

## **Ideas for Foreign Language Department Visibility within the District:**

- Make sure that the department has a 90% plus target language use policy in all foreign language classrooms, as prescribed by the May 2010 ACTFL position paper on the topic. When the administration, other teachers, students and parents pass by one of your departmental classrooms, they should hear interactive and creative target language use all the time. When surveyed, students respond that they take a foreign language to be able to speak the language – let's stop teaching about the language! There is no better way than this to inspire curiosity and excitement about departmental programming than to produce students who are proficient in the language and excited by its culture.
- Make sure that the department is assessing student oral and written proficiency regularly and that the course grades are based at least 50% on open ended performance based tasks. This means that students should be practicing and displaying presentations and getting ready for other oral and written assessments as a regular occurrence -- something that will make you visible as a department. You should have an actively used language or computer lab and the district should see that your assessment needs are different than those of other departments.
- Offer inter-level programming -- create buddy classes within the department in which students share work with each other or in which older students participate in the teaching of younger students.
- Offer a peer tutoring programming in which upper level students tutor lower level students after school. Upper level students can receive extra credit, community service or complete the work as part of an independent study for course credit.
- Keep data from year to year on what percent of students participate in foreign language programming in each grade level. This data makes it easier to defend programming in tough budgetary times.
- Advocate for a foreign language graduation requirement if your district does not have one. Foreign language is recognized at the national level as a core subject and should be treated as such at the district level. A two year graduation requirement is certainly not sufficient and will not lead to significant proficiency, but it is a first step to achieving core subject status in the district.
- A department member should be on every possible district-wide committee: strategic planning, administrative hiring, accreditation, etc. The district should get used to hearing what foreign language programming can add to the discussion and how each new decision will impact foreign languages.

## **Ideas for Foreign Language Department Visibility within the Community:**

- Department news, information, announcements and requests should go out in every possible district-wide newsletter and bulletin. The community should get used to hearing the great news about foreign language programming in the district and what exciting things are happening to and being produced by the students in the department. Or create your own quarterly departmental newsletter to send home with students.
- Send in news releases with photos regularly to the town newspaper highlighting departmental accomplishments, trips, activities, national exam results, alums involved in foreign language endeavors, etc.
- Make contact with the nearby college(s) offering Bachelor of Arts programs in the foreign languages that are taught in your department – and that ideally are approved by the Department of Education to endorse licensure to its teacher candidates. Invite BA students to conduct pre-practicum observation hours in your classrooms and be willing to supervise students completing student teaching.
- Encourage area college foreign language departments to create service learning courses in which their students volunteer to teach their language in your district K-12 classrooms. A formal elementary foreign language program in the district can be jump started through interest created by a voluntary after school program.
- Create an International Week in which the whole school and community participate: have morning announcement trivia or scavenger hunts, ask the cafeteria to coordinate with daily themes, create inter-departmental projects to take place during the week, invite community members to foreign language classes to give presentations in which they share about travel, use of language in their job, politics, exchanges, etc. Alums are a great resource -- keep in touch with them and invite them back to speak to your students.
- Have your foreign language club develop community offerings in the school or the community center: foreign film night, international dessert night, poetry reading, etc.
- Take advantage of and apply for the student awards offered through state and national language organizations then publicize your district winners well.
- Invite the community to participate in a department sponsored activity such as a photo contest for an international calendar or a request for recipes for an international cookbook. This can be organized through the foreign language club and proceeds from the sale of the calendar or cookbook can support a departmental award or exchange program.