



A VIEW *from the* TOP

A REPORT FROM THE NORTH CAROLINA SUMMIT
ON FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES



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NORTH CAROLINA SUMMIT ON FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Dear Fellow North Carolinians,

On October 20, 2010, 48 leaders from a variety of fields met at the North Carolina Summit on Foreign Languages and Cultures to discuss the 21st Century language and cross-cultural skills that our graduates need in order for the state to be globally competitive. Wake Forest University and the Foreign Language Association of North Carolina (FLANC) organized the meeting, which included leaders representing the military, international banking, health care, the energy sector, the North Carolina State Board of Education, and institutions of higher education – all of whom emphasized that if students are to be globally competitive, it is urgent to implement K-12 programs leading to proficiency in world languages and cross-cultural competence. The current lack of long sequences of well-articulated programs leading to high levels of proficiency in languages and cross-cultural competence hampers our business, health care, military, and nearly all other areas of the economy as we work within the global marketplace.

The document that follows is entitled *A View from the Top: A Report from the North Carolina Summit on Foreign Languages and Cultures* and summarizes the reasons given by the Summit participants for increasing the state's collective proficiency in languages and cross-cultural relations. Among those reasons are:

- a globalized market's demands for North Carolinians to use a variety of other languages with business partners abroad and with foreign investors in North Carolina
- the U.S. Army's uncompromising decision at Ft. Bragg that no one can be a member of Special Forces without competence in another language, and
- the NC State Board of Education's commitment to prioritizing world languages in its mission to prepare future-ready 21st Century graduates.

This report also provides ten recommendations from the Summit for implementation in North Carolina schools. Key among the priorities is for our schools to begin world language instruction early, provide an uninterrupted continuum of study through grade 12, focus on the development of proficiency, and implement an assessment system that measures students' progress towards these goals.

The Summit participants offer North Carolina policymakers their full support in the implementation of these recommendations. It is the hope and expectation of the Summit that all North Carolina students in grades K-12 will have the opportunity to gain proficiency in world languages and in cross-cultural skills so that they will indeed be future-ready and globally competent citizens of the 21st Century.

Sincerely,

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A View from the Top

A report from the **North Carolina Summit on Foreign Languages and Cultures**

Introduction

North Carolina cannot afford to consider foreign languages “foreign” any longer. Given that the state leads the nation in some aspects of foreign direct investment (Bunn & Ramirez, 2011), that the state’s percentage of immigrant population is four times what it was in 1990 (Migration Policy Institute, 2012), that students in North Carolina public schools speak approximately 240 languages at home (NCDPI, 2011), and that North Carolina exports over \$24 billion in merchandise annually (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2011), the state faces an immediate need for employees who speak languages other than English and who are adept at functioning in other cultures.

The North Carolina Summit on Foreign Languages and Cultures was held on October 20, 2010 on the campus of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. This meeting, co-hosted by the Foreign Language Association of North Carolina (FLANC) and Wake Forest University, brought together 48 leaders from varied sectors across the state, including the U.S. Army Special Forces, institutions of higher education, health care, the North Carolina Public Schools, the energy sector, and international banking. The purpose of the summit was to determine the 21st Century language and cross-cultural skills North Carolina students need and to present recommendations to state decision-makers.

The North Carolina Summit was inspired by a joint initiative of the National Security Education Program and the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Labor, which organized Congress-funded language summits in Ohio, Texas, and Oregon in 2007. Those summits analyzed the needs of each state and produced strategic long-term foreign language development plans to meet those needs. Other government-funded language summits followed, such as the Governor’s Language Summit in Utah (2008) and the CIA Foreign Language Summit (2010).

In presentations and in small group discussions, summit participants outlined a series of compelling arguments for the urgent need to develop multilingual proficiency. General consensus determined that without foreign language ability, our society will find it increasingly difficult to compete in the marketplace, to defend itself from foreign threats, or to respond to the needs of an increasingly multilingual and multicultural society at home. This report presents a summary of the critical need to develop a North Carolina citizenry capable of productive and effective interaction in a global marketplace and outlines recommendations for achieving that goal.

A Business Perspective

In 2010, the value of North Carolina exported goods was \$24.8 billion (13.9% higher than the 2009 value), the top export market being Canada, followed by China and Mexico. Among the state's largest export markets in the 2005-2010 period, the most significant destination country increases were China (157%), Brazil (93%), and France (80.3%). According to the NC Chamber of Commerce (2011), ten percent of all jobs in the state are supported by exports (Bunn & Ramirez, 2011).

North Carolina business is not alone in its focus on global trade. In the last two decades, while world GDP has *doubled*, world trade has *tripled*. North Carolina business, like business elsewhere in the U.S., is going global in order to meet its clients' international needs, diversify its revenue and risk, have access to emerging economies projected to grow far more than developed economies, and respond to competitors' presence abroad (Watanabe, 2010). In other words, North Carolina is increasingly doing business overseas, and the trend shows no sign of change. One of many effects of this trend is that North Carolina based companies are under increasing pressure to fill key international leadership positions for which requisite abilities include highly advanced linguistic and cross-cultural skills.

And while North Carolina is going overseas to do business, many countries are finding that our state is an ideal place to invest. North Carolina is one of the top states in the country for foreign direct investment (FDI). In its 2011/12 report, the *Financial Times* publication *fDI Magazine* ranked the city of Charlotte, North Carolina first in the nation among large American and Canadian cities for its FDI strategy (NC Department of Commerce Editorial Staff, 2011). Germany, with over 190 companies established in the Charlotte region, leads the way in that metropolitan area (Miller Villegas, 2011). Foreign-owned companies generate over 20,000 jobs in the Research Triangle in industries such as pharmaceuticals, technology, agricultural products, banking, and health care (City of Durham, 2011). These companies seek North Carolinians who are not only skilled in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) but who also speak the language of the corporate headquarters.

A National Security Perspective

Competence in languages and cultures has also become critical to national security. Ft. Bragg, located in Cumberland County, houses the U.S. Government's second largest language school, JFK Special Warfare Center and School. This center trains all U.S. Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) and now requires foreign language competence for continuation in Special Operations training. An equally heavy emphasis is placed on cross-cultural competence. The intent of this emphasis on languages and cultures is to support the mission of Special Operations soldiers as they establish and sustain long-term relationships with indigenous populations, oftentimes with top leadership in those populations, and work to help them solve complex problems (Burton, Nance, & Walton, 2011). The message for North Carolina educational policymakers is that the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in another language and culture is at the heart of a 21st Century or global education.

Multilingual North Carolina

Perhaps one of the most compelling arguments for establishing a clear educational agenda for articulated K-12 world language programs is the change in North Carolina's population demographics. In 2009, 7.1% of North Carolina's population was foreign born. Of that immigrant population, the top three countries of origin were Mexico (36.5%), India (5.3%), and El Salvador (3.5%). Both the total percentage of immigrants and the makeup of that community have changed since 1990, when the percentage of immigrant population was 1.7%, and the top three nations of origin were Germany (10.2%), Mexico (7.7%), and the United Kingdom (7.2%) (Migration Policy Institute, 2012). And, in North Carolina higher education, 12,824 foreign students studied at North Carolina colleges and universities during the 2010-11 academic year, spending an estimated \$304.3 million in the state. The number was 4.2% higher than in 2009-10. Almost half of the students, 49.6%, came from China, India, and South Korea (Institute of International Education, 2011).

Foreign interest in North Carolina's higher education institutions and recent trends in immigration signal a pressing need for a populace prepared to serve, teach, and interact with individuals from different countries and cultures whose first language is not English. As international trade and security require increasing sophistication in linguistic and cross-cultural skills, and because day to day life within North Carolina itself is increasingly multilingual and multicultural, the summit participants offer North Carolina policymakers the following recommendations and fully support their implementation.

THE NORTH CAROLINA SUMMIT ON FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

WORLD LANGUAGE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Begin world language instruction in the early grades for all students. An early start, regardless of the type of program (FLES, immersion, or dual language) helps ensure good pronunciation, confidence in the language, comfort in dealing with other cultures, and success at developing overall literacy.

The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is to graduate students who are future-ready and globally competitive for post-secondary education and the 21st Century workforce. The *North Carolina World Language Essential Standards* for grades K-12 are research-based and organized by proficiency levels aligned with the national proficiency scale established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Research shows that the amount of time spent learning a language is directly linked to the proficiency level achieved. Programs initiated early in the K-12 sequence allow students more opportunities to practice the language, which yields higher levels of fluency and cultural competence. Consequently, language programs must begin in the early grades and continue in an uninterrupted sequence of study through high school. The immersion program model leads to the highest level of proficiency, but programs offering a minimum of 90+ minutes per week can also lead to proficiency when students have the opportunity to stay with the same language throughout a continuum of study (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2010).

2. Provide long, uninterrupted, well-articulated sequences of instruction. The careful articulation of instruction avoids gaps or needless repetition, and the length of the sequence ensures that students attain language competencies for career and/or post-secondary education goals.

Even the relatively few North Carolinians who have had the opportunity to study a world language at the elementary, middle and high school levels have not been language students in a sequential program of study in which one level articulates to the next. The *North Carolina World Language Essential Standards* are designed to guide instruction that will help students in grades K-12 gain proficiency through a continuum of language study. All students in the public schools of North Carolina should have the opportunity to study at least one language in addition to their first language in a well-designed, proficiency-based program that helps them gain communication ability and cultural competence required in a 21st Century global workforce.

3. Ensure students have the opportunity to develop the proficiency needed to function effectively in the target language and the cultures in which the language is spoken through an uninterrupted continuum of study in grades K-12.

World language educators in grades K-12 should provide a language-rich environment in which students hear and use the target language for authentic communication purposes. The use of best practices in designing and delivering instruction, as well as performance-based assessment strategies, will help students develop skills that align with 21st Century needs. The use of presentational communication (speaking and writing), interpersonal communication (person-to-person), and interpretive communication (listening and reading) with authentic

cultural contexts as the focus of instruction can prepare students to function ably in the target culture. As they gain language proficiency, students will be better prepared to enter the workforce or post-secondary programs at a more advanced level and with greater facility in both the language and culture.

4. Adopt accepted/common protocols and terminology for proficiency testing and reporting of test results so that colleges and employers can easily recognize student proficiency and competencies.

The *North Carolina World Language Essential Standards* are based on the proficiency guidelines and rating scale established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). There are currently several nationally recognized research-based measurement instruments available to document students' progress. In grades K-12, these include but are not limited to the Assessment for Performance and Proficiency of Languages (AAPPL), the Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA), and the Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) also offers proficiency testing in speaking and writing. This rating is one that employers, school districts, post-secondary institutions, and graduate schools recognize when selecting qualified individuals for employment and program admission. The use of formal assessment measures to document students' language development will provide a uniform way to monitor progress and collect data on program effectiveness as students gain language ability needed in the 21st Century.

5. Develop a plan for articulation of language study with colleges to ensure continuing development of language proficiency and cross-cultural competence.

In order for students to achieve a high level of proficiency in languages and a deep understanding of the cultures in which the languages are spoken, K-12 language study must articulate with programs in higher education. Students should have the opportunity to continue their language development uninterrupted as they progress to post-secondary programs and/or related experiences designed to prepare them for the demands of careers in a global economy. In order for students completing high school to be able to gain the level of proficiency required of the 21st Century workforce, they must enter post-secondary institutions already possessing the ability to communicate well so that they can work toward attaining near-native language proficiency.

6. Provide statewide professional development for world language educators and administrators, focusing on how to foster language proficiency and cross-cultural skills. Similarly, establish partnerships with North Carolina universities so that future teachers receive training in the same type of pedagogy.

As North Carolina public schools unify efforts to prepare globally competent students, world language educators and administrators will need on-going professional development offerings that are specific to proficiency-based instruction and assessment practices. Because the *North Carolina World Language Essential Standards* require a shift in approach toward design of instruction and assessment practices that articulate language development over time, it will be necessary to assist educators with current best practices consistent with the language expectations at each level of proficiency development. World language educators and

administrators should be able to report evidence of student progress to members of the school community, stakeholders, and post-secondary institutions where their graduates seek admission. Collaboration between K-12 and university world language programs should be established early on in the implementation of the *North Carolina World Language Essential Standards* in order for students to make a smooth transition in the continuum of progress toward developing a high level of proficiency and cultural competence.

7. Provide opportunities for students to use language in the community and abroad in authentic cultural contexts, such as internships with NC-based international firms, service-learning experiences with native speakers, and school exchanges.

In order to help make language learning relevant, students of all ages should be involved in experiences that require language use outside the classroom. Opportunities such as participation in service learning projects in target culture communities and frequent interaction with speakers from other cultures should be incorporated into second or world language programs. Additionally, educators should build relationships with foreign companies in North Carolina that have operations abroad in order to create internship opportunities for students. Experiences outside the classroom also include the expansion of existing foreign exchange programs which provide the opportunity for students to be immersed in the culture and to acquire linguistic and cross-cultural competence.

8. Identify successful early language programs in North Carolina as models, develop a compendium of best practices, and provide state level guidance to replicate these programs across the state.

The design and implementation of K-12 world language programs is fundamental to the preparation of globally competent students and will require vision and commitment on the part of all stakeholders in realizing the mission of the State Board of Education. North Carolina currently has several well-established programs in the early grades that have been highly successful and should be used as models for building K-12 world language programs across the state.

9. Collect and analyze data related to the effect of world language education on students' overall academic success and disseminate the information to all stakeholders, such as parents, administrators, and policymakers.

In realizing the mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education to prepare globally competent, future-ready students, it will be critical to ensure the *North Carolina World Language Essential Standards* are carried out with established expectations for outcomes upon completion of a program of world language study. Similarly to the core subject areas, measurement of student progress throughout the continuum of study of a world language will be essential in order to document gains in ability. The *North Carolina World Language Essential Standards* provide the curriculum framework for proficiency development, but the measurement of progress at benchmark points is a necessary component of the process involved in helping our students become globally competent. An assessment plan for collecting data on students' growth in speaking, listening, reading, writing and cultural competence will allow districts to provide evidence of students' work toward attaining 21st Century skills in a world language.

10. Partner with major employer groups to educate the broader community about North Carolina's need for world languages.

North Carolina employers in the public and private sectors recognize the negative impact the lack of world language proficiency has on the local economy. For example, the increasing demand for interpreters in the legal and medical fields as well as in school districts across the state presents challenges due to the lack of bilingual personnel. North Carolina companies are forced to hire foreign nationals for key leadership positions abroad because otherwise qualified American personnel have neither the linguistic nor the cross-cultural competence required for these positions. Employer groups can be effective at informing the public about the need for skilled workers who are also proficient in languages and cultures.

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North Carolina Summit on Foreign Languages and Cultures

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Summit Speakers and Session Leaders

Keynote Addresses:

- Educational Keynote: **Jill Tiefenthaler**, Provost, Wake Forest University
- Business Keynote: **Satoshi Watanabe**, Senior Vice President, Director of Cross Border Strategic Initiatives, Wells Fargo International
- Military Keynote: **James “Rusty” Nance**, Chief of Language and Human Dynamics, JFK Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, NC

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