



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

February 7, 2014

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: National Foreign Language Week

The Virginia Department of Education is pleased to announce that the week of March 3-9, 2014, has been designated as National Foreign Language Week. Alpha Mu Gamma foreign language honor society has sponsored National Foreign Language Week since 1957, and the theme for 2014 is "Don't Let Learning a Language Slip Through Your Fingers." For general information about the event and the annual poster, please visit its Web site at <http://www.lacitycollege.edu/academic/honor/amg/nflw.html>.

We encourage schools to use this opportunity to highlight the value of learning world languages and learning about other cultures, and to celebrate the successes of world language students and teachers. Many schools organize annual schoolwide activities during National Foreign Language Week, such as holding a parents' night with skits, songs, or other cultural student performances in various languages; providing international food tastings; sponsoring a poster contest based on the theme for the year; or designating language tables during lunch where only a target language may be spoken.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, Virginia's students must become informed global participants. With technological advances in communication and a renewed emphasis on international cooperation, it has never been more important for our students to learn additional languages. The benefits of proficiency in other languages range from the practicality of being able to communicate and efficiently conduct international business to supporting academic achievement and other cognitive benefits.

Virginia students have myriad opportunities to increase their proficiency in world languages. In addition to local course offerings, the Department of Education provides a variety of online language courses through Virtual Virginia at <http://www.virtualvirginia.org>, including Arabic, Chinese, French, Latin, and Spanish. The Governor's Foreign Language Academies have served over 7,800 talented high school students through intensive summer programs since their inception in 1987. For information about the Governor's Academies for French, German, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish, please visit the Department's Web site at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/foreign_language/language_academies/index.shtml. Additional announcements related to foreign language initiatives are posted on the Teacher Direct Web site at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/teacher_direct/index.shtml.

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