



- According to the U.S. Department of Education, only 44 percent of American high school students are enrolled in foreign language classes, only 31 percent of American elementary schools even offer foreign languages, and less than 8 percent of U.S. undergraduates study a foreign language.
- According to the 2000 census, only 9 percent of Americans can speak a second language, whereas over 50 percent of Europeans speak one or more foreign languages.
- According to the National Research Council, a pervasive lack of knowledge about foreign cultures and foreign languages in this country threatens the security of the United States as well as its ability to compete in the global marketplace and produce an informed citizenry.
- The National Research Council also concluded that early language learning in elementary and secondary school is key to establishing a pipeline of students who can eventually reach a high enough level of proficiency in foreign language and culture to meet national needs. Studies also suggest that foreign language study helps develop a child's cognitive skills and improves the child's learning of other subject matter.
- According to the Center for Applied Linguistics' 2008 *National K-12 Foreign Language Survey*, fewer elementary schools are teaching foreign languages than a decade ago, 25% (vs. 31%) of all elementary schools, and the number of middle schools offering languages has also decreased.
- In a recent interview, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan acknowledged that the nation has a severe shortage of foreign language teachers. This is supported by a recent survey from Recruiting New Teachers Inc., 73 percent of the school districts in the United States are in need of foreign language teachers.
- The Committee for Economic Development states that international studies and foreign language education is a necessity in preparing today's students to become tomorrow's leaders. International content should be taught across the curriculum and at all levels of learning, to expand American students' knowledge of other countries and cultures.
- Research demonstrates language acquisition requires a number of years of carefully sequenced, articulated programs of language learning across a student's school experience that bridge the different educational levels. Despite this, in 2008, only 600 urban, suburban, and rural schools around the country offered intensive language programs (Center for Applied Linguistics).
- According to an American Council on Education poll, 79 percent of the American people agree that students should have a study abroad experience, but only 1 percent of our students actually do study abroad.

## The Texas Foreign Language Association

Phyllis B. Thompson, Ph.D., Director, Public Outreach and Advocacy, TFLA

14525 Misty Meadow Lane, Houston, TX 77079

PH 281702 2293

Email: [phyllisbthompson@yahoo.com](mailto:phyllisbthompson@yahoo.com)