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A Very Important Message from NYS AFLT

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It came to our attention this afternoon (March 4) that a proposal to reduce the cost of the NYS Assessment program will be presented to the Board of Regents at their March meeting (March 8 & 9). This proposal is considered a contingency plan that the Regents have been asked to consider in order to lower the operating costs in the 2010- 2011 budget cycle. Although there are suggestions that affect many other subject areas, the items of concern to our organization are **the elimination of the Grade 8 Second Language Proficiency and the High School Foreign Language Regents Exam**. You may view the proposal in its entirety at:

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/March2010/0310emscd2.htm>

All foreign language teachers are encouraged to immediately contact the Regents, especially the co-chairs and members of the [Committee on Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education](#) to voice support for maintaining state assessments and standards in LOTE. We also encourage you to contact your state legislators, supportive school district administrators, parents and community members to ask for their support in maintaining the quality of LOTE education in New York State. **Below are a few talking points that you may wish to incorporate into your conversations. Please note that the NYS AFLT Executive Committee is in the process of developing a more thorough response to this situation pending the outcome of next week's Board of Regents meeting. Please stay tuned to the NYS AFLT website and future listserv messages for additional details as they are made available to NYS AFLT.**

- The Checkpoint A Second Language Proficiency Exams and the Checkpoint B Comprehensive Language Exams are highly reliable and valid assessments which have direct correlations to the well-defined New York State Learning Standards. Through these quality assessments, we have raised the bar for our students in New York State. We must do everything we can to maintain the progress we have made in recent years with standards-based education.
- According to Education Commissioner David Steiner, "The value of fluency in multiple languages cannot be overstated in the twenty-first century, when the emergent conditions of life bring more of us more often into circumstances that, on the one hand, ask us to travel through the complex terrain of a globalized economy and, on the other, bring far-flung local parochialisms to our doors through the vastly expanded reach of new communication technologies." [Liberal Education Magazine - Spring 2009](#). In the 21st century global economy, New York State cannot afford to lose its momentum. Without well-articulated state assessments to support quality instruction, our competitive edge in the global market place will be at risk.
- New York State was just announced as a finalist in the first round of competition for the "Race to the Top." On March 4, 2010 Commissioner Steiner wrote: "These reforms aim to ensure that all of New York's public schools have truly effective teachers and principals, high quality curricula, well-designed assessments and are focused on the academic success of every child." Our current teachers are effective, our curriculum is high quality and our assessments are well designed. It is counterproductive to eliminate them as a cost-cutting measure.

Please know that NYS AFLT will do all that it can to make your voices heard in Albany and across the state and will work to keep you informed during this process.

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