



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Teaching Language for National Security and American Competitiveness

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American students must master critical need foreign language skills for our nation to remain competitive and continue the progress in securing our nation. Together with the Departments of State and Defense and the Director of National Intelligence, the Department of Education is proposing to establish grants and train teachers under President Bush's National Security Language Initiative.

Critical need foreign language skills are necessary to advance national security and global competitiveness.

- More than 200 million children in China are studying English, a compulsory subject for all Chinese primary school students. By comparison, only about 24,000 of approximately 54 million elementary and secondary school children in the United States are studying Chinese.
- According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, only 31% of American elementary schools (and 24% of public elementary schools) report teaching foreign languages.
 - 79% of those schools focus on giving introductory exposure to a language rather than achieving overall proficiency.
- Only 44% of American high school students are enrolled in foreign language classes as reported by the 2002 Digest of Education Statistics. Of those students, 69% are enrolled in Spanish and 18% in French.
 - Less than 1% of American high school students combined study Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Japanese, Korean, Russian or Urdu.
- Less than 8% of United States undergraduates take foreign language courses, and less than 2% study abroad in any given year. Foreign language degrees account for only 1% of undergraduate degrees conferred in the United States.

Federal partners have outlined national goals and are sharing resources to achieve those goals. The National Security Language Initiative will:

- Increase the number of Americans mastering critical need languages and start at a younger age
- Increase the number of advanced-level speakers of foreign languages, with an emphasis on critical need languages
- Increase the number of teachers of critical need languages and resources for them

The Department of Education and its partners will focus resources toward educating students, teachers and government workers in critical need foreign languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, and increasing the number of advanced-level speakers in those and other languages. The Department of Education's FY 2007 budget proposal includes:

- \$57 million for this initiative, a \$35 million increase over FY 2006.
- The Department of Education is proposing \$24 million to create incentives to teach and study critical need languages in K-12 by refocusing the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grants.
- Twenty-four school districts in partnership with colleges and universities will create programs in critical need languages in 2007 through a proposed \$24 million Department of Education program. The program will likely expand to additional schools in future years to ultimately build continuous programs of study from kindergarten through university.
- The Department of Education is proposing \$5 million to create a Language Teacher Corps with the goal of having 1,000 new foreign language teachers in our schools before the end of the decade.
- A proposed \$1 million nationwide Department of Education E-Learning Language Clearinghouse would deliver foreign language education resources to teachers and students across the country.
- The Department of Education would expand Teacher-to-Teacher seminars through a proposed \$3 million effort to reach thousands of foreign language teachers in 2007.