



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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October 18, 2006

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons
Middle School Principals
Curriculum Coordinators
Supervisors of World Languages

FROM: Jay Doolan, Ed.D., Acting Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Programs and Assessment

SUBJECT: Grade Eight Pilot Assessment in World Languages: Project Year Two

Background

The department was awarded a \$435,000 federal grant to conduct a three-year pilot assessment project in grade eight for world languages. This pilot project will help schools and districts improve student achievement in world languages in grades K-8. During the first year of the pilot, over 16,000 students were assessed providing valuable data on programs and student achievement. Furthermore, some districts opted to use the assessment as a demonstration of competency thereby allowing students to attain 5-credits in fulfillment of the high school graduation requirement with no cost to the student or the district.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project is to: (1) provide professional development that focuses on the connection between assessing and teaching for language proficiency; (2) measure student proficiency in world languages; and (3) drive program improvement by assisting districts in determining if their curricular design will enable students to demonstrate proficiency at the *Novice-High* level as defined in the state standards.

District Participation

Districts that participate in the assessment pilot will receive at **no cost**:

- Professional development for teachers that focuses on interpreting assessment results;

- Professional development that focuses on strategies to overcome any areas of identified need, facilitating program improvement and increasing student achievement;
- An evaluation of their current program through the data obtained on student achievement as outlined above; and
- Exit testing for students wishing to fulfill the five-credit graduation requirement at the end of grade eight.

Project Details

- The project will provide proficiency testing in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish for 60,000 grade eight students along with detailed data on student performance over the three years of the grant using STAMP, the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency.
- STAMP is a summative assessment based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines. It was developed by the Center for Applied Second Language Study (CASLS). The STAMP is delivered, graded and reported online by Language Learning Solutions (LLS), an affiliate of CASLS.
- The New Jersey STAMP will measure **interpretive reading** and **presentational speaking**. The STAMP was developed to measure student proficiency, or how well a student can actually use the language in communicative situations. The testing window for Year 2 is from April 1- June 1, 2007.

Project Requirements

- Because this project uses technology, schools/districts that participate must have a recent browser and Internet connection to administer the STAMP.
- Headset microphones are required in order to record student responses. Districts will need to purchase 20-30 headsets for testing classes of students. For districts not already in possession of headsets, the cost per headset is approximately \$15. Purchasing information will be provided to participating school districts.

Data Collection and Reporting

In order to facilitate curricular and instructional improvements, teachers receive detailed feedback on their students' performance.

- Password-protected reports based on student and class performance are posted online for teachers to access. These reports give teachers concrete feedback on students' overall proficiency as well as breakdowns of student performance according to topic and task type.

- Reading scores are generated automatically by the computer and results are available immediately after the test has been completed. The speaking report, also posted online, is available within several weeks after the test. The teacher may also hear student responses to speaking prompts.

I strongly encourage you to consider participating in Year 2 of this important assessment project. A 2007 application form, as well as more detailed information on the STAMP test, professional development, project requirements and reporting, may be found at: <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/aps/cccs/wl/>. Click on *Grade Eight Pilot Assessment Project*. **The application deadline is December 8, 2006.** Schools/districts selected to participate will be notified by January 5, 2007.

Should you have any questions regarding the assessment project or the application process, please contact Janis Jensen, coordinator of world languages and international education, at janis.jensen@doe.state.nj.us or by calling (609) 777-4658.

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Attachment

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