



# PUBLIC ADVOCACY



## **What YOU can do! Take one step more to advocate for WORLD LANGUAGES.**

- Advocacy Packet – Letter Writing Campaign Guide
- Contact information and links
- Advocacy Steps you can take – inside and outside of your classroom
- Use NYSAFLT's Public Advocacy links for legislative contacts, USED, NYSED, research and documentation at [www.nysaft.org/advocacy](http://www.nysaft.org/advocacy)



## **PUBLIC ADVOCACY**

### **Committee Members**

Barbara Patterson and  
Diana Zuckerman, Chairs  
Sally Barnes, Mid-Hudson/Westchester  
Brenda Benzin, Western New York  
Elizabeth Briceno, Western New York  
Marie Campanaro, Western New York  
Marissa Coulehan, NYC/Long Island  
Eleanor Dana, Mid-Hudson/Westchester  
Roxanne Franquelli-Beras, Mid-Hudson/Westchester  
David Graham, Central New York  
Nancy Ketz, Central New York  
Brandi K. Lasnick, Western New York  
Roseann Lorafice, Central New York  
Judy Martialay, Consultant  
Mike Mitchell, Capital-East  
Mary Ann Niemczura, Syracuse  
Joanne O'Toole, Central New York  
Erica Ragan, Western New York  
Rosa Riccio Pietanza, NYC/Long Island  
Jill Schimmel, NYC/Long Island  
Vivian Selenikas, NYC/Long Island  
Chelsea Zuber, Central New York

# **Advocating for World Languages: A Campaign of Letter Writing**



**The information in this packet was compiled by the  
Public Advocacy Committee  
of the  
New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers, Inc.  
Marie Campanaro**

## Directions for Letter Writing

The advocacy efforts of those in our membership and communities have the potential to save our World Language (WL) programs from further devastating cuts. We hope to pave a road to help reinstate the programs and assessments we have already lost. We hope to educate our administrators, educators and community at large in order to maintain or increase our programs.

Our government sources tell us that the most effective way to make an impression on the people who determine policy is to send physical letters – **paper mail** (faxes too)!

*Physical Mail – Most Effective Advocacy Tool*



Here is how to use this packet:

1. Write or type letters to the contacts listed as “most influential.” “CC” these letters to others that should be aware of our cause, even if they do not directly affect our legislation. Contacts are divided into New York State and national so that you can be specific about issues or legislation.  
GO TO [www.nysaft.org/advocacy](http://www.nysaft.org/advocacy) and follow the links in PUBLIC ADVOCACY, then “CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS” to find the key state and national leaders to contact. Be sure to address your letters to your legislators (Senators and Congress members), then copy in the others (Governor, Commissioner of Education, Board or Regent members, and so on).
2. Select an opening sentence and paragraph from page 4 to start your letter or create your own. Tailor all paragraphs to your personal style or concerns. Follow the format given for your inside address and salutation.
3. Page 5 offers suggestions for the second paragraph. This paragraph should explain the problem you identified in the first. Select one or create your own.
4. You should end your letter with specific ways your contact can support World Languages in New York State or in our nation. Select a paragraph and a closing sentence, or create your own.

\*Do your best to keep your letter to only **one page in length**. Multiple, short letters are more effective than a long, multi-paged letter.

5. Fax it, mail it, or e-mail it...and then, write another and another. We need to continually remind our decision makers that we have not given up on ourselves! Remember that an influx of PHYSICAL PAPER mail will make the biggest impression.

Thanks for taking the time to care!

New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers – Updated 7/2016

[www.nysaft.org/advocacy](http://www.nysaft.org/advocacy)

# INSIDE ADDRESS AND OPENING PARAGRAPHS

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assemblyman/Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
Legislative Office Building \_\_\_\_\_  
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Assemblyman/Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

## STATE THE PROBLEM

### CHOOSE ONE OPENING SENTENCE

1. As a (resident/parent/taxpayer/student) of/in the (\_\_\_\_\_) Central School District, I need your help. I am writing to you to express my concern about (i.e., the elimination of foreign language assessments) in New York State and the need to (i.e., reinstate them).
2. As a taxpayer of in the (\_\_\_\_\_) Central School District. I am writing to urge you to (i.e., reinstate the foreign language proficiency and Regents assessments) in New York State.
3. I am a (resident/parent/student) of/in the (\_\_\_\_\_) Central School District. I am deeply concerned about (i.e., the cuts to foreign language education) in New York State. I am writing to you to (i.e., restore funding to these programs).
4. I am a (resident/teacher/parent/taxpayer) of/in (\_\_\_\_\_) Central School District. I am shocked that the New York State Board of Regents would choose to (i.e., further weaken World Language programs) at a time when knowledge of other languages and cultures is so critical. I am writing to ask you to (i.e., reinstate the funding to World Language assessments and to increase graduation requirements) for World Languages.

## OPENING PARAGRAPH

### CHOOSE ONE

1. The U.S. has steadily been losing ground as a leader in the world marketplace. We are increasingly pushed aside by countries that have prepared their citizenry for a competitive and global economy.
2. As parents and educators we have been charged with preparing our students with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. It is our goal to have all students become college and career ready. This cannot be accomplished without early and continual instruction of World Languages and their cultures.
3. The Association of International Educators has called our nation's lack of knowledge about the world a "national liability." There is an urgent need for effective World Language programs to help our students cooperate with and understand other cultures more fully.
4. Early and continued study of a language other than English has many significant benefits for our children. Our lack of global literacy places the U.S. at a disadvantage in the global marketplace and places us in an even more dangerous position with regard to national security.
5. I am a (resident/parent/teacher) of/in the \_\_\_\_\_ Central School District and I write today to express my deep concern about threats to our World Language programs. World Language programs are now the only academic area without the sanction of a state or federal assessment. This is a dangerous message to our students and their parents as we prepare for global understanding and partnerships.
6. *[Create your own opening which states a concern about the lack of support for World Language education in your school or state.]*

## PARAGRAPH NUMBER 2--STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

### CHOOSE ONE

1. The study of World Languages fosters cultural awareness and understanding, cross-cultural communication and the competitive skills needed for today's global market. One needs only point to the most recent U.S. Census results to see the drastic increase of people within our borders who speak languages other than English. Our police forces, medical and emergency personnel, social workers and educators are a few of the areas where the knowledge of other languages and their cultures would increase national security and economic productivity. We must respond to a nation that is more culturally and linguistically diverse than ever. This need is more critical outside of our nation's borders as we become more globally connected. The Trade Benefits America Coalition reports that more than one in five jobs in our country is linked to international trade, and this number is increasing.
2. Research has overwhelmingly shown that learning a second language benefits basic skill development in the first language. Over time, the study of a second language results in higher scores on standardized tests and has been found to improve the chances of college acceptance, achievement and attainment. Studies have also shown these results are true regardless of race, gender or economic status and actually narrow achievement gaps among minority and low socioeconomic groups. The cultural awareness and competency that comes with the study of a second language enhances career opportunities within our borders and abroad. Our students must acquire international awareness, the appreciation of cultural diversity and development of proficiency in at least one additional language in order to be competitive in their fast-paced, continually-changing world.
3. Since the U.S. first emerged from its policy of isolationism during the First World War, our government agencies and leaders have called for a language proficient population. The FBI has recently reported a serious lack of Arabic translators to review the thousands of documents seized in the Middle East as well as within our borders. Our court system is often hindered by the lack of proficient translators. The military and many police departments offer pay incentives for those who can speak other languages. The U.S. idea that "everyone speaks English" further alienates us from the rest of the world and damages our reputation. The critical need for people who speak other languages and understand other cultures is well established. Our educational system has never been awarded the means to fill this pressing need.
4. Unfortunately, a large number of Americans believe that the study of World Languages and their cultures is not important. Mastering a second or third language is not a fun "extra" during the school day, but a critical component needed to create an informed population capable of competing in the global marketplace and meeting the needs of all who live and work within our borders.
5. *[Create a paragraph that explains the importance of the language you speak or teach. Give specific examples of how your target language is used and will help your students in the future.]*

## PARAGRAPH NUMBER 3 – CALL TO ACTION

### CHOOSE ONE

1. This is a critical time for our state's (nation's) leaders to support the education of World Languages and their cultures. I am asking you to oppose the current rash of budget cuts that will undermine our World Language educational programs and further jeopardize the United States' position economically and politically in the global arena.
2. Please speak to the urgent need for effective World Language programs and policies to prepare our students to compete in the global marketplace and to provide services to the English language learners within our borders.
3. I am asking you to please speak out against the current rash of budget cuts that will undermine our World Language educational programs and further jeopardize the United States' position economically and politically in the global arena.
4. I urge you to support the bills and policies which will maintain or expand our current World Language programs. It is time to educate our country about the critical need to work with the rest of the world on equal ground.

## ADD A CONCLUDING SENTENCE WITH A SPECIFIC ACTION

### CHOOSE ONE

1. I hope I can count on you to be a voice to support the teaching of World Languages and their cultures. Your service to our region is appreciated. (i.e., Reinstate funding for World Language programs).
2. Please do all you can to maintain and expand our World Language programs for the future of our students. (i.e., Restore our World Language programs.) Thank you for your consideration and service.
3. Thank you for all you have done in the past for our school programs and for the future of our students. Please stand with us on this important issue to ensure a safer and more economically-stable future. (i.e., Provide the funding necessary to reinstate our World Language programs.)
4. I deeply appreciate your strong support of our schools in the past, and hope you will demonstrate the same now by supporting a solid World Language program. Fund the programs that will enable our children to compete in the global marketplace. (i.e., Reinstate our World Language programs.)
5. I trust you will help strengthen World Languages so that our children will be able to interact, compete and prosper in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Sincerely,

Respectfully,

Yours truly,

With sincere appreciation,

Name

Address

Phone Number

New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers – Updated 7/2016