



New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers
NYSAFLT
1102 Ardsley Road, Schenectady, N.Y. 12308
(518) 372-4718 FAX: (518) 378-2872 e-mail: NYSAFLT@aol.com
NYSAFLT website:
<http://www.nysaflt.org>

PROPOSAL

INCENTIVES FOR ATTRACTING MORE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Reliable sources in the State Education Department indicate that there is a shortage of foreign language teachers in New York State. The memorandum, "Increasing Shortfall of Certified Teachers in New York State", Gerald W. Patton, State Education Department, December 14, 2001, Page 15, places foreign languages at the top of the list of "Percentages of School Districts Reporting Very Difficult to Staff Certificate Areas"; in the case of foreign languages, the percentage of districts reporting this situation is 75%. This same document reports on page 8, "Teacher Shortfall Areas", that there is a critical percentage of foreign language teachers over the age of 55 in six of eight regions in the state.

We are fortunate to have a potential source of future teachers of foreign languages in the large number of heritage language learners in our state. It is important to provide funding to encourage all prospective teachers of foreign languages as a special, separate category. When foreign language is included with the other academic subjects, there is a tendency to overlook or neglect it. One factor contributing to the marginalization of foreign language study is that the current foreign language requirement for New York State High School graduation can be completed by the student passing a Grade 8 Proficiency Examination. Graduation requirements in the other academic subjects, English, math, science and social studies, depend on the student's performance on Regents examinations later during the high school years.

The New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers proposes legislation to enable students to become foreign language teachers by providing the following funding:

- Tuition grants or scholarships for undergraduate and graduate study. A provision of such tuition scholarships would be a commitment on the part of the prospective teacher to teach foreign languages for a minimum of three years after graduation.
- Tuition grants for courses required for New York State foreign language certification.
- Funding to cover expenses for mentoring new teachers of foreign languages for up to five years.