

## 2011 World Languages Curriculum Guidelines

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Communication is an essential element in our lives. Common language is a powerful tool in working with others. Understanding the language of another person helps one understand that person.

The Judeo-Christian tradition contains a story (Genesis 11:1-9) of the beginning of the world when all people spoke a common language and could aspire to build a tower that would allow them to reach Heaven. In the story, God causes the people to cease speaking one language and instead to speak many languages and they could no longer work together toward a common purpose.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, came to heal the divisions between people. After he ascended into Heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to speak through the apostles, and the assembled people could hear and understand the Good News each in their own language (Acts 2:1-12). No longer was there the division of separate languages; once again there was a unifying message that allows all people to reach Heaven.

The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* were published as a guide for educators.

They include the following philosophy:

Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. Children who come to schools from non-English backgrounds should also have the opportunities to develop further proficiencies in their first language.

### Statement of Philosophy

#### *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*

The Standards suggests that these goals will not be achieved overnight, but that there must be continuous improvement over the years. It identifies five C's of foreign language education: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. Communication is the goal of an educated person. It is essential for the success of commerce and peace. Communication in a second language supports the understanding of another culture and connections with the peoples of that culture as well as an understanding of their values and their traditions.

“Language study is best begun in kindergarten and continued without interruption through grade 12 and beyond. Research confirms that children easily and naturally acquire language at an early age.” (Introduction, Colorado Model Content Standards for Foreign Language.)

This Curriculum Guideline is titled World Languages rather than Foreign Language in an effort to focus attention on the value of all languages rather than to work from an ethno-centric position. The goal of this Curriculum Guideline is to expose students from their earliest school experience to a second language in an effort to deepen the understanding of, respect for, and appreciation of others. Meeting this goal will be challenging and school communities will need to be creative with resources of time, personnel, and supporting materials. These guidelines are written with the ideal situation in mind, and the understanding that it will take some time to realize that ideal. A minimum commitment should be made by every Archdiocese of Denver Catholic School to incorporate World Languages into the K-8 curriculum at levels that increase each year. Understanding that hiring certified foreign language teachers will stretch budgets, the resources recommended in the Appendix include some options to support teachers who do not speak the target language as they implement the World Languages Curriculum Guidelines. As a result, these teachers may also begin to learn a second language along with their students. The study of a second language enriches the individual and enhances the Catholic school mission of educating the whole child. It strengthens in students the opportunity for understanding others, active world citizenship, and spreading the Good News.