	\$1,590,857	no change
2007-2008	\$0	- \$1,590,857 (100% decrease in Governor's budget)

"Year of Languages"

President George W. Bush and members of Congress made an official declaration that 2005 was the "Year of Languages." In January of that year, 35 top business, government, academic, and humanitarian leaders convened a national summit to develop an official "plan of action" for U. S. language policy. Their first priority for keeping the U. S. competitive in the next decade was this: raising the American public's awareness of the need and value of learning languages and understanding cultures. From "Foreign language study a must today" by JOHN JARVIS, Ph.D in *The Republican* Monday March 7, 2005 www.masslive.com .

Apparently our state already sees the 'need and value of learning languages.' *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported in the March 13th, 2005 edition that Georgia promised to spend "\$1 million for teaching German in Savannah's public schools" on behalf of the DaimlerChrysler deal.

*Let's be proactive and prepare for tomorrow
by making the investment in Elementary Foreign Language-- TODAY!*