

NYSAFLT Position Statements

Background Information

The New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers is an organization that represents over 2,000 members and whose purpose is to serve the needs of the profession dedicated to the development of second language skills and cultural awareness among students. NYSAFLT provides its members with a network of communication with colleagues throughout the state, opportunities for professional growth through conferences, institutes and colloquia held regionally and statewide, a direct link with the State Education Department, and an advocate's voice among the members of the Board of Regents and the state's legislators.

The following positions statements were developed by NYSAFLT leadership to highlight issues NYSAFLT believes to be of critical importance in the field of second language education and to make its position on these issues clear to its membership as well as others who may be seeking direction in these areas.

NYSAFLT's Position on LOTE as a Core Subject

The study of a language other than English fosters an appreciation and understanding of other cultures, promotes a better understanding of one's own language and culture, supports learning and improves performance in other content areas, and cultivates the qualities of global citizens who are well-educated and prepared to compete professionally in an increasingly interconnected world.

Therefore, language learning should be a part of the core curriculum at all levels of instruction from pre-kindergarten through graduate school and be available and encouraged for students of all abilities and backgrounds.

*Input from NYSAFLT Board of Directors – January through May 2008
Drafted by NYSAFLT Public Relations Committee – January through June 2008
Revised and Approved by NYSAFLT Board of Directors – June 2008*

NYSAFLT's Position on Language Programs and Offerings

1. Language learning should be accessible to all students, including those with special learning needs, with academic intervention programs or special education support.
2. Language programs should allow students to develop fluency and proficiency through sustained, well-articulated sequences of study.
3. The opportunity to learn a second language is more important than the specific language learned, because second language learning facilitates the acquisition of a third or fourth language.
4. Language offerings should reflect community interest and heritage and should not necessitate the elimination or diminishment of another language offering.

Input from NYSAFLT Board of Directors – January 2007
Input from NYSAFLT Executive Committee – March 2007
Drafted by NYSAFLT Public Relations Committee – March through May 2007
Revised and Approved by NYSAFLT Board of Directors – June 2007, October 2007
Additional input from NYSAFLT Board of Directors – January through May 2008
Additional drafting by NYSAFLT Public Relations Committee – January through June 2008
Revised and Approved by NYSAFLT Board of Directors – June 2008

NYSAFLT’s Position on Early Language Learning

Research has shown that early language instruction not only facilitates the language learning process, but results in more native-like pronunciation and fluency in the second language. In addition, early language instruction has been shown to strengthen students’ performance in their first language as well as in other content areas.

1. Second language instruction should begin at the elementary level and be available to all students.
2. Second language instruction at the elementary level should be promoted through advocacy and legislation.

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Revised and Approved by NYSAFLT Board of Directors – June 2007, October 2007

NYSAFLT’s Position on Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Recognizing the acute shortage of highly qualified, well-prepared and trained teachers of LOTE, NYSAFLT supports:

1. initiatives and incentive programs that will attract teachers to this profession.
2. efforts of state and local organizations to provide quality professional development for teachers.
3. the establishment of strong mentoring and professional networking programs that provide support and encouragement for teachers new to the profession.
4. the development of high quality teacher training programs at the university level that emphasize both content area mastery and effective pedagogical strategies.
5. the availability of master’s level language course offerings and programs at regional colleges and universities to allow teachers of LOTE the opportunity to complete professional certification requirements and continue to develop second language proficiency.
6. efforts to foster communication between secondary and post-secondary language teachers and methodologists to assure that future LOTE teachers are provided an

articulated preparation that aligns with NYS and ACTFL standards and prepares these teachers to develop linguistic and cultural proficiencies in their students.

Recognizing that teachers may work in rural areas or in high needs schools or do not have content area supervisors, and recognizing that newly certified teachers are mandated to take 175 hours of professional development every **five** years and may not have ready access to quality professional development programs, NYSAFLT encourages:

1. the establishment of local, face-to-face and/or online collegial groups that bring together LOTE teachers from neighboring schools for the purpose of networking, dialoguing, sharing, and supporting one another's LOTE practice.
2. the provision of online professional development information and opportunities to meet targeted, identified, professional needs of LOTE teachers.

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NYSAFLT's Position on Use of the Target Language in the LOTE Classroom

Research has shown that the predominant use of the target language (TL) by both the teacher and students in a language classroom benefits the language learner and promotes second language acquisition by:

1. Providing an input-rich environment that bridges the gap between the carefully controlled language classroom and the unpredictability of real-life language encounters.
2. Demonstrating that language is not merely the object of instruction but an effective medium for real communication.
3. Developing cognitive flexibility and increased problem-solving skills, as the students need to solve the problem of meaning for themselves in a TL environment.

For these reasons, NYSAFLT supports the use of the TL to the maximum extent possible.

Approved by NYSAFLT Board of Directors – June 2010