

Dear FLENJ Member,

As you speed toward the break from school just over the horizon and as you try to get something of value and meaning accomplished in the frenetic classroom environment prior to vacation, here are three important deadlines – *how dare I add to your workload!* But – these are important deadlines:

1. There is still time to register for the December 22, 2015 workshop: **Teaching with Technology: Proficiency Based Instruction, Collaboration and Assessment.** [Click here to read more and to register](#)
2. Do not miss the December 15, 2015 deadline to apply for a **FLENJ mini-grant!** FLENJ provides material support for your great classroom ideas. [Click here for more info!](#)
3. **Renew your membership** for 2016 at the 2015 rate! FLENJ membership dues will rise January 1, 2016. You can save by renewing TODAY! [Click here to renew your membership](#). Also makes a great gift!

We, on the FLENJ board, discuss regularly how we can continue to provide great member benefits at a low cost and are proud of what we can offer for the cost of membership. The dues will rise slightly in 2016. FLENJ is a leader among states in the ACTFL orbit and the all-volunteer board strives to make the greatest possible network of support and growth for all world language educators in NJ. Please do consider the value of what FLENJ offers you and renew today – and even better – convince that colleague down the hall to join the network!

Looking ahead, we are very excited to partner with you to continue to build the strength of our network at the **FLENJ Annual Conference February 26-27, 2016 at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick**, a easy walk from the NJ Transit station. We have two exciting days of great professional learning: Friday half-day seat reservation-based workshops and 18 high quality, best practices workshops on Saturday; an inspirational keynote, vendors offering the latest and greatest materials and services, awards for colleagues and students.....and lunch on both days. What a bargain! But the best part is the networking and the energy in the space. Our theme:

Imagine, Create, Inspire! is designed to allow you to do just that- build your capacity as an educator and extend the network. The spark of imagination might just come from that new colleague seated next to you in a session, creativity is invigorated by the collective atmosphere of growth and possibility and the inspiration will lead you and your students on new paths to greater learning: more effective lesson design, improved delivery of instruction and enhanced learning scenarios for students. Tell your administrator that this is why you should be permitted to attend – the benefits are long-lasting and multifaceted. So much to gain- please do find your way to New Brunswick- we look forward to learning with you and to building the FLENJ network.

This is **FLENJ forward** and we look forward to the opportunities to collaborate with you!

[Click here for more info and to register](#).

2015 – a year of great challenge in the globalized world comes to a close, soon. Many would like to forget all the tragedy and turmoil and focus on a possible better path for 2016. I am reminded of the purpose and value of my work as a classroom teacher- opening a smooth way onto that better path for the young people who come into the classroom each day. Communication which leads to understanding as the only way forward - - - The great educational thinker Emily Style says that “half the curriculum walks in the door with the students” and I believe this is a great resource for us, as teachers. Our students’ lived lives are a resource for us to imagine, to create and to inspire. Recently, in one of my classes, we were listening to the livestreaming broadcast of the news (as we do weekly) from Europe and I asked the class, before I turned it on, what they thought the news items would be: as attentive students they guessed: “the refugee crisis in Europe, the terror attack in Paris and the climate summit in Paris” (good answers, thought the teacher as he smiled). When we turned it on, the actual first news item was about a U.S. presidential hopeful calling to block Muslims from entering the country. We had not expected this to be the top news item in Europe and this led to a lively inquiry about what it means that this was the top news story on that day. A lot of intermediate high interpersonal discussion ensued. They all wanted to WhatsApp with friends in Germany to hear what they thought about it. These students are opening themselves to other perspectives, challenging themselves to see the world from another vantage point, to see that their view is not the only view, to think critically about the world of today and that they can (and should) play a role in the globalized world of tomorrow. Which path we choose should involve their voices and we, teachers of world languages, have the enviable power to guide students toward paths that make the future possible.

As you look forward to 2016, I wish you peace and classrooms full of intellectual inquiry!

Sincerely,

Christopher Gwin
FLENJ President