World Language Institute

This Act establishes a World Language Instruction Committee in the state department of education. The committee is to develop a plan to provide state public school pupils with opportunities for instruction in a wide variety of world languages, including instruction in a world language provided by a qualified entity other than the school district. The committee is to consider and include proposals in the plan regarding, but not limited to, the following items:

- The identification of statewide proficiency standards for world languages;
- The use of other programs currently in operation in other states;
- Procedures for use by a local school district in working with another entity desiring to provide instruction in a world language to a resident pupil of that district;
- Identification of the cost elements of the plan for the state and local districts, and
- Implementation of the plan as a statewide or a pilot program.

The committee is to issue its plan to the state board of education not later than eight months after the Act’s effective date.

Under the Act, a public high school student who wishes to take a world language course not offered in the resident public school district may complete and receive credit toward high school graduation for a world language course offered by a religious organization or any other non-public school organization or entity. However, in order to receive credit for the course, the pupil must meet local district proficiency requirements.

Submitted as:
New Jersey
Chapter 203 of 2001

Suggested State Legislation

(Title, enacting clause, etc.)

Section 1. [Short Title.] This Act may be cited as “An Act Concerning Opportunities for World Language Instruction and Credit Toward High School Graduation Requirements for Certain World Language Courses.”

Section 2. [Legislative Findings.] The Legislature finds and declares that:

(A) There are many ethnic groups and different world languages used by people living in this state to describe, interpret and give meaning to their world.

(B) We live in a world that is increasingly interdependent creating the need for educated citizens who are multilingual and who have multicultural sensitivities.

(C) People who engage in commerce in this state are finding that their markets are no longer limited to an area where one language is predominant, but that markets in this state and in the United States and in many different parts of the world require the use of different world languages and an understanding of the cultures of which those languages are an integral part to effectively carry out commercial transactions.

(D) In such a world it is important to provide a variety of opportunities for public school pupils to learn different languages and to provide recognition, including credit toward a high school diploma, for those pupils who take advantage of these opportunities.

(E) The resources of local school districts are limited and, as such, it is not practicable to expect local school districts to develop and teach the variety of world languages in which local community groups may wish their children and youth to receive instruction.
(F) Many of these local community groups are well equipped to provide instruction in a world language and the culture that forms, shapes and provides meaning for that world language.

(G) It is therefore in the interest of the people of this state that the [department of education] establish a committee to develop a plan which would provide students in the public schools the opportunity to receive instruction in and graduation credit for a world language not taught in the public school district.

Section 3. [World Language Instruction Committee Created.]

(A) There is created in the [state department of education] the World Language Instruction Committee. The committee shall consist of [fifteen (15)] members selected as follows: the [commissioner of education] or the [commissioner’s designee]; [two (2)] members to be appointed by the [President of the Senate], who shall not be of the same political party; [two (2)] members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, who shall not be of the same political party; [seven (7)] public members appointed by the [Governor], [three (3)] of whom shall be from the higher education academic community with experience in world language instruction; and [one (1)] member each from the [state education association]; the [state principals and supervisors association]; and the [state school boards association].

(B) All appointments shall be made within [thirty (30)] days after the effective date of this Act. Vacancies in the membership of the committee shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made. Members of the committee shall serve without compensation.

(C) The [commissioner of education] or the [commissioner’s designee], shall serve as the committee’s chair and shall convene the committee within [thirty (30)] days after the appointment of its members. The committee shall select a vice-chair from among its members and a secretary who need not be a member of the committee.

Section 4. [Instruction Plan about World Languages.]

(A) The committee shall develop a plan that provides public school pupils with opportunities for instruction in a wide variety of world languages, including instruction in world languages provided by qualified entities other than school districts. The committee shall consider and include proposals in the plan regarding, but not limited to, the following items:

1. The identification of statewide proficiency standards for world languages;
2. The use of other world language programs currently in operation in other states;
3. Procedures for use by a local school district in working with another entity desiring to provide instruction in a world language to a resident pupil of that district;
4. Identification of the cost elements of the plan for the state and local districts, and
5. Implementation of the plan as a statewide or a pilot program.

(B) The committee may meet and hold hearings at the place or places it designates and shall issue its plan to the [state board of education] not later than [eight (8)] months after the effective date of this Act.

Section 5. [Committee Staff.] Staff and related support services shall be provided to the committee by the [state department of education]. The committee shall also be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any state, county or municipal board, bureau, commission or agency as it may require and as may be available to it for its purposes. The committee may meet and hold hearings at the place or places it designates and

Section 6. [Credit for World Language Courses not Offered by Public Schools.] A pupil who is enrolled in a public high school within the state who wishes to take a world language course not offered in the resident public school district may complete and receive credit toward high school graduation for a world language course offered by a religious organization or any other nonpublic school organization or entity. In order to receive credit for the course, the pupil shall meet local district proficiency requirements.

Section 7. [Severability.] [Insert severability clause.]
Section 8. [Repealer.] [Insert repealer clause.]
Section 9. [Effective Date.] [Insert effective date.]