



The Beginning of Our Journey

In June, more than 60 Ohio business, government and education leaders met in Columbus to discuss the state's foreign language needs for today and tomorrow.

They concluded that greater foreign language capacity is critically important for Ohio, contributing to increased business opportunities and a better understanding of foreign language speakers residing in the state. In a series of four meetings, small groups of interested Language Summit attendees and others established the Roadmap Teams to address these needs through actionable recommendations.

The findings that emerged from this unique initiative offer an eclectic perspective on the opportunities available not only for Ohio, but for the nation. The Roadmap Teams' strategic vision and recommendations offer steps for taking advantage of these opportunities.

Charting the Course

Out of the meetings, a strategic vision statement developed that would guide the Teams' recommendations and further focus their efforts:

Ohio businesses, government agencies, and educational institutions will collaborate to create a multilingual workforce by developing and launching innovative programs. These initiatives will assure Ohioans of opportunities to gain advanced knowledge of foreign languages and cultures in conjunction with job-related technical and academic knowledge.

Taking Off

With the guiding strategy in place, the Teams' next step was to examine the current environment and available resources. Once complete, the Teams developed the following recommendations to accomplish the strategic vision.

1

Establish the Ohio Language and Culture Service Center (LCSC)

The LCSC will lead the collaboration of business, government and education to build strong language proficiency and cultural knowledge in Ohio. The LCSC will bring together the foreign language assets of the state, assess the most critical needs, and develop the expertise for creating solutions.

2

Organize Language Partnering for Life (LPL)

Fostered by the LCSC, this networking organization will bring Ohioans who have language needs and expertise together to regularly share their thoughts, needs and resource networks. This includes connections within the U.S. and abroad, and between sister cities, chambers of commerce, universities, colleges and government agencies.

3

Create extended sequences of foreign language study

In order to produce Ohioans capable of using foreign languages in their respective professional careers, foreign language study should start as early as possible. Foreign language instruction must include fluency in the technical areas that employers need. This coupling of language and specific content knowledge will create truly global professionals.

Professionally-useful levels of foreign language proficiency require long periods of quality instruction, dedicated students, and workplace experience. The Roadmap Design Teams recommend that foreign language education be available from preschool. In addition, creative cooperation among schools, government, and business will create a pool of language-competent professionals who have the skills to develop and implement solutions for organizations challenged by language and culture issues.

In recent months, Ohio State Senate Bill 311 mandated the State Board of Education to establish the Ohio Foreign Language Advisory Committee (FLAC) whose charge is to propose a statewide P-16 foreign language implementation plan. When that plan is completed, the Team Members will support relevant FLAC initiatives.

4

Train, license and employ more teachers educated in the use of technology and develop networked programs around these qualified teachers

Once the preceding recommendations are implemented, there will be many more positions available for foreign language teachers than there are individuals to fulfill these needs. Expanding the number of qualified foreign language teachers can be accomplished through recruiting heritage speakers, improving alternative licensure procedures and augmenting training programs for teachers of preschool through graduate school. With more trained teachers, more schools can offer quality foreign language instruction.

In addition, networked instruction developed around these highly-trained teachers will bring foreign language education to school districts whose financial means may not be commensurate with their need for foreign language education, or whose local foreign language resources differ from other regions. For example, Cleveland would be able to take advantage of Toledo's considerable Arabic language resources and Toledo would be able to access Cleveland's Slavic language resources.

5

Create performance-based tools for assessing foreign language learners' ability to communicate effectively

Foreign language learning must be assessed on a performance basis. As in sports and music, students who can perform masterfully in the target language will progress to the next level; therefore, masterful performance at each level needs to be identified, standardized, and clearly articulated. Assessments that are focused on the use of language in the workplace will be enriched by involving the expertise of persons in business and government in the design and evaluation of these performance-based tools.



Arriving at our Destination

Achieving these goals requires a shared recognition of the place of Ohio in the world and of the world in Ohio. As Ohio strives to create new opportunities for its economy and to nourish a new attitude toward its future, having the ability to act as global citizens is crucial. Learning the languages and cultures of those with whom we interact will enhance our ability to build the trusting relationships on which Ohio's success in the world depends.

The Design Teams' sense of urgency permeated their deliberations. The connection between foreign language capacity and the ability of Ohio to thrive in the 21st Century was foremost in their minds. They see an interesting future where the cultures of the world interact with greater frequency and intimacy. In such a world, strong foreign language and culture knowledge combined with all the other strengths of Ohio will bring unprecedented opportunity. This is why foreign language matters to Ohio.

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THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

Creating Global Professionals