



## NYSAFLT ADVOCACY UPDATE (February 2009): NOLAN BILL A01851

Bill A01851 was reintroduced in the N.Y. Assembly by Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, chair of the Assembly Education Committee. The general idea of the bill is to amend the education law to:

- 1) require the Regents to establish learning standards for Languages other than English (NYS has two learning standards for LOTE, but these have not been reviewed since 1987.)
- 2) call for proficiency-based learning standards
- 3) set up a pilot program to do field research, develop data and make recommendations to the Regents about teaching and learning Languages Other than English.

Ms. Nolan's justification for introducing the bill is that "at the 2004 Call to Action for National Foreign Language Capabilities Conference, hundreds of representatives from education, business and government concluded that proficiency in Languages other than English and the understanding of cultures around the world are central to the future of the United States. It is therefore imperative that schools teach world languages - to promote communication among peoples, heighten students' linguistic and cultural awareness of their local, state and world community and help them develop knowledge and skills necessary to participate in a global economy. To do that, New York State schools need a plan for foreign language learning in the 21st century. This bill gets New York started."

"The pilot program proposed by the legislation will support the Regents' development of learning standards for foreign language study. First, there is a need for data about foreign language study in New York schools. This data is essential to the development of quality instructional programs and curriculum sequences for foreign language study. Because research in language acquisition and pedagogy recommends early language learning and highlights the importance of a well-articulated program of foreign language study from elementary grades onwards, the pilot program will look at programs in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and elementary schools as well as in secondary schools. Second, it is essential that foreign language study include proficiency as a learning standard and framework for organizing curriculum and instruction. Language is about communication. Proficiency is therefore key to foreign language learning and teaching. Third, the pilot program will identify best practices, investigate technologies that can bring foreign language instruction to school districts throughout the state and other research necessary to establish high quality, on-going, systematic instruction in foreign languages.

Foreign language study must be a state education priority. Other states have reached the same conclusion. For example, New Jersey and Ohio have launched significant statewide initiatives to teach world languages to all students at all grade levels. Oregon and Texas have set up Language Roadmap Projects to fulfill national language goals. This bill calls on New York State to commit to effective curricula and instruction, as well as sound academic achievement standards for foreign language study."

## WHO IS ALREADY SUPPORTING THE BILL? (Updated Feb 2, 2009)

Assemblywoman Nolan is the sponsor of the bill. Assembly co-sponsors are: Bradley, Cahill, Colton, Gottfried, Jaffee, Millman, Peralta O'Donnell; Multi-Sponsored by Abbate, Cook, DelMonte, Destito, Glick, Greene, McEneny, Peoples, Pheffer, Sweeney, Weisenberg, and Wright.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

There are 3 ways that you can help:

- 1) Make a phone call.
- 2) Send an e-mail, fax, or letter.
- 3) Visit your assemblyperson's office.

The easiest thing to do is to make a phone call. This takes less than one minute!

## HOW?

If you don't know who your assemblyperson is, your NYSAFLT Advocacy Web Page can help. Go to <http://www.nysaflt.org> and click on Resources and then on Advocacy. At the top of the page click on Government Contacts.

To find your Assemblyperson:

- 1) Click on "Assembly Link".
- 2) Enter your zip code.
- 3) If more than one name comes up, pick one, and click on "map". See if your town is on it. If it is, you have found your assemblyperson. If not, try the other name. The addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers are listed.

## WHAT DO I SAY?

If your Assemblyperson is on the list (above) of co-sponsors, thank them for their support of bill A01851. If they are not on the list, simply tell the receptionist/secretary that you are calling to ask the Assemblyperson to support the bill. Be prepared to give your name and mailing address (with zip code), so they will know that you are a constituent in their district.

## WHAT IF I PREFER SENDING AN E-MAIL OR LETTER?

Feel free to use the letter at the end of this update, and add any personal comments you wish.

## AND IF I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A VISIT?

If you are able to arrange a meeting with your Assemblyperson, please refer to the bill and familiarize yourself with details expressed in the "justification" section above. If you need any more information, or if you get any feedback in support of the bill (or otherwise), please let me know (at [mcampanaro@aol.com](mailto:mcampanaro@aol.com)). We need to know how many of our legislators are on our side.

### A FEW FACTS:

- \* One letter/one phone call is great, but the more the better. Get your colleagues, relatives, and neighbors to call too. A phone call requires only a minute or two.
- \* Don't list a lot of names on a letter. It still counts as only one letter.
- \* It is important to contact representatives in your own district. They prefer to hear from their own constituents.
- \* You do not need to be a political genius to do this. Remember: you are a LOTE teacher, you know your job, and the state Assemblypersons work for their constituents (us). Remember, too, that Assemblywoman Nolan, who introduced the bill, is the Assembly Chair of the Education Committee.

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\_\_\_\_\_, 2009

Dear Assembly Member \_\_\_\_\_:

Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan has recently introduced bill #A01851 in the New York State Assembly. The bill will strengthen the study of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in New York State. I am writing to ask that you support and/or co-sponsor the bill. The bill amends the education law to:

- 1) require the Regents to establish learning standards for Languages other than English
- 2) call for proficiency-based learning standards
- 3) set up a pilot program to do field research, develop data and make recommendations to the Regents about teaching and learning Languages other than English.

Our children need to have the skills which will enable them to succeed in the multilingual, multicultural world that they will confront. Proficiency in another language and understanding of another culture will provide them 1) with advantages, useful and necessary in many careers, 2) with the ability to compete in the global economy, and 3) with tolerance for diversity at home and abroad.

The program proposed by this bill “will support the Regents’ development of learning standards for foreign language study. First, there is a need for data about foreign language study in New York schools. This data is essential to the development of quality instructional programs and curriculum sequences for foreign language study. Because research in language acquisition and pedagogy recommends early language learning and highlights the importance of a well-articulated program of foreign language study from elementary grades onwards, the pilot program will look at programs in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and elementary schools as well as in secondary schools.

Second, it is essential that foreign language study include proficiency as a learning standard and framework for organizing curriculum and instruction. Language is about communication. Proficiency is therefore key to foreign language learning and teaching.

Third, the pilot program will identify best practices, investigate technologies that can bring foreign language instruction to school districts throughout the state and other research necessary to establish high quality, on-going, systematic instruction in foreign languages.”

I would be happy to provide you with any additional information if you wish. I can be reached at: \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely yours,

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