

Idaho World Language Standards White Paper

Introduction

We, the World Language Executive Standards Revision Committee, upon review and discussion of the present World Language Standards as presented by The American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language highly recommend the adoption of the five main goal areas (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities) as a the basis for standards for the State of Idaho. We recognize the valid and extensive research, and the time and collaboration that went into developing the World Language Standards. These goals areas meet the needs of all Idaho students. We are proposing that Idaho utilize our own standards within each goal area to meet the needs of our students. The standards we are proposing are equally applicable to learners at all levels, native speakers and heritage speakers (including English Language Learners), American Sign Language, and Classical Languages (Latin and Greek). The proposed standards include language to reflect the current educational landscape in Idaho and will strongly serve the needs of all students in our state. These standards and performance indicators provide flexible and sequential guidelines that serve the needs of World Language Educators in all levels of language instruction in all districts.

Rationale for Change

Problem:

Current Idaho State World Language Standards (adopted in 2008) do not complement the 2012 ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages nor the Idaho Core and its mandate for literacy, 21st century skills, and College and Career readiness in all content areas. *Pg. 4 Common Core State Standards Workbook*: “The standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility...” The 2008 Idaho State World Language Standards do not require the same depth that the ACTFL World-readiness standards recommend, though many Idaho educators are currently incorporating these more rigorous essential competencies into their classrooms.

Solution:

ACTFL and IATLC (Idaho Association of Teachers of Languages and Cultures – the state professional organization) have taken a lead in language research and education in the nation and state respectively. As a part of that process, ACTFL has established robust and rigorous World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages that align directly with the goals of the Idaho Core.

As such we propose that the State of Idaho support aligning the main goal areas in Idaho’s World Language Standards with those in the ACTFL World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. This will provide local flexibility while still preparing Idaho’s students for colleges and careers. The goal areas are written globally and encompass instructional and proficiency levels ranging from ‘novice low’ to ‘distinguished’, regardless of age, grade level, or instructional program.

The new set of standards would provide a statewide common language (terminology), targeted outcomes to determine proficiency regardless of age or program, and a clear articulation of the power of language learning within an increasingly global economy.

These standards focus instruction on performance-based tasks and applicable outcomes, and therefore directly correlate to and support the movement in Idaho toward assessments that measure students' communication skills.

The five goal areas are designed:

- To guide learners to interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.
- To prepare learners to use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect upon the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.
- To encourage learners to build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of the other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.
- To prepare learners to use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.
- To give learners the tools to use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.
- To clarify through clear, concise, flexible standards for educators.
- To guide the delivery of World Language education in the classroom in new ways of thinking learning and creating.
- To build upon essential questions and enduring understandings through anchor standards.

World Language Standards Committee Members:

Cynthia Cook, Mountain Home High School: German Instructor

Helga Frankenstein, Boise School District: World Language Supervisor

Andrew Horning, Kuna High School: French Instructor

Kate Hunter, West Ada School District: World Language Supervisor

Sheila Miller, Borah High School: Spanish/Japanese Instructor

Heather Ohrtman-Rogers, Jenifer Junior High School, Lewiston: Spanish Instructor

Craig Sheehy, Columbia High School, Nampa: Spanish Instructor

Becca Sibrian, Boise State University: German Senior Lecturer