Funding a World Language Program

Introduction

Funding for world language programs is of critical importance for program success. There are many factors to consider when planning to implement a program. The first step toward building a successful world language program is to create a plan for advocacy. It is essential to establish a support network to facilitate and develop the rationale for the importance of a quality world language program. The support network may consist of school board members, parents, administrators, classroom teachers, world language teachers, unified arts teachers, student leaders, interested community members, union representatives, financial officers, and special education representatives.

Once the support committee is established, its initial task is to gather and formulate the rationale for the program and the benefits of learning a second language. There are three major areas of benefits. The first is improved academic achievement. Research has shown that students who study a world language perform at the same academic level or above those students who have not studied a second language. In addition, these students have developed world language skills. Students also demonstrate increased cognitive skills over their monolingual peers. Improved cognitive flexibility, higher-order thinking skills and better problem-solving abilities are additional benefits. Higher scores on the SAT, ACT, Metropolitan Achievement test, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and gains on measures of performance IQ have also been demonstrated. Positive attitudes and beliefs toward other people and cultures have been documented with second language learning. Details of these findings and additional articles can be located at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (www.actfl.org). Specific rationales to study Japanese can be found through a host of resources including Vistawide World Languages and Cultures. Some of the unique reasons for studying Japanese include Japan having one of the world's largest economies, proficiency in the Japanese language bringing business opportunities, and Japanese-speakers being the internet's third-largest language group.

Levels of Funding

The funding level a district is willing and/or able to make will ultimately determine the scope, model, and quality of the program. A long-term financial plan is the ultimate goal. In order to develop the best possible model, it is therefore recommended that a district investigate and determine the budget early in the research phase as to what it is willing and able to allocate.

When attempting to secure funding for a world language program, it is important to consider different types of funding. There are three main types that can be taken into account: national, state, and local funding. National funding offers the greatest possible allocations, but it can also be the most competitive to secure. State funding varies among the 50 states in the process of attaining funding and in the amount of funds available. Local funds can be limited, but local municipalities may also provide other means of support for the program that are not monetary.

Funding Sources

In addition to funding levels, a district should also review a variety of funding sources. The largest source for educational funding is the federal government. Government funds can be found at the national, state, and local levels. These types of funding sources are beneficial for starting up programs but are not available for long-term support or as a permanent solution. Many times, this funding is a limited offer of matching funds only.

World language organizations are another source that can be tapped for funding. This source is usually more focused on materials or professional development.

Business funding can vary greatly. This funding source can also be used to support professional development, materials, or for enhancing students learning opportunities.

Another source to consider for funding is through private or foundation organizations. There are internet search engines that can facilitate searching for appropriate foundations to match targeted world language program needs.

Funding Components

There are numerous components for funding a successful world language program. The greatest cost to a district in funding a program lies in staffing expenditures. A minimum of 75% of program cost is typically allocated to salaries. If an immersion program model is selected, then there is no additional staffing cost. Funding for staffing also needs to include the cost of a World Language Coordinator to oversee, coordinate, develop, and articulate the program. Outside consultant costs should also be factored into the budget.

Core base materials will need to be purchased for teachers and students. A district must factor these costs into the budget. These items include consumables, realia, manipulatives, textbooks, and technology options.

It is essential to develop a curriculum prior to program implementation, and it needs to be modified and updated as the program continues to grow and evolve. Funding needs to be available for ongoing development and refinement.

Ongoing professional development for teachers is critical in order to develop and maintain a quality program. Appropriations need to be designated for local, state, regional, and national conference attendance, workshops, and consultants as mentors. The cost for professional development should also support travel and lodging expenses. Providing quality professional development opportunities for teachers is an excellent way to ensure access to current best practice methodology and research. These skills in turn will increase the quality of the program that is implemented.

A vital component to a program and to students' success is a comprehensive assessment plan. Program evaluation should always be included in the budget in order to validate the reliability of program goals. Standardized tests are available to assess student proficiency and, therefore, to gauge the effectiveness of a program. Allowances need to be made for either commercially prepared and/or district-created student assessments which are standards-based and proficiency-oriented.

Grant Writing

Grants are a viable option to obtain funding to begin or expand an already existing program. Writing a grant entails a considerable amount of time and effort. Nevertheless, the resulting funds can be substantial.

It is important to become familiar with the grant writing components and the application process. Every grant consists of two parts—a narrative and a budget. The written narrative should answer basic questions about the grant such as who will be served, what the program consists of, when and where the program will be implemented, and why the project is unique and worthy of being funded.

A grant narrative consists of the following components:

1. Abstract: A brief description of the proposed goals and outcomes, usually limited to no more than one page.

2. Project Description: In this portion of the grant, the details of the project are outlined in order to answer the who, what, when, where and why of the grant. This section of the narrative should be written concisely.

3. Justification: This section of the narrative includes the reasoning and rationale for why the grant should be funded.

4. Goals and Objectives: Goal statements are broad in scope and are not able to be measured. Objectives must be specific and able to be measured by means of an indicated outcome.

5. Evaluation: Must be both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative evaluation refers to broad feelings or behaviors of the involved participants in the project. Surveys are used to gather this information. Quantitative evaluation includes numerical data that can be analyzed. The information from both types of evaluations is used to verify and document project success and achievement of goals.

6. Procedures and Activities: This portion of the grant describes the actual mechanics and logistics for carrying out the project. Plans, materials, timelines, personnel needs, activities, and communication must all be aligned with project goals and objectives.

7. Timeline: This is the project's sequence of chronological activities.

8. Dissemination: The final portion of the grant detailing how the results of the project will be communicated to others so that successful aspects can be replicated and weaknesses improved.

The budget is the other major element in grant writing. The budget needs to include individual line items which sum up the cost estimates of the total project. The budget for the grant must be

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as accurate as possible; however, it is generally understood that reasonable adjustments in an actual budget might have to be made as the program is implemented.

Grants may be written by district personnel, professional grant writers, or a combination of both. There are multitudes of internet resources available for assistance with the grant writing process. These resources include but are not limited to SchoolGrants, The Art of Grant Writing, and GRANTwriters Online.

National Funding

The most significant funding source for a world language program is at the national level. The US government provides funding to educational institutions through the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP). This type of grant was first awarded in 1988. The funding is now dispersed through No Child Left Behind. Submissions for applications are generally accepted on an annual basis. The federal Foreign Language Assistance Program is the only program that is specifically designed to fund world language projects at the K-12 or K-16 level. FLAP grants represent a variety of models and approaches such as Foreign Language Exploratory programs (FLEX), Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES), secondary advanced placement courses, a variety of immersion programs, content-based programs and programs for heritage language learners. FLAP grants are typically awarded for multiple years at the state or local level. The grants are awarded to establish, improve, or expand innovative K-12 or K-16 programs. Cost sharing is required as a means to develop accountability at the local level. In special situations, a waiver may be granted for the cost sharing. When a district applies for the FLAP matching funds, that district may include its current expenditures and those that will continue during the project period as part of its matching funds. Thus, a district does not need to allocate new funds in order to apply for a grant. The statute that established FLAP states that the federal share shall be 50% of the funding. Multiple partners may contribute to the other 50%. For example, a local district may team with an institute of higher education and/or state agency to account for the matching 50% funding. Within the last few years, the main goal of the FLAP grant has been articulation and curriculum development for critical-need languages. These languages include Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and languages in the Indic, Iranian, and Turkic families. In order to develop proficiency, priority is given to proposals that provide instruction during the school day.

FLAP Grant Process

A defined process is used to award the FLAP grant. This information is found at the Federal Register (http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/). World language experts evaluate the competing applications based on established criteria. These criteria are used by the applicants to develop their proposal. The application needs to include information about how the district will provide matching funding and thus meet the cost-sharing requirement of the grant. The matching funding on the part of the district must continue on an annual basis during the project's multiple-year period. Waivers are available for local district financial hardship. However, waivers for matching funds are not available for state agencies. Further detailed information is available at the website of the US Department of Education (http://www.ed.gov/programs/flap/index.html).

FLAP Grant - 2009 Japanese

Several local districts and state agencies were awarded individual FLAP grants in 2009.

South Orangetown Central Schools, Orangetown, New York, received a grant in the amount of $261,029 for Chinese, Korean, Russian and Japanese language instruction. This grant will be used to expand world language course offerings at the middle and high school levels. There may also be possible expansion into the elementary level at a later date.

Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit, Pennsylvania, received $200,000 to develop a program in Chinese, Arabic, Japanese, and Hindi.

San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco, California, was awarded a FLAP grant totaling $300,000 to build K-16 languages in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian. Grant funding will provide staff training and create the opportunity for critical-need language teachers to strengthen their skills by taking additional university coursework. Outcomes for the district include development of sequential, standards-based curricula which will also include an assessment component for both students and program. Local universities will conduct research concerning student achievement. A plan for project accountability will also be developed.

Fayette County Public Schools, Kentucky was granted $300,000 to expand its articulated Chinese and Japanese offerings. Students will have the opportunity to achieve Superior proficiency in the K-16 sequence. Longitudinal research will be conducted. Teachers will have the opportunity to participate in targeted training to enhance instructional skills and thus increase student learning. Fayette County Public Schools is partnering with the University of Kentucky and the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center.

The West Virginia Department of Education received $123,033 to implement the LEAPER program. This media-based FLES program will be developed as a content-related program that includes the national standards and state content standards. The project allows for curriculum to be developed for Grades K-5. This curriculum will be media-based, organized into 30-minute instructional blocks, and delivered three times per week. The lessons will be exclusively in the

target language. Culture will be embedded within the content-related topics. Best practice strategies will be utilized in a communicative format. Assessment will be used to validate student learning. The Center for Applied Linguistics will assist in the assessment process.

FLAP Grants - Tips

A successfully funded FLAP grant usually includes several predictable components. To begin, the grant proposes a program that develops an extended sequence of study for the students. The articulated program generally begins in the elementary school at the kindergarten level and continues through grade twelve. Universities are involved in order to provide professional development, research capabilities, and monitoring responsibilities. The written curriculum is based on the national and state standards. It also incorporates technology to support instruction. A major goal of these types of programs is for students to attain high levels of proficiency (Advanced/Superior). State and local agencies collaborate to accomplish the goals of the grant. In K-16 grant proposals, the universities generally offer intensive summer world language programs for professional development. Grant proposals that combine several different types of critical language choices for students are a priority. Additional recommendations for a successful proposal can be found at JNCL-NCLIS.

National Funding: Additional Sources

In addition to FLAP grants, there are numerous other sources where funding may be available. These sources may provide only partial funding for programming, materials, or professional development. Funding sources include the following:

1. The Department of Education includes a Funding Opportunities Page. A search tool is available that links to information about several funding options. These include, but are not limited to, scholarships for the Fulbright program for educators, undergraduate international study, and other continually evolving programs.

2. The Federal Register is the official government daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents. It contains documents in numerous formats with information about grants.

3. The Grant Announcements webpage from the Department of Education can be useful when organizing a proposal. Descriptions of previously funded proposals are archived and can be found through this site.

4. One of the major goals of the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) is to aid the development of the nation's critical language capacity. This website provides a wealth of detailed information including sample abstracts, grant forecasts, and contact information.

5. The Chronicle of Higher Education, published daily online, is a newspaper based in Washington, DC. It also publishes the *Chronicle Guide to Grants.* This is an electronic database of grants that are funded by corporations and foundations.

6. The American Councils for International Education advances cross-border learning through educational programs emphasizing key world languages. Grants are available through these Councils. Funding sources include the US Agency for International Development, US Departments of State and of Education, and numerous other public and private agencies.

7. The United States-Japan Foundation, founded in 1972 by the government of Japan, provides a variety of grants to schools in need of funding for Japanese Language programs. Three types of grants are available. The first is the Salary Assistance Program, which provides funding for salaries for full-time teaching positions for up to a three-year period. The second is the Support for Courses Program, which provides monies for maintaining or expanding teaching staff. The third is the Japanese-Language Teaching Materials Donation Program, which donates instructional materials to schools teaching Japanese.

8. The Northeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies is one of four regional councils that make up the Association for Asian Studies. The NEAC funds two grants: Japan Studies Grants and Korean Studies Grants as well as a lecture series on Japan. There is a link on their website for further information.

9. Asia Society is a non-profit organization whose goal is to build awareness about Asian politics, business, education, arts, and culture through education. They partner with Goldman Sachs to provide four grant prizes of $25,000 each, which are awarded to innovative elementary, middle, high school, state, and media/technology programs.

10. A compilation of national funding sources can be found at JNCL-NCLIS (www.languagepolicy.org).

State Funding

1. Each state has a department of education that may have unique funding options particular to that state. It is important to be familiar with state government organization and processes in order to be able to take advantage of available funding. The following link provides a listing of each state's Department of Education website: http://www.yellowpagesforkids.com/help/seas.htm

2. State world language associations and organizations can provide a wealth of resources and networking information. These groups may provide funding for materials, professional development, or new and innovative strategies. A listing of the state organizations can be found at http://www.multilingualbooks.com/forlangassoc.html

3. Language-specific associations can offer funding for world languages. For example, the Japan Foundation offers grants for arts and culture, Japanese studies, and Japanese language instruction. Each of these categories contains several offerings for grants.
Links for the Japan Foundation are http://jflalc.org/ or http://www.jfny.org/index.php

4. Business partnerships can be another source of funding. Companies whose home office is in the target language country should be sought out for support. For example, Toyota has the Toyota International Teacher Program to Japan. Information can be found at www.toyota4education.com

5. Foundations can be an additional source to tap for funding. Goldman Sachs offers four grants of $25,000 each in partnership with the Asia Society to support Japanese education. Internet search engines such as Foundation Finder and Fundsnet can be used to research funding through foundations that are specific to program needs.

Local Funding

Local funding for the world language program is critical. While outside sources can contribute to the budget to start or support certain portions of the program, in-district sources must be committed to sustain the program beyond the grant funding periods. School districts can consider allocating funding in a variety of ways. An equal percent contribution from all existing district budgetary line items may be dedicated to a world language program budget. In addition, many districts have local foundation grants available. These district grants may provide monies for materials, technology, or professional development. Local community associations may also be tapped to support components of the program. Local businesses and private donors are other sources that may be willing to support the budget. District fundraising can be an exciting and beneficial avenue to explore when funding a program. Districts should continually strive to cultivate networks and relationships with their local benefactors and community. Doing so will foster partnerships which can be drawn upon for funding and other supportive efforts.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, funding for the implementation or expansion of a world language program can be successful with careful planning and research. There are many funding options available. A district will have to determine its most viable options for long-term program success. The information contained in this article provides substantial resources to support the search for funding sources. Though the process can be involved, the outcomes of a quality world language programs are more than worth the effort.

About the Authors

Jennie Frazier and Irma Torres have each been involved in world language education for over 30 years. They have taught all grade levels from kindergarten through university. Frazier and Torres have helped design and implement all aspects of a world language program including initial program design, curriculum, methodology, materials development, assessment, professional development, technology integration, and marketing. Jennie and Irma are regular presenters and consultants at the local, state, and national levels. They serve on the Executive Board of the Michigan World Language Association and are involved with ACTFL, CSCTFL, AATSP, and NNELL. They may be contacted at:

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